



Introduction

The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles have established the *Teachings of Presidents of the Church* series to help you draw closer to your Heavenly Father and deepen your understanding of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. As the Church adds volumes to this series, you will build a collection of gospel reference books for your home. The volumes in this series are designed to be used for personal study and for Sunday instruction. They can also help you prepare other lessons or talks and answer questions about Church doctrine.

This book features the teachings of President Joseph Fielding Smith, who served as President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from January 23, 1970, to July 2, 1972.

Personal Study

As you study the teachings of President Joseph Fielding Smith, prayerfully seek the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. The questions at the end of each chapter will help you understand President Smith's teachings and apply them in your life. As you study these teachings, you may want to think about ways to share them with family members and friends. This will strengthen your understanding of what you read.

Teaching from This Book

This book has been designed for use at home and at church. In high priests groups, elders quorums, and Relief Societies, two Sunday lessons each month will normally be taught from chapters in the book. Because the book contains more chapters than can be covered in 12 months, ward and stake leaders may determine which chapters will best meet the needs of the members they serve.

The following guidelines may help you teach from the book:

Prepare to Teach

Seek the guidance of the Holy Ghost as you prepare to teach. Prayerfully study the assigned chapter to become confident in your understanding of President Smith's teachings. You will teach with greater sincerity and power when his words have influenced you personally (see D&C 11:21).

If you are teaching a Melchizedek Priesthood or Relief Society lesson, you should not set this book aside or prepare a lesson from other materials. Prayerfully select from the chapter those teachings that you feel will be most helpful to those you teach. Some chapters contain more material than you will be able to discuss during class time.

Encourage participants to study the chapter before the lesson and to bring their books with them. When they do so, they will be better prepared to participate in discussions and edify one another.

In your preparation to teach, give special attention to the "Suggestions for Study and Teaching" at the end of each chapter. Under this heading, you will find questions, related scriptures, and teaching helps. The questions and related scriptures correlate specifically with the chapter in which they are found. The teaching helps can guide you in all your efforts to help others find joy in learning and living the gospel.

Introduce the Chapter

As you introduce the chapter, and throughout the lesson, work to establish an atmosphere in which the Spirit can touch the hearts and minds of those you teach. To start the lesson, help those you teach focus on the teachings of the chapter. Consider the following ideas:

- Read and discuss the section titled "From the Life of Joseph Fielding Smith" at the beginning of the chapter.
- Discuss a picture or scripture from the chapter.
- Sing a related hymn together.
- Briefly share a personal experience about the topic.

Lead a Discussion about President Smith's Teachings

As you teach from this book, invite others to share their thoughts, ask questions, and teach one another. When they actively participate, they will be more prepared to learn and to receive personal revelation. Allow good discussions to continue rather than trying to cover all the teachings. To encourage discussion, use the questions at the end of each chapter. You may also develop your own questions especially for those you are teaching.

The following options may give you additional ideas:

- Ask participants to share what they have learned from their personal study of the chapter. It may be helpful to contact a few participants during the week and ask them to come prepared to share what they have learned.
- Assign participants to read selected questions at the end of the chapter (either individually or in small groups). Ask them to look for teachings in the chapter that relate to the questions. Then invite them to share their thoughts and insights with the rest of the group.
- Read together a selection of President Smith's statements from the chapter. Ask participants to share examples from the scriptures and from their own experience that illustrate what President Smith taught.
- Ask participants to choose one section and read it silently. Invite them to gather in groups of two or three people who chose the same section and discuss what they have learned.

Encourage Sharing and Application

President Smith's teachings will be most meaningful for participants who share them with others and apply them in their lives. Consider the following ideas:

- Ask participants how they can apply President Smith's teachings in their responsibilities at home and in the church. For example, you might help them ponder and discuss how they can apply his teachings as husbands, wives, parents, sons, daughters, home teachers, or visiting teachers.

- Encourage participants to share some of President Smith's teachings with family members and friends.
- Invite participants to apply what they have learned and share their experiences at the beginning of the next class.

Conclude the Discussion

Briefly summarize the lesson or ask one or two participants to do so. Testify of the teachings you have discussed. You may also want to invite others to share their testimonies.

Information about the Sources Quoted in This Book

The teachings in this book are direct quotations from President Joseph Fielding Smith's sermons, articles, books, letters, and journals. Quotations from published sources have retained the punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and paragraphing of the original sources unless editorial or typographic changes have been necessary to improve readability. For this reason, you may notice minor inconsistencies in the text. For example, the word *gospel* is lower-cased in some quotations and capitalized in others.

Also, President Smith often used terms such as *men*, *man*, or *mankind* to refer to all people, both male and female. He frequently used the pronouns *he*, *his*, and *him* to refer to both genders. This was common in the language of his era. Despite the differences between these language conventions and current usage, President Smith's teachings apply to both women and men.