



# Foundations of the Restoration Teacher Material

# Foundations of the Restoration Teacher Material

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## INTRODUCTION

# Introduction to the Foundations of the Restoration Teacher Material (Religion 225)

Welcome to Foundations of the Restoration! Thank you for accepting the opportunity to help your students deepen their conversion to Jesus Christ and His restored gospel.

The Objective of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion states:

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], 1)*

What are the objectives of this course?

This course is designed to help students:

- Strengthen their testimony of Jesus Christ and His restored gospel.
- Increase in their desire and effort to live principles and doctrine of the gospel and become more like Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.
- Apply principles of acquiring spiritual knowledge and gain experience evaluating sources of information.
- Identify and explain foundational doctrine, revelation, and historical events of the Restoration.

How is this manual structured?

The contents of this manual are designed to help students have meaningful, edifying experiences both outside and inside the classroom. Each lesson is composed of preparation material and teacher material.

## Preparation Material

The preparation material is intended to be studied by both you and your students in preparation for class. It includes pertinent historical context and images, teachings from the scriptures and Church leaders, and a “Want More?” section that identifies additional resources related to the lesson.

The preparation material also contains questions and activities meant to help deepen students’ learning experiences in class. For example, in the preparation material for lesson 6, “The Book of Mormon—the Keystone of Our Religion,” you and your students are given the opportunity to study teachings from Church leaders regarding how the Book of Mormon helps us draw nearer to God and blesses our lives in additional ways:

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

Elder Kim B. Clark of the Seventy taught about the preparation and sincere effort required to learn deeply:



If you really desire to learn deeply, if your heart and your mind are open to learning, and if you act on that desire, the Lord will bless you. When you do your part—pray in faith, prepare, study, engage actively, and do your very best—the Holy Ghost will teach you, magnify your capacity to act on what you learn, and help you become what the Lord wants you to become. (“Learning for the Whole Soul,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Aug. 2017, 27)

## Teacher Material

The teacher material is designed to help teachers invite students to discuss what they learned in their preparation and help students deepen their understanding and testimony of the Lord and His restored gospel. In the introduction for each lesson you will find a description of the lesson’s intended outcomes. This is followed by suggested teaching ideas that provide lesson structure, content, discussion helps, and application ideas.

The following is an example of how the teacher material draws on the students’ preparation, again from lesson 6:

Divide students into small groups, and invite them to share and explain Book of Mormon passages that have helped them draw nearer to God. (Students who have studied the preparation material can refer to what they wrote at the end of section 4.) You might also invite students to discuss in their groups how living the teachings recorded in the passages they chose helps them become more like Jesus Christ.

As you read the lessons in this manual, pay attention to how the teacher material regularly draws on the students’ preparation. Consistently relying on students’ preparation will help them feel the importance of preparing for every class.

The teacher material also models the fundamentals of gospel teaching and learning (see *Gospel Teaching*

and *Learning*, 10, 23–31, 38–41). These include helping students to identify, understand, and feel the truth and importance of doctrine and principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as well as inviting them to explain, share, and testify.



## Ponder in Preparation to Teach This Course

Take a minute to look through a lesson or two to become familiar with how the preparation and teacher material are designed to be used together as you prepare to teach. What are some ways you might help students prepare so they can have a richer experience in class?

How can I focus on students and help them have a meaningful experience with this course?

You will bless your students by expecting and encouraging them to fulfill their role as learners both outside and inside the classroom. Some ways that you can do this are by relying on students’ preparation, inviting them to ask questions about the preparation material or lesson topic, giving them opportunities to explain doctrine and principles in their own words and to share relevant experiences and testimony, and inviting them to more fully live the truths of the restored gospel.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught:



We can be more powerful teachers than we sometimes are. In approaching such a daunting task, please . . . remember that a student is not a container to be filled; a student is a fire to be ignited. (Jeffrey R. Holland, “Angels and Astonishment” [Church Educational

System Training Broadcast, June 12, 2019], [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/broadcasts/article/article/2019/06/14holland](https://ChurchofJesusChrist.org/broadcasts/article/article/2019/06/14holland))

The lesson structure suggested in the teacher material should help you provide enough time in class for students to recognize and follow spiritual promptings. The materials should also help you invite students to apply what they are learning and to become more like our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. Consider this example from lesson 19, “Redemption of the Dead”:

You might invite students to think of someone they could ask to mentor them in doing family history. If some students are already skilled at doing family history, invite them to mentor someone else in the class. If time permits, you might also show students the family history website at [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/family-history](https://ChurchofJesusChrist.org/family-history) and encourage them to explore this site for additional ideas on how to become more involved in family history.

Share the following statement by President Russell M. Nelson:



I invite you prayerfully to consider what kind of sacrifice, and preferably a sacrifice of time, you can make to do more family history and temple work this year. (Russell M. Nelson, RootsTech Family Discovery Day—Opening Session 2017, [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://ChurchofJesusChrist.org))

Conclude by inviting students to prayerfully ponder and then write down what specific sacrifices they will make or specific steps they will take to participate more fully in family history and temple service.

This course is designed as a semester-long course with 28 lessons written for 50-minute class periods. If your class meets only once each week for 90 to 100 minutes, combine and teach two lessons each class period. Rather than being concerned with covering all of the content in the teacher material, focus instead on helping students to deepen their

understanding of doctrine or principles that are especially relevant to them and on helping them to more fully live by those truths.



### Ponder in Preparation to Teach This Course

What are some ways you can encourage students to share in class what they learn from their preparation? What could you do to include students who didn't study the preparation material?

## How can I effectively prepare to teach?

Heavenly Father will assist you as you prepare and teach His children. Your efforts to diligently live the gospel will help you qualify for the Spirit in your preparation to teach.

As you prepare, consider ways you can appropriately adapt the teacher material to meet the needs and circumstances of your students. Follow this counsel from President Dallin H. Oaks of the First Presidency in making adaptations:



President [Boyd K.] 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. (Dallin H. Oaks, “A Panel Discussion with Elder Dallin H. Oaks” [Seminaries and Institutes of Religion satellite broadcast, Aug. 7, 2012], [broadcasts. ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://ChurchofJesusChrist.org))



You may find it helpful to ask yourself the following questions as part of your preparation to teach:

- Have I prayed to receive the guidance of the Holy Ghost?
- Have I studied the preparation material?
- Do I feel sufficiently grounded in the teacher material? Is there anything that I need to adapt to meet the needs of my students?
- How can we effectively learn from the scriptures in class?
- How can I help students focus on the Savior and learn from the Holy Ghost in this lesson?
- How can I most effectively help my students learn, understand, and grow in their testimony of the principles pertaining to these aspects of the gospel?
- What can I do to meaningfully incorporate what students have learned from their class preparation and their life experience?
- How can I help each of my students fully engage in the lesson?
- How can I vary the learning activities and approaches I use in each class?
- How can we create a learning environment that invites the Spirit and gives students the privilege and responsibility to teach and to learn from one another? (See Doctrine and Covenants 88:78, 122.)

## 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 include them and help them succeed

(see the Disability Resources page at [disabilities.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://disabilities.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)).



### Record Your Thoughts

Consider the kind of experience you hope your students have in this course. List a few of your thoughts about how you plan to help them have a meaningful learning experience.

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## What is expected of students to receive credit?

To receive credit toward institute graduation, students are required to:

1. Study the preparation material for at least 75 percent of the lessons.
2. Attend 75 percent of the classes held.
3. Complete one of three learning experiences: keep a study journal, write responses to three essay questions, or design and complete a learning project (with teacher approval) of their own that is related to the content of the course. Find more details here: [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/si/institute/learning-experiences](https://ChurchofJesusChrist.org/si/institute/learning-experiences).

If students record responses to all of the questions and activities in the preparation material, this would also satisfy the learning experience requirement. Students do not need to submit their responses to you. At the end of the semester they simply need to show you what they completed.

## Want More? (Optional)

### **What other resources can help me to become the teacher the Lord needs me to be?**

New-Teacher Training resources can help you to understand Seminaries and Institutes purpose and teaching philosophy as well as help you practice several teaching skills.

The *Gospel Teaching and Learning* handbook is an essential resource for understanding the gospel

teaching process and learning how to become successful in the classroom.

The resource *Teaching in the Savior's Way* shares principles to help gospel instructors teach more like the Savior.

### **Where can I find ideas and resources on adapting lessons to meet the needs of those with disabilities?**

Consult the Disability Resources page at disabilities.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.



#### LESSON 1 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

## Prelude to the Restoration

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

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

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

#### SECTION 1

### What led to the Great Apostasy?

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



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

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

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

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

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



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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

## SECTION 2

### How did the Lord prepare the way for the Restoration?

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

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



### Study in Preparation for Class

Read 1 Nephi 13:13–16, 19.

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



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

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



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

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

**President M. Russell Ballard taught the following:**



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

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

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



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



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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

## Want More? (Optional)

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



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

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

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

## LESSON 1 TEACHER MATERIAL

## Prelude to the Restoration

The Lord Jesus Christ ended the Great Apostasy when He restored His gospel and organized His Church once again on the earth. After participating in this lesson, students should be able to recognize the hand of the Lord in the events preceding the Restoration and explain the need for truth to be dispensed again to God's children in our day.

*Note:* If possible, contact students who register for this course prior to their first day of class and invite them to read the preparation material for lesson 1 before coming to class. If you will be teaching lessons 1 and 2 together, invite students to also study the material for lesson 2.

### Suggestions for Teaching

Show students who are unfamiliar with the preparation material how to access it electronically. You might also provide paper copies to students who do not have electronic devices.

#### IMPROVING OUR TEACHING AND LEARNING

**Prepare with students in mind.** As you prepare to teach, consider what you hope students will feel and do and how you hope their lives will change as a result of the lesson and the course. Prayerfully consider the needs of your students and listen to the direction of the Spirit as you prepare. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught teachers that “a student is not a container to be filled; a student is a fire to be ignited” (“Angels and Astonishment,” Church Educational System training broadcast, June 12, 2019).

### The Great Apostasy made the Restoration of the gospel necessary.

Invite a student to read aloud the introduction to the lesson 1 preparation material.

Display a live plant and a dead or dying plant (or a dead branch in some dirt). Or display the accompanying images if real plants are not available.





- Why do you think these plants look different from each other? What kind of analogy about our own spiritual condition could we make using these plants?

Explain that an Old Testament prophet named Amos warned the wicked people of Israel that they would experience a famine. Invite students to read Amos 8:11–12, looking for what type of famine Amos warned of.

Invite students to search section 1 of the preparation material, looking for what was lost during the Great Apostasy. Have students report what they find.

Show students the video “Dispensations: The Pattern of Apostasy and Restoration” (6:52). Invite students to think as they watch about what the pattern of apostasy and restoration depicted in the video teaches us about Heavenly Father.

- What do you think this pattern of apostasy and restoration teaches us about Heavenly Father?
- Why is the dispensation of the fulness of times different than any other dispensation? What are your thoughts or feelings about living during this time?

## The Lord prepared the way for the Restoration of the gospel.

Display the following truth: **The Lord prepared the way for the Restoration of the gospel.**

Invite students to form small groups and then take turns reading from section 2 of the preparation material, looking for what events prepared the way for the Restoration of the gospel. (If most of your students were able to read the preparation material prior to class, you might invite them to summarize the content in section 2.) Display the following questions, and provide time for each group to discuss them together.

- How did the Lord prepare the way for the Restoration to take place?
- What can we learn about the Lord by how He prepared the way for Joseph Smith and the Restoration?

## Students can take an active role in their gospel learning.

Display a list of the lesson titles for the course (you can find them in the table of contents). Explain that this course will focus on the foundational events, doctrine, and scripture of the Restoration, as well as address difficult topics that sometimes come up in Church history. Consider inviting students to read through the list of future lessons and share with the class which topics they would most like to learn about. Note their responses so you will know which lessons you might give a little more emphasis to during the course.

Explain that the preparation material is an integral part of this course and can enhance students’ personal gospel learning and help prepare them to make meaningful contributions during class.

To help students understand the blessings that can come from preparing for each class experience,

display the following statement by Elder Kim B. Clark of the Seventy:



If you really desire to learn deeply, if your heart and your mind are open to learning, and if you act on that desire, the Lord will bless you. When you do your part—pray in faith, prepare, study, engage actively, and do your very best—the Holy Ghost will teach you, magnify your capacity to act on what you learn, and help you become what the Lord wants you to become. (Kim B. Clark, “Learning for the Whole Soul,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2017, 27)

Invite students to carefully ponder how they would answer the following questions:

- How will sincere participation in this course help my spiritual growth?
- Am I willing to pay the price of studying on my own before each class so I can come prepared to learn more deeply? When in my schedule will I

commit to making my personal study and preparation a priority?

Consider encouraging students to record their goals related to these questions. You might also discuss as a class how they could help one another come ready to learn more deeply. (Ideas might include setting up class text messaging groups, study groups, ways to remind each other of their goals, or discussion forums where they can share insights from their study.)

## For Next Time

Explain to students that the preparation material for the next class includes portions of the Prophet Joseph Smith’s firsthand accounts of his First Vision. Invite students to consider what we can learn from the various accounts as well as the significance of having our own testimonies of the reality of the First Vision.





## LESSON 2 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

# The First Vision

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

## SECTION 1

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

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



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

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

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

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



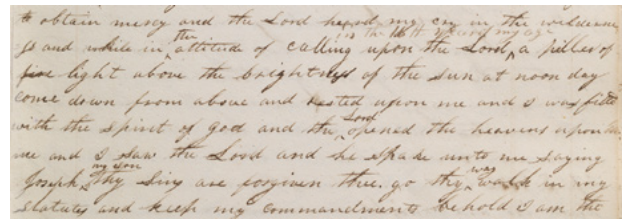
### Study in Preparation for Class

Read Joseph Smith—History 1:8, 11–19.



## SECTION 2

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



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

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

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

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



### Record Your Thoughts

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

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

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

*Note:* The complete record of each account is available in "Joseph Smith's Accounts of the First Vision" at [josephsmithpapers.org](http://josephsmithpapers.org).

### 1832 Account

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 1835 Account

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

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

## 1842 Account

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

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



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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

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

## Want More? (Optional)

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

Read the essay “First Vision Accounts,” available on [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

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

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

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



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



## LESSON 2 TEACHER MATERIAL

# The First Vision

God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to Joseph Smith in 1820. This lesson is designed to help students become familiar with Joseph’s accounts of his First Vision, identify doctrine and principles they can learn from his vision, and strengthen their testimonies that Joseph Smith saw the Father and the Son.

*Note:* Joseph Smith’s search for truth as recounted in Joseph Smith—History 1:5–13 will be covered in greater detail in lesson 3 of this course.

## Suggestions for Teaching

### Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ appear to Joseph Smith.

Display the following statement from Joseph Smith—History 1:21:

*“There [are] no such things as visions or revelations in these days.”*

- What are your feelings about this statement?
- How would your life be different if you believed this statement?

Explain that this statement was made by a Methodist preacher when young Joseph Smith told him about his First Vision. Invite students to read Joseph Smith—History 1:15–19, and ask them to think about how Joseph’s description of what he experienced refutes this preacher’s claim. After they read, invite students to share what they think.

### IMPROVING OUR TEACHING AND LEARNING

**Invite students to read in class.** Reading in class could be done in a variety of ways, such as students reading from their own scriptures silently, one student reading aloud, students

taking turns reading verses aloud, students reading aloud in unison, and so forth.

Write the following truth on the board: **God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph Smith and spoke with him.**

Invite a few students who would like to bear testimony of Joseph’s First Vision to answer the following question:

- How has your spiritual witness of the First Vision come to you?

### We learn important truths from the First Vision accounts.

Remind students that Joseph Smith gave four different accounts of the First Vision that we know of. We also have five additional accounts of this vision recorded by those who heard Joseph talk about it. Just as there are differences in the accounts of the Savior’s life recorded by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, each account of Joseph’s First Vision emphasizes different aspects of his experience. But they all share important elements of what Joseph saw and heard. Some people attempt to dismiss the First Vision because of differences in the various accounts. (For example, the 1832 account emphasizes that Joseph was seeking forgiveness of his sins and also uses the title “the Lord” instead of referring to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ separately. The

1835 account describes Heavenly Father appearing first, followed by the Savior.)

To help explain why there are differences in these accounts, ask students to think of a significant or meaningful experience they have had in their lives.

- How might your telling of that experience differ depending on who your audience is? How might it change depending on when or why you were telling about the experience?
- How would you respond to someone who argues that variations in the different accounts of the First Vision call into question the reality of Joseph's experience? (If needed, encourage students to think about what they learned from section 2 of the preparation material.)

Display the following incomplete statement: *We learn from the First Vision that . . .*

Explain that we can learn wonderful truths from all of Joseph's accounts of the First Vision. Remind students that they were invited to prepare for this class by making a list of truths they identified from these First Vision accounts. If needed, give students time to review what they marked and truths they noted. (You may need to provide time for students to study the accounts in class if you are combining the first two lessons and students have not been able to prepare for class.)

Invite students to share some of the truths they found and also the verse, verses, or portion of the account that teaches those truths. Write student responses under the incomplete statement you just displayed.

*Note:* For examples of truths that we can learn from Joseph Smith's First Vision, see the talk "The First Vision: Key to Truth" (*Ensign*, June 2017, 60–65) by Elder Richard J. Maynes of the Seventy, referenced in the "Want More?" section of the preparation material.

As students share the truths they found, consider asking them one or more of these follow-up questions:

- Why do you think this truth is important to know and understand?
- How has knowing that truth blessed you?
- What do you learn about Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ from what you have studied about the First Vision?

### We can deepen our testimony of the First Vision.

Explain that many people in Joseph's community rejected his testimony of what he saw and heard and that many persecuted him for it (see Joseph Smith—History 1:21–23).

Invite students to read Joseph Smith—History 1:24–25, looking for how the Prophet Joseph Smith responded to those who ridiculed his testimony of the vision.

- What phrases from Joseph Smith's testimony stand out to you? Why?
- How can Joseph Smith's example help you if you encounter ridicule or challenges to your testimony of the First Vision and the restored gospel of Jesus Christ?

Display or hand out the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley, and invite a student to read it aloud:



For more than a century and a half, enemies, critics, and some would-be scholars have worn out their lives trying to disprove the validity of that vision. Of course they cannot understand it. The things of God are understood by the Spirit of God. There had been nothing of comparable magnitude since the Son of God walked the earth in mortality. Without it as a foundation stone for our faith

and organization, we have nothing. With it, we have everything.

Much has been written, much will be written, in an effort to explain it away. . . . But the testimony of the Holy Spirit, experienced by countless numbers of people all through the years since it happened, bears witness that it is true, that it happened as Joseph Smith said it happened. (Gordon B. Hinckley, "Four Cornerstones of Faith," *Ensign*, Feb. 2004, 5)

Encourage students who may desire a deeper testimony of Joseph Smith and the First Vision to follow Joseph's example of seeking truth by continuing to study these accounts and asking God to confirm the reality of the First Vision to them through the Holy

Ghost. You might conclude class by sharing your testimony of the First Vision and of the Restoration of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

## For Next Time

Ask students to think about challenging questions they or others have had about the teachings, practices, or history of the Church. Explain that in the next class, they will learn what to do when difficult questions or issues arise. Encourage students to study the preparation material for lesson 3 so that they can come ready to discuss principles that will help them acquire greater spiritual knowledge.



### LESSON 3 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

## Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge

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

### SECTION 1

Is it OK to have questions about the Church?

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



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

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

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



### Record Your Thoughts

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

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

## SECTION 2

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

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

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

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

### Act in Faith

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

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

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



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



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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

## Examine Concepts and Questions with an Eternal Perspective

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

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

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



### Record Your Thoughts

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



## Seek Further Understanding through Divinely Appointed Sources

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



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

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

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

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

### Questions for Evaluating Sources

1. What are the qualifications, intentions, and possible biases of the author?  
President Dallin H. Oaks of the First Presidency taught that we should “be cautious about the motivation of the one who provides information. . . . Our personal decisions should be based on information from sources that are qualified on the subject and free from selfish motivations” (Dallin H. Oaks, “Truth and the Plan,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 25).
2. How closely connected is the author to the events being described?  
When a source addresses something from Church history, ask yourself how far removed the source is from the event it is discussing. Stories based on second- or thirdhand accounts are often less reliable.
3. Does the author intentionally ignore available evidence in order to mislead?  
Some authors deliberately omit important facts and ignore critical evidence to support their particular point of view.
4. Are the teachings and events addressed in this source presented in the proper context of their time, place, and circumstance?  
Some teachings and historical events can become confusing when they are taken out of the context of their time and place. Historical

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

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

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



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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

## Want More? (Optional)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## LESSON 3 TEACHER MATERIAL

# Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge

The Lord has revealed principles that can guide us in our search for truth (see “Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge,” *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document* [2018]). This lesson will increase students’ capacity to apply principles of acquiring spiritual knowledge and assessing the reliability of sources.

## IMPROVING OUR TEACHING AND LEARNING

Communicate student learning outcomes.

Learning outcomes are statements defining what knowledge and skills students should be able to learn from an educational experience.

Outcomes for each lesson in this course are specified in the lesson introduction. Feel free to communicate these outcomes to students.

Let the lesson outcomes help guide you as you adapt lesson material and assess the success of the students’ learning experience.

## Suggestions for Teaching

### The Lord has provided a pattern to acquire spiritual knowledge.

Display the following questions: *Is it okay to have questions about the Church? Why or why not?* Invite two or three students to share their thoughts.

As a class, read Joseph Smith—History 1:8–10, looking for words or phrases that Joseph used to describe his religious questions and concerns. Invite students to share what they found and what they learn about asking questions from Joseph’s account.

Write the following statement on the board: *I can acquire spiritual knowledge as I . . .*

Ask students to identify the three principles from the preparation materials that complete this

statement. As students respond, ensure the following principles are identified and displayed:

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

Ask students to explain what they understand about each of these principles. If needed, provide a little time for them to review the preparation material.

Invite students to read Joseph Smith—History 1:11–14, looking for how Joseph Smith’s actions illustrated these principles of acquiring spiritual knowledge as he sought answers to his questions and concerns. Invite students to share what they learned.

Select and display one or more of the questions you received from students to which they could apply the principles of acquiring spiritual knowledge (see the “Record Your Thoughts” activity in section 1 of the preparation material). Explain that while you will be able to use only a few of the submitted questions during this class, you will look for places later on in the course curriculum to address the other questions you have received.

*Note:* The purpose of this activity is to allow students a chance to talk about how they would apply the principles of acquiring spiritual knowledge to various questions. It is not intended to provide answers

to the specific questions. Be careful not to get stuck in the details of a question or issue.

Discuss how students would use the principles displayed on the board to seek answers to the selected question or questions. The follow-up questions below could be part of your discussion:

- How could we act in faith as we seek an answer to this question?
- How could an eternal perspective help us answer this question? What do we know about Heavenly Father and His plan of salvation that could help us see this question from an eternal perspective?
- What divinely appointed sources could help us better understand this topic? What other reliable sources could help? (*Note:* It may be beneficial to take students to the Gospel Topics page at [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org) to demonstrate a reliable source that also points to scripture links and prophetic talks.)

Invite a student or two to share how the three principles of acquiring spiritual knowledge have blessed them in their search for spiritual knowledge.

### We can evaluate the reliability of sources.

Show a portion of the video “Divinely Appointed Sources” (time codes 0:00 to 4:19).

Invite students to watch for what kinds of sources of information are most reliable and which have the potential to damage our understanding of truth.

After you pause the video, consider asking some questions like the following to help students consider the differences between divine sources, reliable sources, and unreliable or even destructive sources:

- What are the purest sources from which we can seek answers?
- How do you discern whether a source of information is reliable or not?

- What do you do when you come across sources of information that are intended to destroy faith?

To demonstrate the importance of using reliable sources when studying Church history, invite students to imagine the following situation: *You are seeking more information about the Three Witnesses of the Book of Mormon. In your search you come across the following statement by Stephen Burnett, who lived at the same time as Martin Harris, and you’re not sure if the statement is true or not:*

I have reflected long and deliberately upon the history of this church and weighed the evidence for and against it. . . . But when I came to hear Martin Harris state in public that he never saw the plates with his natural eyes, only in vision or imagination, [nor] Oliver nor David . . . the last pedestal gave way. (Stephen Burnett, in Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses* [1981], 155)

- What steps could you take before deciding whether or not to accept Stephen Burnett’s claim about Martin Harris?

Invite students to report what they learned about evaluating sources from the section of the preparation material called “Questions for Evaluating Sources.”

With these guidelines for evaluating sources in mind, provide students the handout “Historical Background on Stephen Burnett’s Statement,” and invite students (as a class or in small groups) to look for information that would help them assess the credibility of Stephen Burnett’s accusation that Martin Harris didn’t see the gold plates.

### Historical Background on Stephen Burnett’s Statement

Stephen Burnett joined the Church in 1830 and was ordained an elder in 1831. He served missions in the Eastern United States between

1832 and 1834 (see “Burnett, Stephen,” The Joseph Smith Papers, interim content). By 1838 he had left the Church and thought it was a “whole scene of lying and deception.”

While Burnett personally knew Martin Harris, he was not one of the Three or Eight Witnesses.

In 1838, Burnett wrote a letter in which he claimed that Martin Harris said “he never saw the plates with his natural eyes, only in vision or imagination.” Burnett wrote that three other people “concurred” with his account. These three people had also left the Church.

Martin Harris strongly objected to how Burnett described his testimony and continued to testify of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon throughout his life.

In contrast to Burnett’s account, the “agreement of many interviews with Martin Harris proves that his [Harris’s] intense certainty never varied from his vision of the angel and the plates in 1829 to the moment of his death in 1875.” In a private letter written in 1871, Harris declared, “No man ever heard me in any way deny the truth of the Book of Mormon, the administration of the angel that showed me the plates, nor the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints” (Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses* [1981], 107–20, 155–57).

After students have had sufficient time to read and discuss the handout, ask the following questions:

- What information from this handout calls into question the reliability of Stephen Burnett’s statement?
- In addition to testing the credibility of sources, how else could you find out if the testimony of the Three Witnesses is true?

Invite students to share what they have learned from this experience. Consider ending class by showing the rest of the video “Divinely Appointed Sources” (time codes 4:20 to 9:16) and sharing your testimony of the value of applying the principles of acquiring spiritual knowledge.

## For Next Time

Ask students if they have ever struggled to recognize when the Lord was speaking to them or if they have ever wanted to know how to better receive personal revelation and guidance in their lives. Invite them to carefully study the preparation material for the next lesson on the doctrine of revelation and to come prepared to share in class what they discovered.





#### LESSON 4 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

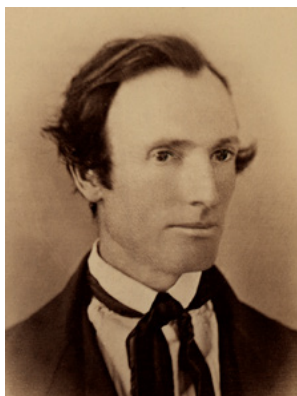
## The Doctrine of Revelation

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

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

### SECTION 1

How can I recognize when God is speaking to me?



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



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



### Study in Preparation for Class

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

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

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



### Study in Preparation for Class

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

## SECTION 2

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



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



### Study in Preparation for Class

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

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



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

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

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

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

**Elder Scott counseled:**



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

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



### Ponder and Discuss in Preparation for Class

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

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

## SECTION 3

### How does revelation usually come?

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



### Ponder and Record Your Thoughts in Preparation for Class

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

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## Want More? (Optional)

### Where can I find additional information about receiving revelation?

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



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

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



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

## LESSON 4 TEACHER MATERIAL

# The Doctrine of Revelation

The Lord revealed important truths about the doctrine of revelation to Joseph Smith and others in the early days of the Restoration. This lesson is designed to help students increase their ability to receive revelation and better recognize when the Holy Ghost is speaking to them.

## Suggestions for Teaching

The Lord reveals principles of revelation to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.

### IMPROVING OUR TEACHING AND LEARNING

**Cultivate a learning environment of love, respect, and purpose.** When students know they are valued and respected by their teacher and other students, they are more likely to come to class ready to learn. The acceptance students feel from each other can soften hearts, reduce fear, and invite the sharing of experiences and feelings with the class.

Display the following question: *What is a current situation, decision, or question that you would like guidance and revelation on from your Heavenly Father?*

Invite students to think about the question and write down their thoughts. After sufficient time, you might ask a few students to share what they wrote with the class if it is not too personal.

To help students understand the relevance of this lesson to their lives, explain the desired outcomes described in the introduction of this lesson.

Display the following image, and ask:



- What circumstances led Oliver Cowdery to assist Joseph Smith in translating the Book of Mormon? (Invite students to draw on what they learned from section 1 of their preparation material as needed.)
- How did revelation influence Oliver's decision to help Joseph?

Remind students that in response to Oliver's desire to help translate the Book of Mormon, the Lord taught him about receiving revelation. Invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 8:1–3 aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for truths Oliver needed to understand in order to receive revelation to translate.

### IMPROVING OUR TEACHING AND LEARNING

**Identify principles and doctrine.** Clearly identified principles and doctrine help students see truth in a way that is simple and relevant.

When possible, encourage students to discover and share principles and doctrine from what they are studying. Writing or displaying principles, or having students note truths in their scriptures, will help students ponder them more deeply and receive revelation on how they might apply them.

- What truths can we learn from these verses about seeking and receiving revelation? (Students may identify a few truths, including the following: **The Lord speaks to our minds and our hearts through the power of the Holy Ghost.**)
- Based on your personal study and experience, what are some ways the Lord speaks to our minds? to our hearts? (List students' responses on the board. If needed, invite students to review the scripture passages and commentary they studied in section 1 of the preparation material.)
- Why do you think the Lord chooses to communicate to us through both our minds and our hearts? (Encourage students to draw on what they learned and pondered during their personal study and preparation.)

Explain that when Oliver attempted to translate, he struggled to receive the revelation he needed to continue. Joseph and Oliver asked the Lord why Oliver had struggled. Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 9:7–9 silently, looking for a pattern the Lord taught Oliver about how to receive revelation.

- What pattern did the Lord reveal to Oliver that can help us to receive and recognize revelation? (Revelation often comes after studying questions and matters out in our minds, reaching a conclusion, and then asking God if our conclusion is right.)

Explain that President Dallin H. Oaks of the First Presidency said a “burning in the bosom” can signify “a feeling of comfort and serenity” (“Teaching and Learning by the Spirit,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1997, 13).

Invite students to share their thoughts about the following questions and invitation from their preparation material:

- Why do you think the Lord expects us to study matters out in our minds as part of seeking revelation?
- What did a friend or family member teach you about inviting and receiving revelation? What have you learned from your own experiences about inviting and receiving revelation?

*Note:* The following activity is intended to provide students with enough time to consider what they are learning and put it into practice. Adjust the lesson as needed to provide students with plenty of time to ponder, write, read, or pray.

Invite students to ponder and write for a few minutes about what they have learned about revelation and how it relates to the thoughts they wrote down at the beginning of class. Or they could pray silently for guidance on what they wrote down. You might also display the following statement by President Russell M. Nelson and invite students to read it silently, looking for additional ways they can invite revelation.



Pray in the name of Jesus Christ about your concerns, your fears, your weaknesses—yes, the very longings of your heart. And then listen! Write the thoughts that come to your mind. Record your feelings and follow through with actions that you are prompted to take. As you repeat this process day after day, month after month, year after year, you will “grow into the principle of revelation” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 132). . . .

I urge you to stretch beyond your current spiritual ability to receive personal revelation. . . .

Nothing opens the heavens quite like the combination of increased purity, exact obedience, earnest seeking, daily feasting on the

words of Christ in the Book of Mormon, and regular time committed to temple and family history work. (Russell M. Nelson, "Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2018, 95)

### The Restoration of the gospel provides a pattern for receiving revelation.

Point out that the principles of revelation Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery learned were revealed to them over time according to the circumstances that arose and the questions they asked. This illustrates an important truth the Lord taught in several of the revelations.

Invite three students to take turns reading aloud Doctrine and Covenants 42:61; 50:24; 98:12. Ask the class to follow along, looking for what these passages teach about how the Lord reveals His truth and will to us.

- How would you summarize a truth these verses teach about receiving revelation from the Lord? (Using students' words, display or write a truth on the board that is similar to the following: **The Lord reveals truth to us "line upon line, precept upon precept."**)

Remind students that in section 3 of the preparation material, they learned about patterns of receiving

revelation from Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Invite students to share what stood out to them from his teachings. You might also ask them how his analogies relating to revelation can help us better understand the truth displayed or written on the board.

- How could understanding this truth help someone who feels like he or she is not receiving answers or guidance from the Lord?
- What experience have you had with answers or guidance coming gradually over time?

Conclude by testifying or inviting any students who would like to testify of the truths about revelation taught in the lesson.

### For Next Time

Ask students what they think the greatest miracles of the Restoration might be. Invite them to study the preparation material for the next lesson about the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and to consider the miracles associated with the preservation, translation, and publication of the Book of Mormon.





#### LESSON 5 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

## The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon

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

### SECTION 1

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

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

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

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



### Study in Preparation for Class

Read Joseph Smith—History 1:34–35.



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

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

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

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

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

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

### Joseph Smith translated without notes and without reviewing the manuscript.



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

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

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

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

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

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

## Joseph Smith was given instruments to help him translate.

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

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

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

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

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



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



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



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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

## SECTION 2

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



### Record Your Thoughts

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

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## Want More? (Optional)

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

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



## LESSON 5 TEACHER MATERIAL

# The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon

The coming forth of the Book of Mormon occurred in a miraculous way. This lesson will help students better understand how the Book of Mormon was translated “by the gift and power of God” (Doctrine and Covenants 135:3). Students will also reflect on and be given an opportunity to share their witness of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon.

## Suggestions for Teaching

### IMPROVING OUR TEACHING AND LEARNING

**Teach for conversion.** President Henry B. Eyring taught: “We must raise our sights. We must keep the goals we have always had: enrollment, regular attendance, graduation, knowledge of the scriptures, the experience of feeling the Holy Ghost confirm truth. In addition, we must aim for the mission field and the temple. But students need more during the time they are our students. . . .

“The pure gospel of Jesus Christ must go down into the hearts of students by the power of the Holy Ghost. . . . Our aim must be for them to become truly converted to the restored gospel of Jesus Christ while they are with us” (“We Must Raise Our Sights” [Church Educational System conference on the Book of Mormon, Aug. 14, 2001], 2).

### The Book of Mormon came forth “by the gift and power of God.”

Display a picture of Moroni burying the plates.



Ask students to describe what they know about what is happening in the picture. You might also ask what they think Moroni knew about the impact the record would have on future generations.

Invite students to read Mormon 8:12–16, looking for what Moroni taught about the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.

- What did Moroni want to make clear about the coming forth of the Book of Mormon?

Display the following statement by Joseph Smith that he often repeated when asked about the Book of Mormon translation:



**I did translate the Book of Mormon by the gift and power of God.** (Joseph Smith, in James Palmer, Journal, 75, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah; capitalization modernized)

Invite students to share what they discovered in the preparation material about how the Book of Mormon came forth “by the gift and power of God.” (If needed, encourage students to briefly review section 1 of the preparation material.) You could also invite them to ask any questions they might have from their study about the translation of the Book of Mormon.

Invite students to review what they learned from the statements by Joseph Smith and Elder Neal A. Maxwell at the end of section 1 of the preparation material. (You may want to invite a student to read these statements aloud.)

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

### God promises that individuals can receive a confirming witness of the Book of Mormon.

Ask students how many of them would like to see the gold plates for themselves and why.

- Why do you think the Lord does not prove the authenticity of the Book of Mormon by allowing the plates and other artifacts to be shown to the world?

Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 5:3, 6–7, looking for why Joseph did not show the plates to those who wanted proof. Have students explain what the verses teach.

Explain that this revelation was given to Joseph as a result of Martin Harris asking for a witness that Joseph had the gold plates. Martin was Joseph’s friend and had the financial ability to help publish the Book of Mormon once it was translated. Martin’s wife, Lucy, entered a complaint to the local magistrate, accusing Joseph of defrauding her husband and others for financial gain. In March 1829 Martin went to Harmony, Pennsylvania, to ask Joseph Smith for evidence of the plates’ existence.

Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 5:11–15, looking for one way the Lord would establish the truth of the Book of Mormon record. Ask students to explain what they learn from these verses.

Explain that the Lord revealed that Martin Harris could be one of the Three Witnesses if he would “bow down” and “humble himself in mighty prayer and faith” (Doctrine and Covenants 5:24). Three months later Joseph invited Martin Harris to join Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer in seeking the special witness the Lord had promised.

Display the picture of Joseph Smith and the Three Witnesses from the preparation material, and ask the class to recount what happened when these men prayed for a witness of the plates.

- How did Joseph feel about the Three Witnesses seeing the plates? (If needed, have students review Lucy Mack Smith’s account in the preparation material.)
- How is the testimony of the Three Witnesses strengthened by the fact that they never denied their witness, even when each of them was estranged from the Prophet and the Church?

Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 5:15–16 and Moroni 10:3–5, looking for how all people can gain a witness of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. As students explain what they learned from these scripture passages, help them identify a principle similar to the following: **The**

**Lord will manifest the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon through the Holy Ghost to all who seek a witness.**

- How does a witness from the Holy Ghost compare with physical evidence, like seeing the plates or having a complete knowledge of all of the details of the Book of Mormon translation?

Invite a student to read aloud the following story from Brother Tad R. Callister, former General Sunday School President:



One of my good and bright friends left the Church for a time. He recently wrote to me of his return: "Initially, I wanted the Book of Mormon to be proven to me historically, geographically, linguistically, and culturally. But when I changed my focus to what it teaches about the gospel of Jesus Christ and His saving mission, I began to gain a testimony of its truthfulness. One day while reading the Book of Mormon in my room, I paused, knelt down, and gave a heartfelt prayer and felt resoundingly that Heavenly Father whispered to my spirit that the Church and the Book of Mormon were definitely true. My three-and-a-half-year period of reinvestigating the Church led me back wholeheartedly and convincingly to its truthfulness."

If one will take the time to humbly read and ponder the Book of Mormon, as did my friend, and give ear to the sweet fruits of the Spirit, then he or she will eventually receive the desired witness.

The Book of Mormon is one of God's priceless gifts to us. (Tad R. Callister, "God's Compelling Witness: The Book of Mormon," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 109)

- What experiences have helped you come to know that the Book of Mormon is true? (Give students the opportunity to share what they wrote in their preparation material at the end of section 2.)

Conclude by sharing your testimony that, while we have not seen the gold plates, nor were we present when the Book of Mormon was translated, we can read and study the book and obtain a spiritual witness for ourselves that it is indeed God's word.

## For Next Time

Invite students to consider why critics of the Lord's Church aggressively target the Book of Mormon. Encourage the class to study the preparation material for the next class, looking for how they might increase their ability to defend the Book of Mormon.



## LESSON 6 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

# The Book of Mormon—the Keystone of Our Religion

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

## SECTION 1

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

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

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

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



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

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



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



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

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



### Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 17:6.

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



### Study in Preparation for Class

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

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



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

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

## SECTION 2

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

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



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



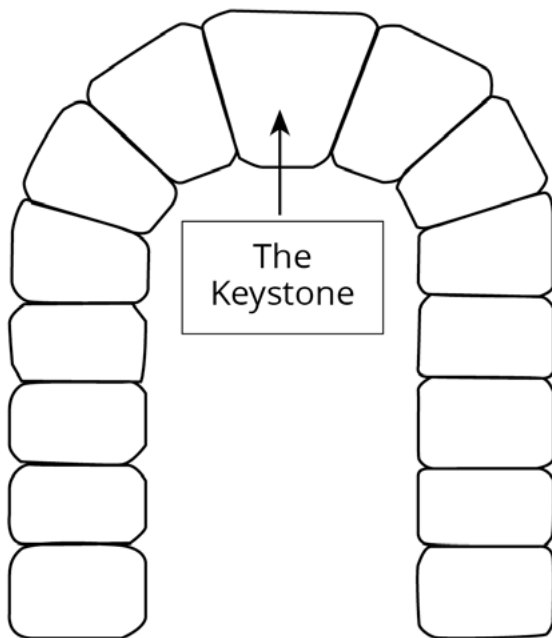
### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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

## SECTION 3

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

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



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



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

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

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

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



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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



the Book of Mormon a keystone of your personal testimony?

#### SECTION 4

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

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



President Benson taught:



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

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

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



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

And President Russell M. Nelson has promised:



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



### Record Your Thoughts

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

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### Want More? (Optional)

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



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

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



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

## LESSON 6 TEACHER MATERIAL

# The Book of Mormon—the Keystone of Our Religion

The Prophet Joseph Smith declared that “the Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion” (introduction to the Book of Mormon). This lesson is designed to help students explain why the Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion and to strengthen their ability to respond to criticisms against it.

## Suggestions for Teaching

### IMPROVING OUR TEACHING AND LEARNING

**Focus on students.** As you teach, remember to focus on the individual needs of students. Be careful that the lesson material does not become more important than the students in the classroom. Continually assess the engagement of the students and allow enough flexibility in the discussion to meet their needs.

### The Book of Mormon is essential to God’s Church and to our testimonies.

You might begin class by holding up a copy of the Book of Mormon and having a short discussion on the following statement and question:

*Many of the attacks that come from critics of the Church target the Book of Mormon. Why do you think that is?*

Invite students to open or navigate to the introduction page of the Book of Mormon. Explain that on Sunday, November 28, 1841, the Prophet Joseph Smith spent the day in council with the Twelve Apostles at the house of Brigham Young, president of that quorum (see History, 1838–1856 [Manuscript

History of the Church], volume C-1, 1255, joseph-smithpapers.org). Ask a student to read aloud the sixth paragraph in the introduction to the Book of Mormon to find out what Joseph told the Apostles. Invite students to consider marking the truths Joseph taught.

- Would anyone be willing to share their thoughts or testimony on any of these teachings? (*Note:* As students respond, consider using the following teaching ideas to help them understand the truths Joseph taught the Twelve.)

### The Book of Mormon is the most correct of any book on earth.

As needed, help students understand the phrase “the Book of Mormon was the most correct book of any on the earth” by using the information found in section 2 of the preparation material.

You might also explain to students that Joseph Smith’s statement does not mean that printed editions of the Book of Mormon were free from errors. Corrections have been made to each edition of the Book of Mormon since 1829. The corrections have dealt with minor changes in wording or changes to spelling, punctuation, or capitalization. The use of the word *correct* in this statement refers to the powerful truths contained in the Book of Mormon but does not mean the printed text was free from error.

## The Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion.

As students mention the Book of Mormon being “the keystone of our religion,” you might show a picture of a keystone, like the one in the preparation material. Invite students to explain why they think a keystone is a good metaphor for the Book of Mormon.

Invite a student to read or summarize the statement by President Ezra Taft Benson in section 3 of the preparation material. (This statement explains three ways that the Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion.) Consider asking some or all of the following questions to help students deepen their understanding of President Benson’s teachings about the Book of Mormon being a keystone.

- How has the Book of Mormon strengthened your testimony of the Savior Jesus Christ?
- In what ways does the Church stand or fall with the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon?
- How has your testimony of the Book of Mormon strengthened your testimony of other doctrine and teachings of the Church?
- Has the Book of Mormon become a keystone of your personal testimony? If so, how?

## We can draw nearer to God by following the teachings in the Book of Mormon.

Divide students into small groups, and invite them to share and explain Book of Mormon passages that have helped them draw nearer to God. (Students who have studied the preparation material can refer to what they wrote at the end of section 4.) You might also invite students to discuss in their groups how living the teachings recorded in the passages they chose helps them become more like Jesus Christ.

## Enemies of the Church attempt to discredit the Book of Mormon.

Display the following statement by Brother Tad R. Callister, former Sunday School General President, and invite a student to read it aloud:



[The Book of Mormon] is the one weight on the scales of truth that exceeds the combined weight of all the critics’ arguments. Why? Because if it is true, then Joseph Smith was a prophet and this is the restored Church of Jesus Christ, regardless of any historical or other arguments to the contrary. For this reason, the critics are intent on disproving the Book of Mormon, but the obstacles they face are insurmountable because this book is true. (“God’s Compelling Witness: The Book of Mormon,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 107)

Help students navigate to the following reliable resources electronically, or provide some paper copies for them if needed. Divide the resources among students, and ask them to think about and look for some of the arguments critics make against the Book of Mormon and to consider how we might use the following resources to respond to such criticism as we seek to acquire spiritual knowledge and increase testimony. Ask students to report some of what they find. They could do this in small groups or as a class.

- Mormon 8:14–22. Moroni finishes his father Mormon’s record with a warning to those who criticize the Book of Mormon in the last days.
- Ether 12:23–29. Moroni expresses concern that some may criticize the weakness of his writing and miss the power of the Book of Mormon message.
- Tad R. Callister, “God’s Compelling Witness: The Book of Mormon,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 107–9. (You could use just the first half of Brother Callister’s talk.) Or students could view the video “Compelling Witness” (7:46).

- “Critics of the Book of Mormon,” Church History Topics, [history.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://history.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).
- “The Book of Mormon and DNA Studies,” Gospel Topics, [topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org). (You might use just “The Ancestors of the American Indians” and the “Conclusion” sections.)
- Jeffrey R. Holland, “Safety for the Soul,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 88–90. (You could study only the second half of Elder Holland’s talk.)

After students discuss what they found, ask one or more of the following questions:

- Why do you think God does not simply provide complete physical evidence that the Book of Mormon is true?
- What counsel would you give a friend or family member who confides to you that he or she is struggling with Book of Mormon criticisms? What else might you do to help?
- What do you do (or what can you do) if there doesn’t yet seem to be a good answer for a criticism you hear?

Provide a few minutes for students to consider the effectiveness of their personal Book of Mormon study and to make plans for changes as prompted by the Spirit. Encourage students to include in their plans a goal to study and pray as needed to ensure that the Book of Mormon is a keystone of their

testimony. As they ponder, you might display the following statement by Elder Kevin W. Pearson of the Seventy:



If you are struggling, confused, or spiritually lost, I urge you to do the one thing I know will get you back on track. Begin again to prayerfully study the Book of Mormon and live its teachings every day, every day, every day! I testify of the profound power in the Book of Mormon that will change your life and strengthen your resolve to follow Christ. The Holy Ghost will change your heart and help you see “things as they really are” [Jacob 4:13]. He will show you what you need to do next. (Kevin W. Pearson, “Stay by the Tree,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 116)

Invite a couple of students who would like to share a brief testimony of the Book of Mormon to do so. You might also share your testimony.

## For Next Time

Ask students to consider how often they experience the blessings of priesthood authority and priesthood keys each week. Encourage them to study the preparation material for the next lesson on the restoration of the priesthood and to look for how the priesthood can provide them access to the saving powers of Jesus Christ.





## LESSON 7 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

# Restoration of the Priesthood

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

## SECTION 1

How did the Lord restore priesthood authority to the earth?

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

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

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

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





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



### Study in Preparation for Class

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

Sometime after Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery received the Aaronic Priesthood from John the Baptist, they received the Melchizedek Priesthood from Peter, James, and John (see Doctrine and Covenants 27:12–13). The specific date of this event is not known. However, historical evidence suggests it occurred in May or June of 1829. (See Larry C. Porter, “The Restoration of the Aaronic

and Melchizedek Priesthoods,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1996, 30–47.)



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

### The Restoration of Priesthood Authority, Keys, and Knowledge

Date	Heavenly Messengers and Revelations	Priesthood Authority, Keys, and Knowledge Restored
1829	John the Baptist	Conferred the authority and keys of the Aaronic Priesthood (Doctrine and Covenants 13)
1829	Peter, James, and John	Conferred the Melchizedek Priesthood and keys of the kingdom (Doctrine and Covenants 27:12–13)

Date	Heavenly Messengers and Revelations	Priesthood Authority, Keys, and Knowledge Restored
1830	Doctrine and Covenants 20	Revealed the procedures for baptism and the sacrament, and outlined the duties of priesthood holders
1832	Doctrine and Covenants 84	Revealed the history, purpose, and covenant of the priesthood
1831, 1835	Doctrine and Covenants 107	Revealed the naming, administration, and structure of priesthood offices and quorums
1836	Moses	Committed keys to gather the house of Israel (Doctrine and Covenants 110:11)
1836	Elias	Committed “the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham” (Doctrine and Covenants 110:12)
1836	Elijah	Committed keys for the sealing power (Doctrine and Covenants 110:13–16)

Date	Heavenly Messengers and Revelations	Priesthood Authority, Keys, and Knowledge Restored
1839	Doctrine and Covenants 121:34–46	Revealed knowledge about conduct of priesthood holders
Unknown	Adam, Gabriel, Raphael, and divers angels	Declared their dispensation, rights, keys, and the power of their priesthood (Doctrine and Covenants 128:21)
1978	Official Declaration 2	Revealed that all worthy male members of the Church of Jesus Christ could receive the priesthood

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



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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

## SECTION 2

## What is the relationship between priesthood authority and priesthood keys?

President Joseph F. Smith taught:



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

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

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



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

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

## SECTION 3

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

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

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



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

. . . Through the priesthood, the power of godliness is manifest in the lives of all who make and keep gospel covenants and receive the associated ordinances [see Doctrine and Covenants 84:19–21]. This is the way each of us comes unto Christ, is purified, and is reconciled to God. Christ's atoning power is made accessible through the priesthood. (Dale G. Renlund, "The Priesthood and the Savior's Atonement," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 65)

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



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

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

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

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



### Record Your Thoughts

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

## Want More? (Optional)

### What are priesthood keys?



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

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

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

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

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

## LESSON 7 TEACHER MATERIAL

# Restoration of the Priesthood

After a period of apostasy, God's priesthood authority was restored to the earth. This restoration prepared the way for the organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In this lesson students will learn why the priesthood is essential to the Lord's Church and how ordinances allow us to access the Savior's power.

## Suggestions for Teaching

### IMPROVING OUR TEACHING AND LEARNING

#### See your students as they can become.

President Thomas S. Monson taught, "We have the responsibility to see individuals not as they are but rather as they can become" ("See Others as They May Become," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 70). Pray to be able to see your students as Heavenly Father sees them. Doing so can help you comprehend each student's worth and sense Heavenly Father's love and concern for each of His children.

### The priesthood is indispensable to the Lord's Church.

Consider displaying the following question before students arrive and then asking them to share their thoughts about it as class begins.

- When have you recently felt blessed because of the priesthood?

Display the following statement of doctrine by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



**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 indispensable 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.** (Jeffrey R. Holland, "Our Most Distinguishing Feature," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2005, 43; bolded emphasis added)

- What words or phrases stand out to you in Elder Holland's statement? Why?

As you facilitate student sharing and discussion, you might use some of the following topics and questions to help students understand a few elements of Elder Holland's statement more deeply. It may be more important to thoroughly discuss one or two questions rather than try to cover all the questions. Your discussion can be enhanced as students share what they learned from the preparation material, as well.

*Note:* You will discuss ordinances in the second half of this lesson. Remember to leave sufficient time for that discussion so students can come to better know and understand the importance of ordinances.

The priesthood is indispensable to the Lord's Church (see section 1 of the preparation material).

- Why do you think the priesthood is indispensable to the Lord's Church? What knowledge and keys would we be missing if the priesthood had not been restored?
- In what ways is the priesthood indispensable to your own life?



The priesthood is of divine origin (see section 1 of the preparation material).

- How was the priesthood restored?
- What does the restoration of the priesthood teach you about your Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ?

Priesthood keys are essential to the Lord's Church (see section 2 of the preparation material).

- What are priesthood keys?
- How have priesthood keys been a blessing in your life?

As students share experiences and bear testimony of the priesthood and its restoration, you might also share your gratitude and testimony of how the restoration of the priesthood has blessed your own life.

### Ordinances and covenants of the priesthood are necessary for our salvation.

Explain that in September 1832, about two years after receiving the Melchizedek Priesthood from Peter, James, and John, Joseph Smith received a revelation that helps us better understand the priesthood. It included the truth that saving ordinances administered through priesthood authority help prepare us to return to God's presence. Invite students to study Doctrine and Covenants 84:18–22, looking for how ordinances prepare us to return to God's presence.

- According to these verses, what vital blessing is received through the ordinances of the priesthood?
- What are some possible meanings of the phrase “power of godliness”? (After students respond, you might suggest that “godly” means “godlike.” The power of godliness includes God's power to help us become like Him.)

Display and read the following statement by Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and invite students to look for possible meanings of the phrase “power of godliness”:



Priesthood ordinances open the door and provide access to the power of godliness. . . . The human mind and mortal languages simply cannot define accurately or adequately the meaning of the scriptural phrase, “the power of godliness.” But the totality of the blessings of the Atonement—redemption from sin; strength to do and to become good; the spiritual gift of personal peace; the compensating capacities that helps us face disappointment, injustice, unfairness, inequity, and so much more—certainly constitute at least a portion of the power of godliness. . . . To come unto the Savior, an individual *must* first pass through the gate of baptism and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost—and then continue to press forward along the path of covenants and ordinances that leads to the Savior and the blessings of His Atonement (see 2 Nephi 31). Priesthood ordinances are essential to fully “come unto Christ, and be perfected in Him” (Moroni 10:32; see also vv. 30–33). Without the ordinances, an individual cannot receive all of the blessings made possible through the Lord's infinite and eternal atoning sacrifice (see Alma 34:10–14)—even the power of godliness. (David A. Bednar, *Power to Become* [2014], 75–77)

- What do we learn from Elder Bednar's statement about the “power of godliness”? What do we learn about the purpose of priesthood ordinances? (Using students' words, write or display a truth similar to the following: **Through priesthood ordinances and covenants, we can access the blessings of the Lord's Atonement, which gives us power to become like God.**)
- In what ways do you think the specific ordinances of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood connect us to the blessings of the Savior's

Atonement? (If needed, give students time to review the statements in section 3 of the preparation material.)

Give students a few minutes to ponder the priesthood ordinances they have most recently participated in. Ask them to think about how they felt and what those ordinances mean to their eternal progression. Then display the following questions for students to consider:

- What ordinance might become more meaningful to you by applying what you have learned today? (Encourage students to record and act on their impressions.)
- What have you learned and felt today that has increased your desire to participate in the ordinances of the priesthood?

As appropriate, invite students to share their testimony of how priesthood authority, keys, and ordinances have helped them feel Heavenly Father's love.

## For Next Time

Invite students to consider what role the Church plays in their lives. As they study the preparation material for the next lesson, encourage them to look for blessings the Lord makes available to faithful members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.



## LESSON 8 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

# The Organization of the Church of Jesus Christ

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

## SECTION 1

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

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

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

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

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

Of this day, the Prophet Joseph Smith observed:



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

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



### Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 115:4–5.

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



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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

## SECTION 2

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

**President Dallin H. Oaks of the First Presidency taught:**



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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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



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

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

devotional for young adults, Jan. 12, 2014], [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org))

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



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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

### SECTION 3

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

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



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

. . . The ancient purpose remains: that is, to preach the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ and administer the ordinances of salvation—in other words, to bring people to Christ. . . .



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

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



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



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

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



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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

## Want More? (Optional)

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

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



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

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



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

## LESSON 8 TEACHER MATERIAL

# The Organization of the Church of Jesus Christ

Through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord organized His Church again on the earth. This lesson will help students explain what makes The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints the “only true and living Church” (Doctrine and Covenants 1:30). Students will also determine how they can more fully participate in the Lord’s restored Church.

## Suggestions for Teaching

### The Lord restored His Church through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Invite students to imagine that when they invited a friend to attend church, she replied: “Church is fine, but I think I can be a good person without organized religion. We all have our own individual path to God, right?”

- What are some misconceptions that may be preventing your friend from understanding the value of the Lord’s Church?

Allow students to discuss for a few minutes in small groups how they might explain to this friend why the Lord established a church on earth. (Encourage students to use what they learned from studying the preparation material.)

Display the accompanying images of the Peter Whitmer Sr. home in Fayette, New York. Invite students to recall what they studied in section 1 of the preparation material to describe what took place in the Whitmer home on the day the Church was organized.



As a class, read Articles of Faith 1:6, looking for what Joseph Smith once wrote about the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ. If needed, you might point out that “evangelists” can refer to patriarchs and “pastors” to presiding officers, like bishops.

- What truths can we learn from this statement?  
(One truth we can learn is that **the Lord's Church in the latter days is organized as it was in Jesus's day.**)

Invite a student to read aloud the second paragraph of Brother Tad R. Callister's statement in section 2 of the preparation material, which begins with the words "If one were to match the blueprint . . ."

Display the following scripture references. Invite students to select one or more of them to read silently, looking for what they reveal about the organization, practices, and teachings of the Savior's New Testament Church.

- Matthew 16:18–19
- Matthew 28:16–19
- Luke 9:1–2; 10:1–2
- Acts 8:14–17
- Ephesians 2:19–20
- Ephesians 4:11–15
- James 5:14–15
- 1 Corinthians 15:29

*Note:* This activity is not meant to be comprehensive or time consuming. It is simply to help students recognize how the Lord's restored Church is patterned after His ancient Church.

- What similarities do you see between Christ's original Church and the Church in our day? Why is it important to know that the Lord's Church today was organized according to the pattern of His ancient Church?

Explain that about a year and a half after the Church was organized, the Lord taught about the uniqueness of His restored Church. Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 1:30 silently, looking for what the Lord declared.

- How did the Lord describe His Church in verse 30? (Help students identify the following statement of doctrine: **The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only true and living church upon the earth.**)

To help deepen students' understanding of this truth, you might ask the class to discuss some of the following questions. Encourage students to review and think about what they learned from section 2 of the preparation material during the discussion.

- How would you sensitively but boldly explain to someone what it means that this Church is "the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth"?
- What makes this a "living" church? (It may help to display something that is living, such as a plant, and ask students to describe the characteristics of a living thing compared to something that is not living or is dead.)
- Why do you think it is important to understand that while the eternal truths of the Savior's gospel do not change, the Church continues to grow and adapt through revelation from the Lord?
- What experiences have helped you come to know that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Savior's true and living Church?

### The Lord's Church makes the blessings of the gospel available to everyone.

Display the following statement by Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Invite a student to read it aloud:



It is worth pausing to consider why Jesus Christ chooses to use a church, His Church, . . . to carry out His and His Father's work. ("Why the Church," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 108)

- Why do you think Jesus Christ chooses to use a church, His Church, to carry out His and His Father's work?

As a class, read Moroni 6:3–6 and Doctrine and Covenants 43:8–9, looking for some of the purposes and blessings that come through membership and service in the Lord's Church. Ask students to share what they learned from these passages.

Give students a minute to briefly review the statements from Elder Christofferson and Sister Bonnie L. Oscarson from section 3 of the preparation material.

- Which teachings in these statements were particularly meaningful to you? (After students respond, display the following truth: **The Lord organized His Church to help us come unto Him, receive the full blessings of His gospel, and have opportunities to minister to others.**)

Ask students to think about each element of this truth. Invite students to share how they have seen this truth fulfilled in their own life. You might ask some follow-up questions such as these:

- What are the "full blessings" of the Lord's gospel?

- What role does the Church play in helping you become more like your Heavenly Father?

Give students some time to reflect on and record their thoughts about the following question:

- In what ways can I more actively participate in the Church and in helping to accomplish its purposes?

After sufficient time, you might ask students what they learned today that could help them answer a friend's questions like the one introduced in the scenario described at the beginning of the lesson. You could conclude by testifying of the truths taught in the lesson.

## For Next Time

Explain that because of the Restoration of the gospel, we can understand more about the Savior's character and atoning sacrifice than anyone was able to for nearly 2,000 years. Ask students to think about the blessings of coming closer to their Savior, Jesus Christ. Invite them to deepen their understanding and faith in Him by carefully studying the preparation material for the next class.





#### LESSON 9 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

## Jesus Christ: Our Divine Redeemer

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

### SECTION 1

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



### Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 76:23–24.



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

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

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



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

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



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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

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

## SECTION 2

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

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

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



### Study in Preparation for Class

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

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



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

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



### Study in Preparation for Class

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

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



There is no physical pain, no spiritual wound, no anguish of soul or heartache, no infirmity or weakness you or I ever confront in mortality that the Savior did not experience first. In a moment of weakness we may cry out, "No one knows what it is like. No one understands." But the Son of God perfectly knows and understands, for He has felt and borne



our individual burdens. And because of His infinite and eternal sacrifice (see Alma 34:14), He has perfect empathy and can extend to us His arm of mercy. He can reach out, touch, succor, heal, and strengthen us. (David A. Bednar, “Bear Up Their Burdens with Ease,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 90)

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



### Study in Preparation for Class

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



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



### Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 19:16–19.

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



### How can I know Jesus Christ better?

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

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### Want More? (Optional)

#### Would you like to know Jesus Christ better?

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

### What if I feel I'm not worth saving?

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

### How do I repent?



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

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

The Gospel Topics essay "Are Mormons Christian?" ([topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://topics.churchofjesuschrist.org)) explains why some

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





## LESSON 9 TEACHER MATERIAL

# Jesus Christ: Our Divine Redeemer

As part of the Restoration, Joseph Smith and the Saints were taught more accurately about the character and mission of Jesus Christ. In this lesson, students will have opportunities to deepen their faith in the Savior and His Atonement and to determine how to invite His power more fully into their lives.

## Suggestions for Teaching

### Joseph Smith learns about the character of Jesus Christ.



Display an image portraying the First Vision. Remind students that one of Joseph Smith's purposes for praying on this occasion was to ask God which church to join (see Joseph Smith—History 1:13–19). In his 1832 account of the vision, however,

Joseph mentioned another reason he went to the grove to pray that day.

Invite a student to read aloud the first paragraph of section 1 in the preparation material.

Give students a minute to think about times in their lives when they felt distressed by their sins and weaknesses. Then ask students to silently read paragraphs two and three in section 1 of the preparation material.

- What did Joseph learn about the character of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ? (**Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ are merciful and forgiving.**)

Explain that Joseph and the Saints continued to learn about the character of Jesus Christ through His revelations. Display the following references, or write them on the board: Doctrine and Covenants 3:10; 38:14; 58:42; 61:2; 62:1; 64:2–4. Give students time to read a few of the passages, and ask them to read as though the Lord was speaking directly to them. Ask them to consider how the Savior's words in these verses deepen their understanding of His merciful and forgiving character. After they read, invite students to share what they learned.

- Why do you think it is vital for us to understand that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ are merciful and forgiving?

Explain that Joseph Smith's First Vision is one of many experiences that prepared Joseph to stand as a powerful witness of Jesus Christ. Remind students

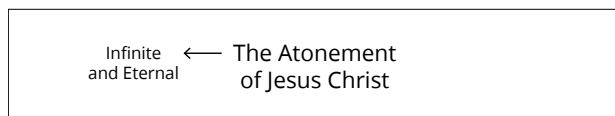
that according to Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Joseph Smith is “the preeminent revelator of Jesus Christ in His *true character* as divine Redeemer” (D. Todd Christofferson, “Born Again,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2008, 79; italics added).

- How have Joseph Smith and the Restoration influenced your understanding of and feelings about Jesus Christ?

### The Atonement of Jesus Christ is both infinite and personal.

Explain to students that the coming forth of the Book of Mormon through the Prophet Joseph Smith allowed the world to understand Jesus Christ and His Atonement in a way that had not been possible for centuries. Among the many passages that teach us of the Savior’s sacrifice for humanity are the teachings of Alma and Amulek. Invite students to read Alma 34:10, 12, and 14 silently, looking for how Amulek described the Savior’s atoning sacrifice. Ask them to share what they find.

Draw or display the following diagram:



- In what ways is the Savior’s Atonement “infinite and eternal”? (Encourage students to draw on what they learned from section 2 of the preparation material.)

Invite a student to read aloud the following statement by Elder Cecil O. Samuelson Jr., who served in the Presidency of the Seventy, and ask the class to listen for words he used to describe the Lord’s Atonement:



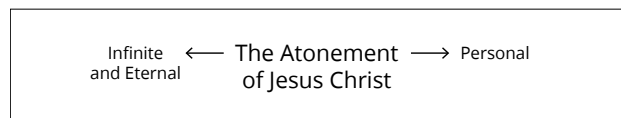
His Atonement does indeed cover the world and all people from the beginning to the end. Let us not forget, however, that in its

comprehensiveness and completeness it is also intensely personal and uniquely crafted to fit perfectly and address perfectly each of our own individual circumstances. The Father and the Son know each of us better than we know ourselves and have prepared an Atonement for us that is fully congruent with our needs, challenges, and possibilities.

Thanks be to God for the gift of His Son, and thanks be to the Savior for His Atonement. It is true and is in effect and will lead us where we need and want to be. (Cecil O. Samuelson Jr., “What Does the Atonement Mean to You?” *Ensign*, Apr. 2009, 51)

- What words did Elder Samuelson use to describe the Savior’s Atonement?

Add to the diagram *personal* and other words students identify:



- Why do you think it is important to remember that while the Savior’s atoning sacrifice extends to an infinite number of people and worlds, it is also intensely personal?

Remind students that in section 2 of the preparation material, they were invited to mark truths that stood out to them. If needed, give students some time to review the scripture passages and prophetic teachings they marked in this section.

- What truths stood out to you, and why? (Display these truths or write them on the board.)

After students respond, consider asking them to restate (and rewrite) the principles in a personal way, using first-person pronouns like *I*, *me*, and *my*. The truths might read similar to the following: **Jesus Christ took upon Himself my sins, afflictions, pains, and temptations so He would know how to**

**succor *me*. The worth of *my* soul is so great that Jesus Christ suffered and died so *I* could repent. Jesus Christ suffered for *my* sins so *I* could repent and not suffer as He did.**

- How can understanding and believing these truths help you have greater faith in Jesus Christ?
- What thoughts and feelings come to you as you consider what the Savior suffered for you and why He did so?

Display the following question: *What will I do to invite the power of Jesus Christ more fully into my life?*

Provide time for students to prayerfully ponder this question and write a response in their journals or notebooks. As they are pondering, consider displaying the following statement by President Russell M. Nelson. Invite students to look for counsel that can help them invite the Savior's power into their lives:



We begin by learning about [Jesus Christ]. "It is impossible for [us] to be saved in ignorance" [Doctrine and Covenants 131:6]. The more we know about the Savior's ministry and mission [see Doctrine and Covenants 76:40–41]—the more we understand His doctrine [see 2 Nephi 31:2–21] and what He did for us—the more we know that He can provide the power that we need for our lives. . . .

As we invest time in learning about the Savior and His atoning sacrifice, we are drawn to

participate in another key element to accessing His power: we choose to have faith in Him and follow Him. . . .

We also increase the Savior's power in our lives when we make sacred covenants and keep those covenants with precision. Our covenants bind us to Him and give us godly power. . . .

When the Savior knows you truly want to reach up to Him—when He can feel that the greatest desire of your heart is to draw His power into your life—you will be led by the Holy Ghost to know exactly what you should do [see Doctrine and Covenants 88:63].

(Russell M. Nelson, "Drawing the Power of Jesus Christ into Our Lives," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2017, 39–42)

Conclude by testifying that because of His Atonement, Jesus Christ has power to strengthen, comfort, heal, and extend mercy and forgiveness to us.

## For Next Time

Invite students to think about how their lives would be different without living prophets. Ask students to study the preparation material for the next lesson and come ready to discuss the blessings of being led by living prophets.



#### LESSON 10 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

## Following the Lord's Living Prophets

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

### SECTION 1

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

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



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





### Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 21:4–6.

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

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



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

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



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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

## SECTION 2

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

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



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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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



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

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

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



### Discuss with Others and Prepare to Share in Class

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

## SECTION 3

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

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

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

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

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

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



### Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 28:2, 7.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



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



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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

## Want More? (Optional)

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



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

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



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

### Is there really a need for prophets today?



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

## LESSON 10 TEACHER MATERIAL

# Following the Lord's Living Prophets

A foundational truth of the restored gospel is that the Lord continues to call living prophets to reveal His will and doctrine to His people. This lesson is designed to help strengthen students' commitment to follow the Lord's prophets in patience and faith.

## Suggestions for Teaching

### The Lord commands the Saints to heed the words of His prophet.

Display an image of the President of the Church, and ask students what they think and feel when they see this picture.

Display the following statement by Elder Ulisses Soares of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles that is included in the preparation material:



Having prophets is a sign of God's love for His children. (Ulisses Soares, "Prophets Speak by the Power of the Holy Spirit," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 99)

- In what ways are living prophets a sign of God's love for His children? (Encourage students to recall what they studied in section 1 of the preparation material.)

Explain that on the day the Church was organized, the Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation from the Lord with a commandment and promise to members of His Church. Read with students Doctrine and Covenants 21:4–5, looking for what the Lord commanded Church members to do.

- What truth can we identify from the Lord's commandment to the Saints? (Using students' words, identify a truth similar to the following: **The Lord commands us to receive the prophet's words as if from His own mouth in patience and faith.**)

- Why might it sometimes take patience and faith to accept and heed the words of the prophet?

As a class or in small groups, invite students to read the following scenario and discuss the questions that follow:

While talking with a friend about a recent general conference, your friend tells you of her struggle to accept something taught by one of the Church leaders. "What should I do if I disagree with something a prophet has taught?" she asks.

- Why can this be a challenging dilemma for a member of the Church?
- What might you share with your friend to encourage her to act in patience and faith as she seeks to resolve her concern? (Encourage students to think about or review if needed what they learned in section 2 of the preparation material.)
- What has helped you follow the Lord's prophets in patience and with faith? Or what did you learn from a family member or friend you talked to about this question (as suggested in section 2 of the preparation material)?

Write on the board (or display) the following incomplete principle: **As we heed the words of the Lord's prophets in patience and faith . . .**

Read with students Doctrine and Covenants 21:6, looking for the Lord's promised blessing for following His prophets in patience and faith.

- What do you think it means that the “the gates of hell shall not prevail against you”? that the Lord will “disperse the powers of darkness from before you”? that the heavens will “shake for your good”? (Write students’ responses on the board under the incomplete statement of principle.)
- What are some recent teachings from the Lord’s prophets that can help protect us against the powers of darkness and cause the heavens to shake for our good? (Consider preparing a few examples to share.)
- When has your willingness to follow the counsel of prophets in patience and faith led to some of these blessings?

Give students time to prayerfully ponder what they can do to follow the Lord’s prophets with greater patience and faith. This might include thinking about how they can more fully act on recent prophetic invitations and counsel. Invite students to record thoughts and impressions that come to them. Encourage them to act on promptings they receive from the Spirit.

### The Lord’s prophets receive revelation and declare doctrine for the whole Church.

Ask students to recall the experience with Hiram Page and his stone from their study of the preparation material.

- What problems did Hiram Page’s alleged revelations cause for Church members?

Remind students that Hiram Page not only claimed to receive revelation for the Church, but his alleged revelations contradicted doctrine taught in the scriptures and the revelations previously received by Joseph Smith. Those who accepted Hiram Page’s revelations included members of the Whitmer family and Oliver Cowdery.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 28:1–7, looking for the Lord’s teachings to Oliver Cowdery and Church members. Point out that the “mysteries” mentioned in verse 7 refer to “spiritual truths known only by revelation” (Guide to the Scriptures, “Mysteries of God,” scriptures.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

- What truths can we learn from these verses about who can receive revelation for the entire Church? (Students may identify a variety of truths, including the following: **Only those who hold keys to lead the Church are authorized to receive revelation and establish doctrine for the entire Church.**)
- How might understanding this truth help us avoid being deceived?

Explain that there is great consistency in the doctrine taught by the Lord’s chosen prophets throughout the Church’s history. However, some members may wonder what to do when they find a statement made in the past by a Church leader that seems inconsistent with doctrine taught today.

- What principles can guide us in recognizing the Lord’s doctrine as taught by His living prophets? (You may want to invite students to review the statements by Elders D. Todd Christofferson and Neil L. Andersen in section 3 of the preparation material.)

As part of the discussion, you might share the following statement by President Russell M. Nelson:



You may not always understand every declaration of a living prophet. But when you know a prophet is a prophet, you can approach the Lord in humility and faith and ask for your own witness about whatever His prophet has proclaimed. (Russell M. Nelson, “Stand as True Millennials,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2016, 31)

Consider concluding the lesson by sharing your testimony of living prophets and the blessings of following them in patience and faith.



## For Next Time

Explain that the next class will focus on a topic that President Russell M. Nelson has referred to as “*the greatest challenge, the greatest cause, and the greatest work on earth today*” (“Hope of Israel” [worldwide youth devotional, June 3, 2018], supplement to the

*New Era* and *Ensign*, 4–5, Church of Jesus Christ.org; italics in original). Invite students to study the preparation material for the next class and come prepared to discuss the purposes and blessings of taking part in the great cause and work of gathering Israel.



## LESSON 11 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

# The Gathering of Israel

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

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

## SECTION 1

### What is the gathering of Israel?

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

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

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



### Study in Preparation for Class

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

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



### Study in Preparation for Class

Read 3 Nephi 5:24–26.

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



### Study in Preparation for Class

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

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



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

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

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



### Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 33:5–7.

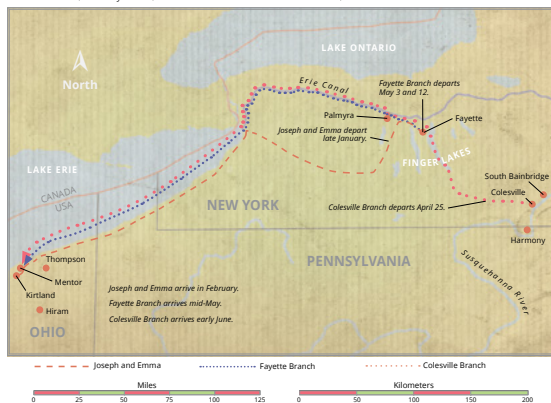


At the end of December 1830, the Lord revealed through Joseph Smith His will for the Church regarding a gathering place in Ohio:

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

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

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



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

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



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

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



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

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



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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

## SECTION 2

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

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





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

**Elder Kimball recorded the following in his journal:**

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

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

**Heber C. Kimball later recalled:**

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

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



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

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

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



**President Nelson has further taught:**



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

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

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



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

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



### Act on What You Have Learned

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

## Want More? (Optional)

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

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



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



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

## LESSON 11 TEACHER MATERIAL

# The Gathering of Israel

Jesus Christ promised to gather His people in the latter days (see 3 Nephi 21:22–29). This lesson is designed to help students better understand their role in helping the Lord gather Israel. It will also help students plan how they will participate more fully in this gathering.

## Suggestions for Teaching

### The Lord has commanded His Saints to gather.

Display the following picture, and invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 29:1–2 aloud.



- What might the imagery in these verses teach us about the Savior? What does Jesus Christ want to do for His people?

Point out the word “atoned” in verse 1. Explain that President Russell M. Nelson taught that “in Hebrew, the basic word for atonement is *kaphar*, a verb that means ‘to cover’” (“The Atonement,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 34).

- According to verse 2, who are the Lord’s people that He wants to gather and cover with His arms of mercy?

Explain that the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and several of the revelations given to Joseph Smith all teach that the Lord will gather His people, scattered Israel, in the latter days (see Ezekiel 28:25; 2 Nephi 10:8; Doctrine and Covenants 33:6).

Invite students to explain what they understand about the gathering of Israel. (Encourage them to refer to section 1 of the preparation material.) You might also ask questions like the following to help deepen the discussion:

- Why do you think President Nelson would call the gathering “*the greatest challenge, the greatest cause, and the greatest work on earth today*”? (“Hope of Israel” [worldwide youth devotional, June 3, 2018], supplement to the *Ensign* and *New Era*, 8, ChurchofJesusChrist.org; italics in original).
- What can we learn about the Lord and His character through the scattering and gathering of His covenant people?
- What are some of the reasons the Lord wants His Saints to gather together?

Explain that in December 1830 Joseph Smith received a revelation commanding the Saints to move to Ohio (see Doctrine and Covenants 37:1–3). At a conference of the Church in January 1831, Joseph received additional revelation giving the Lord’s reasons for commanding the Saints to gather and explained the promised blessings for doing so.

Invite the class to read Doctrine and Covenants 38:28, 31–33, looking for ways the Saints would be blessed if they obeyed the commandment to

gather to Ohio. Invite students to share what they discovered.

You might emphasize the following truth: **The Lord gathers His people to protect and spiritually strengthen them.**

- How does gathering together today in our wards, stakes, and temples make it possible for us to receive protection and spiritual strength from the Lord?
- What kinds of protection have you experienced as you've gathered with other Saints?

### The Lord calls and helps His servants to gather Israel.

Refer again to the picture of the hen gathering her chicks under her wings. Display the following truth: **The Lord has called us and will help us to gather Israel.**

Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 29:4–7 and 84:86–88, looking for ways the Lord will help us as we assist in gathering Israel. Have students share what they find.

For an example of how the Lord will help us to gather Israel, invite students to recount or read together the account of Heber C. Kimball's mission to England found in section 2 of the preparation material. This could be done in small groups. Invite each group (or the class) to discuss together the following questions after reviewing Elder Kimball's account:

- What can I learn from the experience of Heber C. Kimball that might give me more confidence to help gather Israel through sharing the gospel with others?
- When have I felt the Lord's help in proclaiming the gospel?
- What can I do to exercise my faith and share the gospel more with others?

Display the following statement by Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Invite students to read the statement and then share how they have shared the gospel message with others in effective but natural ways.



Wherever you are on this earth, there are plenty of opportunities to share the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ with people you meet, study with, and live with or work and socialize with. . . . There are many normal and natural ways to do this. (Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Missionary Work: Sharing What Is in Your Heart," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2019, 15, 17)

### We can join in the marvelous work of gathering Israel.

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



*Anytime you do anything that helps anyone—on either side of the veil—take a step toward making covenants with God and receiving their essential baptismal and temple ordinances, you are helping to gather Israel.* (Russell M. Nelson, "Hope of Israel," 15; italics in original)

- Based on President Nelson's teachings, what else can we do to help the Lord gather Israel? (Help students identify a truth similar to the following: **We gather Israel when we help God's children take steps toward making and keeping covenants with Him.**)

*Note:* Students will be able to further discuss gathering Israel through family history and temple service in lesson 19, "Redemption of the Dead."

Invite students to identify several specific ways they could help gather Israel. List their responses on the board. You might ask students to share experiences they have had related to items on the list.

Provide time for students to ponder the following question found in section 2 of the preparation material and to write a goal they feel they could accomplish. They may want to make a plan to act on their goals with a friend or group in the class. You might also ask if some students would be willing to report on their experience during a future discussion.

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

Conclude by sharing your testimony that the Lord is gathering Israel in the latter days. Assure students of the protection and strength God will give them

as they gather with other Saints and as they help gather Israel.

## For Next Time

Explain that the gathering of Israel is closely related to the Lord's work of establishing Zion on the earth in preparation for His Second Coming. Invite students to study the preparation material for the next class and to come prepared to discuss what Zion is and the blessings that come from helping establish Zion in their homes and stakes.



## LESSON 12 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

# Establishing the Cause of Zion

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

## SECTION 1

What does it mean to establish Zion?

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



### Study in Preparation for Class

Read Moses 7:18–21.



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

The Prophet Joseph Smith declared:





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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



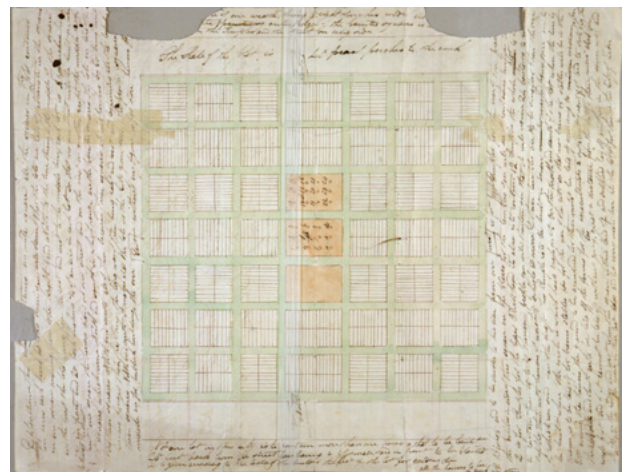
### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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

## SECTION 2

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

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



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

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

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

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

Parley P. Pratt recounted:



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

### SECTION 3

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

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

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



### Study in Preparation for Class

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



### Record Your Thoughts

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

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## SECTION 4

### What is the future of Zion?

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



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

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

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

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

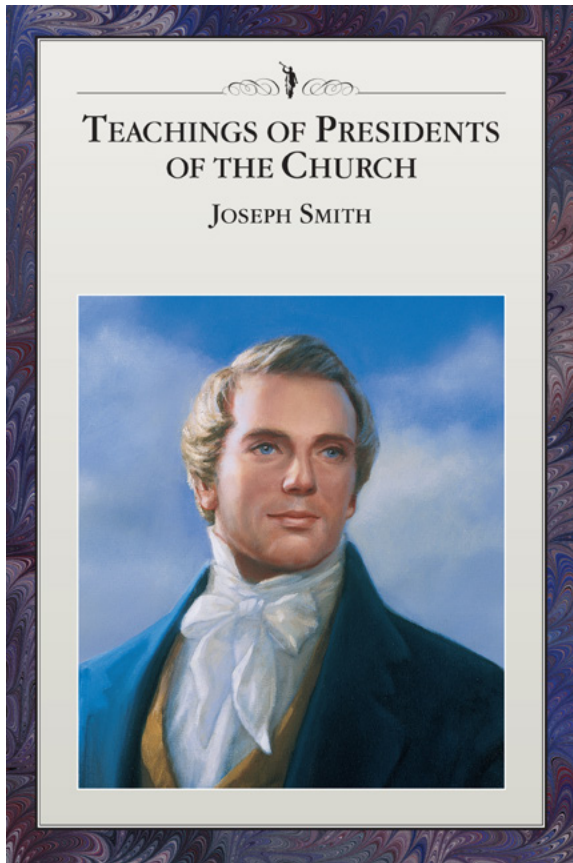


### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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

## Want More? (Optional)

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



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



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



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

## LESSON 12 TEACHER MATERIAL

## Establishing the Cause of Zion

After being commanded by the Lord to establish the cause of Zion, the early Saints began building a gathering place in Jackson County, Missouri. This lesson is designed to help students identify ways that they can help build up Zion in our day.

### Suggestions for Teaching

#### The Lord commands His people to establish the cause of Zion.

Ask students to think about how many times they have prayed to Heavenly Father asking for help to know what He would have them do in their lives.

Explain that in the spring of 1829, even before the Church was organized, Joseph Smith received revelations on behalf of Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, and Joseph Knight. Each of these men desired to know what the Lord would have them do. Write the following scripture references on the board: *Doctrine and Covenants* 6:6; 11:6; 12:6.

Invite students to read the verses silently, looking for what the Lord told each of these men.

- What do you think it means to “bring forth and establish the cause of Zion”? (*Doctrine and Covenants* 6:6).

Invite a student to read aloud the statement by Joseph Smith in section 1 of the preparation material. Or you might show the video “Teachings of Joseph Smith: Preparing for Zion” (1:42). Ask the class to look for what Joseph Smith taught about Zion.

- Why do you think Zion is a cause that has interested the people of God in every age? (Invite students to recall what they learned in their preparation material.)

Write the following incomplete phrase on the board:  
**We can build up Zion by . . .**

Explain that in November and December of 1830, as Joseph Smith worked on his inspired translation of the Bible, he received revelations about the ancient prophet Enoch and his people. Invite one student to read *Moses* 7:18–19, 21 and another student to read *Doctrine and Covenants* 97:21. Ask the class to listen for the Lord’s descriptions of Zion.

- What can we learn from the Lord’s descriptions of Zion that helps us know how to build Zion in our day? (List students’ responses on the board under the incomplete phrase. Student responses will vary but may include examples like the following: **We can build up Zion by becoming one in heart and mind, by living righteously, by caring for the poor and needy, and by striving to be pure in heart.**)
- What difference could it make in a family, ward, or branch where everyone was of “one heart and one mind”?

Invite students to review the statement by Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in section 1 of the preparation material. Ask students to look for how we might become of one heart and one mind. After they report, you might add **placing the Savior at the center of our lives and following Church leaders** to the list on the board.

- How do you think placing the Savior at the center of our lives and following Church leaders can help us become Zion-like people?



## The Saints attempted to build the city of Zion in Jackson County, Missouri.

Explain that the Saints learned from Moses 7 that before the Savior's Second Coming, the Lord's people would again be gathered together and would build another city of Zion (see Moses 7:62). A few months after receiving the revelation recorded in Moses 7, the Prophet Joseph Smith received another revelation during a Church conference that revealed more concerning this future city of Zion (see Doctrine and Covenants 45).

Invite the class to read Doctrine and Covenants 45:66–71 together, looking for descriptions of the city of Zion.

- What effect do you imagine this revelation had on the early Saints?

Remind students that Joseph Smith later learned through revelation that “the center place” for the city of Zion was to be in Independence, Jackson County, Missouri (Doctrine and Covenants 57:3).

- What challenges prevented the Saints from building the city of Zion in Jackson County? (Encourage students to recall what they learned from section 2 of the preparation material.)
- What questions might the Saints have asked after they were expelled from Jackson County?

## Zion can be built only upon principles of righteousness.

Explain that in the months following the Saints' violent expulsion from Jackson County by Missouri mobs, Joseph Smith struggled with the questions of “why God hath suffered so great calamity to come upon Zion” and “by what means he will return [Zion] back to [its] inheritance” (“Letter to Edward Partridge and Others, 10 December 1833,” josephsmithpapers.org). The Lord eventually gave Joseph

insight into why the Saints were persecuted and expelled.

Invite half the class to review Doctrine and Covenants 101:2–3, 6–8 and the other half to review Doctrine and Covenants 105:3–6, which are passages they studied in section 3 of the preparation material. Ask students to share their thoughts about the following questions they were invited to ponder:

- What prevented the Saints from establishing the cause of Zion in Jackson County, Missouri?
- What actions and attitudes does the Lord require of those in the latter days who desire to build Zion? (Add students' responses to the list on the board under the phrase **We can build up Zion by . . .**)

Explain that while Independence, Missouri, is “the center place” of Zion (Doctrine and Covenants 57:3), the Prophet Joseph Smith taught that “any place where the Saints gather is Zion” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 186). Today, this includes all of the stakes of the Church throughout the world.

Display the following quote by Joseph Smith:



“We ought to have the building up of Zion as our greatest object” (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 186).

- Based on what you have learned about Zion, why do you think building Zion should be one of our greatest objectives?

Give students time to review what they have learned from the experiences of early Saints and the revelations about building Zion. Invite them to ponder what they can do right now to help establish Zion in their homes, wards, and branches. You might encourage them to record thoughts and impressions they receive. You might also ask several students to share what they will do. Remind them not to share anything too personal.

## For Next Time

Explain that to help His Saints establish Zion, the Lord revealed laws of consecration, morality, health, and the Sabbath, among others. Emphasize that students will have the opportunity to study one or

more of these topics as they prepare for the next class. Encourage them to come to class next time ready to share something unique they discovered about one or more of these laws.



#### LESSON 13 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

## The Laws of God

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

### SECTION 1

#### How can obeying God's laws bless my life?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## SECTION 2

### Law of Chastity



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

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

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

### Want More? (Optional)

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

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

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

## SECTION 3

### Law of Consecration



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

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

## Want More? (Optional)



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

## SECTION 4

### Law of the Sabbath



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



## Want More? (Optional)

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

### SECTION 5

## Law of Health



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

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

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

## Want More? (Optional)

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

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

## LESSON 13 TEACHER MATERIAL

# The Laws of God

The Lord has revealed His laws and commandments again in this dispensation through Joseph Smith and subsequent prophets. This lesson will prepare students to explain God’s divine purposes for giving His children commandments. Students will also be invited to determine what they can do to more faithfully keep the Lord’s commandments.

## Suggestions for Teaching

### The Lord gives us laws and commandments for our salvation.

Show students the video “Why Does God Give Us Commandments?” (0:39), and ask them to look for what it illustrates about the way some people may view God’s commandments.

- How does this video illustrate the attitude some young adults may have toward God’s laws and commandments?
- What might some people who view God’s law’s as restrictive misunderstand?

Explain that there are more important purposes for God’s laws than merely physical protection or mortal testing. In His revelations to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord taught the Saints some higher reasons that God gives His children laws and commandments. Invite half the class to read Doctrine and Covenants 93:19–20 silently and the other half of the class to read Doctrine and Covenants 130:20–21 silently. Ask students to look for the Lord’s promises to those who keep God’s laws and commandments. Have students report what they found.

Point out that God’s “fulness” referred to in Doctrine and Covenants 93:19–20 is the promise of eternal life—to enter God’s presence and to become like the Father and the Son (see Doctrine and Covenants 76:94).

- How would you summarize a truth from these scripture passages about why Heavenly Father gives His children commandments? (Using students’ words, write on the board or display a statement of doctrine similar to the following: **Heavenly Father gives His children commandments so He can bless them and help them become like Him.**)

To deepen students’ understanding of this truth, display the following statement by Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and invite a student to read it aloud:



God’s plan includes directions for us, referred to in the scriptures as commandments. These commandments are neither a whimsical set nor an arbitrary collection of imposed rules meant only to train us to be obedient. They are linked to our developing the attributes of godliness, returning to our Heavenly Father, and receiving enduring joy. (“Choose You This Day,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 105)

- How are commandments an indication of our Heavenly Father’s and Savior’s love for us?
- What difference can it make in our lives to see the commandments as loving instructions that will help us acquire the attributes of godliness and receive joy?

### The Lord gives the Saints His law.

Remind students that shortly after the Prophet Joseph Smith moved to Kirtland, Ohio, he received

a revelation containing the Lord's law for His Church (see Doctrine and Covenants 42). In the years that followed, the Lord taught the Saints more of His law.

- What are some of the ancient laws and commandments the Lord has reaffirmed in our dispensation?

Remind students of the assignment they were given in the preparation material. Give students a few minutes to review the law or laws they studied. Invite students who may not have studied one of the laws outlined in the preparation material to do so during this time.

## IMPROVING OUR TEACHING AND LEARNING

### **Small group discussions and assignments can help students learn more deeply.**

Dividing the class into pairs or small groups allows more students to express their thoughts and feelings and to teach one another. To help students have a meaningful experience together, make sure they understand the intent and relevance of what they are discussing before they begin. You might also assign a discussion leader or designate one student to share first.

After sufficient time, divide the class into small groups (two to five students per group) according to the law they chose to study. For example, two to five students who chose to study the law of consecration would form a group. There may need to be multiple groups that discuss the same law if more than five students chose to study the same law. (If your class is small or if only one student chose to study a particular law, then adjust this activity to meet the needs of your class. For example, you might invite the one student to share what he or she learned with you or with a group who studied a different topic.)

Ask students to designate one group member as the leader. Give each group leader a copy of the accompanying handout "God's Laws."

## God's Laws

Group leader instructions: Please lead your group in a meaningful discussion of the following questions. Be sure to include each member of the group in your discussion.

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

As you conclude, identify a person who will share with the class a few highlights from your group discussion.

Give the groups 10 minutes, or enough time to have a meaningful discussion. After sufficient time, invite representatives from each group to share with the entire class a few highlights from their discussion. Consider encouraging each representative to share how obeying the law he or she studied can help us become more like our Heavenly Father.

Share your testimony and experience of how obeying God's laws and commandments has blessed your life and helped you become more like Heavenly Father.

Display the following questions. Give students time to ponder the questions, write down their impressions, and identify actions they feel inspired to take. Encourage students to prayerfully seek Heavenly Father's help and guidance to act on the impressions they received. You might also invite them to

determine a time to follow up on what they have committed to do.

- Which of the Lord's commandments discussed today could I more faithfully keep?
- What specifically do I need to change, start doing, or stop doing to more fully keep this commandment?
- What blessings, attributes of godliness, and joy would come into my life by following this commandment more closely and with greater sincerity?

## For Next Time

Explain that one of the unique beliefs of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is that God continues to guide His children by providing additional scripture. Invite students to study the preparation material for the next lesson and come prepared to discuss how additional scripture clarifies and deepens our understanding of the Savior's gospel.



#### LESSON 14 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

## The Lord Reveals Additional Scripture

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

### SECTION 1

What do we believe about continuing revelation and additional scripture?

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

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

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

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

### SECTION 2

How can studying the Doctrine and Covenants bless my life?

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



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



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

Commandments. Later, these and additional revelations were published as the Doctrine and Covenants.

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

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



### Study in Preparation for Class

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



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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

## SECTION 3

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



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



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

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

Portions of the Prophet's inspired revisions can be found in the footnotes and appendix of some editions of the Bible and in the Guide to the Scriptures ([scriptures.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://scriptures.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)).

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

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



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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

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

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



## SECTION 4

### What is the book of Abraham?



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

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

#### The Book of Abraham and the Ancient World

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

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

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

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

## The Egyptian Papyri

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

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

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

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

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

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

### A Witness from God

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

## Want More? (Optional)

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

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

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

### Where can I learn more about the book of Abraham?

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

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



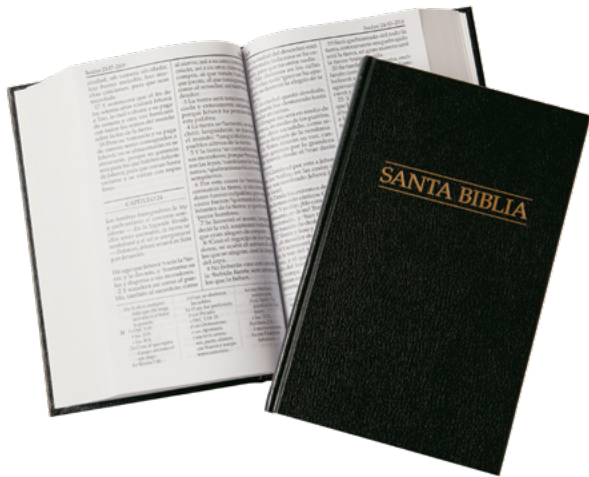
## LESSON 14 TEACHER MATERIAL

# The Lord Reveals Additional Scripture

As in previous dispensations, the Lord continues to reveal additional scripture through His living prophets. This lesson provides students with an opportunity to share how latter-day scripture restores and helps clarify gospel truths. Students will also be better prepared to address questions relating to the book of Abraham.

## Suggestions for Teaching

**The Lord revealed additional scripture through the Prophet Joseph Smith.**



Invite students to imagine that a friend sincerely asks, “Why does your church have more scriptures than the Bible? I thought the Bible contained all of God’s word.” Ask students to raise their hands if they have been asked a question like this. Invite a few students to share how they answered (or how they would answer).

Explain that the Book of Mormon contains a record written by Nephi of a vision where he saw the words of the Bible going forth to the world. He also saw that many “plain” and “precious” (1 Nephi 13:26) parts of the Savior’s gospel were taken from the Bible (see 1 Nephi 13:24–26).

Read 1 Nephi 13:38–41 as a class, looking for what records Nephi saw that would be available to people in the latter days. You might pause after each verse and let students explain what records Nephi is referring to. For example, the “other books” referred to in verse 39 include the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price, and Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible.

- According to verses 40 and 41, what are the purposes of these additional scriptures revealed through Joseph Smith? (Using students’ responses, identify a truth such as the following: **Through Joseph Smith, the Lord revealed additional scripture that confirms the truths of the Bible, restores plain and precious truths, and helps bring people unto Jesus Christ.**)

To help deepen students’ understanding of this truth, consider using some of the following teaching ideas to facilitate student sharing and discussion.

### The Doctrine and Covenants

Remind students that at a meeting in 1831, Joseph Smith and several elders decided to publish the revelations received up to that time. During the meeting, the Lord revealed His own preface to the Book of Commandments (now the Doctrine and Covenants) through Joseph Smith. This preface is Doctrine and Covenants 1.

Give students a minute to review Doctrine and Covenants 1:17, 21–23, 37 from the preparation material. Invite them to look for what the Lord taught

about the revelations (referred to as “commandments” in the text). Invite students to share what they found.

In section 2 of the preparation material, students were asked to locate a passage of scripture from the Doctrine and Covenants that has strengthened their faith in Jesus Christ. Provide time for students to share their passages with each other. You might do this activity in small groups or as a class. They could also share their answers to the following question with each other:

- In what ways do these passages confirm the truth of the Bible, restore plain and precious truths, or bring us closer to Jesus Christ?

### **The Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible and the Pearl of Great Price**

Invite a student to read aloud Joseph Smith’s statement about the Bible found in section 3 of the preparation material. Explain that through Joseph Smith’s translation of the Bible the Lord restored many of the plain and precious truths that had been lost.

As part of their class preparation, students studied explanations of what the Joseph Smith Translation and the Pearl of Great Price are. Ask a few students to summarize what they learned about each book.

If needed, remind students that portions of the Joseph Smith Translation are included in the Pearl of Great Price as the books of Moses and Joseph Smith—Matthew. Other inspired revisions can be found in the footnotes and appendix of some editions of the Bible, in the Guide to the Scriptures, and on scriptures.ChurchofJesusChrist.org. Consider asking students to open to whichever resource is available to them to ensure that they are familiar with how to access these scriptures.

Display the list of scripture passages from the books of Moses and Abraham and the Joseph Smith Translation found in section 3 of the preparation material. Ask students to briefly review the scripture passages that they selected on their own or from the list.

After you give them a minute to review, invite students to share with a partner what plain and precious truths these scriptures teach or how they deepen their knowledge of Jesus Christ and His gospel. You may also want to share with the class your testimony of latter-day scripture and its impact in your life.

**We can act in faith as we address questions about the book of Abraham translation.**

### **IMPROVING OUR TEACHING AND LEARNING**

#### **Strengthen faith while teaching Church**

**history.** As you teach Church history, do so in a way that strengthens students’ faith that Jesus Christ has restored His Church to the earth in the last days. Help students see how Joseph Smith faithfully fulfilled his mission as prophet of the Restoration. Use divinely appointed sources (such as the scriptures and words of prophets), the provided course materials, and other reliable resources to help students see the unfolding of the Restoration from a perspective of faith.

Display the following image, and explain that it is a fragment of the Egyptian papyri that Joseph Smith once had.



Invite students to explain what they know about the acquisition and history of the papyri (see sections 3 and 4 of the preparation material).

- What questions have arisen from the study of the existing papyri fragments? (Invite students to recall what they learned from section 4 of the preparation material.)
- What would you share with someone who had general concerns about the book of Abraham translation?

As students answer the preceding question, you might use one or more of the follow-up questions below to continue the discussion. As part of the discussion, provide opportunity for students to consider what they read in the preparation material

and ask any questions they have about the book of Abraham.

- What do you do when you are unable to find specific answers to gospel questions, such as those about the book of Abraham?
- What are some evidences that have surfaced since the publication of the book of Abraham that support its authenticity? (See “The Book of Abraham and the Ancient World” in section 4 of the preparation material.)
- What would you suggest to someone as the most reliable way to determine the truthfulness of the book of Abraham? Why?

Conclude by giving students an opportunity to share their favorite scripture passages from the book of Abraham and to testify of that book and of other scripture of the Restoration.

## For Next Time

Ask students to consider how they tend to think about themselves. Invite them to also consider their potential influence in this life and in the eternities. Encourage students to come prepared next time to discuss restored truths about God’s plan for them and their futures.



## LESSON 15 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

# Heavenly Father's Plan and Our Divine Potential

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

## SECTION 1

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

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

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

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



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



presence so you can enjoy immortality and eternal life.

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



### Study in Preparation for Class

Read Abraham 3:22–26.



### Study in Preparation for Class

Read Moses 1:37–39.

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



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

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



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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



## SECTION 2

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



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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



### Record in Preparation for Class

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

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

### SECTION 3

## How can I gain eternal life in the celestial kingdom?

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



### Study in Preparation for Class

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



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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

## Want More? (Optional)

### Where can I learn more about what eternal life means?

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

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

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

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

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

## LESSON 15 TEACHER MATERIAL

# Heavenly Father's Plan and Our Divine Potential

The Lord revealed to Joseph Smith the glory of Heavenly Father's plan of redemption and our divine potential to become like Him. This lesson will help students strengthen their appreciation for the Father's plan and understand more deeply who they are and what they can do to reach their divine potential.

## Suggestions for Teaching

### Joseph Smith received important truths regarding the plan of salvation.

Invite students to explain what most Christians and early converts to the Church may have understood about God and the afterlife prior to the revelations the Lord gave through Joseph Smith about these topics. (Students may want to review sections 1 and 3 of the preparation material.)

- From what you learned in the preparation material, when and how did the Lord reveal truths about the plan of salvation to Joseph Smith?
- What are some restored truths about the plan that you think would have been most life changing to the early Saints? Where are these truths recorded? (See sections 1 and 3 of the preparation material.)

As students answer the preceding questions, you might have them revisit some of the scripture passages mentioned in the preparation material, such as Moses 1:39 and Abraham 3:22–26. Help students identify and explain truths like the following: **God's work and glory is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man** (see Moses 1:39). **We lived with Heavenly Father as spirits before we were born** (see Abraham 3:22–23). **The Lord created the earth as a place where we could choose whether or not to obey God** (see Abraham 3:24–25).

- Imagine how your life would be different if you did not know about Heavenly Father's plan. How do you think knowing about the plan has affected the way you think, make decisions, and act?

### Joseph Smith taught about our divine potential.

Explain that on “April 7, 1844, Joseph Smith rose to speak in what would prove to be his last conference. After asking the Saints for their ‘profound attention,’ . . . Joseph taught about divine nature and eternal progression” (“King Follett Discourse,” Church History Topics, [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/study/church-history](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org/study/church-history)).

Invite a student to read aloud Joseph Smith's statement from his King Follett discourse found at the beginning of section 2 in the preparation material.

- What do you learn from Joseph's teachings about your relationship with God?

Explain that in 1995, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles issued a document called “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.” In it they declared:

All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. . . .

In the premortal realm, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshipped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan

by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize their divine destiny as heirs of eternal life. ("The Family: A Proclamation to the World," ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

- As sons and daughters of God, what is our eternal potential? (Help students identify a principle similar to the following: **As spirit sons and daughters of Heavenly Father, we have the potential to become like Him.**)

Display or ask the following questions, and give students a minute or two to ponder them and to write impressions that may come to them.

- How does this truth influence the way you view your relationship with Heavenly Father? How does it influence the way you view yourself and those around you? How can it influence the way you live your life?

### Jesus Christ showed us how we can receive a fulness of God's glory in the celestial kingdom.

Write on the board or display the words *Heaven* and *Hell*, and ask students what most 19th-century Christians believed about who would go to each.

Invite students to recount what they have learned from Doctrine and Covenants 76 about the afterlife and obtaining celestial glory. (Students might need to review Doctrine and Covenants 76:50–54.) You might also ask students what they learned about Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ from the truths revealed in section 76.

Display the following statement by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



Around the Church I hear many who struggle with this issue: "I am just not good enough." "I fall so far short." "I will never measure up." I hear this from teenagers. I

hear it from missionaries. I hear it from new converts. I hear it from lifelong members. (Jeffrey R. Holland, "Be Ye Therefore Perfect—Eventually," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 40)

You might invite students to consider times in their lives when they have felt this way.

Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 76:40–42, 69, looking for the crucial role Jesus Christ plays in our salvation.

- What role does Jesus Christ play in our quest for eternal life? (Help students identify the following truth: **We can be made perfect only through Jesus Christ.**)
- Why do you think it is important to remember that perfection and exaltation come only through Jesus Christ?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 93:12–13 with the class, looking for what the passage teaches about the Savior's path to becoming like Heavenly Father.

- What do you think it means that the Savior "continued from grace to grace, until he received a fulness"?
- How can the Savior's example help you overcome feelings of discouragement as you strive for eternal life?

Display and read the following statement by Elder Holland:



I testify of that grand destiny, made available to us by the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, who Himself continued "from grace to grace" [Doctrine and Covenants 93:13] until in His immortality [see Luke 13:32] He received a perfect fulness of celestial glory. I testify that in this and every hour He is, with nail-scarred hands, extending to us that same grace, holding on to us and encouraging us, refusing to let us go until we are safely home in the embrace of Heavenly Parents. For such a perfect moment, I continue to strive,



however clumsily. For such a perfect gift, I continue to give thanks, however inadequately. I do so in the very name of Perfection itself, of Him who has never been clumsy or inadequate but who loves all of us who are, even the Lord Jesus Christ. (Jeffrey R. Holland, "Be Ye Therefore Perfect—Eventually," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 42)

Invite students to ponder for a minute what would most help them to spiritually progress toward eternal life at this time. Conclude by sharing your testimony that through the Savior's grace and by following His example we can receive eternal life and enter the celestial kingdom.

### IMPROVING OUR TEACHING AND LEARNING

**Continue to encourage student preparation.** Now that students are more than halfway through this course, you might invite them to share how their preparation for class

has affected their experience in the course. Consider sharing the following encouragement from Elder Kim B. Clark of the Seventy: "When you do your part—pray in faith, prepare, study, engage actively, and do your very best—the Holy Ghost will teach you, magnify your capacity to act on what you learn, and help you become what the Lord wants you to become" ("Learning for the Whole Soul," *Ensign*, Aug. 2017, 27).

### For Next Time

Ask students to consider how their lives are different because of temples and temple ordinances. Explain that in the next class, they will learn why ancient prophets appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple. Encourage them to study the preparation material for lesson 16 so they can come ready to discuss principles that will help make the temple a more meaningful part of their life.



#### LESSON 16 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

## The Kirtland Temple and Priesthood Keys

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

### SECTION 1

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

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



### Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 88:119.

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



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



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

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

Another challenge also slowed the progress of the temple construction:

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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

## SECTION 2

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

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

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

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

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



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

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



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



### Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 110:11.

President Joseph Fielding Smith explained:



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



### Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 110:12.

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

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



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





### Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 110:13–16.

#### President Joseph Fielding Smith taught:



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

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



### Study in Preparation for Class

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



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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

### Want More? (Optional)

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



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

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

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

## LESSON 16 TEACHER MATERIAL

# The Kirtland Temple and Priesthood Keys

The Lord commanded the Saints to build a temple in Kirtland, Ohio, and promised that He would endow them with “power from on high” (Doctrine and Covenants 95:8). This lesson will help students consider how they might more fully obey the Lord’s commands related to the temple. It will also help them explain the significance of the priesthood keys restored in the Kirtland Temple.

## Suggestions for Teaching

### The Lord helped the Saints fulfill His command to build the Kirtland Temple.

Invite students to think about something the Lord, through His servants, has asked Church members to do that seems difficult or overwhelming. Ask a few students to share an example with the class.

Display an image of the Kirtland Temple. Remind students that in December 1832 the Lord commanded the Saints to build “a house of God” in Kirtland (Doctrine and Covenants 88:119).



Explain that more than five months after the Lord’s commandment, Church leaders and members still had not begun constructing the temple. Read Doctrine and Covenants 95:1–3 as a class, looking

for what the Lord said about the Saints’ delay in building the temple.

- Why do you think not building the temple might be considered a “grievous sin”? (verse 3; see also verse 6).
- In what ways do you think the Lord’s chastening of the Saints for not building the temple was a sign of His love for them? (see verse 1).

Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 95:8, looking for one reason that the Lord wanted a temple built in Kirtland.

Explain that *endow* means to provide someone with a gift. The endowment spoken of in Doctrine and Covenants 95 included gifts of spiritual knowledge and power. The temple endowment ceremony as practiced today was not revealed until 1842 in Nauvoo, Illinois.

Invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 95:11–12 aloud.

- What principle can we learn from the Lord’s promise to the Saints in verse 11? (Using students’ words, write a principle on the board similar to the following: **As we strive to keep the Lord’s commandments, He will give us power to accomplish His will.**)
- Why might this promise from the Lord have been a comfort to the Saints in Kirtland? (See Eliza R. Snow’s statement in section 1 of the preparation

material.) How might this principle be of comfort to you in your life today?

- What were some of the sacrifices the Saints made in order to obey the Lord's commandment to build the Kirtland Temple? (If needed, encourage students to review section 1 of the preparation material.)
- How did the Lord give power and help to the Saints to build the Kirtland Temple?

Invite students to review the statement by President Thomas S. Monson in section 1 of the preparation material and to think about the following: How do Saints today assist in the building of temples? What kind of sacrifices am I making related to temple worship?

- Why do you think sacrifice is often connected to the blessings of the temple?

## IMPROVING OUR TEACHING AND LEARNING

**Give students time to think.** When students are given time to reflect on experiences with living the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost can help bring memories into their minds. Occasionally combining this approach with inviting students to record their thoughts before sharing them can lead to more meaningful responses and a greater willingness to share.

Provide time for students to think (and maybe write) about (1) the sacrifices they have made related to the temple, (2) the blessings they have already received from the temple, and (3) what they can do to more diligently keep the Lord's commandments related to the temple.

The Lord accepted the Kirtland Temple, and priesthood keys were committed to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.

*Note:* Students will study Doctrine and Covenants 109, the dedicatory prayer for the Kirtland Temple, in lesson 20.

Explain that through the Saints' sacrifices and the Lord's help, the Kirtland Temple was completed and then dedicated on March 27, 1836. The Lord's endowment of power came as a result of the Saints' obedience in building the temple.

- What are some of the spiritual manifestations the Saints experienced during the Kirtland Temple dedication? (Encourage students to recall what they learned in section 2 of the preparation material.)

Explain that a week later, the Savior and other heavenly messengers appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the temple. Invite a student to read the section heading for Doctrine and Covenants 110 aloud.

Display the following image:



Read Doctrine and Covenants 110:1–10 with the class, looking for descriptions of the Savior and for His message to Joseph and Oliver. Invite students to share what stood out to them. As students share, allow time for them to discuss questions like the following:

- What can we learn about the Lord from His appearance and teachings in His newly built house?
- What do the Lord’s words and promises in verses 7–8 teach about the sacredness of His temples?
- What effect would the temple in Kirtland have on the rest of the world? (see verses 9–10).

Invite students to share what they know about the other angelic messengers that appeared in the Kirtland Temple. You might display the following truth: **The Lord sent heavenly messengers to the**

### **Kirtland Temple to commit priesthood keys essential for the work of salvation.**

Ask students to also explain the keys that these messengers committed to Joseph and Oliver. Refer students to section 2 of the preparation material if needed. As students share, consider displaying the names *Moses*, *Elias*, and *Elijah* with the associated keys.

- In what ways are we blessed today because of the priesthood keys committed in the Kirtland Temple?

Display the following statement by President Joseph Fielding Smith, and invite a student to read it aloud:



The Kirtland Temple holds a peculiar place in the annals of temple building. It is not like other temples. It was built primarily for the restoration of keys of authority. (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie [1955], 2:242)

Consider sharing an example about a specific way the keys committed in the Kirtland Temple have blessed your life. Testify that the priesthood keys committed to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery are held and used today by each member of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles under the direction of the President of the Church.

## For Next Time

Explain that in preparation for the next class, students will have the opportunity to study one of the darkest periods in the Church’s history, when the Saints experienced trials, persecution, and betrayal. Invite students to study the preparation material and come to class ready to share principles that can help them face opposition and hardship with faith in God.





## LESSON 17 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

# Remaining Faithful amid Opposition and Affliction

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

## SECTION 1

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

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

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

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



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



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

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



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

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

## SECTION 2

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



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

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

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



### Study in Preparation for Class

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



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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

### SECTION 3

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

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



Historic photograph of Liberty Jail in Liberty, Missouri.

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

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

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

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



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

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



### Study in Preparation for Class

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



### Record Your Thoughts

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

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### Want More? (Optional)

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

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

#### How can I remain steadfast during a trial of faith?

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

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

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

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

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

## LESSON 17 TEACHER MATERIAL

## Remaining Faithful amid Opposition and Affliction

During the period between 1837 to 1839, the Saints experienced a threatening spirit of apostasy in Kirtland, Ohio, and violent persecution in Missouri. This lesson will help students determine how they can turn to, trust in, and rely more fully on Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ in times of difficulty and opposition.

### Suggestions for Teaching

#### Some members in Kirtland, Ohio, left the Church, while others remained faithful.

Begin class by asking students to describe how people they know have responded to difficult trials in their lives. You might also ask what they learn from such examples.

Invite students to ponder the trials they or their loved ones are currently experiencing and to consider what the Lord might teach them today about responding to such trials.

- What are some of the challenges and trials the early Saints experienced in Ohio? (You might refer students to their preparation material to help them remember.) What can we learn from those affected by the trials in Ohio?

Remind students that in the summer of 1837, Thomas B. Marsh, the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, traveled from Missouri to Kirtland to meet with members of that quorum and with the Prophet Joseph Smith.

- What were some of the challenges and concerns Thomas B. Marsh faced before he arrived in Kirtland?

Explain that after Thomas B. Marsh and Joseph Smith met together and resolved their differences, the Prophet received a revelation from the Lord addressed to Thomas. Invite students to read or review Doctrine and Covenants 112:10–15 silently,

looking for counsel and principles the Lord taught Thomas B. Marsh and other members of the Quorum of the Twelve. Invite students to share and discuss what they found.

If needed, help students identify and discuss a principle from verse 13 by asking some of the following questions:

- What did the Lord promise He would do for those of the Twelve who chose not to harden their hearts when their faith was tested? (After students respond, display the following principle or write it on the board: **If we do not harden our hearts when our faith is tested, the Lord will be with us and help deepen our conversion.**)
- How might some people harden their hearts when their faith is tested? What are the dangers of doing so?
- When have you seen someone respond to a trial of faith with a soft heart and an open mind? What did you notice happening to the person as he or she responded this way?

#### The Prophet Joseph Smith was blessed for his faithfulness during his trials in Liberty Jail.

Display the following question: *Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people?*

Ask students if they have ever wondered about or been asked this question. Explain that Joseph Smith asked a similar question after being unjustly



imprisoned in Liberty, Missouri. As students discuss Joseph's experience, invite them to consider how they would answer if a friend asked them that question.

Display the following images of Liberty Jail:



Ask students to recount the events that led to Joseph Smith's imprisonment in Liberty Jail. (If needed, direct students to review section 3 of the preparation material.)

- What were conditions like for Joseph Smith and the others in Liberty Jail?

Remind students that the Prophet Joseph Smith spent over four months in Liberty Jail during the bitter cold of winter. Invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 121:1–3 aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for questions the Prophet asked in this prayerful letter.

- What do these questions reveal about what Joseph Smith might have been feeling at that time?
- How might this time period have been a trial of Joseph's faith?

Remind students that while in jail, Joseph Smith sent two letters to the Church. Divide students into small groups. Invite them to review or read Doctrine and Covenants 121:7–10; 122:7–9 and then share the phrases and principles that stood out to them.

After sufficient time, invite a few students to share a phrase or principle they discussed with their groups. Consider displaying these principles or phrases or writing them on the board. Some principles students identify could be expressed or summarized in the following ways: **As we turn to the Lord and rely on Him during our trials, He will bless us with revelation, comfort, and encouragement. If we remain faithful, affliction and adversity can give us experience and be for our good.**

- How could the principles and phrases you identified help someone who is experiencing adversity or a trial of faith?

As part of your discussion, you might display the following statement by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and invite a student to read it aloud.



You can have sacred, revelatory, profoundly instructive experiences with the Lord *in the most miserable experiences of your life*—in the worst settings, while enduring the most painful injustices, when facing the most insurmountable odds and opposition you have ever faced. . . .

... The lessons of the winter of 1838–39 teach us that every experience can become a redemptive experience if we remain bonded to our Father in Heaven through that difficulty. These difficult lessons teach us that man's extremity is God's opportunity, and if we will be humble and faithful, if we will be believing and not curse God for our problems, He can turn the unfair and inhumane and debilitating prisons of our lives into temples—or at least into a circumstance that can bring comfort and revelation, divine companionship and peace. (Jeffrey R. Holland, "Lessons from Liberty Jail," *Ensign*, Sept. 2009, 28)

- What do you think it means that trials can become "redemptive" experiences?
- How can faithfully enduring the trials of life help us become more like our Heavenly Father and our Savior, Jesus Christ?
- What are some ways you have turned to and relied more fully on Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ during trials that tested your faith? What have you learned from doing so?

Invite students to share with a classmate how they would answer the question you displayed previously about why God allows bad things to happen to His children.

Then invite students to consider displaying words and phrases they selected from the scripture passages discussed earlier in places where they can see them often or to memorize them or share them on social media. Testify that as we turn to the Savior in our trials, He will give us peace, comfort us, and deepen our conversion.

## For Next Time

As you end class, consider explaining that one of the largest women's organizations in the world today, the Relief Society, was founded in 1842 by the Prophet Joseph Smith. Let students know that as they prepare for the next class they will have the opportunity to learn more about how and why this worldwide organization was created. Encourage students to come prepared to share what they learned.



## LESSON 18 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

# Latter-day Saint Women and the Relief Society

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

## SECTION 1

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



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

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



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

Emma Smith, the wife of the Prophet Joseph Smith, serves as an example of a Latter-day Saint woman who fulfilled an important role in the Restoration. In a revelation to Joseph Smith, the Lord referred to



Emma as “an elect lady” (Doctrine and Covenants 25:3). As you read some of this revelation, consider marking the responsibilities and counsel the Lord gave Emma. Note that in verse 16 the Lord declares that His counsel given to Emma also applies to each of us.



### Study in Preparation for Class

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

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



Emma served for a time as Joseph’s scribe, helping with the Book of Mormon translation. Throughout

her life she boldly testified of the Book of Mormon. Shortly before her death she told her son: “My belief is that the Book of Mormon is of divine authenticity—I have not the slightest doubt of it” (Emma Smith, in “Last Testimony of Sister Emma,” *Saints’ Herald*, Oct. 1, 1879, 290). Obedient to the Lord’s command, Emma also compiled the Church’s first hymnbook.

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



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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

## SECTION 2

What is unique about the organization of the Relief Society?

In the spring of 1842, the Saints struggled in their poverty to build the Nauvoo Temple. Many of the sisters desired to do more to help. Led by Sarah

Kimball and Margaret Cook, a group of sisters gathered to draft a constitution and bylaws for a new women's society to sew clothes for the temple workers. When they consulted the Prophet Joseph Smith, he told them their constitution was "the best he had ever seen" (*Teachings of Joseph Smith*, 450). "But," he said, "this is not what you want. Tell the sisters their offering is accepted of the Lord, and he has something better for them. . . . I invite them all to meet with me and a few of the brethren . . . and I will organize the women under the priesthood after the pattern of the priesthood" (in *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 12). Eliza R. Snow recounted that Joseph Smith taught the Relief Society that "the same organization existed in the church anciently" (in *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 7).



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



Relief Society is unique because it was organized after the "pattern of the priesthood" [Joseph Smith, quoted in Sarah M. Kimball, "Auto-biography," *Woman's Exponent*, Sept. 1, 1883, 51]. . . . We operate in the manner of the priesthood—which means that we seek, receive, and act on revelation; make decisions in councils; and concern ourselves with caring for individuals one by one. Ours is the

priesthood purpose to prepare ourselves for the blessings of eternal life by making and keeping covenants. Therefore, like our brethren who hold the priesthood, ours is a work of salvation, service, and becoming a holy people. (Julie B. Beck, "Relief Society: A Sacred Work," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 110)

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



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

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

### SECTION 3

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

The first Relief Society meeting was held on March 17, 1842, in the upper room of Joseph Smith's Red Brick Store in Nauvoo, Illinois. Emma was chosen and sustained as president of the new organization. Joseph stood and explained that this was a fulfillment of the Lord's declaration that Emma was



“an elect lady, whom I have called” (Doctrine and Covenants 25:3). A short time later the Prophet said: “This Society is to get instruction through the order which God has established—through the medium of those appointed to lead—and I now turn the key to you in the name of God, and this society shall rejoice and knowledge and intelligence shall flow down from this time” (in *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 14–15).

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

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



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

Sister Beck taught:



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

. . . joy and progress. . . .” [*Evidences and Reconciliations*, arr. G. Homer Durham, 3 vols. in 1 (1960), 308]

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



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



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



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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

## Want More? (Optional)

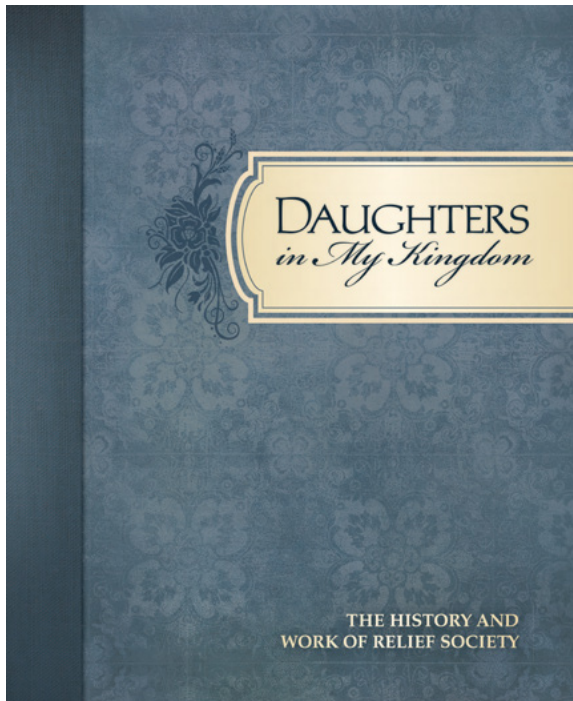
### What did Joseph Smith teach about women and priesthood authority?

The essay “Joseph Smith’s Teachings about Priesthood, Temple, and Women” (Gospel Topics, [topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)) highlights Joseph Smith’s teachings about women and priesthood authority.

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

Explore the Women of Conviction collection on [history.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://history.ChurchofJesusChrist.org) for stories of faithful Latter-day Saint women around the world.

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



As an example, you might start with the story of Relief Society President Belle Spafford, who extended the Relief Society’s influence among those of other faiths.



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

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

## LESSON 18 TEACHER MATERIAL

# Latter-day Saint Women and the Relief Society

The Relief Society is one of the oldest and, with over 7.1 million members, one of the largest women's organizations in the world. The Relief Society is an integral part of the restored Church of Jesus Christ. This lesson will help students be able to share how the unique abilities and contributions of Latter-day Saint women are essential to the Lord's work. Students will also determine how they will more fully participate in or support the Relief Society in accomplishing its purposes.

## Suggestions for Teaching

### Covenant-keeping women make a unique and vital contribution to building God's kingdom.

Display a picture of or describe a righteous woman in your life. Briefly share with the class what makes her an exemplary woman and how she has contributed to building God's kingdom.

Invite students to share their thoughts about a righteous woman they know and how she is an influence for good in building the kingdom of God. (This was something students were invited to ponder in the preparation material.)

Display the following statement by President Russell M. Nelson. Invite a student to read it aloud, and ask the class to follow along and look for what President Nelson teaches about the righteous women of the Church.



My dear sisters, you . . . are our vital associates during this winding up scene. . . . Your virtue, light, love, knowledge, courage, character, faith, and righteous lives will draw good women of the world, along with their families, to the Church in unprecedented numbers!

We, your brethren, need your strength, your conversion, your conviction, your ability to lead, your wisdom, and your voices. The kingdom of God is not and cannot be complete

without women who make sacred covenants and then keep them, women who can speak with the power and authority of God! (Russell M. Nelson, "A Plea to My Sisters," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 96)

- What stands out to you in this statement?
- How would you summarize a truth we can learn from President Nelson's teachings about covenant-keeping women in the Church? (Using students' words, write on the board or display a truth similar to the following: **The attributes, leadership, and voices of covenant-keeping women are essential to building the kingdom of God.**)
- Why do you think the kingdom of God "is not and cannot be complete" without the voices and contributions of covenant-keeping women?

Explain that as recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 25, the Lord called on Emma Smith to use her voice, talents, and abilities to help build His kingdom. Invite students to review Doctrine and Covenants 25:5–7, 10–16, which they studied in section 1 of the preparation material, and ask them to identify the counsel and responsibilities the Lord gave Emma.

Ask students to share what stands out to them from these verses and why. Give students a minute to consider which points of counsel the Lord would want them to more fully accept and live.

## The Lord organized the Relief Society through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Display an image of Joseph Smith's Red Brick Store in Nauvoo, Illinois, and explain that it was here that the Relief Society was organized in March 1842.



Ask students to recount from section 2 of the preparation material (or invite a student at the beginning of class to prepare to do so) the circumstances that led to the establishment of the Relief Society.

- After what pattern did Joseph Smith say the Relief Society is organized? (**The Relief Society is organized after the pattern of the priesthood.**)
- What does it mean that the Relief Society was organized after the pattern of the priesthood? Why is this important for us to know? (If needed, invite students to recall what they learned in section 2 of the preparation material.)
- How would you summarize the purposes of the Relief Society? (You might invite students to review the statements of Sister Zina D. H. Young and Sister Julie B. Beck in section 3 of the preparation material to help them identify a truth similar to the following: **The Relief Society was organized to provide relief to the poor and to help save souls.**)

- What are ways you have seen women of the Relief Society fulfill these purposes? (You might also share a meaningful example or experience of your own.)

Provide time for a couple of sisters in class to share their feelings about the blessings of the Relief Society.

Ask a few students to share their responses to the following question they were invited to ponder in the preparation material:

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

Display the following questions, and invite students to prayerfully think about and then write a goal in their journal or notebook:

- Sisters, how will you participate more fully in accomplishing the purposes of the Relief Society through your abilities, faith, voice, and leadership?
- Brethren, what will you do to better support, encourage, and work with women in building God's kingdom?

If time permits, consider inviting a few students to share what they wrote.

### IMPROVING OUR TEACHING AND LEARNING

**Adapt teaching suggestions.** You may choose to use all or some of the teaching suggestions within each lesson, and you may adapt suggestions according to the direction of the Spirit and the needs and circumstances of your students. When adapting teaching suggestions or substituting them with your own ideas, consider the intended student learning outcomes, and select



an alternative teaching idea that will bring about the intended outcome.

To conclude the lesson, consider doing one or more of the following:

1. Ask students how they would respond to someone who claims that women have a diminished place and role in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
2. Testify of the truths identified during the lesson.
3. Invite a student to read the following invitation from President Russell M. Nelson:



It is converted, covenant-keeping women . . . whose righteous lives will increasingly stand out in a deteriorating world and who will thus be seen as different and distinct in the *happiest* of ways.

. . . I plead with my sisters of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to step forward! Take your rightful and needful place in your home, in your community, and in the kingdom of God—more than you ever have before. (Russell M. Nelson, “A Plea to My Sisters,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 97; italics in original)

## For Next Time

Explain to students that next time they meet, they will focus on an aspect of the restored gospel that the Prophet Joseph Smith referred to as one of the greatest responsibilities in this world that God has given to the Latter-day Saints (see *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 475).

Invite students to carefully study the preparation material for lesson 19 and come ready to discuss the marvelous prophetic promises made to those who help accomplish temple work for the dead.





#### LESSON 19 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

## Redemption of the Dead

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

### SECTION 1

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

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

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

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

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

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



### Study in Preparation for Class

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

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

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



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

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



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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

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

## SECTION 2

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



### Study in Preparation for Class

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

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

**SECTION 3**

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

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



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

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

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



### **Ponder and Discuss in Preparation for Class**

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

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

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

## **Want More? (Optional)**

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



## LESSON 19 TEACHER MATERIAL

# Redemption of the Dead

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that one of the greatest responsibilities God has given Latter-day Saints is to help redeem the dead (see *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 475). This lesson is designed to help students understand and share why the redemption of the dead is such a vital part of God's plan and to increase their desire to participate more fully in family history and temple service.

## Suggestions for Teaching

### The Lord reveals the doctrine of redemption of the dead through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Display the accompanying image and explain that it portrays Alvin Smith carrying his younger brother, Joseph, after Joseph's leg surgery. Invite students to recount from their class preparation what they know about Joseph's feelings for his brother Alvin and what happened to Alvin.



- What did a Presbyterian minister suggest to the Smith family at Alvin's funeral?
- How would you have felt hearing these words if you had been a member of Joseph's family?

Remind students that the minister's words reflected the belief, as taught in the New Testament, that baptism is essential for salvation (see John 3:5). Ask students to review Joseph Smith's 1836 vision of the celestial kingdom as recorded in Doctrine



and Covenants 137:1, 5–8, looking for what Joseph Smith learned about his brother Alvin. Invite students to report what they found.

- What truths about the plan of salvation does this revelation help restore or clarify? What thoughts and feelings do you think Joseph may have had as he learned these truths?

Explain that four and a half years after seeing the vision of Alvin in the celestial kingdom, Joseph taught the Saints in Nauvoo concerning how someone like Alvin who had not been baptized in this life could be saved in the kingdom of God. The Prophet introduced the doctrine of baptism for the dead during a funeral sermon on August 15, 1840 (see Church History Topics, “Baptism for the Dead,” [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org)).

Invite students to read in pairs or small groups the excerpt from Vilate Kimball’s letter found in section 1 of the preparation material. Then display the following questions (also found in section 1 of the preparation material), and invite students to discuss them:

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

Invite a student to read aloud the teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith as recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 128:15. Ask the class to follow along, looking for why participating in the work to redeem the dead is so important for us.

- According to this verse, why is it essential that we perform saving ordinances for the dead? (Students may identify a few truths, including the following: **Without the saving ordinances of the gospel, our ancestors who die without the gospel cannot progress toward exaltation. The**

**salvation of our deceased ancestors is essential to our own salvation.**)

- In what ways do you think the salvation of our ancestors is “necessary and essential” to our own salvation?

As part of your discussion, display the following statement by President Russell M. Nelson, and invite a student to read it aloud:



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.

We are exalted when we can dwell together with our *extended families* in the presence of Almighty God. (Russell M. Nelson, “Generations Linked in Love,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2010, 93–94; italics added).

### Joseph F. Smith sees a vision of the redemption of the dead.

Explain that even after the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord continued to reveal truths “line upon line” (Doctrine and Covenants 98:12) about His plan to redeem the dead. In 1918 President Joseph F. Smith received a vision of the redemption of the dead.

- What experiences of President Joseph F. Smith and events in the world made this vision so timely? (Encourage students to draw on what they learned from section 2 of the preparation material.)

Remind students that it was while President Smith pondered the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Apostle Peter regarding the Savior’s visit to the spirit world that he had his vision (see Doctrine and Covenants 138:1–11). Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 138:28–34, 57 silently, looking for what the Savior did during

His brief visit in the spirit world and the impact it had.

- How do the truths in this scripture passage help us better understand Heavenly Father’s plan for His children?

Point out the phrase “vicarious baptism” (verse 33). Explain that *vicarious* means to act as a substitute for someone else.

Invite a student to read aloud the statement by Elder D. Todd Christofferson found in section 3 of the preparation material. Ask the class to look for what Elder Christofferson taught about the vicarious work of salvation we perform for our deceased family members in the temple.

- How would you summarize a principle we can learn from Elder Christofferson’s teachings? (Students may identify a truth similar to the following: **We testify of Jesus Christ and His Atonement as we participate in the work to help redeem our deceased family members.**)
- How is participating in the work to redeem our dead an expression of our testimony of Jesus Christ and His Atonement?
- In what ways does participating in family history and temple service help us become more like the Savior?

### The Lord’s prophets promise powerful blessings to those who help redeem the dead.

Write the following incomplete principle on the board: *As I participate in family history and temple service . . .*

Show the video “The Promised Blessings of Family History” (3:22). Invite students to listen for the blessings that await those who do family history and temple service. Consider writing the blessings students identify under the statement on the board.

- Which promised blessing stands out most to you and why?
- What are some of the ways you and your family have participated in family history and temple service? What blessings have you experienced for doing so?

You might invite students to think of someone they could ask to mentor them in doing family history. If some students are already skilled at doing family history, invite them to mentor someone else in the class. If time permits, you might also show students the family history website at [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/family-history](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org/family-history) and encourage them to explore this site for additional ideas on how to become more involved in family history.

### IMPROVING OUR TEACHING AND LEARNING

**Act on spiritual promptings.** If gospel doctrine or a gospel principle is learned but not applied, learning is not complete. We apply gospel learning when we accept a truth in our hearts and then act according to that truth. Invite students to act on spiritual promptings they receive to apply the gospel truths they learn.

Share the following statement by President Russell M. Nelson:



I invite you prayerfully to consider what kind of sacrifice, and preferably a sacrifice of time, you can make to do more family history and temple work this year. (Russell M. Nelson, RootsTech Family Discovery Day—Opening Session 2017, [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org))

Conclude by inviting students to prayerfully ponder and then write down what specific sacrifices they will make or specific steps they will take to participate more fully in family history and temple service.

## For Next Time

Display an image of a temple. Explain that since ancient times, the Lord has commanded His people to build temples. Latter-day prophets have taught that the crowning blessings of the gospel are received

in the Lord's temples. Invite students to study the preparation material for the next lesson and come ready to discuss how the Lord blesses us through temple ordinances and temple worship.



#### LESSON 20 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

## Temple Ordinances and Worship

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

### SECTION 1

## How can worshipping in the temple bless my life?

In 2019, the First Presidency shared:

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

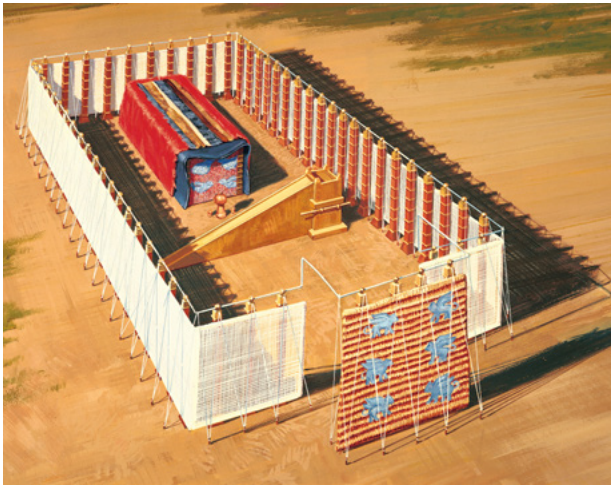
With the restoration of the gospel in these latter days, temple worship has also been restored to bless the lives of people across the world and on the other side of the veil as well. . . . A dedicated temple is the most holy of any place of worship on the earth. (“First

Presidency Statement on Temples,” Jan. 2, 2019, [newsroom.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://newsroom.ChurchofJesusChrist.org))



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





The Tabernacle (Exodus 26–28)



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



The Temple of Solomon (1 Kings 6)

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







### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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

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



### Study in Preparation for Class

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

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



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

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



### Discuss with Others

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

## SECTION 2

### Why does the Lord command His people to build temples?

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



### Study in Preparation for Class

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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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

## SECTION 3

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

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

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

Some of the gifts you receive through the temple endowment include:

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

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

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

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

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



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



### Record Your Thoughts

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

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### Want More? (Optional)

#### What can I do to prepare for the temple?

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

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

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

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

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

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

## LESSON 20 TEACHER MATERIAL

# Temple Ordinances and Worship

When the Nauvoo Temple was under construction, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “The Church is not fully organized . . . until the Temple is completed” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 416). The purpose of this lesson is to deepen students’ understanding of the significance of temple ordinances and to invite them to improve the frequency (as circumstances allow) and quality of their temple worship.

## Suggestions for Teaching

### The Lord restored saving ordinances of the temple through Joseph Smith.

Display a picture of a temple that students would recognize. Invite a few students who have enjoyed worshipping in the temple to share how they feel as they enter the Lord’s house. You might also ask how they feel when they leave the temple.

#### IMPROVING OUR TEACHING AND LEARNING

##### Ask questions that encourage application.

Invite students to respond to questions that encourage application. These types of questions can play a vital role in helping students both to see how the truths being discussed apply in their current situations and also to consider how they may apply in the future (see *Gospel Teaching and Learning* [2012], 5.1.4).

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 Kirtland Temple, this task required great sacrifices from the Saints. When the Nauvoo

Temple was under construction the Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “The Church is not fully organized . . . until the Temple is completed” (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 416).

- Why do you think the Restoration of the Savior’s Church was not complete without a temple? (You might prompt students to share some of what they learned from studying the preparation material.)

Explain that in a revelation commanding the Saints to build the Nauvoo Temple, the Lord revealed why the temple would be so important to the Saints. He explained that washings, anointings, baptisms for the dead, and other ordinances belong in His holy house. Invite students to spend a few minutes studying Doctrine and Covenants 124:31, 34, 40–41, 55, looking for how the Lord promised to bless His people in temples.

Have students report what they find. Using students’ words, display or write a truth on the board that is similar to the following: **In the temple, the Lord blesses us with essential ordinances so we can be crowned with honor, immortality, and eternal life.**

- In what ways do you think temple ordinances prepare us for honor, immortality, and eternal life?





Show a picture of Joseph's Red Brick Store in Nauvoo, and ask students to explain what they know about the restoration of the temple endowment ceremony. Invite them to review section 2 of the preparation material as needed.

- What did you learn about the blessings of the endowment from section 3 of the preparation material?

As you discuss the endowment, consider asking some of the follow-up questions listed below. Point out that Elder Bednar taught that as we talk about the temple we should not “disclose or describe the special symbols associated with covenants we receive in sacred temple ceremonies,” but that we “may discuss the basic purposes of and the doctrine associated with temple ordinances and covenants” (“Prepared to Obtain Every Needful Thing,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2019, 103).

- What is included in the gift of the endowment? (See section 3 of the preparation material.)
- What is the relationship between ordinances and covenants?
- As you studied the preparation material, what did you learn about the covenants we make during the endowment ceremony?

- Why do you think the Lord wants His people to be endowed in the temple?

Consider giving students a minute or two to share with another student seated nearby their thoughts about the following questions found at the end of the preparation material:

- What would you suggest someone do to prepare to receive his or her endowment? Why are the temple and its ordinances important to you personally?

**Temple worship invites the Lord's power and blessings into our lives.**



Remind students that the Kirtland Temple was the first temple completed in our dispensation. Its purpose was different than that of subsequent temples—it provided a place for the Lord to restore knowledge and priesthood keys for future temple worship. During the dedicatory prayer of that temple, Joseph Smith asked the Lord to give certain blessings to those who worship in the temple. Invite students to review Doctrine and Covenants 109:13, 22–26 and look for blessings they can receive through temple worship.

- According to these verses, what blessings can we receive as we worship in the temple? (Consider listing students' responses on the board and asking them to explain why these blessings are important to them. You might help students identify a principle like the following: **As we worship in the Lord's temple, He will arm us with His power and protection.**)

Discuss with students reasons that we need the Lord's power and protection in our day. Invite students who asked a family member or friend what specific blessings he or she has felt through temple ordinances and worship to share what they learned (see the invitation at the end of section 1 in the preparation material). You might also invite students to testify of the blessings they have felt through their own temple worship.

Display and read with students the following statement by President Russell M. Nelson:



I plead with you to take a prayerful look at how you spend your time. . . . If you have reasonable access to a temple, I urge you to find a way to make an appointment regularly with the Lord—to be in His holy house—then keep that appointment with exactness and joy. I promise you that the Lord will bring the miracles He knows you need as you make sacrifices to serve and worship in His temples. (Russell M. Nelson, "Becoming Exemplary Latter-day Saints," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 114)

To help students think deeply about their commitment to the Lord and their own experience with the temple, display the following questions, and invite students to ponder the questions that apply to their current circumstances. Provide students with sufficient time to think and perhaps record their impressions.

1. Are there distractions or matters of unworthiness keeping me from the temple? What do I need to do to eliminate these obstacles?
2. What kinds of sacrifices might the Lord want me to make to receive more of the blessings available through temple worship?
3. How might I make my worship in the temple more meaningful?
4. In what ways might the Lord want me to help others experience the blessings of the temple?

## For Next Time

Point out that during the next class, students will have the chance to discuss the crowning temple ordinance of eternal marriage. Encourage students to carefully read the preparation material for lesson 21 and to consider why marriage and family is so central to Heavenly Father's plan of happiness.



## LESSON 21 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

# The Doctrine of Eternal Marriage and Family

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

## SECTION 1

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

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

scripture passage that teach the Lord’s doctrine of marriage.



## Study in Preparation for Class

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

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





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

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

. . . The unique combination of spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional capacities of both males and females were needed to implement the plan of happiness. Alone, neither the man nor the woman could fulfill the purposes of his or her creation. . . .

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

The commandment given anciently to Adam and Eve to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force today. . . . Thus, marriage between a man and a woman is the authorized channel through which premortal spirits enter mortality. . . .

A home with a loving and loyal husband and wife is the supreme setting in which children can be reared in love and righteousness and in which the spiritual and physical needs of children can be met. Just as the unique characteristics of both males and females contribute to the completeness of a marriage relationship, so those same characteristics are vital to the rearing, nurturing, and teaching of children. (David A. Bednar, "Marriage Is Essential to His Eternal Plan," *Ensign*, June 2006, 83–84)



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

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

## SECTION 2

### What are some blessings of an eternal marriage?

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



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

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



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

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

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

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



### Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 132:19–20.

**President Russell M. Nelson explained:**



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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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



### Discuss in Preparation for Class

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



## SECTION 3

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

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

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

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

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



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

President [Spencer W.] Kimball said:

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

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



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

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



### Record Your Thoughts

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

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## Want More? (Optional)

### What have the prophets taught about marriage and family?

Find recent counsel from Church leaders on marriage and family:

The First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles, "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org)



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

### **What are some of the benefits of marriage?**

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

### **What does the Church teach regarding same-sex marriage?**

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

### **What does the Church teach about divorce?**

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

## LESSON 21 TEACHER MATERIAL

# The Doctrine of Eternal Marriage and Family

As part of the Restoration, the Lord has revealed His will concerning eternal marriage and family. This lesson is designed to help students be better able to explain the doctrine of eternal marriage and family and to determine what they can do to receive these blessings.

## Suggestions for Teaching

Marriage between a man and a woman has a purpose in God's plan.



Begin class by asking the following question (re-mind students to refrain from making judgmental statements about people):

- What are some of the current views and attitudes you see in the world about marriage?

Explain that just as in our day, some people in Joseph Smith's day had differing views of marriage. Invite students to recall from section 1 of the preparation material what they learned about the Shakers' beliefs about marriage.

Invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 49:15–17 aloud. Ask the class to look for the doctrine the Lord revealed about marriage.

- What did the Lord teach about marriage in this passage? (Students may identify several truths, including the following: **Marriage is ordained of God. Husbands and wives are commanded to have children. As men and women marry and have children, they help fulfill God's purpose in creating the earth.** Consider displaying or writing on the board some or all of these ideas.)

Consider explaining that the phrase “measure of man” in verse 17 refers to God's spirit children that He has prepared to inhabit the earth. Explain also that the phrase “marriage is ordained of God” in verse 15 means that marriage is decreed and established by God. In 1995 the Lord reemphasized through His prophets in “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” (Church of Jesus Christ. org) that “marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God.”

Invite students to briefly review Elder David A. Bednar's statement from section 1 of the preparation material. Ask the class to look for reasons marriage between a man and a woman is essential to Heavenly Father's plan.

- How do Elder Bednar's teachings deepen your understanding of why marriage between a man and a woman is essential to God's plan?

## The early Saints learned about the blessings of eternal marriage.

If you have a student who has been married in the temple, consider asking what it means to him or her to be married for eternity. Explain that prior to the

completion of the Nauvoo Temple, Joseph taught the doctrine of eternal marriage to a few faithful Church members and sealed them together. Invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–4 aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for what the Prophet taught.

- What truth can we learn about eternal marriage from these verses? (After students respond, display the following principle: **In order to obtain the highest degree of the celestial kingdom, we must enter into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage.** You might point out that it is only in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom that we receive exaltation.)

Point out to students that in Doctrine and Covenants 132:19, the Lord further taught that we are to “abide in [His] covenant” in order to receive the blessing of exaltation.

- What does it mean to you to “abide in [His] covenant” as it relates to eternal marriage?

You may want to emphasize that it is not enough just to be sealed in the temple. Both spouses must be diligent in their efforts to keep their temple covenants and to build a strong and lasting relationship.

Add “and abide in” to the displayed principle so that it reads, “. . . **we must enter into and abide in the new and everlasting covenant of marriage.**”

Ask students to list on the board some other blessings of eternal marriage. (Invite students to draw on what they learned from section 2 of the preparation material.)

- Which of these blessings are most important to you? Why?

## IMPROVING OUR TEACHING AND LEARNING

**Help students prepare for class.** Students who prepare on their own for class are exercising their faith in the Lord and His ability to help them have a deeper learning experience. Remind students that they can fulfill their role in the learning process by studying the preparation material and completing the learning activities. You might look at the upcoming lesson or lessons to let students know what they can do to prepare for the next class.

Remind students that they were asked in the preparation material to talk with a married couple they know who have a strong and loving marriage. They were invited to discuss what the couple have done to build an eternal marriage and how their marriage has enriched their lives. Ask a few students to share what they learned from their conversations.

Invite students to prayerfully ponder what attributes, characteristics, or actions will help them abide in the marriage covenant and create loving, righteous marriages. Provide time for students to record and make a plan to act on promptings they receive.

## God wants us to defend the doctrine of marriage and family.

Ask the following:

- Why is it important for us to defend the doctrine of marriage and family? (Students could review section 3 in the preparation material to help them answer this question.)
- Have you ever defended the doctrine of marriage or family? If so, what was your experience like?

Display the following text for students, and ask them to consider if they have ever heard something that reflects the following mind-set:

*“Why do you want to get married now? You have your whole life ahead of you. Why don’t you use this time to have fun and get ahead in life?”*

Remind students that one of the principles of acquiring spiritual knowledge is to examine concepts and questions with an eternal perspective. The following activity can help students practice this principle as it relates to questions about marriage.

Divide students into small groups, and invite them to discuss how they would respond to someone who has this perspective. Give students a copy of the following questions (or display them) to help guide their discussion:

- What assumptions may this person have that could be limiting his or her view of the importance of marriage and family?
- How could understanding marriage and family from the perspective of God’s plan of salvation help address this person’s point of view?

- What doctrine, scriptures, or prophetic teachings might you share to help this person view marriage and family from an eternal perspective?

After sufficient time, ask a few students to share what their group discussed.

Conclude class by sharing your testimony of the truths identified in this lesson.

## For Next Time

As you end class, remind students that the Lord also revealed the doctrine of plural marriage to the Prophet Joseph Smith. Encourage students to carefully read their preparation material for lesson 22 and come prepared to discuss why the early Saints practiced plural marriage.





## LESSON 22 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

# Plural Marriage

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

## SECTION 1

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

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



## Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 132:34–37.

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

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

days of the Church, its introduction was part of the latter-day restoration of “all things” (Doctrine and Covenants 132:40, 45; see also Acts 3:19–21).

## SECTION 2

### What do we know about the Prophet Joseph Smith’s experience with plural marriage?

Individuals close to Joseph Smith reported that he had told them that an angel of God appeared to him as many as three times between 1834 and 1842, commanding him to live the principle of plural marriage. “Fragmentary evidence suggests that Joseph Smith acted on the angel’s first command by marrying a plural wife, Fanny Alger, in Kirtland, Ohio, in the mid-1830s. . . . Little is known about this marriage, and nothing is known about the conversations between Joseph and Emma regarding Alger. After the marriage with Alger ended in separation, Joseph seems to have set the subject of plural marriage aside until after the Church moved to Nauvoo, Illinois” (“Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo,” Gospel Topics, topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

Beginning in 1841, the Prophet Joseph Smith married additional women in obedience to the Lord’s commandment and introduced the principle of plural marriage to a limited number of other Church members.

Eliza R. Snow, who was sealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith and later served as the second Relief Society General President, recalled:



The Prophet Joseph . . . described the trying mental ordeal he experienced in overcoming the repugnance of his feelings . . . relative to the introduction of plural marriage. He knew the voice of God—he knew the commandment of the Almighty to him was to go forward. . . . He knew that he had not only his own prejudices and prepossessions [beliefs]

to combat and to overcome, but those of the whole Christian world stared him in the face; but God, who is above all, had given the commandment, and He must be obeyed. (Eliza R. Snow, in *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow* [1884], 69)



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

What does the Prophet Joseph Smith’s willingness to obey such a difficult commandment reveal about his faith and character?

One of the reasons our understanding of Joseph Smith’s practice of plural marriage is limited is that he and others who practiced plural marriage in Nauvoo rarely mentioned it in written records. Many details of the practice of plural marriage were kept confidential, and historical records simply do not answer all of our questions.

From a Gospel Topics essay about plural marriage we learn:

During the era in which plural marriage was practiced, Latter-day Saints distinguished between sealings for time and eternity and sealings for eternity only. Sealings for time and eternity included commitments and relationships during this life, generally including the possibility of sexual relations. Eternity-only sealings indicated relationships in the next life alone. . . .

Some of the women who were sealed to Joseph Smith later testified that their marriages were for time and eternity, while others indicated that their relationships were for eternity alone.

Most of those sealed to Joseph Smith were between 20 and 40 years of age at the time of their sealing to him. The oldest, Fanny Young, was 56 years old. The youngest was Helen

Mar Kimball, . . . who was sealed to Joseph several months before her 15th birthday. Marriage at such an age, inappropriate by today's standards, was legal in that era, and some women married in their mid-teens. Helen Mar Kimball spoke of her sealing to Joseph as being "for eternity alone," suggesting that the relationship did not involve sexual relations. . . .

. . . Joseph Smith was sealed to a number of women who were already married. Neither these women nor Joseph explained much about these sealings, though several women said they were for eternity alone. . . .

There are several possible explanations for this practice. These sealings may have provided a way to create an eternal bond or link between Joseph's family and other families within the Church. . . .

These sealings may also be explained by Joseph's reluctance to enter plural marriage because of the sorrow it would bring to his wife Emma. He may have believed that sealings to married women would comply with the Lord's command without requiring him to have normal marriage relationships. . . .

Another possibility is that, in an era when life spans were shorter than they are today, faithful women felt an urgency to be sealed by priesthood authority. Several of these women were married either to non-Mormons or former Mormons, and more than one of the women later expressed unhappiness in their present marriages. Living in a time when divorce was difficult to obtain, these women may have believed a sealing to Joseph Smith would give them blessings they might not otherwise receive in the next life. . . .

. . . After Joseph's death, most of the women sealed to him moved to Utah with the Saints, remained faithful Church members, and defended both plural marriage and Joseph.

("Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo," [topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org))

### SECTION 3

How did members of the Church respond to the principle of plural marriage?



The practice of plural marriage was as foreign and difficult for most early Saints as it would be to Church members today. "In many parts of the world, polygamy was socially acceptable and legally permissible. But in the United States, most people thought that the practice was morally wrong" ("The Manifesto and the End of Plural Marriage," Gospel Topics, [topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)). The commandment to practice plural marriage "was among the most challenging aspects of the Restoration—for Joseph personally and for other Church members. . . . For Joseph Smith's wife Emma, it was an excruciating ordeal. . . . She vacillated in her view of plural marriage, at some points supporting it and at other times denouncing it" ("Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo," [topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)).

Not all Latter-day Saints were expected to live plural marriage. And some Church members who struggled with the principle of plural marriage were blessed with a spiritual witness that gave

them courage to move forward with the practice. The experiences of two such members are summarized here:

Brigham Young said that, upon learning of plural marriage, “it was the first time in my life that I had desired the grave.” “I had to pray unceasingly,” he said, “and I had to exercise faith and the Lord revealed to me the truth of it and that satisfied me.” . . .

Lucy Walker recalled her inner turmoil when Joseph Smith invited her to become his wife. “Every feeling of my soul revolted against it,” she wrote. Yet, after several restless nights on her knees in prayer, she found relief as her room “filled with a holy influence” akin to “brilliant sunshine.” She said, “My soul was filled with a calm sweet peace that I never knew,” and “supreme happiness took possession of my whole being.”

Not all had such experiences. Some Latter-day Saints rejected the principle of plural marriage and left the Church, while others declined to enter the practice but remained faithful. Nevertheless, for many women and men, initial revulsion and anguish was followed by struggle, resolution, and ultimately, light and peace. Sacred experiences enabled the Saints to move forward in faith. (“Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo,” topics. ChurchofJesusChrist.org)



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

How might these experiences of early Church members help someone who has questions about whether Joseph Smith acted as an inspired prophet of God when he implemented the practice of plural marriage?

## SECTION 4

How did the practice of plural marriage in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints come to an end?

Not long after the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1844, the Saints migrated to the Salt Lake Valley in the western United States, where Church members eventually practiced plural marriage openly. From the 1860s to the 1880s, the United States government passed laws against the practice and eventually put harsh punishments in place for those who did not comply, including imprisonment. After seeking the Lord’s guidance and receiving His direction, President Wilford Woodruff prepared a statement in September 1890 that became known as “the Manifesto” (Official Declaration 1), which ultimately led to the end of the practice of plural marriage by members of the Church.

A small number of Church members continued to enter into new plural marriages after the Manifesto was given. During the April 1904 general conference, President Joseph F. Smith issued a second manifesto and announced “that all [plural] marriages are prohibited, and if any officer or member of the Church shall assume to solemnize or enter into any such marriage he will be . . . excommunicated” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1904, 75). This policy continues today.

## SECTION 5

Is plural marriage required for exaltation?

Elder Marcus B. Nash of the Seventy has taught:



Some [misread the scriptures] to mean that plural marriage is necessary for exaltation. . . . This, however, is not supported in the revelations. . . . Eternal life is promised to a



monogamous couple who are sealed by the authority of the priesthood and who abide in the covenant—with no additional condition or requirement [see Doctrine and Covenants 132:19]. . . . The Church affirms that monogamy is God’s standard for marriage except when He authorizes or commands otherwise through His prophet. The Church does not teach that participation in plural marriage is necessary for exaltation. (“The New and Everlasting Covenant,” *Ensign*, Dec. 2015, 44, 46)

Again, we do not understand all of God’s purposes for introducing plural marriage in the early days of the Church. But Latter-day Saints today respect the sacrifices and devoted efforts made by those who practiced plural marriage in obedience to God’s command.



### Record Your Thoughts

Based on what you have learned, how was the practice of plural marriage by the early Saints of this dispensation an indication of their faith, trust, and love of the Lord?

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## Want More? (Optional)

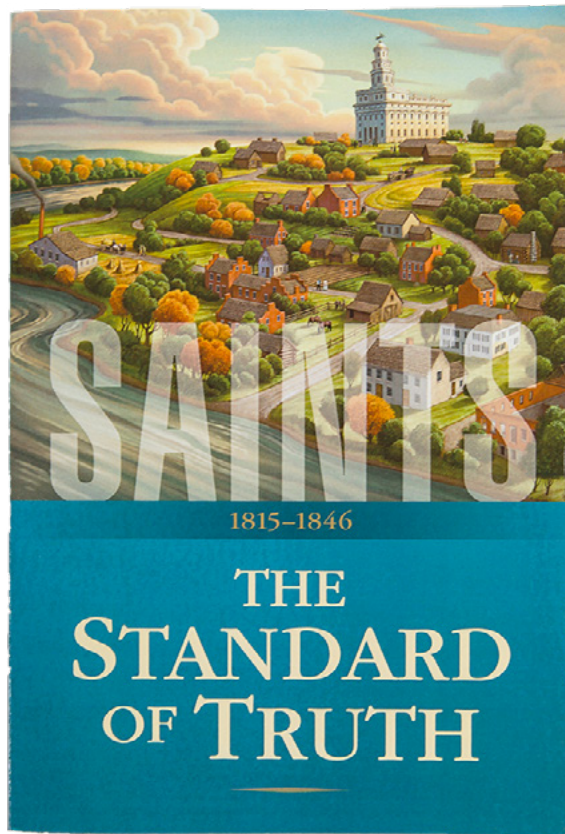
### Where can I find trustworthy resources to learn more about the practice of plural marriage by the early Saints?

As you study more about plural marriage in Church history, remember that there is much unreliable information about this topic on the internet and in many print sources. Some authors who write about the Church and its history present information out of context, or they include partial truths that can be misleading. The intent of some writings is to destroy faith.

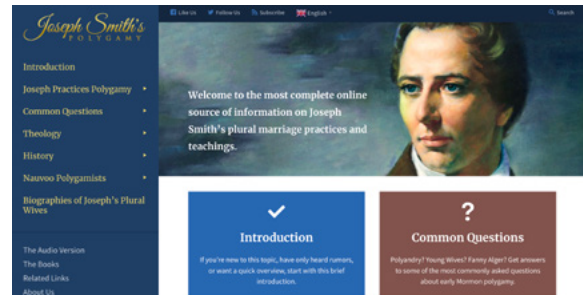
The following resources are examples of those that can help provide candid yet faithful insight into the practice of plural marriage in Church history:

- “Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo,” Gospel Topics, [topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)
- “Plural Marriage and Families in Early Utah,” Gospel Topics, [topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)
- “The Manifesto and the End of Plural Marriage,” Gospel Topics, [topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)
- “Why Was It Necessary for Joseph Smith and Others to Practice Plural Marriage?” [10:07]. In this video, Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, along with Church historians, answers a question about plural marriage during a worldwide devotional.
- “Mormon Polygamy Q and A” [7:40]. In this video, Church historians discuss plural marriage in the early Church—how the practice began, how it changed over time, and why it was discontinued.
- *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, volume 1, *The Standard of Truth, 1815–1846*, chapters 36, 40–41. These chapters give a narrative account of Joseph Smith’s efforts to obey the Lord’s command and establish the practice of plural marriage.





- Joseph Smith's Polygamy website. Though not produced by the Church, this online resource provides comprehensive and candid information on Joseph Smith's plural marriage practices and teachings from a perspective of faith.



## LESSON 22 TEACHER MATERIAL

# Plural Marriage

Marriage between one man and one woman is the Lord's law unless He commands otherwise (see Jacob 2:27–30). By revelation the Lord commanded the Prophet Joseph Smith to live the principle of plural marriage and to teach it to some early Church members. Plural marriage continued in the Church until the Lord declared by revelation that the Saints should end the practice (see Official Declaration 1). This lesson is designed to strengthen students' assurance that Joseph Smith and early Church members were acting under the Lord's direction when they practiced plural marriage. It will also help students more fully trust in the Lord as they seek to obey His will and find answers to their questions.

## Suggestions for Teaching

### The Lord revealed the practice of plural marriage.

Display the following statement by President Russell M. Nelson:



God has always asked His covenant children to do difficult things. (Russell M. Nelson, "Stand as True Millennials," *Ensign*, Oct. 2016, 27)

- What are some of the "difficult things" God has asked Church members to do in our day? (You might list responses on the board. Invite students to consider their personal obedience to these commandments throughout the lesson.)
- Why do you think God asks His covenant children to do these things?

Point out that for many early Latter-day Saints, one of the most difficult requirements from God was for them to live the principle of plural marriage. Remind students that as early as 1831, Joseph Smith prayed to understand why some ancient prophets and Israelite kings practiced plural marriage (see the section heading and verse 1 of Doctrine and Covenants 132).

Invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 132:34–37 aloud. Ask the class to follow along and look for how the Lord responded to the Prophet's question.

- Display the following question: *Why did Abraham marry Hagar as a plural wife?*
- According to verses 36–37, what principle did the Lord teach Joseph Smith about obedience to His commandments? (After students respond, write the following truth on the board: ***When we are willing to obey whatever the Lord commands, it is "accounted unto [us] for righteousness."***)
- How might the Lord's commandment for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac be compared to His commandment for Joseph Smith and the early Saints to practice plural marriage?

Explain that sometime after the Lord revealed the principle of plural marriage to Joseph Smith, He commanded the Prophet to live this principle and to teach it to others.

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

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.” (“Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo,” Gospel Topics, topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

- What were Joseph Smith’s feelings toward the practice of plural marriage when it was first introduced? (If needed, have students review Sister Eliza R. Snow’s statement in section 2 of the preparation material.)

Ask class members to consider the examples of Abraham and Joseph Smith.

- What does the early Saints’ willingness to obey such difficult commandments reveal about their character and faith?

Explain that several of the early Saints left descriptions of the internal struggle they experienced when plural marriage was introduced to them. Invite students to share what they remember from the accounts they studied in section 3 of the preparation material.

Display the following account from Phebe Woodruff, wife of President Wilford Woodruff. Invite a student to read it aloud:

When the principle of polygamy was first taught I thought it the most wicked thing I ever heard of. . . . As soon, however, as I became convinced that it originated as a revelation from God through Joseph, and knowing him to be a prophet, I wrestled with my Heavenly Father in fervent prayer, to be guided aright at that all-important moment of my life. The answer came. Peace was given to my mind. I knew it was the will of God. (Phebe Woodruff, in Edward Tullidge, *The Women of Mormondom* [1877], 413)

- How can Phebe’s example help someone today who may struggle with obeying a commandment from God? How can her example help someone

who may have questions about the practice of plural marriage among the early Saints?

Invite a student to read Proverbs 3:5–6 aloud, and ask the class to read along and look for a principle that can relate to these early Saints’ experiences.

- What principles can we learn from this passage and the experience of the early Saints? (Using students’ words, write on the board (or display) a principle similar to the following: *If we trust in the Lord with all our heart and do not rely on our own understanding, then He will guide our lives.*)

Ask students the following question:

- What do you think it means for someone who is concerned about the early practice of plural marriage to trust in the Lord with all his or her heart and not simply rely on his or her own understanding?

Explain that it is not uncommon for Church members to have questions or concerns about plural marriage. God has not revealed and does not require His children today to understand the details of plural marriage. However, all Saints are promised that they can obtain a witness that Joseph Smith was God’s prophet who received commandments and revelation from Him and that Joseph faithfully lived according to the Lord’s commands.

## IMPROVING OUR TEACHING AND LEARNING

**You can help students answer difficult questions.** Providing students with correct information and helping them locate trustworthy sources can help them think about challenging topics and explain them accurately. If students want to learn more about the practice of plural marriage in early Church history, invite them to prayerfully study the additional resources listed

in the “Want More?” section of the preparation material.

Invite students to consider times in their lives when they have trusted in the Lord and obeyed a difficult commandment—or when they have had to “lean not unto [their] own understanding” as they searched for answers to difficult questions. You might invite a few students to share their experiences. Ask them how the Lord directed their paths.

Consider giving students time to think about religious or personal questions they have. Ask them to ponder what they can do to find answers to or reassurances about these questions, to trust in the Lord, and to rely on Him. They might even record their thoughts in a journal or pray for the Lord’s help to know how to act in faith.

### The Lord revealed some reasons for the practice of plural marriage.

Explain that we do not understand all of God’s purposes for introducing plural marriage in this dispensation, but He has given us some of His reasons. For example, the Lord taught the Prophet Joseph Smith that the practice was part of the restoration of “all things” from previous dispensations (see Doctrine and Covenants 132:40, 45).

Invite a student to read Jacob 2:30 aloud, and ask the class to look for another reason the Lord has given for commanding His people to practice plural marriage. Invite students to report what they find. (Students should include in their responses that the command was given as a way to increase the number of children born in the gospel covenant. In this way, the Lord’s people “raise up seed” unto Him.)

Point out that the early Saints’ efforts to obey this commandment “result[ed] in the birth of large numbers of children within faithful Latter-day Saint homes” (“Plural Marriage and Families in Early Utah,” Gospel Topics, topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

### The Lord later revealed that Latter-day Saints should stop practicing plural marriage.

Invite a student who studied the preparation material (section 2) to recount what led to the end of plural marriage in the restored Church.

- How would you explain the Church’s current stance on plural marriage to someone?

Invite a few students to take turns reading aloud from the first and seventh paragraphs of “Excerpts from Three Addresses by President Wilford Woodruff regarding the Manifesto,” which follows Official Declaration 1.

- What did President Woodruff teach the Saints? (Students should identify a truth similar to the following: **The Lord will never permit the President of the Church to lead the Church astray.**)
- How can this truth affect the way we personally respond to the counsel and teachings of the Lord’s living prophet?

Conclude by sharing your testimony that the Prophet Joseph Smith and other early Church leaders were true prophets of God who obediently followed and taught the Lord’s commandments to the Latter-day Saints.

### For Next Time

Explain to students that as they study for the next class, they will have the opportunity to learn about the details surrounding the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Encourage students to come to class prepared to discuss their thoughts on what Joseph Smith accomplished as a prophet of God.





#### LESSON 23 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

## The Prophetic Mission and the Martyrdom of Joseph Smith

Think of people in the scriptures who were willing to sacrifice their lives to do the Lord's will. What do such sacrifices teach you about these people's testimony and conviction? As you study the mission and martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith, think about how his contributions and legacy have impacted your life.

### SECTION 1

What events led to the imprisonment of the Prophet Joseph Smith at Carthage Jail?

"Joseph and Hyrum are dead. [John] Taylor wounded. . . . I am well." These words are a portion of a message Willard Richards sent to Emma Smith and other Saints in Nauvoo just hours after Joseph and Hyrum Smith were brutally killed at Carthage Jail on the evening of June 27, 1844 (Willard Richards letter, Carthage Jail, June 27, 1844, Church History Library, Salt Lake City). Imagine the thoughts and feelings Emma and the Saints might have had while they read these words.

The Saints' growing political and economic influence was viewed as a threat by neighboring communities. By the summer of 1844, opposition to Joseph Smith and the Church had greatly intensified. Some who had left the Church conspired to inflame public opinion against the Prophet. Some Illinois citizens discussed driving the Saints from the state, while others plotted to kill the Prophet.

On June 10, 1844, Joseph Smith, who was the mayor of Nauvoo, and the Nauvoo city council ordered the destruction of the *Nauvoo Expositor* and the press on which it was printed. The *Nauvoo Expositor* was an anti-Mormon newspaper that slandered the Prophet and other Saints and called for the repeal of the Nauvoo Charter. City officials feared that this publication would lead to



mob action. As a result of the action by the mayor and city council, Illinois authorities brought an unfounded charge of riot against the Prophet, his brother Hyrum, and other Nauvoo city officials. The governor of Illinois, Thomas Ford, ordered the men to stand trial in Carthage, Illinois, the county seat, and promised them protection. Joseph knew that if he went to Carthage, his life would be in great danger from the mobs who were threatening him. . . .

. . . On June 24, Joseph and Hyrum Smith bade farewell to their families and rode with other Nauvoo city officials toward Carthage. (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 529–30)

Complete one or both of the following activities:

1. Watch the video “Ministry of Joseph Smith: Sealed His Testimony with His Blood” (1:14).
2. Study the rest of section 1.

As the Prophet traveled with others to Carthage, he prophesied of his martyrdom.



### Study in Preparation for Class

Study Doctrine and Covenants 135:4.

Joseph and Hyrum “voluntarily surrender[ed] themselves to county officials in Carthage the next day. After the brothers had been released on bail for the initial charge, they were falsely charged with treason against the state of Illinois, arrested, and imprisoned in Carthage Jail to await a hearing.

Elders John Taylor and Willard Richards, the only members of the Twelve who were not then serving missions, voluntarily joined them” (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 530).



## SECTION 2

### What happened at Carthage Jail?

Complete one or both of the following activities:

1. Watch the video “Joseph Smith—Prophet of the Restoration,” which depicts the scene of Joseph and Hyrum’s death, from time codes 0:00 to 3:20.
2. Read the following narrative from *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*:

Time passed slowly in the Carthage jail that afternoon. In the summer heat, the men left their coats off and opened the windows to let in a breeze. Outside, eight men . . . guarded the jail while the rest of the militia camped nearby. Another guard sat just on the other side of the door.



Stephen Markham, Dan Jones, and others were running errands for Joseph. Of the men who had stayed there the night before, only Willard Richards and John Taylor were still with Joseph and Hyrum. Earlier in the day, visitors had smuggled two guns to the prisoners—a six-shooter revolver and a single-shot pistol—in case of an attack. Stephen had also left behind a sturdy walking stick he called the “rascal beater.”

To ease the mood and pass the time, John sang a British hymn. . . .

[Shortly after John Taylor sang the hymn for the second time] the prisoners heard a rustling at the door and the crack of three or four gunshots. Willard glanced out the open window and saw a hundred men below, their faces blackened with mud and gunpowder, storming the entry to the jail. Joseph grabbed one of the pistols while Hyrum seized the other. . . . All four men pressed themselves against the door as the mob rushed up the stairs and tried to force their way inside.

Gunfire sounded in the stairwell as the mob shot at the door. . . . [A] ball splintered through the wood. It struck Hyrum in the face and he turned, stumbling away from the door. Another ball struck him in the lower back. . . .

“Brother Hyrum!” Joseph cried. Gripping his six-shooter, he opened the door a few inches and fired once. More musket balls flew into the room, and Joseph fired haphazardly at the mob while John [Taylor] used a cane to beat down the gun barrels and bayonets thrust through the doorway.



After Joseph’s revolver misfired two or three times, John ran to the window and tried to climb the deep windowsill. A musket ball flew across the room and struck him in the leg, tipping him off balance. His body went numb and he crashed against the window sill, smashing his pocket watch at sixteen minutes past five o’clock.

“I am shot!” he cried.

John dragged himself across the floor and rolled under the bed as the mob fired again and again. A ball ripped into his hip, tearing away a chunk of flesh. Two more balls struck his wrist and the bone just above his knee.

Across the room, Joseph and Willard strained to put all their weight against the door as Willard knocked away the musket barrels and bayonets in front of him. Suddenly, Joseph dropped his revolver to the floor and darted for the window. As he straddled the windowsill, two balls struck his back. Another ball hurtled through the window and pierced him below the heart.

"O Lord, my God," he cried. His body lurched forward and he pitched headfirst out the window.

Willard rushed across the room and stuck his head outside as lead balls whistled past him. Below he saw the mob swarming around Joseph's bleeding body. . . .

Joseph Smith, the prophet and seer of the Lord, was dead. (*Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, vol. 1, *The Standard of Truth, 1815–1846* [2018], 548–552; see also Doctrine and Covenants 135:1–2)



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

What are your thoughts and feelings as you consider the sacrifice Joseph and Hyrum Smith were willing to make for their testimonies of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ?



### Study in Preparation for Class

Study Doctrine and Covenants 135:3. Consider marking words and phrases that seem significant to you.



### Record Your Thoughts

Think about your testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the ways his prophetic mission has influenced and blessed your life. Consider recording your thoughts in your journal.

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## SECTION 3

How has the prophetic mission of Joseph Smith blessed my life?

Under the direction of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, a written announcement of the martyrdom was prepared based on the eyewitness accounts of Elder John Taylor and Elder Willard Richards. This announcement is now recorded as Doctrine and Covenants 135.

## Want More? (Optional)

### Where can I learn more about the prophetic mission and the martyrdom of Joseph Smith?



President Dallin H. Oaks of the First Presidency shared his witness of Joseph Smith's remarkable life and prophetic mission in his article "The Miraculous Mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith" (*Ensign*, Jan. 2019, 30–39).

The video *Joseph Smith: Prophet of the Restoration* (1:09:25) depicts the life and martyrdom of Joseph Smith.

## LESSON 23 TEACHER MATERIAL

# The Prophetic Mission and the Martyrdom of Joseph Smith

On June 27, 1844, Joseph and Hyrum Smith were martyred at Carthage, Illinois. Their deaths added a powerful seal to their testimonies of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ (see Doctrine and Covenants 135:1, 3). This lesson is designed to help strengthen students' testimonies of Joseph Smith's prophetic mission.

## Suggestions for Teaching

### IMPROVING OUR TEACHING AND LEARNING

**Use hymns.** Sacred music, especially Church hymns, can help students feel the Holy Ghost's influence as they study the gospel. To help provide additional insights during a lesson, you could select a hymn to sing at the beginning of class that relates to the lesson material.

### Joseph and Hyrum Smith are martyred at Carthage Jail.

Consider singing a few verses (including verse 7) of the hymn "A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief." Explain that this hymn and its message about serving the Savior was a favorite of Joseph Smith's. The Prophet asked John Taylor to sing it in Carthage Jail just before the mob attacked.

Ask students to explain what they know about the events that led to the arrest and imprisonment of Joseph and Hyrum Smith in Carthage, Illinois. (Encourage students to draw on what they learned from the preparation material.)

- How do you think the words of "A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief" may have reflected Joseph's commitment to the Savior? (If needed, you might give students a minute to review the words of the hymn as they answer this question.)

Explain that Joseph knew that he faced certain death if he went to Carthage to stand trial. Church member Dan Jones, who was with the Prophet in Nauvoo as he prepared to travel to Carthage, recalled:

I shall never forget that scene when [the Prophet] stood . . . , and looking around him, then at the city and its inhabitants who were so dear to him, he said, "If I do not go [to Carthage], the result will be the destruction of this city and its inhabitants; and I cannot think of my dear brothers and sisters and their children suffering the scenes of Missouri again in Nauvoo; no, it is better for your brother, Joseph, to die for his brothers and sisters, for I am willing to die for them. My work is finished." (Dan Jones, in Ronald D. Dennis, trans., "The Martyrdom of Joseph Smith and His Brother, Hyrum," *BYU Studies*, vol. 24, no. 1 [1984], 85)

- What do the Prophet's words and actions reveal about his character?





You might point out that Joseph Smith followed the Savior's example of love by his willingness to give his life to protect the Saints (see John 15:13).

Display an image of Carthage Jail. Invite students to recount what they know about the events in Carthage Jail on June 27, 1844, when Joseph and Hyrum were killed. (Encourage students to recall what they learned from the preparation material.)

Explain that the announcement of the Prophet's death, now included in Doctrine and Covenants 135, was taken from the eyewitness accounts of Elders John Taylor and Willard Richards.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 135:1–2, 4–6 with the class.

- What are your thoughts and feelings as you consider the sacrifice Joseph and Hyrum Smith were willing to make for their testimonies of the restored gospel?

Invite students to read the last two sentences of Doctrine and Covenants 135:3 (starting with "He lived great . . .") and Doctrine and Covenants 136:39, looking for what we learn about Joseph's and Hyrum's deaths.

- What do these verses teach us about the significance of Joseph's and Hyrum's deaths? (Students

may identify a truth similar to the following:  
**Joseph and Hyrum Smith sealed their testimonies of the restored gospel with their blood.**)

Explain that this act of sealing their testimonies with their blood permanently established their testimonies and their divine missions related to the Restoration of the gospel.

To help students better understand this truth, consider showing the video "Testimony of the Book of Mormon" (4:39) by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Invite students to think about the unwavering commitment Joseph and Hyrum showed to their testimonies of the restored gospel even in the face of death.

- How does Joseph Smith's willingness to give his life for the restored gospel strengthen your testimony of him as the Lord's Prophet?

### **Divine blessings have been made available to Heavenly Father's children through the prophetic ministry of Joseph Smith.**

Invite students to read the first sentence of Doctrine and Covenants 135:3, which teaches that **Joseph Smith has done more for the salvation of people in this world than any other person except Jesus Christ.** (You might encourage students to mark this truth in their scriptures.)

Consider asking students to share how they would explain this truth to a friend of another Christian faith.

Invite students to read the rest of Doctrine and Covenants 135:3, looking for the contributions the Prophet Joseph Smith made to help Heavenly Father's children gain salvation. Have students report what they found. You might list their responses on the board.

- What else would you add to the list of contributions the Prophet Joseph Smith has made for the salvation of the world?



Invite students to choose one of the following questions to answer. Provide students some time to record their thoughts.

- What experiences have you had that have helped you gain a testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith?
- How has your life been influenced and blessed because Joseph Smith fulfilled his prophetic mission?

After sufficient time, invite a few students to share with the class what they wrote. Conclude by sharing your testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

## For Next Time

Ask students to imagine what it might be like to be called to lead in the Church with little experience and many weaknesses. Invite them to ponder whether or not they would have faith and trust that the Lord would help them in such a calling. Encourage students to study the preparation material for the next lesson with this question in mind.



#### LESSON 24 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

## The Prophet Joseph Smith—A Choice Seer

The Lord described the Prophet Joseph Smith as “a choice seer” who would bring people to a knowledge of the Lord’s covenants (2 Nephi 3:7–8). Yet from the very beginning of the Restoration, Joseph Smith acknowledged his feelings of inadequacy. As you study this material, consider how you might respond with faith to callings from the Lord, despite your weakness. Consider also how you can respond to those who would criticize Joseph Smith because of his weakness.

### SECTION 1

What can I learn from Joseph Smith about my own ability to serve the Lord?

As a young man, Joseph Smith felt overwhelmed with his calling from the Lord. He said of himself:



I stood alone, an unlearned youth, to combat the worldly wisdom . . . with a new revelation. (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 60)

I was an obscure boy, . . . and my circumstances in life [were] such as to make [me] a boy of no consequence in the world . . . who was doomed to the necessity of obtaining

a scanty maintenance by [my] daily labor.  
(Joseph Smith—History 1:22–23)



Joseph thought it was “very strange” that “men of high standing would take notice sufficient to excite the public mind against me, and create a bitter persecution” (Joseph Smith—History 1:22–23).

Imagine the feelings Joseph may have had as he translated 2 Nephi 3 in the Book of Mormon and learned from Lehi that Joseph of Egypt prophesied of a “choice seer” in the latter days.



### Study in Preparation for Class

Read 2 Nephi 3:7, 11, 13.

In a later revelation the Lord explained one reason why He had chosen and called Joseph to be the prophet of the Restoration:

Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you, my servant Joseph Smith, I am well pleased with your offering . . . ; for unto this end have I raised you up, that I might show forth my wisdom through the weak things of the earth. (Doctrine and Covenants 124:1)

Commenting on the scripture passage from 2 Nephi 3, Elder Marcus B. Nash of the Seventy taught:



It may seem counterintuitive that the Lord would call upon the weak to accomplish a mighty work. Yet those who recognize their weakness can be moved by that very weakness to seek the Lord’s strength. Those who thus humble themselves in faith will be strengthened by Him who has all power in heaven and earth (see Matthew 28:18; Mosiah 4:9).

From the time of his youth, Joseph Smith approached the Lord on these terms. . . .

Joseph described himself as “an obscure boy . . . who was doomed to the necessity of obtaining a scanty maintenance by his daily labor” (Joseph Smith—History 1:23). He was born into a low social stratum with limited formal education. . . .

Joseph felt so keenly his lack of education that he once lamented being trapped in “the little narrow prison almost as it were totel [*sic*] darkness of paper pen and ink and a crooked broken scattered and imperfect language.” Despite this, the Lord called him to translate the Book of Mormon—all 588 pages of it as originally published—which he did in less than 90 days! . . .

Yes, a theme of the Book of Mormon—and the Prophet Joseph’s life—is that the weak who humbly seek the Lord in faith are made strong, even mighty, in the work of the Lord. This strengthening will occur even in seemingly small things. . . .

. . . There is another, more personal lesson: if we, like Joseph, will recognize our weakness and turn in faith to the Lord with all of our heart, determined to do His will, we too will be made strong out of weakness. This does not necessarily mean that the weakness is erased in mortality—but it does mean that such an individual will be made strong by God. (“Joseph Smith: Strength Out of Weakness,” *Ensign*, Dec. 2017, 55–56, 58)



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

What can you learn from the Lord calling Joseph Smith, a mortal with weaknesses, and then strengthening Joseph to do His work?

## SECTION 2

What did those who were closely acquainted with Joseph Smith say about him and his character?

The Lord declared to Joseph of Egypt that his descendants would highly esteem the Prophet of the Restoration (see 2 Nephi 3:7). President Dallin H. Oaks of the First Presidency declared:



Men who knew Joseph best and stood closest to him in Church leadership loved and sustained him as a prophet. His brother Hyrum chose to die at his side. John Taylor, also with him when he was murdered, said: "I testify before God, angels, and men, that he was a good, honorable, virtuous man . . . —that his private and public character was unimpeachable—and that he lived and died as a man of God" (*The Gospel Kingdom*, [1987], 355; see also D&C 135:3). Brigham Young declared: "I do not think that a man lives on the earth that knew [Joseph Smith] any better than I did; and I am bold to say that, Jesus Christ excepted, no better man ever lived or does live upon this earth" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 9:332). (Dallin H. Oaks, "Joseph, The Man and the Prophet," *Ensign*, May 1996, 71)

Jane Snyder Richards said of Joseph's personality and character:



[Joseph Smith] was one of the most engaging personalities it has ever been my good fortune to meet. . . . As Seer and Revelator he was fearless and outspoken, yet humble, never considering that he was more than the mouth-piece, through whom God spoke. As the Leader of his people he was ever active and progressive but always modest and considerate of them and their trying circumstances. (Jane Snyder Richards, in "Joseph Smith, the Prophet," *Young Woman's Journal*, Dec. 1905, 550)

Edwin Holden recounted that the Prophet was filled with the love of God, eager to lift and bless others:



In 1838 Joseph and some of the young men were playing various out-door games, among which was a game of ball. By and by they began to get weary. He saw it, and calling them together he said: "Let us build a log cabin." So off they went, Joseph and the young men, to build a log cabin for a widow woman. Such was Joseph's way, always assisting in whatever he could. (*The Juvenile Instructor*, Mar. 1, 1892, 153)

Eliza R. Snow wrote of the Prophet's humility and integrity:



I resided in the family of Joseph Smith, and taught his family school, and had ample opportunity to mark his "daily walk and conversation," as a prophet of God; and the more I became acquainted with him, the more I appreciated him as such. . . . In his devotions he was as humble as a little child. (Eliza R. Snow, "Sketch of My Life," *Relief Society Magazine*, Mar. 1944, 136)

Mary Frost Adams remembered one of Joseph's kind deeds:

While Joseph was mayor of Nauvoo, a black Latter-day Saint named Anthony was arrested for selling liquor on the Sabbath, which was against the law. Anthony had done so to raise money to purchase the freedom of his child who was a slave in the South. He had purchased his wife's and his own liberty and now wanted to bring their child to join them. Despite the worthiness of Anthony's cause, the Prophet said, "I am sorry, Anthony, but the law must be observed, and we will have to impose a fine." However, "the next day Brother Joseph presented Anthony with a fine horse, directing him to sell it, and use the money obtained for the purchase of the child." ("Joseph Smith, the Prophet," *Young Woman's Journal*, Dec. 1906, 538)



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

What do you learn about Joseph Smith's character from the accounts of those who knew him? What feelings and testimony do you have about the Prophet Joseph Smith?

## SECTION 3

### How should I respond when I encounter negative information about the Prophet Joseph Smith?

Even as Joseph Smith's work to restore the gospel was barely beginning, it was prophesied that many would speak against him and accuse him of evil deeds and motives. Joseph Smith recorded in his history a prophecy delivered by the angel Moroni when he appeared to Joseph in 1823. At that time, Joseph was just 17 years old.



### Study in Preparation for Class

Study Joseph Smith—History 1:33.

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles suggested ways Latter-day Saints might respond to the criticisms against the Prophet Joseph Smith:



Should we be surprised with the evil spoken against [Joseph Smith]? The Apostle Paul was called mad and deranged [see Acts 26:24]. Our Beloved Savior, the Son of God,

was labeled gluttonous, a winebibber, and possessed of a devil [see Matthew 11:19; John 10:20]. . . .

Many of those who dismiss the work of the Restoration simply do not believe that heavenly beings speak to men on earth. Impossible, they say, that golden plates were delivered by an angel and translated by the power of God. From that disbelief, they quickly reject Joseph's testimony, and a few unfortunately sink to discrediting the Prophet's life and slandering his character. . . .

To questions about Joseph's character, we might share the words of thousands who knew him personally and who gave their lives for the work he helped establish. . . .

We might remind the sincere inquirer that Internet information does not have a "truth" filter. Some information, no matter how convincing, is simply not true. . . .

We might remind the inquirer that some information about Joseph, while true, may be presented completely out of context to his own day and situation. . . .

Each believer needs a spiritual confirmation of the divine mission and character of the Prophet Joseph Smith. This is true for every generation. Spiritual questions deserve spiritual answers from God. . . .

A testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith can come differently to each of us. It may come as you kneel in prayer, asking God to confirm that he was a true prophet. It may come as you read the Prophet's account of the First Vision. A testimony may distill upon your soul as you read the Book of Mormon again and again. . . . With faith and real intent, your testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith will strengthen. (Neil L. Andersen, "Joseph Smith," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 28–30)





### Ponder in Preparation for Class

Why do you think that it is important to include a study of reliable sources along with prayer when seeking to answer questions about Joseph Smith and his prophetic mission? Why do you think that questions about Joseph Smith and his prophetic mission deserve spiritual answers from God?

### Want More? (Optional)

#### Where can I learn more about the prophetic mission of Joseph Smith?

The video *Joseph Smith: Prophet of the Restoration* (1:09:25) depicts the life of Joseph Smith.



In his talk “Joseph Smith: Strength Out of Weakness” (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Dec. 2017, 55–61), Elder Marcus B. Nash of the Seventy used the experiences of the Prophet Joseph Smith to teach principles relating to making weaknesses become strong.

You can also learn more about the Prophet Joseph Smith and details about his life by exploring the following resources:

- *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, vol. 1, *The Standard of Truth, 1815–1846* (2018)
- Joseph Smith Papers
- Joseph Smith: Prophet of the Restoration Videos

## LESSON 24 TEACHER MATERIAL

# The Prophet Joseph Smith—A Choice Seer

The Lord described the Prophet Joseph Smith as “a choice seer” who would be “esteemed highly” by his people (2 Nephi 3:7). Yet despite all the good the Lord did through Joseph Smith, the Prophet has many critics. This lesson will prepare students to respond with faith to criticisms against Joseph Smith and strengthen their conviction that the Lord magnifies those He calls.

## Suggestions for Teaching

**The Lord called Joseph Smith in his weakness and magnified him to become a choice seer.**

Display the following painting of young Joseph Smith.



Invite students to share words and phrases from section 1 of the preparation material that describe how Joseph felt about his own abilities at the time he was called to help restore the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Invite students to think about times they have felt overwhelmed by or inadequate to do what the Lord or His servants have asked them to do.

Explain that the Lord’s call to Joseph Smith teaches a powerful principle that can help us when we feel weak or inadequate in doing the work of the Lord. In the Book of Mormon, the prophet Lehi recounted a prophecy of Joseph of Egypt. Read 2 Nephi 3:6–11, 15 as a class, looking for words or phrases used by the Lord to describe a future prophet who would also be named Joseph.

- What are some words or phrases that the Lord used to describe Joseph Smith and the work He would help him accomplish?
- What role does the Savior promise to play in the work Joseph would be called to perform?

Read 2 Nephi 3:13 and Doctrine and Covenants 124:1 as a class, looking for how the Lord described Joseph Smith. Have students report what they found.

- How do you think the Lord’s wisdom is shown by calling the “weak things of the earth” to perform His work? (Doctrine and Covenants 124:1).
- What lessons can we learn from the Lord calling Joseph Smith in his weakness?

Display the following principle taught by Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and invite a student to read it aloud:



One of the great messages which flows from the Lord’s use of Joseph Smith as ‘a choice seer’ in the latter days is that there is indeed hope for each of us! *The Lord can call us in our*

*weaknesses and yet magnify us for His purposes.*  
(Neal A. Maxwell, "A Choice Seer," *Ensign*, Aug. 1986, 14; italics added)

- How could this principle help people who struggle with human failings they observe in themselves, their Church leaders, and other members?
- When have you felt the Lord magnify your abilities to do His work, despite your weaknesses? When have you seen the Lord do this for others?
- What did Joseph Smith do to receive the Lord's strengthening power? (You might invite students to review Elder Marcus B. Nash's statement found in section 1 of the preparation material.)

Give students a moment to prayerfully consider and perhaps record what they can do to invite into their lives the Lord's power to magnify them for His purposes.

### Joseph Smith's name will be "had for good and evil among all nations."

Explain that despite all the good the Prophet Joseph Smith did, he had many detractors and critics. But this was not a surprise to Joseph. When Moroni first appeared to a 17-year-old Joseph, he gave Joseph insight into his future. Invite students to read Joseph Smith—History 1:33, looking for how people would feel about Joseph.

- What can we learn from this passage? (Help students identify the following truth: **Joseph Smith's name will be spoken of for both good and evil among all people.**)
- In what ways are we seeing this prophecy be fulfilled today?

Explain that the Lord comforted Joseph during one of the darkest times of his life when he was imprisoned in Liberty, Missouri. Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 122:1–3, looking for how the Lord reassured Joseph.

- What can we learn from this passage about how the faithful will respond to Joseph Smith and his prophetic mission? (While some may ridicule Joseph Smith, the pure in heart will not turn against him but will seek the blessings made available through his ministry.)

Ask students to review the statements in section 2 of the preparation material from those who knew the Prophet Joseph Smith and to share what stood out to them.

- What feelings and testimony do you have about the Prophet Joseph Smith?

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



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. (Neil L. Andersen, "Joseph Smith," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 30)

Discuss as a class or in small groups how students might help a family member or friend who is concerned about negative comments they have heard or read about the Prophet Joseph Smith. As part of the discussion, the group may want to review Elder Andersen's statement in section 3 of the preparation material. The following questions might also be helpful to include in the discussion:

- Why do you think that it is important to encourage someone to study reliable sources along with inviting the person to ponder and pray when seeking answers to questions about Joseph Smith and his prophetic mission?
- What would you encourage someone to do to gain a spiritual witness of or to strengthen his or her witness of Joseph Smith's divine mission?

Conclude by testifying of the importance of receiving a spiritual witness from God that Joseph Smith was His prophet, called in his weaknesses and magnified by the Lord to be the choice seer of the Restoration.

## For Next Time

Ask students if they ever worry and pray about decisions that affect their future. Invite them to study

the class preparation material for next time. In it they will learn about the uncertainty experienced by the Saints after Joseph Smith's death and their remarkable faith in following a new leader into the wilderness. Invite students to come to class ready to discuss what they learned from the Saints during this challenging time.



Brigham Young looks on as the Saints leave Nauvoo.

## LESSON 25 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

# Succession in the Presidency and the Trek West

After announcing the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, one newspaper article concluded, “Thus ends Mormonism” (*Weekly Herald*, July 13, 1844, 220). With the Prophet Joseph’s death, many outside observers believed the Church would fall apart. And Church members questioned who would lead them. As you study this lesson material, look for how the Lord continues to guide His Church after the death of the prophet.

## SECTION 1

### Who leads the Lord’s Church when the prophet dies?

Complete *one* of the following options for this section:

1. Watch the video “The Succession Crisis after Joseph Smith’s Murder” (8:03), and then complete the ponder activity at the end of this section.
2. Study the following material, and then complete the ponder activity.

A feeling of gloom settled over Nauvoo with the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. During this time of confusion, several people claimed they had

the right to lead the Church. One of these people was Sidney Rigdon.

At the time of Joseph’s death, Brigham Young and other Apostles were serving missions in the eastern United States. It was not until July 16, 1844, that Brigham received a letter describing the murders of Joseph and Hyrum Smith.

When he read the letter, Brigham felt like his head was going to crack. He had never felt such despair.

His thoughts turned instantly to the priesthood. Joseph had held all the keys necessary to endow the Saints and seal them together for eternity. Without those keys, the work of the Lord could not move forward. For a moment, Brigham feared that Joseph had taken them to the grave.



Then, in a burst of revelation, Brigham remembered how Joseph had bestowed the keys on the Twelve Apostles. Bringing his hand down hard on his knee, he said, “The keys of the kingdom are right here with the church.” (*Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, vol. 1, *The Standard of Truth*, 1815–1846 [2018], 559)

On August 7, 1844, the Twelve and other Church leaders gathered in council. During this meeting Sidney Rigdon, who had become disaffected from the Church, asserted that because he had previously been called and ordained as a spokesman for Joseph Smith (see Doctrine and Covenants 100:9), it was his responsibility to “see that the church is governed in a proper manner” (in *History, 1838–1856* [Manuscript History of the Church], volume F-1, 295, josephsmithpapers.org).

After Sidney concluded his remarks, Brigham Young declared:



Joseph conferred upon [the] heads [of the Twelve Apostles] all the keys and powers belonging to the apostleship which he himself held before he was taken away. (Brigham Young, in *History, 1838–1856*, volume F-1, 296, josephsmithpapers.org)

The next day, the Saints in Nauvoo gathered to hear Sidney Rigdon make his leadership claim. After his speech, Brigham Young spoke briefly, advocating that the Quorum of the Twelve, who collectively held all the priesthood keys restored to the Prophet Joseph Smith, lead the Church for now.

As Emily [Hoyt] listened to Brigham speak, she caught herself glancing up at him to make sure it was not Joseph speaking. He had Joseph’s expression, his method of reasoning, and even the sound of his voice. . . .

Seven years later, Emily recorded her experience of watching Brigham speak to the Saints, testifying how much he looked and sounded like Joseph on the stand. In

the years to come, dozens of Saints would add their witness to hers, describing how they saw Joseph’s prophetic mantle fall on Brigham that day. (*Saints*, 1:565–66)

Wilford Woodruff wrote, “If I had not seen him [Brigham] with my own eyes, there is no one that could have convinced me that it was not Joseph Smith” (in *History of the Church*, 7:236).

With Brigham Young’s declaration concerning Joseph’s conferral of the keys and powers of the apostleship upon the Twelve and the confirming witness of the Holy Ghost, the Saints understood the will of the Lord and sustained the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as the leaders of the restored Church of Jesus Christ.



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

Consider how Heavenly Father made known His will and His love for the Saints by showing to them that Brigham Young and the Twelve were to lead the Church. How have you come to know that those who lead the Church today are chosen and called of God?

## SECTION 2

How might the Lord guide us when the future looks uncertain?

In January 1846, amid growing persecution against the Saints, the Twelve Apostles finalized plans to leave Nauvoo and go west. In 1842 Joseph Smith had prophesied “that the Saints would continue to suffer much affliction and would be driven to the Rocky Mountains . . . [and make] settlements and build cities and . . . become a mighty people in the midst of the Rocky Mountains” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 517).



Brigham Young leads the Saints out of Nauvoo.

While the Saints were preparing to leave Nauvoo, they also worked to complete the Nauvoo Temple. As it neared completion, thousands of Saints thronged the temple day and night to receive the endowment and sealing ordinances. Sister Sarah Rich observed:



If it had not been for the faith and knowledge that was bestowed upon us in that temple by the influence and help of the Spirit of the Lord, our journey would have been like one taking a leap in the dark. . . . But we had faith in our Heavenly Father, and we put our trust in Him feeling that we were His chosen people. (Sarah Rich, in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* [2011], 30)

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke of the Saints who were in Nauvoo at that time:



Their covenants with the Lord in the Nauvoo Temple were a protection for them during their journey westward, as it is for each of us today and throughout our lives. (Robert D. Hales, “Temple Blessings,” *New Era*, Feb. 2014, 4)

As persecution intensified, the Saints finalized their plans and the first large body of Saints started the

journey across Iowa in February 1846. They faced severe winter weather, inadequate provisions, and disorganization. Spring brought constant rain, swollen creeks, and mud, restricting the Saints’ travel to only 300 miles (483 kilometers) in 131 days. As a result of these delays and depleted resources, Brigham Young halted the journey and established a way station called Winter Quarters. By fall, the population of Winter Quarters had swelled to over 7,000 people.



Many were sick from malnutrition and exposure, and the faith of some was being challenged. These trying circumstances made the winter of 1846–47 among the most difficult periods of Brigham Young’s life. He felt “like a father with a great family of children around [him]” and later recalled that his responsibilities pressed down upon him like a “twenty-five ton weight” (“This Shall Be Our Covenant,” *Revelations in Context* [2016], 307–8; see also *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, vol. 2, *No Unhallowed Hand, 1846–1893* [2020], 40–44, 46–51).

Under this weight, Brigham Young pled with the Lord for guidance and received a revelation constituting the “Word and Will of the Lord concerning the Camp of Israel in their journeyings to the West” (Doctrine and Covenants 136:1). As you study the following portions of this revelation, consider

marking the Lord's instructions and promises to the Saints.



### Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 136:2, 8, 10–11, 21–22.

President Dallin H. Oaks of the First Presidency gave an important insight into the timing of the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 136. He said:



Fundamental to any effort to receive revelation is a commitment to do all we can with our own efforts and judgment. This means we need to serve and to work.

Going forward with our service and work is an important way to qualify for revelation. In my study of the scriptures I have noted that most revelation to the children of God comes when they are on the move, not when they are sitting back in their habitations waiting for the Lord to tell them the first step to take.

For example, it is significant to note that the revelation known as “the Word and Will of the Lord concerning the Camp of Israel” (D&C 136:1) was not given in Nauvoo as the Quorum of the Twelve planned the exodus from Nauvoo; . . . nor was it given on the west bank of the Mississippi River. . . . The revelation to guide the movement of the Saints across the plains was given on January 14, 1847, when the Saints had already gone about a third of the way to the valleys of the mountains. (Dallin H. Oaks, “In His Own Time, in His Own Way,” *Ensign*, Aug, 2013, 22, 24)

Consider for a minute how this insight from President Oaks may apply to your own questions and decisions that affect your future.



In early April 1847, Brigham Young left Winter Quarters with the first company of Saints. They traveled 1,031 miles (1,660 kilometers) in four months and arrived in the Salt Lake Valley on July 24, 1847. Wilford Woodruff recorded that when Brigham Young saw the valley, “he was enwrapped in vision for several minutes. . . . When the vision had passed, he said, ‘It is enough. This is the right place. Drive on!’” (in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff* [2004], 146). By October, about 1,700 Saints had settled in Utah. However, about 10,000 others still lived along the Missouri River in Iowa and Nebraska and would travel west within the next five years (see “Sustaining a New First Presidency in 1847,” [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org)).

For more than three years, the Twelve Apostles had led the Church in the absence of the First Presidency. In December 1847, the Apostles met in Council Bluffs, Iowa, where many of the Saints still lived. They gathered in a small log home to discuss reorganizing the First Presidency. “A great manifestation of the Holy Spirit was poured out upon those present,” and the Twelve unanimously sustained Brigham Young, the senior Apostle, as President of the Church (Autobiography of Bathsheba W. Smith, 12, Church History Library, Salt Lake City; spelling standardized; see also *Saints*, 2:87–89, 92–95).



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

Think about how the Lord guided the Saints as they journeyed to the Salt Lake Valley. How have you felt the Lord guiding your life? What could you focus on to receive greater guidance from the Lord?

### Want More? (Optional)

#### **What counsel and promises did the Lord give the Saints in preparation for their westward migration?**

Read Doctrine and Covenants 136 to learn more about how the Lord organized and directed the Saints in their migration to the Salt Lake Valley.

#### **How do the ordinances and covenants of the temple help fortify me?**

Watch the video “Endowed with Power” (12:17), which portrays the earnest desires of the Saints to receive their temple blessings before leaving Nauvoo.



## LESSON 25 TEACHER MATERIAL

## Succession in the Presidency and the Trek West

After Joseph and Hyrum Smith's martyrdom, many Saints received a divine witness that Brigham Young and the Twelve Apostles were to lead the Lord's Church. Under their inspired direction, the Saints journeyed to the Salt Lake Valley. This lesson is designed to deepen students' faith that the First Presidency and Twelve Apostles hold all of the priesthood keys of this last dispensation. This lesson will also help students trust that the Lord will direct their individual lives as they honor their covenants.

### Suggestions for Teaching

#### Apostles hold the keys of the kingdom.

Display the following image of Joseph and Hyrum Smith.



Explain that the brothers were martyred on the evening of June 27, 1844. The following morning, the Prophet's friend Porter Rockwell rode his horse into Nauvoo shouting, "Joseph is killed! Joseph is killed! They have killed him!" (Anson Call, *Autobiography and journal*, circa 1856–1889, 12, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah).

- How do you think the Saints felt after hearing this news?

You might ask students if they have experienced hearing the news of a prophet's death and how that felt.

- What questions and concerns do you think the early Saints had when they heard of Joseph Smith's death?
- How did Brigham Young react to the news of Joseph and Hyrum Smith's death? (If needed, invite students to review Brigham Young's reaction in section 1 of the preparation material.)
- Despite his grief at the Prophet's death, what comforted Brigham?

Display images of Brigham Young and Sidney Rigdon.



Remind students that Brigham Young was the senior Apostle at the time of the Prophet's death.



Sidney Rigdon had served as Joseph Smith's counselor in the First Presidency and felt that he should lead the Church as its guardian. Sidney called a special meeting, with the hope that Church members would approve his claim to leadership. Both Sidney and Brigham addressed the Saints.

Invite a student to read aloud the statements by President Brigham Young found in section 1 of the preparation material.

- What truth can we learn from Brigham Young's statement about the authority of those ordained as Apostles? (After students respond, write the following truth on the board: **The Apostles hold all the keys of the priesthood necessary to preside over the Church.** [See Doctrine and Covenants 27:12–13; 112:30–32.] )

Point out that in our day, when each Apostle is ordained, he is given all of the priesthood keys the Lord has restored to the earth through Joseph Smith. However, only the President of the Church is authorized to exercise all of these keys. Members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles exercise their priesthood keys under the direction of the Church president.

- What happens now when the President of the Church passes away?

If needed, display the following statement and invite a student to read it aloud:

When the President of the Church passes away, the First Presidency is automatically dissolved. The men previously serving as counselors assume their places in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and that quorum assumes leadership of the Church, with the senior Apostle at its head. . . . Throughout our history, the senior Apostle has always become the successor President of the Church. ("A Message from the First Presidency," Jan. 16, 2018, ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

Refer back to the pictures of Brigham and Sidney, and ask:

- What did many Saints experience as they watched and listened to Brigham Young speak? How did that affect them? (Encourage students to recall what they learned in section 1 of the preparation material.)

Display the following statement by Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Explain that Elder Andersen spoke these words on the day President Russell M. Nelson was sustained as the new President of the Church:



We have the privilege as Latter-day Saints to receive a personal witness that [the prophet's] call is from God. ("The Prophet of God," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 25–26)

Invite a few students to share their testimony that the current prophet is called of God and perhaps how they received that testimony. Encourage students to seek their own witness that Church leaders are called by inspiration.

### Brigham Young and the Twelve lead the Saints to the Salt Lake Valley.



Show a picture of the Nauvoo Temple, and ask students why the Saints worked so hard to complete

the temple before they left their homes and moved west. (You might invite students to read the statement by Sarah Rich in section 2 of the preparation material.)

Explain that when the Saints left Nauvoo to travel west, they had little knowledge of what lay before them. Invite a student to read the following statement by Elder Erastus Snow, an early pioneer and later a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



When the pioneers left [for the West] . . . we were seeking a country which had been pointed out by the Prophet Joseph Smith in the midst of the Rocky Mountains. . . . That band of pioneers went out, not knowing whither they went, only . . . that God had commanded them to go into a land which he would show them. And whenever the Prophet Brigham Young . . . was asked the question—"Whither goes thou?" the only answer he could give was—"I will show you when we come to it." The prayers of that band of pioneers, offered up day and night, continually unto God, was to lead us, as he had promised, unto a land . . . he had declared he would give us. (*Journal of Discourses*, 16:207)

- What do you notice from this statement about the faith of the pioneers?

Ask students to consider for a minute the journey of life they have before them and what guidance from heaven they hope to receive.

- What are some of the challenges the Saints experienced as they left Nauvoo and started their journey west? (If needed, refer students to section 2 of the preparation material.)

Remind students that during the trying winter of 1846–47 while the Saints crowded into a makeshift settlement at Winter Quarters, Nebraska, Brigham Young received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 136. Invite students to read Doctrine

and Covenants 136:22, looking for the Lord's promise to the Saints that can give us comfort as we strive to discover and follow God's will for us in our lives.

You might point out that the phrase "my arm is stretched out in the last days" represents the Lord's power and guidance being extended to His people.

- What can we learn from this verse about what the Lord desires to do for His people? (After students respond, display or write the following truth on the board: **The Lord desires to guide and help us in our lives.**)
- What are some ways the Lord guides us in our life? What do we need to do to receive such guidance? (Review with students President Oaks's statement in section 2 of the preparation material.)

Write the following on the board: **I can receive guidance and help from the Lord as I . . .**

Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 136:2–4, 7–11, 19–24, looking for what kind of people the Saints needed to be to have the Lord's guidance. Consider inviting students to list their responses on the board to complete the principle.

- Why do you think striving to become the kind of people described in these verses helps us receive the Lord's guidance and help?

Invite students to recall what Brigham Young said when he first saw the Salt Lake Valley (see section 2 of the preparation material). Ask students if they have had moments in their lives when the Lord has confirmed to them that they were doing the right thing or were in the right place. Consider inviting a few students to share their experiences.

Give students a few minutes to prayerfully ponder the following question and record any thoughts and impressions they may receive:

- What do you feel you need to focus on in order to receive the guidance from the Lord you hope for?

Conclude by encouraging students to act on impressions they received and sharing your testimony of the truths taught in the lesson.

most tragic events in Church history, the Mountain Meadows Massacre. Invite them to come to class prepared to discuss lessons we can learn from this experience.

## For Next Time

Explain to students that in the preparation material for the next class, they will study one of the



Engraving of Salt Lake City in 1853, by Frederick Piercy

## LESSON 26 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

# The Church in the West

The Saints who gathered to the valley of the Great Salt Lake and surrounding regions experienced several challenges after their arrival. These included harsh weather, crop-eating crickets, drought, and hunger. However, Brigham Young “was less concerned with raising crops and money than he was with helping his people to become a holy nation. He knew from experience that they would grow from working hard and accepting responsibility. ‘This is a good place to make Saints,’ he told a congregation of members in Salt Lake City in 1856 (*DNW [Deseret News Weekly]*, 10 Sept. 1856, 5)” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 9). Most of the Saints demonstrated great faith in the Lord during these early years, despite these trials. Sadly, this period of Church history also includes the tragedy of the Mountain Meadows Massacre, which can teach us important lessons we can apply in our day.

## SECTION 1

What can I learn from the early pioneer Saints about serving the Lord and building His kingdom today?

During the trying winter of 1848–49 when the weather was cold and food was scarce, some Saints wanted to move on to California and mine gold. President Brigham Young prophesied:



“Some have asked me about going [to California]. I have told them that God has appointed this place [the Great Basin] for the gathering of his Saints, and you will do better right here than you will by going to the gold mines. . . . God has shown me that this is the spot to locate His people, and here is where they will prosper; . . . God will temper the climate and we shall build a city and a temple to the Most High God in this place. We will extend our settlements to the east and west, to the north and to the south, and we will build towns and cities by the hundreds, and



thousands of the Saints will gather in from the nations of the earth.” (In James S. Brown, *Life of a Pioneer: Being the Autobiography of James S. Brown* [1900], 121–22)

By the time of Brigham Young’s death in 1877, Latter-day Saints had seen the miraculous fulfillment of this prophecy. Their faith in the Lord and His prophet inspired 60,000 to 70,000 pioneer Saints to immigrate to the Salt Lake Valley, where they founded between 350 and 400 communities in Utah, Arizona, California, Idaho, Nevada, and Wyoming.

The Perpetual Emigration Fund that was established to assist poor Latter-day Saint immigrants helped fund the travel of 30,000 Saints from the British Isles, Scandinavia, Switzerland, Germany, and the Netherlands. Missionaries preached the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world. The Saints consecrated their time to build temples in Salt Lake City, Logan, and St. George. Most important, the Saints left a legacy of faith, sacrifice, and unyielding devotion to the cause of Jesus Christ and His restored gospel. (See “Brigham Young,” Newsroom Topics, [newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org](http://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org).)

Choose one of the following accounts of faithful Saints who gathered to Utah in the early days of the Church. Read the account and come to class prepared to share lessons or principles you learn from it about serving the Lord and building His kingdom today.

### Lucy Meserve Smith

Read about the compassion of Lucy Meserve Smith and other Latter-day Saint women who provided relief to the handcart pioneers, in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* [2011], 36–37. Start with the paragraph that begins “Lucy Meserve Smith, for example, led a group . . .,” and read until the end of the chapter.

### John Moyle

Read the inspiring story of John Moyle, who journeyed to Salt Lake to work on the temple each week despite losing his leg in an accident, in Dieter F. Uchtdorf’s talk “Lift Where You Stand” (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 55–56). Read the section titled “The Example of John Rowe Moyle.”

Or watch the video “Only a Stonecutter” (15:00).

### Joseph Millett

Read about Joseph Millett’s willingness to give flour to a man who was directed to him by the Lord: Boyd K. Packer, “A Tribute to the Rank and File of the Church,” *Ensign*, May 1980, 63. Start with the paragraph that begins “Let me quote from the diary of Joseph Millett . . .,” and conclude with the paragraph beginning “The Lord knew Joseph Millett.”

Or watch the video “The Joseph Millett Story” (6:14).

### Charles Walker and Charles Rich

Read about the faith of two men and their families who answered the call to establish new settlements for the gathering Saints, in *Our Heritage: A Brief History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (1996), 88–89. Read from page 88, starting with the paragraph that begins “At general conference meetings, President Young . . .,” and concluding with the paragraph on page 89 that begins “There have been many hardships . . .”

## SECTION 2

### What led to the Mountain Meadows Massacre?

During the 1850s, disagreements and miscommunication resulted in growing tension between the Latter-day Saints and officials of the United States government. Falsely believing the Saints to be in



rebellion, United States President James Buchanan sent 1,500 troops to Salt Lake City to put down the alleged rebellion.

In sermons to the Saints, President Young and other Church leaders described the coming troops as enemies. They feared that the troops might drive the Saints from Utah Territory, as they had previously been driven from Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois. President Young instructed the Saints to save grain so they would have food to eat if they needed to flee from the troops. As governor of the Utah Territory, he also directed the militia to prepare to defend the territory. To avoid bloodshed, the rest of the Saints were prepared to evacuate their homes and lands and destroy them if needed.

During this time, an emigrant wagon train traveling west from Arkansas to California entered Utah. Some members of the wagon train became frustrated because they had a difficult time purchasing much-needed grain from the Saints.

Tensions escalated in Cedar City, the last settlement in Utah on the route to California. Confrontations occurred, and some members of the wagon train threatened to join the coming government troops against the Saints. After the wagon company left town, some of the settlers and leaders in Cedar City wanted to pursue and punish the men who had threatened and offended them.

Isaac Haight, the Cedar City mayor, militia major, and stake president, requested permission from William Dame, militia commander in nearby Parowan, to call out the militia and confront the offenders from the wagon train. However, Dame denied their request and instructed them not to notice the emigrants' threats.

Instead of following this instruction, Isaac Haight and other Cedar City leaders planned to persuade local Paiute Indians to attack the wagon train, steal cattle, and kill some or all of the men. Haight asked

John D. Lee, a local Church member and militia major, to lead the Paiutes in this attack. They conspired to blame the Paiutes for the deed.

Isaac Haight presented his plan to a council of local Church, community, and militia leaders. Some council members strongly disagreed with Haight's plan and asked if he had consulted with President Brigham Young. Saying he had not, Haight agreed to send a messenger to Salt Lake City with a letter explaining the situation and asking what should be done. It would require about a week for the messenger to reach Salt Lake City and return with President Young's instructions.

But shortly before the messenger was dispatched, John D. Lee and a group of Indians prematurely attacked the emigrant camp at a place called Mountain Meadows. Lee attempted to make it appear as if only local Piutes were involved. Some of the emigrants were killed or wounded, and the remainder fought off their attackers, forcing Lee and the Piutes to retreat. The emigrants quickly pulled their wagons into a tight circle for protection.

At one point, Cedar City militiamen were seen by two emigrant men. The militiamen fired on them, killing one. The other man escaped.

In an attempt to prevent news from spreading that Church members were involved in the attacks, Isaac Haight, John D. Lee, and other local Church and militia leaders developed a plan to kill all the remaining emigrants, except for small children. "Again they sought Dame's permission to call out the militia, and again Dame held a . . . council, which decided that men should be sent to help the beleaguered emigrants continue on their way in peace. Haight later lamented, 'I would give a world if I had it, if we had abided by the deci[s]ion of the council'" (Richard E. Turley Jr., "The Mountain Meadows Massacre," *Ensign*, Sept. 2007, 18).

After the council meeting, Isaac Haight succeeded in convincing Dame to rethink the council's decision, and Haight left believing he had permission

to use the militia to carry out their plan. John D. Lee approached the emigrants under a white flag of truce and said the militia would protect them from further attacks by guiding them safely back to Cedar City.

As the emigrants were walking toward Cedar City, the militiamen turned and fired on them. Some Indians recruited by the settlers rushed from hiding places to join the attack. Of approximately 140 emigrants who were part of the wagon train, only 17 small children were spared.

Two days after the massacre, President Young's reply arrived, with the instruction to allow the wagon train to go in peace. "When Haight read Young's words, he sobbed like a child and could manage only the words, 'Too late, too late'" (Richard E. Turley Jr., "The Mountain Meadows Massacre," *Ensign*, Sept. 2007, 20).

The choices of some Church leaders and settlers in southern Utah Territory led to the tragic Mountain Meadows Massacre. In contrast, Church and territory leaders in Salt Lake City resolved the conflict with the United States government through peace talks and negotiation in 1858. During this conflict—later called the Utah War—the United States troops and Utah militiamen engaged in acts of aggression but never in battle.



Speaking at the Mountain Meadows Massacre memorial site on September 11, 2007, President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency said:



The gospel of Jesus Christ that we espouse abhors the cold-blooded killing of men, women, and children. Indeed, it advocates peace and forgiveness. What was done here long ago by members of our Church represents a terrible and inexcusable departure from Christian teaching and conduct. . . . We express profound regret for the massacre carried out in this valley . . . and for the undue and untold suffering experienced by the victims then and by their relatives to the present time. (Henry B. Eyring, "150th Anniversary of Mountain Meadows Massacre," newsroom. ChurchofJesusChrist.org)



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

What are some of the lessons we can learn from the terrible choices that led to the Mountain Meadows Massacre? Read Proverbs 28:13 and 3 Nephi 12:24–25, 43–44, and identify principles that if followed could have prevented this tragedy. Consider how living these principles could prevent unnecessary heartache or tragedy in your own life.

### Want More? (Optional)

**Where can I learn more about some of the positive and faithful experiences of the early pioneer Saints?**



In the article "The Faith of the Pioneers" (*Ensign*, July 1984, 3–6), President Gordon B. Hinckley teaches lessons we can learn

from the early pioneers who settled in the Salt Lake Valley.

### **Where can I learn more about the Mountain Meadows Massacre?**

See the following resources:

- Richard E. Turley, "The Mountain Meadows Massacre," *Ensign*, Sept. 2007, 14–21

- *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, vol. 2, *No Unhallowed Hand, 1846–1893* [2020], 241–269
- "Peace and Violence among 19th-Century Latter-day Saints," Gospel Topics, topics. [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org)

## LESSON 26 TEACHER MATERIAL

# The Church in the West

The establishing of the Church in the western United States is a remarkable story of faith. This lesson will give students an opportunity to learn lessons from the faithful Saints who built their foundation on Jesus Christ and dedicated their lives to building His kingdom. It will also help students better understand one tragic event of Church history from this period that demonstrated a serious departure from the teachings of the Savior's gospel: the Mountain Meadows Massacre.

## Suggestions for Teaching

**The Saints continued to build the Lord's kingdom through faith and sacrifice.**

Display the accompanying image of a tapestry, or bring one of your own to class. Make sure students understand that a tapestry is created by weaving together many threads in complex and intricate combinations to produce a beautiful picture or design.



Invite a student to read the following statement by Elder Steven E. Snow of the Seventy, who previously served as the Church Historian and Recorder.



If you think of Church history as a quilt or a tapestry, it is the most rich and beautiful thing I have ever observed. If you examine it carefully, you are going to find some peculiar

threads in that beautiful quilt or tapestry, and if you pull at them and obsess on those threads, you will miss the wonderful message of our history. If you will step back and look at the whole quilt or tapestry, it's beautiful. (Steven E. Snow, "Start with Faith: A Conversation with Elder Steven E. Snow," *Religious Educator*, no. 3 [2013], 11)

Explain that from the early history of the Church in the West, there are thousands of stories of faithful Saints whose effort to follow Jesus Christ and build up the Lord's Church created a beautiful tapestry of faith.

Find out which students read which accounts from section 1 of the preparation material. For each account, invite a student to do the following:

1. Summarize the account he or she read.
2. Explain how the Latter-day Saint or Saints in the account showed their faith in Jesus Christ and His restored gospel.

3. Share lessons or principles he or she learned from the account.

Allow other students who read the same account to add their insights before moving on to the next account.

### **Some early Church members planned and carried out the Mountain Meadows Massacre.**

Display the accompanying image, and explain to students that it is a picture of the Mountain Meadows Massacre grave site monument built by the Church in southern Utah. Explain that, sadly, the tragedy of Mountain Meadows is a regrettable thread woven into the Saints' history.



Ask students what they learned from their reading about the Mountain Meadows Massacre. Make sure students understand that on September 11, 1857, about 50 to 60 local militiamen in southern Utah, assisted by some American Indian allies, massacred about 120 emigrants who were traveling by wagon to California. Only 17 children were spared.

- What are some of the events and choices that led to the tragedy at Mountain Meadows? (If needed, give students a few minutes to review section 2 of the preparation material.)

Consider asking students to share principles and truths from scripture that could have helped these settlers make different choices. (Some examples could include Proverbs 28:13; 3 Nephi 12:24–25, 43–44; Doctrine and Covenants 64:9–11.)

- What are some of the lessons we can learn from the tragedy of the Mountain Meadows Massacre? (Consider writing students' responses on the board.)

You might give students a minute or two to write or share how these principles could prevent unnecessary heartache in their own lives.

Explain that because some local Church members and leaders were responsible for the planning and carrying out of the Mountain Meadows Massacre,



some people have allowed this event to negatively affect their view of the Church.

- What might you say to someone who thinks negatively about the Church because of the Mountain Meadows Massacre? (Invite students to draw on what they learned from section 2 of the preparation material.)

Invite students to read and identify a principle from Helaman 5:12. Display the following statement. Invite a student to read it aloud and ask the class to look for how it illustrates the principle taught in Helaman 5:12.

James Sanders is a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and a great-grandson of Nancy Saphrona Huff, one of the children who survived the massacre. Brother Sanders shared these feelings about the massacre: “I still feel pain; I still feel anger and sadness that the massacre happened. . . . But I know that the people who did this will be accountable before the Lord, and that brings me peace.” Brother Sanders said that “learning [an] 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’” (in Richard E. Turley Jr., “The Mountain Meadows Massacre,” *Ensign*, Sept. 2007, 21).

- How is the principle taught in Helaman 5:12 illustrated in the statement by James Sanders? (After students respond, write the following principle on the board: **Building our faith on the foundation of Jesus Christ and His gospel**

**can help us remain strong despite the human failings of Church members.)**

- How can basing our faith in Jesus Christ help us when we see or learn of instances when Church members fail to live according to gospel teachings?
- What do you do that helps you build and maintain your faith on the foundation of Jesus Christ?

Give students time to think about and write down what they will do to maintain and strengthen their faith in Jesus Christ and His gospel.

Testify of the importance of living the Savior’s teachings and basing our faith on Him and His gospel, regardless of the human failings of Church members. As we do so, we can help move Christ’s kingdom forward as the faithful pioneer Saints did.

## For Next Time

Ask students if they have ever been asked about why the Church withheld priesthood authority and some temple ordinances from members of black African descent for a time. Explain that in preparation for the next class, students will have the opportunity to learn about this topic and the related revelation in Official Declaration 2 that prophets had anticipated for many years. Invite students to come to class prepared to discuss what they learn and any questions they have about this topic.



#### LESSON 27 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

## The Revelation on the Priesthood

Have you ever wondered or been asked to explain why Latter-day Saints of black African descent were restricted for a time from being ordained to the priesthood and receiving temple ordinances? As you study, identify what we do and do not know about the priesthood and temple restrictions. Look for truths that can help you better understand this topic and explain it to others in an accurate and faithful way.

### SECTION 1

What do we know about the origin of the priesthood and temple restrictions?

“The Book of Mormon teaches that ‘all are alike unto God,’ including ‘black and white, bond and free, male and female’ (2 Nephi 26:33). Throughout the history of the Church, people of every race and

ethnicity in many countries have been baptized and have lived as faithful members of the Church. During Joseph Smith’s lifetime, a few black male members of the Church were ordained to the priesthood. Early in its history, Church leaders stopped conferring the priesthood on black males of African descent. Church records offer no clear insights into the origins of this practice” (introduction to Official Declaration 2).



Elijah Able was one of the few black men ordained to the priesthood in early Church history.

During this time, black men and women were also restricted from receiving the ordinances of the temple, but they were still permitted to be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Although much is unknown about the origin of the priesthood and temple restrictions, Latter-day prophets, including Brigham Young, David O. McKay, and Harold B. Lee, taught that the time would come when all worthy Church members, regardless of race, would be able to receive all the blessings of the gospel (see “The Long-Promised Day,” *Ensign*, June 2018, 34).

Over the years, some Church leaders and members suggested reasons for why the priesthood and temple restrictions had been introduced. However, these statements were given as opinions and do not represent Church doctrine.

President Dallin H. Oaks of the First Presidency, not yet an Apostle at the time the priesthood and

temple restrictions were lifted, spoke of his feelings prior to the revelation that lifted those restrictions:



I observed the pain and frustration experienced by those who suffered these restrictions and those who . . . sought for reasons [for them]. I studied the reasons then being given and could not feel confirmation of the truth of any of them. As part of my prayerful study, I learned that, in general, the Lord rarely gives reasons for the commandments and directions He gives to His servants. I determined to be loyal to our prophetic leaders and to pray—as promised from the beginning of these restrictions—that the day would come when all would enjoy the blessings of priesthood and temple. (“President Oaks Remarks at Worldwide Priesthood Celebration,” *Be One—A Celebration of the Revelation on the Priesthood*, June 1, 2018, [newsroom.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://newsroom.ChurchofJesusChrist.org))

## SECTION 2

What circumstances led to the revelation from the Lord extending the priesthood to every worthy male member of the Church and temple blessings to all worthy members?

In 1964, Joseph William Billy Johnson of Cape Coast, Ghana, gained a testimony of the restored gospel after reading the Book of Mormon and other Church literature that had been given to him. Brother Johnson and others who joined the Church sent letters to President David O. McKay requesting that missionaries be sent to Africa to baptize him and others with whom he had shared the gospel. President McKay responded that missionaries would be sent “in the Lord’s own due time,” but until then, Brother Johnson should continue to study the gospel and help his fellow believers (in E. Dale

LeBaron, “Steadfast African Pioneer,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1999, 45–49).

Although there was no opportunity for Brother Johnson to be baptized at that time, he and a few others diligently spread the message of the gospel in Ghana for many years. Brother Johnson organized a number of congregations of believers and led them in regular fasts in which they pled for missionaries to come to their land and establish the Church among them (see Elizabeth Maki, “A People Prepared’: West African Pioneer Preached the Gospel before Missionaries,” history. ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

Like the believers in Ghana, thousands of other people of black African descent gained testimonies of the restored gospel as missionary work spread throughout the earth during the 20th century. Leaders of the Church were inspired by the faith of these individuals and desired to extend the blessings of the priesthood and temple to them (see Official Declaration 2).

President Spencer W. Kimball felt an especially strong desire to address the priesthood and temple restrictions during his time as President of the Church. He recalled:



I knew that something was before us that was extremely important to many of the children of God. . . . Day after day I went alone and with great solemnity and seriousness in the upper rooms of the temple, and there I offered my soul and offered my efforts to go forward with the program. I wanted to do what he wanted. I talked about it to him and said, “Lord, I want only what is right. . . . We want only the thing that thou dost want, and we want it when you want it and not until.” . . . The Lord made it very clear to me what was to be done. (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* [2006], 238–39)

As recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants, “The revelation came to Church President Spencer W. Kimball and was affirmed to other Church leaders

in the Salt Lake Temple on June 1, 1978” (introduction to Official Declaration 2).

In their public announcement of the revelation, the First Presidency stated:



We have pleaded long and earnestly in behalf of these, our faithful brethren, spending many hours in the Upper Room of the Temple supplicating the Lord for divine guidance.

He has heard our prayers, and by revelation has confirmed that the long-promised day has come when every faithful, worthy man in the Church may receive the holy priesthood, with power to exercise its divine authority, and enjoy with his loved ones every blessing that flows therefrom, including the blessings of the temple. (Official Declaration 2)

President Gordon B. Hinckley, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles at the time



the revelation was received, testified of what it was like to be in the temple that day:



We joined in prayer in the most sacred of circumstances. President Kimball himself was voice in that prayer. . . . There was a hallowed and sanctified atmosphere in the room. For me, it felt as if a conduit opened between the heavenly throne and the kneeling, pleading prophet of God who was joined by his Brethren. The Spirit of God was there. And by the power of the Holy Ghost there came to that prophet an assurance that the thing for which he prayed was right. . . .

All of us knew that the time had come for a change and that the decision had come from the heavens. The answer was clear. There was perfect unity among us in our experience and in our understanding. ("Priesthood Restoration," *Ensign*, Oct. 1988, 69–70)



### Record Your Thoughts

When have you witnessed the Lord guide His Church through revelation to His prophets? In your lifetime, what changes have you seen the Lord make in the way His Church fulfills its mission? If possible, watch all or part of the announcement of the 1978 revelation on the priesthood in general conference and record your feelings.

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### SECTION 3

What impact did the revelation have on the Church and people throughout the world?

At the end of one difficult day, Brother Billy Johnson felt compelled to turn on his radio at around midnight before going to bed. While listening he heard the news that the priesthood restriction had been lifted. He recalled, "I jumped and started crying and rejoicing in the Lord with tears that now is the time that the Lord will send missionaries to Ghana and to other parts of Africa to receive the priesthood. . . . I was so happy indeed." When missionaries arrived in Ghana, they found a group of people who had already embraced the restored gospel. Brother Johnson along with approximately 600 members of his congregation were baptized. "After serving as the Cape Coast branch's first president, [Brother] Johnson went on to serve as a district president, a full-time missionary, and as patriarch of the Cape Coast Ghana Stake" (see Elizabeth Maki, "A People Prepared": West African Pioneer Preached the Gospel before Missionaries," [history.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://history.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)).

For more information you can watch the video "Long-Promised Day" (8:40), which depicts the joy that Billy Johnson felt after learning about the revelation that extended the priesthood to all worthy males.





Elder Edwin Q. "Ted" Cannon Jr. baptizing a group of Nigerian converts.

As a result of the revelation ending the priesthood and temple restrictions, missionaries today preach the gospel in many countries in Africa, temples have since been built on that continent, and hundreds of thousands of people of black African descent have received the ordinances of the gospel for themselves and for their deceased ancestors. Today, Church members of black African descent make invaluable contributions to the Church throughout the world as they unite with their fellow Saints and strive to become "one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

What can you learn from Brother Johnson's willingness to embrace and live the restored gospel even though he was denied priesthood and temple blessings for a time?

## Want More? (Optional)

### How can I respond to questions about the priesthood and temple restrictions?



Read "Till We All Come in the Unity of the Faith: A Personal Essay on Race and the Priesthood, Part 4" (history.ChurchofJesusChrist.org) by Brother Ahmad Corbitt, and look for how he was able to resolve his concerns about the priesthood and temple restrictions.

### Where can I learn about some of the earliest black Latter-day Saints?

Read about the faithfulness of two of the earliest black Latter-day Saints, Elijah Able and Jane Manning James (History.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).



### How has the Church moved forward after the revelation on the priesthood?

In June 2018, the First Presidency commemorated the 40-year anniversary of the revelation on the priesthood. Watch *Be One—A Celebration of the Revelation on the Priesthood* (1:35:07), and look for how Church members have moved forward after the revelation on the priesthood. Time code 1:06:55–1:09:14 contains a special video presentation where black Latter-day Saints describe how the priesthood has blessed their lives.

## LESSON 27 TEACHER MATERIAL

## The Revelation on the Priesthood

On June 1, 1978, President Spencer W. Kimball received a revelation from the Lord that lifted the restrictions on priesthood ordinations and temple ordinances for Church members of black African descent. This lesson will help students explain the circumstances and truths related to this revelation, act in faith as they encounter difficult questions or situations, and gain a greater understanding that God is leading His Church through revelation to His living prophets.

### Suggestions for Teaching

We can approach questions about the priesthood and temple restrictions from the perspective of faith.

#### IMPROVING OUR TEACHING AND LEARNING

**Stories can strengthen faith.** “Stories can help build students’ faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ. They can generate interest and help students understand the gospel through vicarious experiences. Stories can also be particularly effective in helping students understand gospel principles that have been identified within a scripture block. By illustrating a gospel principle in a modern context, in addition to the context of the scriptures, stories can help students understand how a gospel principle relates to their lives, as well as help them feel a desire to apply it” (*Gospel Teaching and Learning Handbook* [2012], 5.5).

Display the accompanying image of Brother George Rickford:



Invite a student to read aloud the following account of a man named George Rickford:

In 1969, George Rickford, a young adult living in Leicester, England, encountered missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. George initially resisted their message, but eventually he began meeting with the missionaries. After three months of intense investigation, George awoke one morning with a conviction that the Church was true.

George was eager to share his newfound testimony with the elders, but before he could do so, they informed him that he would be ineligible to receive the priesthood if he were to join the Church because of his mixed-race heritage, which included ancestors of black African descent.

George was devastated by the news. He recalled, “I had a very hostile reaction. I became very aggressive and after some heated discussion I kicked them out. . . . I gave them a real verbal tongue-lashing about discrimination and racism and all those kinds of words.”

Once the missionaries were gone, George wept. (See Elizabeth Maki, “I Will Take It In Faith,” history. ChurchofJesusChrist.org.)

Refer students to section 1 of the preparation material. Ask them the following question, allowing them some time to consider how they would respond:

- If someone asked you why the priesthood and temple restrictions existed, what would be the main points you would want to discuss? (Consider writing students’ responses on the board.)

Invite students to reflect on questions they might have regarding the priesthood and temple restrictions. Encourage them to keep those questions in mind during the lesson and to pay attention to discussions and inspiration from the Holy Ghost that may help address those questions.

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

Today, the Church disavows the theories advanced in the past that black skin is a sign of divine disfavor or curse, or that it reflects unrighteous actions in a premortal life; that mixed-race marriages are a sin; or that 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. (“Race and the Priesthood,” Gospel Topics, topics. ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

- Why do you think it is important to avoid speculating about previously given reasons for why the priesthood and temple restrictions existed?

Invite students to recount what they know about the circumstances that led to the revelation from the Lord that lifted the priesthood and temple restrictions.

Explain that Official Declaration 2 in the Doctrine and Covenants contains the official announcement of the revelation that was received by President Spencer W. Kimball and accepted and approved by his counselors in the First Presidency and the members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in June 1978.

Invite students to read silently the first two paragraphs of Official Declaration 2 under the words “Dear Brethren.” Invite them to look for what Church leaders said they had witnessed and to report what they find.

Next, invite students to recount the story of Brother Billy Johnson and his congregation in Ghana from section 2 of the preparation material.

- How did these individuals exemplify “the faithfulness of those from whom the priesthood had been withheld”?

Ask a student to read more from the account of George Rickford, and invite the class to listen for how George chose to act in faith after he learned of the priesthood restriction:

One day, George was speaking with a close friend about his experiences with the missionaries and began teaching his friend about the Prophet Joseph Smith. He recalled, “As I told that story, I just came alive and something took over and I just radiated.”

The experience reaffirmed George’s testimony, but his concerns about the priesthood restriction still remained. As he prayed for further understanding, this message came to him: “You don’t have to understand everything about my gospel before you commit yourself to it. Why don’t you show your faith

by accepting what you've heard and commit the rest into my hands?"

Comforted by the message, George prayerfully responded, "Yes, Lord, I will. I *will* take it in faith. And thank you, by the way, thank you." Two months later, George was baptized and became a faithful member of the Church.

George wrote in 1975 (three years before the revelation on the priesthood) that he accepted the priesthood ban "in faith, without any reservation" and expressed his belief that, whatever his own condition then, God was just. "I am just grateful that the Lord's priesthood is once again upon the earth, with all its attendant blessings, authority, and responsibility. It matters less to me who has it and who hasn't, but much more how it is utilized." (In Maki, "I Will Take It in Faith," history. ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

- What can we learn from the example of George Rickford that could help us when we have unanswered questions about the gospel? (After students have shared, write the following truth on the board: **When we have unanswered questions, we can move forward in faith while relying on the light and knowledge God has given us.**)
- How can the bolded truth help someone who may be struggling with his or her faith because of unanswered questions about the gospel?

Invite a student to read aloud the following statement by Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



Faith never demands an answer to every question but seeks the assurance and courage to move forward, sometimes acknowledging, "I don't know everything, but I do know enough to continue on the path of discipleship." (Neil L. Andersen, "Faith Is Not by Chance, but by Choice," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 66)

- How has the light and knowledge God has given you helped you to move forward in faith when you have faced unanswered questions or uncertain situations?
- How might we help someone who is struggling with unanswered questions move forward in faith?

Give students time to ponder how they can apply the principle of acting in faith to their own life or use it to help someone they know. Invite students to consider recording their plan in their journal.

### Priesthood and temple blessings are now extended to every worthy Church member.

Invite a student to read aloud the third and fourth paragraphs under "Dear Brethren:" in Official Declaration 2, beginning with "He has heard our prayers."

- What can we learn from these paragraphs about how the Lord directs His Church? (After students have responded, write the following truth on the board: **The Lord directs His Church through revelation to His prophets.**)
- When have you seen the Lord direct His Church through revelation to His prophets in your lifetime?

Explain that the day after the revelation on the priesthood was received, George Rickford was ordained as a priest in the Aaronic Priesthood and received the Melchizedek Priesthood soon after. In October 1978, George and his wife, June, were sealed together with their four children as an eternal family in the London England Temple (see Maki, "I Will Take It in Faith," history. ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

- What impact did the revelation have on the Church, its members, and people throughout the world?

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

The gospel of Jesus Christ is for everyone. The Book of Mormon states, "black and white, bond and free, male and female; . . . all are alike unto God" (2 Nephi 26:33). This is the Church's official teaching. ("Race and the Church: All Are Alike Unto God," Feb. 29, 2012, [newsroom.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://newsroom.ChurchofJesusChrist.org))

To conclude the lesson, invite students to consider (or practice), based on what they learned today, how they might respond if they were asked why the Church did not ordain men of black African descent to the priesthood for a time. Emphasize that it is appropriate to explain to others that we do not

know why the priesthood and temple restrictions began. However, we can share and testify of the truths we do know, including those that have been discussed today.

## For Next Time

Explain to students that in preparation for the next class, they will study what prophets, both ancient and modern, have taught about the destiny of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Encourage students to come ready to discuss ways they can help in the Lord's work of salvation in the last days.





#### LESSON 28 CLASS PREPARATION MATERIAL

## The Lord Is Hastening His Work

President Russell M. Nelson has taught: “These are exciting days. The Lord is hastening His work right before our eyes. It is thrilling. It is rigorous. More is required from each of us—more than ever before. And more is being given” (“A Personal Invitation to Participate in Seminary and Institute,” Feb. 4, 2019, [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org)). As you study this material, look for ways you can participate as the Lord hastens His work in preparation for His Second Coming.

### SECTION 1

What is the destiny of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?

On Tuesday, April 6, 1830, about 50 people crowded in and around Peter Whitmer’s log home in Fayette, New York. There, Joseph Smith, under the direction of Jesus Christ, organized the Lord’s Church again upon the earth. Although the Church started small, its destiny is to fill the whole earth.



In Old Testament times, the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar had a dream where he saw a “stone [that] was cut out of the mountain without hands” (Daniel 2:45). This stone increased in size until it

“became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth” (Daniel 2:35). In his interpretation of the king’s dream, the prophet Daniel foretold that in the latter days, God would set up a kingdom that would never be destroyed but would stand forever (see Daniel 2:28, 44).

The Lord reiterated Daniel’s prophecy to the Prophet Joseph Smith 18 months after the organization of the Church, at a time when there were only about 600 Latter-day Saints on the earth. In Doctrine and Covenants 65:2 we read: “The keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth, and from thence shall the gospel roll forth unto the ends of the earth, as the stone which is cut out of the mountain without hands shall roll forth, until it has filled the whole earth.”

Two and a half years later, in April 1834, the Prophet Joseph Smith made a remarkable prophecy about the destiny of the Church to a group of priesthood holders in Kirtland, Ohio.

President Wilford Woodruff, who was at the meeting, recalled:



The Prophet called on all who held the Priesthood to gather into the little log school house they had there. It was a small house, perhaps 14 feet square. But it held the whole of the Priesthood of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who were then in the town of Kirtland. . . . The Prophet said, “Brethren, . . . I want to say to you before the Lord, that you know no more concerning the destinies of this Church and kingdom than a babe upon its mother’s lap. You don’t comprehend it.” I was rather surprised. He said, “It is only a little handful of Priesthood you see here tonight, but this Church will fill North and South America—it will fill the world.”

(Wilford Woodruff, in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 137)

Watch the video “The Gospel Shall Roll Forth” (2:47), and ponder how the growth of the restored Church is evidence of Heavenly Father’s desire to bless all the world.

Over 160 years later, after the Church had grown to more than 11 million members and spread over much of the world, President Gordon B. Hinckley taught:



My brethren and sisters, do you realize what we have? Do you recognize our place in the great drama of human history? This is the focal point of all that has gone before. This is the season of restitution. These are the days of restoration. . . . This is the summation of all of the centuries of time since the birth of Christ to this present and wonderful day. (Gordon B. Hinckley, “At the Summit of the Ages,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 74)

And less than a decade later, President Hinckley proclaimed:



A great miracle is taking place right before our eyes. . . .

And this is only the beginning. This work will continue to grow and prosper and move across the earth. (Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Stone Cut Out of the Mountain,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 83–84)



### Ponder in Preparation for Class

Why do you think it is important to understand and have a testimony of the destiny of the Lord’s Church?

## SECTION 2

## How is the Lord hastening His work today?

Speaking of the accelerated growth and influence of the Lord's Church, President Thomas S. Monson taught:



The reason the Church is growing today is that the Lord indicated it would. In the Doctrine and Covenants, He said, "Behold, I will hasten my work in its time" [Doctrine and Covenants 88:73].

We, as spirit children of our Heavenly Father, were sent to earth at this time that we might participate in hastening this great work. (Thomas S. Monson, "Hastening the Work," *Ensign*, June 2014, 4)

The following examples are a few of the ways the Lord and His servants have invited you to participate in the hastening of the work of salvation. Consider marking any of the principles or ideas that stand out to you, and be ready to share your thoughts about them in class.

## Gathering Israel



## Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 29:4, 7, which are parts of an early revelation from the Lord to elders of the Church.

Speaking of this gathering, President Russell M. Nelson taught:



My dear young brothers and sisters, these surely *are* the latter days, and the Lord is hastening His work to gather Israel. That gathering is the most important thing taking place

on earth today. Nothing else compares in magnitude, nothing else compares in importance, nothing else compares in majesty. . . .

When we speak of the *gathering*, we are simply saying this fundamental truth: every one of our Heavenly Father's children, on both sides of the veil, deserves to hear the message of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. They decide for themselves if they want to know more. (Russell M. Nelson, "Hope of Israel" [worldwide youth devotional, June 3, 2018], supplement to the *Ensign* and *New Era*, 8, ChurchofJesusChrist.org; italics in original)

## Sharing the Gospel



## Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 123:12, looking for what the Lord taught the Prophet Joseph Smith about many who are blinded by the "craftiness of men."

Think about the teaching in this verse as you reflect on this invitation by Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles encouraging us to help in the work of salvation in new ways:



The Lord is hastening His work, and it is no coincidence that . . . powerful communication innovations and inventions are occurring in the dispensation of the fulness of times. Social media channels are global tools that can personally and positively impact large numbers of individuals and families. And I believe the time has come for us as disciples of Christ to use these inspired tools appropriately and more effectively to testify of God the Eternal Father, His plan of happiness for His children, and His Son, Jesus Christ,

as the Savior of the world; to proclaim the reality of the Restoration of the gospel in the latter days; and to accomplish the Lord's work. (David A. Bednar, "To Sweep the Earth as with a Flood" [Brigham Young University Education Week devotional, Aug. 19, 2014], [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org))

## Ministering

During His mortal ministry the Savior taught His disciples that He "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Matthew 20:28). He ministered as He "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38). In a revelation to Joseph Smith, the Lord invited Frederick G. Williams to minister to others.



### Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 81:5.

We have similarly been called to minister. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:



I bear my own witness that these adjustments [from home and visiting teaching to ministering] are . . . yet more evidence that the Lord is hastening His work in its time. . . .

. . . May we labor side by side with the Lord of the vineyard [see Jacob 5:70–72], giving the God and Father of us all a helping hand with His staggering task of answering prayers, providing comfort, drying tears, and strengthening feeble knees [see Doctrine and Covenants 81:5]. If we will do that, we will be more like the true disciples of Christ we are meant to be. (Jeffrey R. Holland, "Be with

and Strengthen Them," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2018, 101, 103)

**Sister Linda K. Burton, former Relief Society General President, also shared:**



Imagine with me some of the possible spiritual "help wanted" signs related to the work of salvation:

- Help wanted: parents to bring up their children in light and truth
- Help wanted: daughters and sons, sisters and brothers, aunts and uncles, cousins, grandparents, and true friends to serve as mentors and offer helping hands along the covenant path
- Help wanted: those who listen to the promptings of the Holy Ghost and act on impressions received
- Help wanted: those who live the gospel daily in small and simple ways
- Help wanted: family history and temple workers to link families eternally
- Help wanted: missionaries and members to spread the "good news"—the gospel of Jesus Christ
- Help wanted: rescuers to find those who have lost their way
- Help wanted: covenant keepers to stand firm for truth and right
- Help wanted: true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ . . .

. . . It does not matter if we are not yet perfect and complete. . . . We can walk as one, as disciples, as servants with willing hearts and hands to hasten the work of salvation. As we do so, we will become like the Savior. (Linda K. Burton, "Wanted: Hands and Hearts to Hasten the Work," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2014, 124)

## Honoring the Sabbath



### Study in Preparation for Class

Read Doctrine and Covenants 59:9–10 to learn what the Lord taught His Saints about keeping the Sabbath day holy.

President M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught the following about the power of honoring the Sabbath day:



Of all of the organizational or policy changes or doctrinal training that could hasten the work of salvation at this time, we have determined that elevating the spirit and power of the Sabbath day would be most influential in drawing members and families closer to the Lord Jesus Christ. (M. Russell Ballard, in Chad H. Webb, “The Sabbath Day” [Seminaries and Institutes training satellite broadcast, Aug. 4, 2015], ChurchofJesusChrist.org)



### Record Your Thoughts

What additional evidence have you seen that the Lord is hastening His work in our day? What are

some specific ways you would like to assist more in the Lord’s work? Record your thoughts in your journal or in the space provided below.

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## Want More? (Optional)

### Where can I learn more about the destiny of the Church?

Find more information about the destiny of the Church here:



M. Russell Ballard, “The Truth of God Shall Go Forth,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 81–84.



Neil L. Andersen, “Preparing the World for the Second Coming,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 49–52.

### How can I help the Lord hasten His work?

Visit the Church’s Hastening the Work of Salvation web pages to find ideas and resources.



## LESSON 28 TEACHER MATERIAL

# The Lord Is Hastening His Work

We live in a time when the Lord is hastening His work of salvation (see Doctrine and Covenants 88:73). This lesson is designed to strengthen students' faith that the Lord's work will move forward despite opposition and to help students create a plan to diligently assist the Lord in hastening His work.

## Suggestions for Teaching

### Joseph Smith taught that the work of the Lord will move forward despite opposition.

Show students an image of the Peter Whitmer Sr. log home (see preparation material) and ask them to share what they know about the growth of the Lord's restored Church since its organization in 1830. (Students may want to refer to section 1 of the preparation material.)

- What have the prophets said about the future of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints? Why do you think it is important to understand the destiny of the Lord's Church?

Explain that in March 1842, Joseph Smith described the destiny of the Lord's gospel and His Church when he wrote a letter in response to a request for information about the Church's beliefs by John Wentworth, who was the editor of a newspaper in Chicago, Illinois. In the letter, the Prophet described the "rise, progress, persecution, and faith of the Latter-day Saints" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 437).

Display the following portion of the letter, and ask a student to read it aloud:

The Standard of Truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go

forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done. (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 444)

If needed, explain that *calumny* refers to false statements intended to damage someone's reputation.

- What truths can we learn about God's work from Joseph Smith's statement and what you studied in the preparation material? (After students respond, display the following truth: **Despite opposition, the work of God will move forward until His purposes are accomplished.**)

Explain that President M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles testified that Joseph Smith's prophecy continues to be fulfilled in our day. Display the following statement, and invite a student to read it aloud.



Persecutions have raged. Calumny and lies and misrepresentation have attempted to defame. But in every decade from the time of the Restoration forward, the truth of God has gone "forth boldly, nobly, and independent." The little Church that started in 1830 with just a handful of members has now grown to [millions of] Latter-day Saints in many different nations around the world, and we are well on our way to penetrating every continent, visiting every clime, sweeping every country, and sounding in every ear.

This is God's work, and God's work will not be frustrated. (M. Russell Ballard, "The Truth of God Shall Go Forth," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 83)

Display the following questions, and give students a minute to ponder them before they respond:

- What are some examples from the history of the Church or our present time that show that, despite opposition, God's work continues to move forward?
- How does knowing that God's work cannot be stopped help prepare you to face opposition to your beliefs?

### The Lord is hastening His work.

Display the following statement from President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, which he made while he was serving as Second Counselor in the First Presidency:



Sometimes we think of the Restoration of the gospel as something that is complete, already behind us—Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon, he received priesthood keys, the Church was organized. In reality, the Restoration is an ongoing process; we are living in it right now. (Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Are You Sleeping through the Restoration?" *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 59)

- Why do you think it is important to understand that the Restoration is ongoing?

Explain that in late December 1832, the Lord commanded the elders in Kirtland, Ohio, to prepare to "go forth among the Gentiles for the last time" (Doctrine and Covenants 88:84).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 88:73–74, 80–81 with students, and invite them to consider marking the Lord's promise and related commandments.

To help students understand this promise, invite them to read the following statement by President

Russell M. Nelson found in the introduction of the preparation material for this lesson:



These are exciting days. The Lord is hastening His work right before our eyes. It is thrilling. It is rigorous. More is required from each of us—more than ever before. And more is being given. (Russell M. Nelson, "Personal Invitation," [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org))

- What can we learn from these verses in Doctrine and Covenants 88 and from President Nelson's statement about our role in hastening the Lord's work? (Students may share an idea similar to the following truth: **We have a responsibility to participate in hastening the Lord's work.**)

Invite students to think about aspects of the Lord's work of salvation that they have learned about in this course. You might review the course syllabus or list of lesson titles to help students remember important topics. You might also ask students to share what impressed them about the scripture passages and invitations from Church leaders found in section 2 of the preparation material.

- What are some aspects of the Lord's work of salvation that we have a responsibility to participate in? (List students' answers on the board. These may include gathering Israel, proclaiming the gospel, redeeming the dead, following the prophets, sacrificing for others, ministering, providing relief to those in need, worshipping in the temple, and honoring the Sabbath.)
- In what specific ways are you seeing the Lord hasten His work in the areas we have listed?

Invite students to take a few minutes to prayerfully consider how the Lord might want them to personally participate in the hastening of His work. Give them time to write a plan of what they will do to assist the Lord. As they create their plans, you might suggest that they include specific information about how and by when they will act.

Consider writing your own personal plan before class, where you describe some things you will do (or will continue to do) to participate in the hastening of the Lord's work. Before students write their plan, consider sharing yours as an example.

After sufficient time, invite students to testify of what they have learned and felt as they have participated in this course. Briefly share your testimony and assurance of the blessings that students will receive as they continue to be active participants in hastening the Lord's work.

## IMPROVING OUR TEACHING AND LEARNING

### **Encourage students to continue toward institute graduation.**

President Russell M. Nelson has said, "Graduating from . . . institute will increase your ability to excel in the most important things you will ever do in life" ("A Personal Invitation to Participate in Seminary and Institute," Feb. 4, 2019, [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org)). Help and encourage students to complete course requirements. Encourage them to continue to enroll in institute.

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