

A photograph of a family of four standing in front of a large, white, modern temple building. The father, wearing a white shirt and a striped tie, is holding a young boy in a white shirt and brown pants. The mother, wearing a green floral dress, is holding a baby in a white dress. The temple building in the background has the inscription "THE HOUSE OF THE LORD - WILMINGTON TO THE LORD" on its facade. The sky is blue with some clouds.

# The Eternal Family

Teacher Manual  
*Religion 200*

*A Cornerstone Course*



# The Eternal Family Teacher Manual

*Religion 200*

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# Introduction to *The Eternal Family Teacher Manual* (Religion 200)

## What is expected of a religion teacher?

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

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

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

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

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

## What are the objectives of this course?

This course, The Eternal Family (Religion 200), is a study of the central role of the family in the plan of salvation as taught in the scriptures and the words of modern prophets. The doctrine, themes, and principles of the course are drawn particularly from “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129). In the course, questions and issues relating to marriage and family will be studied, discussed, and evaluated in the context of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This course will provide students with a better understanding of the connection between making and keeping covenants and receiving blessings in this life and in the world to come. The doctrine and principles relating to marriage and family will be identified and analyzed so that students understand how they are relevant to the circumstances of today. Students will better understand why they can trust and follow the teachings of modern prophets.

## What is expected of students?

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

## How are lessons structured in this manual?

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

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

### Introduction

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

### Background Reading

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

### Suggestions for Teaching

The Suggestions for Teaching section includes material to help you know both *what* to teach and *how* to teach it (see sections 4.3.3 and 4.3.4 in the *Gospel Teaching and Learning* handbook). Suggested learning activities are designed to help students identify, understand, and apply sacred truths. You may choose to use some or all of the suggestions as you adapt them to fit your individual teaching style and to meet the needs and circumstances of your students. As you consider how to adapt lesson materials, follow this counsel from Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



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



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

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

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

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



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

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

## Student Readings

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

## How can I prepare to teach?

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

- Am I striving to live the gospel so that I can be receptive to the Spirit in my preparation and teaching?

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

The following suggestions may also be helpful:

- Encourage students to read assigned scripture passages and articles before each class.
- Expect students to fulfill their role as learners.
- Provide frequent opportunities for students to explain doctrine and principles in their own words, share relevant experiences, and testify of what they know and feel.
- Vary the learning activities and approaches you use during each class and also from lesson to lesson.
- Create a learning environment that invites the Spirit and gives students the privilege and responsibility to teach and to learn from one another (see D&C 88:78, 122).
- Throughout the course you will find references to specific scripture study skills. Take advantage of these opportunities to help students become more self-reliant in their scripture study and more dedicated to lifelong learning from the scriptures.

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



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

## How can I adapt lessons for those with disabilities?

As you prepare to teach, be mindful of students who have particular needs. Adjust activities and expectations to help them succeed. Seek ways to help them feel loved, accepted, and included. Foster a relationship of trust.

For more ideas and resources, consult the Disability Resources page at [disabilities.lds.org](http://disabilities.lds.org) and the Seminaries and Institutes of Religion policy manual section titled "Adapted Classes and Programs for Students with Disabilities."

## LESSON 1

# Coming Forth of “The Family: A Proclamation to the World”

### Introduction

In September 1995 the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles issued a proclamation to the Church and to the world titled “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129). This prophetic

declaration teaches of the divine role of the family in God’s eternal plan. This lesson will help students better understand why latter-day prophets, seers, and revelators issued this inspired document.

### Background Reading

- “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129.
- M. Russell Ballard, “What Matters Most Is What Lasts Longest,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2005, 41–44.

### Suggestions for Teaching

#### Mosiah 8:15–17; Moses 6:26–27, 31–36; 7:16–21

*“The Family: A Proclamation to the World” was written by seers*

Ask a student to read Moses 6:26–27 aloud, and invite the class to follow along, looking for what the Lord said about the hearts, ears, and eyes of the people.

- How did the Lord describe the wickedness of the people?
- What does it mean when people’s “hearts have waxed hard, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes cannot see afar off”?

Ask a student to read Moses 6:31–34 aloud.

- If you were Enoch, what would you find reassuring in the Lord’s words?
- What do these verses teach about how the Lord empowers His prophets?

Give students a moment to read Moses 6:35–36.

- What was Enoch able to see when he washed the clay from his eyes?
- What might the clay represent? (The clay might be a symbol of worldliness. Ask students to consider what they might be able to see if worldly things were washed from their eyes.)
- How does verse 36 help define what a seer is? (Answers should include the following truth: **A seer is able to see things that are not visible to natural eyes.** Consider asking students to cross-reference verse 36 with Mosiah 8:15–17.)

To further define a seer, display the following statement by Elder John A. Widtsoe (1872–1952) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and ask a student to read it aloud:



"A seer is one who sees with spiritual eyes. He perceives the meaning of that which seems obscure to others; therefore he is an interpreter and clarifier of eternal truth. ... He is one who sees, who walks in the Lord's light with open eyes [see Mosiah 8:15–17]" (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, arr. G. Homer Durham [1960], 258).

Suggest that students write some of this definition in their scriptures next to Moses 6:35–36. Explain that seers are also prophets.

Summarize Moses 7:16–21 to help students understand what happened to those who accepted Enoch as a seer and followed his words.

- How do these verses illustrate the importance of giving heed to modern prophets and seers? (Make sure students understand the following doctrine: **Prophets help us see things from God's perspective, and we are blessed as we trust their words.**)

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



"Brothers and sisters, this year marks the 10th anniversary of the proclamation to the world on the family, which was issued by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1995 [see 'The Family: A Proclamation to the World,' *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129]. It was then and is now a clarion call to protect and strengthen families. ...

"The proclamation is a prophetic document, not only because it was issued by prophets but because it was ahead of its time. It warns against many of the very things that have threatened and undermined families during the last decade and calls for the priority and the emphasis families need if they are to survive in an environment that seems ever more toxic to traditional marriage and to parent-child relationships.

"The proclamation's clear and simple language stands in stark contrast to the confused and convoluted notions of a society that cannot even agree on a definition of family" ("What Matters Most Is What Lasts Longest," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2005, 41).

- What do you think Elder Ballard meant when he said that the family proclamation was "ahead of its time"?
- How does the family proclamation confirm your belief that the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles are prophets, seers, and revelators?

Testify that because Heavenly Father loves us and wants us to become like Him, He sends us prophets and seers.

## **"The Family: A Proclamation to the World"**

### *Coming forth of the family proclamation*

Make sure each student has access to a copy of "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" ([lds.org/topics/family-proclamation](http://lds.org/topics/family-proclamation)). (You may need to provide a print copy for students who need it.) Encourage students to bring a print or digital copy of the family proclamation to each class session throughout the course. Explain that "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" was first presented to the Church by President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) on September 23, 1995, at a general Relief Society meeting.

- What does the title tell us about the intended audience of this proclamation?
- Why do you think this proclamation was issued to the entire world rather than just to Church members? (As students respond, write the following truth on the board: **God calls prophets to declare His truths to all His children.**)

Explain that since the Church was organized, Church leaders have issued only five proclamations. One was issued by the First Presidency, one by the Quorum of the Twelve, and the others by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve together. Proclamations are reserved for statements of great importance. (If students ask about these five proclamations, refer them to *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. [1992], "Proclamations of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles," 3:1151, [eom.byu.edu](http://eom.byu.edu).)

Tell students that before reading the family proclamation, President Hinckley expressed some reasons why Church leaders felt impressed to publish this important document. Display the following statement by President Hinckley, and invite a student to read it:



"I need not remind you that the world we are in is a world of turmoil, of shifting values. Shrill voices call out for one thing or another in betrayal of time-tested standards of behavior. The moral moorings of our society have been badly shaken" ("Stand Strong against the Wiles of the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 99).

- What do you think President Hinckley meant when he said that "the moral moorings of our society have been badly shaken"? (You might want to point out that moorings are ropes or chains that hold objects in place.)
- How would you describe what has happened to society's "moral moorings" since 1995, when President Hinckley spoke about serious moral decline?

Display the following paragraph from President Hinckley's address. Give students a moment to read it and note words and phrases that further explain the problems that Church leaders were seeing in the world and the reasons they issued this proclamation.



"With so much of sophistry that is passed off as truth, with so much of deception concerning standards and values, with so much of allurement and enticement to take on the slow stain of the world, we have felt to warn and forewarn. In furtherance of this we of the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles now issue a proclamation to the Church and to the world as a declaration and reaffirmation of standards, doctrines, and practices relative to the family which the prophets, seers, and revelators of this church have repeatedly stated throughout its history" ("Stand Strong against the Wiles of the World," 100).

As students share what they identified, write their responses on the board. The board might look like this:

***What problems did Church leaders see in the world?***

*Sophistry passed off as truth*

*Deception concerning standards and values*

*Allurement and enticement to be like the world*

***What are some reasons Church leaders issued this proclamation?***

*To warn and forewarn*

*To declare and reaffirm standards, doctrines, and practices taught by current and former Church leaders*

- What is "sophistry"? (Sophistry is false reasoning that is presented as truth.) How have you seen false ideas taught as truth in connection with the family? (You might refer to D&C 89:4 as an example of sophistry.)
- What can we learn about the responsibilities of latter-day prophets and apostles from President Hinckley's statement? (Student responses should include the following truth: **Prophets have a sacred responsibility to declare the Lord's "standards, doctrines, and practices relative to the family."**)

Assign students to take a few minutes to look over the family proclamation and identify some of the answers it provides to modern questions about the family. After sufficient time, ask students to share what they found. Because other lessons cover the proclamation in detail, do not spend a lot of time on this activity.

Testify of the following truths: The family proclamation is full of inspired answers to society's problems. The proclamation is a firm anchor for individuals and families in a world of shifting values.

Explain that after President Hinckley read the family proclamation, he declared:



"We commend to all a careful, thoughtful, and prayerful reading of this proclamation. The strength of any nation is rooted within the walls of its homes. We urge our people everywhere to strengthen their families in conformity with these time-honored values" ("Stand Strong against the Wiles of the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 101).

- What does it mean to you to prayerfully read the family proclamation?
- In what ways have the principles found in the family proclamation influenced your feelings about marriage and family?

Help students consider and share how they might apply President Hinckley's encouragement to learn and apply the doctrines and principles found in the family proclamation (for example, memorizing parts of the proclamation). Write the students' responses on the board, and invite them to prayerfully consider how they can strengthen themselves and their families by applying "these time-honored values."

## Student Readings

- Ephesians 4:11–14; Mosiah 8:15–17; Moses 6:26–39; 7:16–21.
- "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129, [lds.org/topics/family-proclamation](http://lds.org/topics/family-proclamation).
- M. Russell Ballard, "What Matters Most Is What Lasts Longest," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2005, 41–44.

## LESSON 2

# Prophets and Apostles Solemnly Proclaim

### Introduction

"The Family: A Proclamation to the World" begins with this statement: "We, the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly proclaim ..." (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129). Prophets in every dispensation have a

responsibility to declare the will of the Lord and to warn of the consequences of sin. This lesson will help students to understand prophets' role as watchmen who warn us of foreseen calamities.

### Background Reading

- M. Russell Ballard, "Stay in the Boat and Hold On!" *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 89–92.
- Henry B. Eyring, "Finding Safety in Counsel," *Ensign*, May 1997, 24–26.
- Carol F. McConkie, "Live according to the Words of the Prophets," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 77–79.

### Suggestions for Teaching

#### Ezekiel 33:1–7; Doctrine and Covenants 1:4–5, 11, 14

##### *Watchmen on the tower*



Show students the picture of a watchtower, and ask them if they can identify the structure in the image. Explain that the structure is a replica of an ancient watchtower. (As an alternative approach, if available in your language, show the first minute of the video "Watchman on the Tower," [lds.org/media-library](https://www.lds.org/media-library).) Ask students what kinds of things watchmen might look for and why it is important for them to perform their duties.



Invite students to read Ezekiel 33:1–3 and identify a watchman's responsibility.

- What is the responsibility of the watchman? (To warn people of approaching danger.)

Ask a student to read Ezekiel 33:4–7 aloud.

- What duty did the Lord assign to Ezekiel?
- How are prophets like watchmen on a tower? (It may be helpful for students to read Doctrine and Covenants 1:4–5, 11, 14 to help them understand that modern prophets serve as watchmen. You might suggest that students cross-



reference these verses to Ezekiel 33:4–7. Consider pointing out that Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles declared, “As Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is our duty to be watchmen on the tower” [“Beware of False Prophets and False Teachers,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 62].)

Testify of the following doctrine: **Heavenly Father has called latter-day prophets to warn us of approaching danger.**

To reinforce this doctrine, display the following statement by President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency, and have a student read it aloud:



“There seems to be no end to the Savior’s desire to lead us to safety. And there is constancy in the way He shows us the path. He calls by more than one means so that it will reach those willing to accept it. And those means always include sending the message by the mouths of His prophets, whenever people have qualified to have the prophets of God among them. Those authorized servants are always charged with warning the people, telling them the way to safety”

(“Finding Safety in Counsel,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 24).

- When have you felt protected by following prophetic counsel?
- What counsel have you heard from modern apostles and prophets that can bring spiritual protection to families?
- In what ways is the family proclamation a voice of warning from our Father in Heaven?

### Amos 3:6–7

*Prophets and apostles help us understand the Lord’s perspective on the family*

Share the following statement by Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Ask students to look for ways in which prophets become aware of dangers in today’s world.



“I have heard that some people think the Church leaders live in a ‘bubble.’ What they forget is that we are men and women of experience, and we have lived our lives in so many places and worked with many people from different backgrounds. Our current assignments literally take us around the globe, where we meet the political, religious, business, and humanitarian leaders of the world. Although we have visited [leaders in] the White House in Washington, D.C., and leaders of nations [and religions] throughout the world, we have also visited the most humble [families and people] on earth. ...

“When you thoughtfully consider our lives and ministry, you will most likely agree that we see and experience the world in ways few others do. You will realize that we live less in a ‘bubble’ than most people. ...

“... There is something about the individual and combined wisdom of the [Church leaders] that should provide some comfort. We have experienced it all, including the consequences of different public laws and policies, disappointments, tragedies, and deaths in our own families. We are not out of touch with your lives” (“Stay in the Boat and Hold On!” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 90).

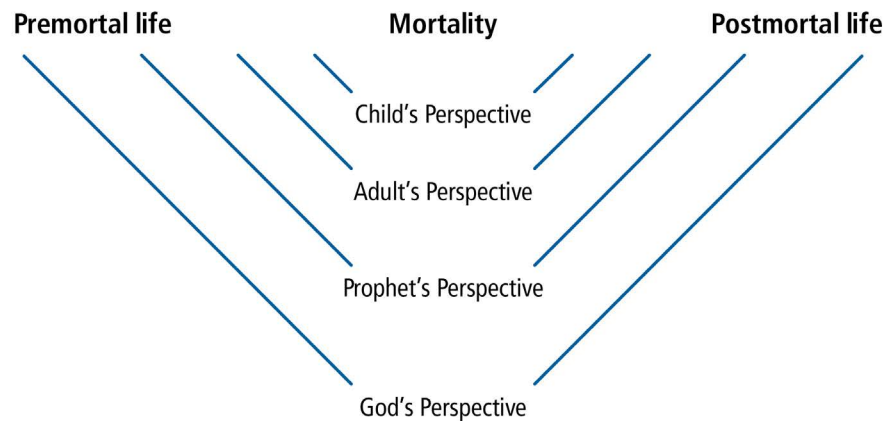
- How might Church leaders' vast experiences help them in their role as watchmen?

Explain that prophets have access to something far more important than life experience to help them fulfill their divinely given duties. Ask a student to read Amos 3:6–7 aloud. Point out to students that the Joseph Smith Translation changes the word “done” to “known” in verse 6 and the word “but” to “until” in verse 7 (see the footnotes to these two verses). This discussion may be an excellent opportunity for you to encourage students to use the footnotes during their personal scripture study.

- What does Amos 3:6–7 teach about prophets?

Share the following definition with the students: A prophet is “a person who has been called by and speaks for God. As a messenger of God, a prophet receives commandments, prophecies, and revelations from God. ... A prophet denounces sin and foretells its consequences” (Guide to the Scriptures, “Prophet,” scriptures.lds.org).

Copy the following diagram onto the board:



Allow students a few moments to ponder and discuss the diagram. You may want to explain that the diagram illustrates how God's perspective on the family encompasses premortal, mortal, and postmortal life. Through revelation, prophets receive a wider perspective, and they in turn help us increase our perspective and understanding.

- How does this diagram illustrate why we would be wise to study the family proclamation? (Write the following on the board: **By studying the family proclamation, we can learn Heavenly Father's perspective on the family.**)

Ask students to take out their copies of “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.” Emphasize the opening phrase: “We, the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly proclaim. ...” Give students a few minutes to search the family proclamation, looking for evidence that God's perspective on marriage and family is different

from the world's. Invite students to share what they found, and list student responses on the board.

### Doctrine and Covenants 90:1–5

*Following the counsel of the prophets in the family proclamation will keep us safe*

Invite students to search Doctrine and Covenants 90:1–3 to identify what the Lord had given to the Prophet Joseph Smith.

- What did the Lord give to Joseph Smith? (The keys of the kingdom, which represent the rights of presidency, or the authority to direct God's kingdom on the earth.)
- Who holds those same keys today? (Each member of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.)

Invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 90:4–5 aloud. Ask the class to look for what the Lord promised would come to the Church through the Prophet. (The Lord said the Church would receive "oracles." Tell students that "oracles" means "revelations.")

- What warning did the Lord give the Saints in verse 5?
- What principle can we learn from this warning? (Responses should show understanding of the following principle: **If we treat lightly the revelations God gives us through His prophets, we will stumble and fall.** Consider writing this principle on the board.)

Display the following statements by Sister Carol F. McConkie of the Young Women general presidency and Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



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"We may choose to ignore, trifle with, trample upon, or rebel against the words of Christ spoken by His ordained servants. But the Savior taught that those who do so will be cut off from His covenant people [see 3 Nephi 20:23]" (Carol F. McConkie, "Live according to the Words of the Prophets," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 79).



"I have discovered in my ministry that those who have become lost [and] confused are typically those who have most often ... forgotten that when the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve speak with a united voice, it is the voice of the Lord for that time. The Lord reminds us, 'Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same' [D&C 1:38]" (M. Russell Ballard, "Stay in the Boat and Hold On!" 90).

- What might be some indications that someone is treating lightly the counsel found in the family proclamation?

- What blessings have you or others received by heeding the counsel in the family proclamation?
- What thoughts and feelings do you have regarding latter-day prophets that you could share with the class?

Testify that the family proclamation is an inspired declaration from the united voice of fifteen prophets, seers, and revelators. Encourage students to take the opportunity throughout this course to pray for a deeper testimony of the truths contained in the family proclamation.

### **Student Readings**

- Ezekiel 33:1–7; Amos 3:6–7; Doctrine and Covenants 1:4–5, 11, 14, 37–38; 90:1–5; 124:125–126.
- Henry B. Eyring, “Finding Safety in Counsel,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 24–26.

## LESSON 3

# Our Divine Potential

### Introduction

Heavenly Father has provided a plan that enables us to return to His presence and become like Him. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf taught: “We were His children before we came to this world, and we will be His children forevermore. This basic truth should change the way we look at ourselves, our

brothers and sisters, and life itself” (“Four Titles,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 58). As students come to better understand their divine potential, they are more likely to appropriately deal with challenges they face in mortality.

### Background Reading

- Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Four Titles,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 58–61.
- Gospel Topics, “Becoming Like God,” [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics).

### Suggestions for Teaching

**Genesis 1:27; Isaiah 55:8–9; Acts 17:29; Hebrews 12:9; 1 John 3:1; 4:8–9; 1 Nephi 9:6; 2 Nephi 9:20; Moroni 8:18; Doctrine and Covenants 76:4; 88:41; 130:22**

#### *We are children of God*

Invite students to imagine that a nonmember friend has asked them what our Church believes Heavenly Father is like. Ask students to briefly share how they might respond.

Write the following sets of scriptures on the board, or distribute them on a handout:

*Genesis 1:27; Doctrine and Covenants 130:22*

*1 Nephi 9:6; 2 Nephi 9:20*

*Isaiah 55:8–9; Doctrine and Covenants 88:41*

*1 John 3:1; 4:8–9*

*Moroni 8:18; Doctrine and Covenants 76:4*

*Acts 17:29; Hebrews 12:9*

Assign students to study several of these scripture sets and identify what they teach about our Father in Heaven. Ensure that each scripture set is assigned. After sufficient time, invite students to share how they might use one or more of these scriptures to explain what they know or believe about Heavenly Father.

- How can knowing these attributes of Heavenly Father help you to worship Him?

- How does knowing that Heavenly Father is a real being who has a glorified, resurrected body of flesh and bones and is the Father of your spirit affect your relationship with Him?
- Why is it helpful when worshipping God to remember that He is the Father of our spirits? (As part of the discussion, emphasize that because God is the Father of our spirits, our divine potential is to become like Him. It may also be helpful to share the following statement issued by the First Presidency in 1909, under the direction of President Joseph F. Smith [1838–1918]: “All men and women are in the similitude of the universal Father and Mother and are literally the sons and daughters of Deity” [“Gospel Classics: The Origin of Man,” *Ensign*, Feb. 2002, 29].)

Distribute copies of the following statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith. Ask students to read it silently and note phrases that show the importance of understanding who God is.



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

- How does comprehending who Heavenly Father is help us to comprehend ourselves? (As students respond, write the following on the board: **As we come to understand our Heavenly Father, we can better understand our potential to become like our Heavenly Parents.**)

Display the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and ask a student to read it aloud.



“Consider the power of the idea taught in our beloved song ‘I Am a Child of God’ [*Hymns*, no. 301]. ... Here is the answer to one of life’s great questions, ‘Who am I?’ I am a child of God with a spirit lineage to heavenly parents. That parentage defines our eternal potential. That powerful idea is a potent antidepressant. It can strengthen each of us to make righteous choices and to seek the best that is within us” (“Powerful Ideas,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 25).

Write the following on the board:

*My knowledge that I am a child of God can help me when*

\_\_\_\_\_.

*My knowledge that I am a child of God has helped me when*

\_\_\_\_\_.

Invite several students to share how they would complete one of these sentences.

### **Romans 8:16–17; 1 John 3:2; 3 Nephi 12:48**

#### *Our divine potential*

Tell your class that sometimes we hear that someone has “great potential.”

- What do you think this phrase means?

Write the following scripture references on the board, and ask students to study them to learn about our divine potential: Romans 8:16–17; 1 John 3:2; 3 Nephi 12:48. You might suggest that students cross-reference these scriptures by writing the other two references in the margin next to each scripture.

- In light of the scriptures we studied about God’s character, what does the phrase “we shall be like Him” mean to you?
- What do you think it means to be a “joint-heir” with Jesus Christ? (As the Only Begotten Son of the Father in the flesh, it is the right of Jesus Christ to inherit all that the Father has. Those who are obedient and receive the full blessings of the Savior’s Atonement will also inherit all that the Father has [see Romans 8:14–18; Galatians 3:26–29; D&C 84:38]. Emphasize the following principle: **Heavenly Father’s plan provides a way for us to become like our Heavenly Parents.** Point out that although some people may criticize our belief that we can become like God, this belief is founded in the teachings of the Bible.)

Write the following question on the board:

*What did Elder Dallin H. Oaks teach about the purpose of our mortal life?*

Read the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks and ask students to look for answers to the question on the board:



“In the theology of the restored church of Jesus Christ, the purpose of mortal life is to prepare us to realize our destiny as sons and daughters of God—to become like Him. ... The Bible describes mortals as ‘the children of God’ and as ‘heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ’ (Rom. 8:16–17). It also declares that ‘we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together’ (Rom. 8:17) and that ‘when he shall appear, we shall be like him’ (1 Jn. 3:2). We take these Bible teachings

literally. We believe that the purpose of mortal life is to acquire a physical body and, through the atonement of Jesus Christ and by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel, to qualify

for the glorified, resurrected celestial state that is called exaltation or eternal life. ... (This destiny of eternal life or God's life should be familiar to all who have studied the ancient Christian doctrine of and belief in deification or apotheosis.) ...

"... Our theology begins with heavenly parents. Our highest aspiration is to be like them. Under the merciful plan of the Father, all of this is possible through the atonement of the Only Begotten of the Father, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ" ("Apostasy and Restoration," *Ensign*, May 1995, 86–87).

(Note: You may need to explain that *deification* and *apotheosis* refer to the idea that a person can become a god or be elevated to divine status.)

Discuss students' answers to the question on the board. Then ask:

- What thoughts do you have as you consider that Heavenly Father's plan gives you the opportunity to become like Him?
- Why is the Atonement of Christ necessary for us to become like God?

To further this discussion, review the following statement with your students:

"Latter-day Saints understand the magnitude of the Atonement of Christ in terms of the vast human potential it makes possible. Christ's Atonement not only provides forgiveness from sin and victory over death, it also redeems imperfect relationships, heals the spiritual wounds that stifle growth, and strengthens and enables individuals to develop the attributes of Christ [see Alma 7:11–12]. Latter-day Saints believe that it is only through the Atonement of Jesus Christ that we can have a sure hope of eternal glory and that the power of His Atonement is fully accessed only by faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end in following the instruction and example of Christ [see 2 Nephi 31:20; Articles of Faith 1:4]. Thus, those who become like God and enter into a fulness of His glory are described as people who have been 'made perfect through Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, who wrought out this perfect atonement through the shedding of his own blood' [D&C 76:69]" [Gospel Topics, "Becoming Like God," [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics)).

Distribute copies of the following statement by President Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the First Presidency. Invite students to read the statement and mark ideas that give them hope that they can reach their divine potential. Point out that President Uchtdorf gave this address at a priesthood session of general conference, but the ideas apply to everyone:



"One title that defines all of us in the most fundamental way is *son [or daughter] of Heavenly Father*. No matter what else we are or do in life, we must never forget that we are God's literal spirit children. We were His children before we came to this world, and we will be His children forevermore. This basic truth should change the way we look at ourselves, our brothers and sisters, and life itself. ...

"It can be discouraging at times to know what it means to be a [child] of God and yet come up short. The adversary likes to take advantage of these feelings. Satan would rather that you define yourself by your sins instead of your divine potential. Brethren, don't listen to him.



"We have all seen a toddler learn to walk. He takes a small step and totters. He falls. Do we scold such an attempt? Of course not. What father would punish a toddler for stumbling? We encourage, we applaud, and we praise because with every small step, the child is becoming more like his parents.

"Now, brethren, compared to the perfection of God, we mortals are scarcely more than awkward, faltering toddlers. But our loving Heavenly Father wants us to become more like Him, and, dear brethren, that should be our eternal goal too. God understands that we get there not in an instant but by taking one step at a time" ("Four Titles," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2013, 58).

- How can remembering these eternal truths help you to reach your divine potential?
- How might remembering these truths affect the way you treat members of your family?
- How might your knowledge of these truths affect your desire to research information about your deceased family members and perform temple ordinances for them?

Encourage students to share what they have learned and felt during this lesson with a family member or friend during the coming week. They might also consider what they could do each day to consciously remember that they are children of Heavenly Father and to plan to record in a journal how remembering this sacred truth affects their actions.

## Student Readings

- Genesis 1:27; Isaiah 55:8–9; Acts 17:29; Romans 8:16–17; Hebrews 12:9; 1 John 3:1–2; 4:8–9; 1 Nephi 9:6; 2 Nephi 9:20; 3 Nephi 12:48; Moroni 8:18; Doctrine and Covenants 76:4; 88:41; 130:22.
- Gospel Topics, "Becoming Like God," [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics).

## LESSON 4

# The Family and the Great Plan of Happiness

### Introduction

With the creation of Adam and Eve, the human family was established on earth. The Fall of Adam and Eve made it possible for children to be brought into the world, and the Atonement in turn enables us to overcome the negative

effects of the Fall. This lesson will help students better understand how the Creation, Fall, and Atonement work together for the salvation of families.

### Background Reading

- M. Russell Ballard, “The Atonement and the Value of One Soul,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2004, 84–87.
- Julie B. Beck, “Teaching the Doctrine of the Family,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2011, 12–17.

### Suggestions for Teaching

#### Moses 1:27–39; Doctrine and Covenants 49:15–17

##### *Moses learned the purpose of the earth’s creation*

Bring a small container of sand and a glass of water to class. Invite a student to dip a finger into the water and then into the sand. Then ask the student to estimate how many grains of sand are stuck to the finger.

- How many grains of sand do you think are in the container of sand? On the shores of the seas?

Ask students to turn to Moses 1, which records a series of visions that Moses beheld. Ask a student to read aloud Moses 1:27–29, and invite students to look for what the Lord showed Moses.

- According to these verses, what did Moses see in vision?
- What thoughts might you have had if you had experienced this vision?

Ask students to read Moses 1:30 and mark the two questions Moses asked the Lord (*why* and *how* the earth and its inhabitants were created). Help students develop their personal scripture study skills by encouraging them to look for questions and their answers in the scriptures as they study.

Invite students to read Moses 1:31–33 and look for how the Lord answered Moses’s two questions.

- According to verse 31, why did God create the world?
- What doctrine do verses 32–33 teach about how Heavenly Father created worlds? (Students should identify the following doctrine: **Under the direction of the Father, Jesus Christ created the earth and worlds without number.**)

Invite students to read Moses 1:36–39 and identify Moses’s additional desire and the Lord’s response.

- What was Heavenly Father’s purpose in creating the earth and its inhabitants? (Students should identify the following doctrine: **The earth was created to help bring about the immortality and eternal life of man.** Note that *immortality* is living forever in a resurrected state, while *eternal life* is living as God lives, meaning living forever as part of an eternal family.)
- How does the creation of the earth help fulfill Heavenly Father’s work and glory? (Use Doctrine and Covenants 49:15–17 to show that the earth was created as a mortal dwelling place for families.)

Testify that the earth was created to help bring about the immortality and eternal life of God’s children. The family unit is designed to help us attain eternal life, which means that we live forever as part of an eternal family—the life that God lives.

## 2 Nephi 2:19–25; Moses 3:16–17; 5:9–11

### *The Fall of Adam and Eve was an essential part of God’s plan*

Explain that God gave Adam and Eve specific instructions in the Garden of Eden. Ask students to silently read Moses 3:16–17, and then ask:

- What did the Lord say would happen to Adam and Eve if they ate the forbidden fruit?

Explain that when Adam and Eve partook of the forbidden fruit they brought upon humankind two kinds of death.

Write the following on the board:

*Spiritual death = separation from God*

*Physical death = separation of the spirit and the physical body*

Invite students to study 2 Nephi 2:19–25 and make a list of additional consequences of the Fall.

- How did partaking of the forbidden fruit enable Adam and Eve and all humankind to become more like Heavenly Father?

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



“The Fall was an essential part of Heavenly Father’s divine plan. Without it no mortal children would have been born to Adam and Eve, and there would have been no human family to experience opposition and growth, moral agency, and the joy of resurrection, redemption, and eternal life” (“The Atonement of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2008, 35).

Read Moses 5:9–11 with students. Help them state the truths recorded in these verses by asking:

- What truths did Adam and Eve learn after they were cast out of the Garden of Eden? (Students should understand the following truths: **Because of the Fall, Adam and Eve could bear children and their posterity could progress toward eternal life.**)

Invite a student to read aloud the following statement by Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Ask students to look for reasons why we were excited to come to earth:



"One of the most exhilarating moments of your life—when you were filled with anticipation, excitement, and gratitude—you are not able to remember. That experience occurred in the premortal life when you were informed that finally your time had come to leave the spirit world to dwell on earth with a mortal body. You knew you could learn through personal experience the lessons that would bring happiness on earth, lessons that would eventually lead you to exaltation and eternal life as a glorified, celestial being in the presence of your Holy Father and His Beloved Son" ("First Things First," *Ensign*, May 2001, 6).

- How does understanding the purposes of the Fall and mortality affect the choices you make in this life?

## 2 Nephi 9:6–12

### *The Atonement overcomes the effects of the Fall*

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



"This past January our family suffered the tragic loss of our grandson Nathan in an airplane crash. Nathan had served in the Russian-speaking Baltic Mission. He loved the people and knew it was a privilege to serve the Lord. Three months after I officiated at his eternal marriage to his sweetheart, Jennifer, this accident took his life" ("The Atonement and the Value of One Soul," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2004, 84).

Explain that because of the Fall of Adam and Eve, all of us are subject to unfortunate and tragic experiences such as the one that occurred in Elder Ballard's family. Fortunately, Heavenly Father has provided a way for the effects of the Fall to be overcome.

Invite students to study 2 Nephi 9:6–12, looking for how the Atonement of Jesus Christ can help each of us overcome physical and spiritual death. You might encourage students to consider marking key words and phrases in their scriptures as they read. Then invite students to share their findings.

- What doctrine do these verses teach about the relationship between the Fall of Adam and the Atonement of Jesus Christ? (Ensure that students understand

the following: **The Atonement of Jesus Christ provides the way for all of Heavenly Father's children to overcome both physical and spiritual death.**

You might encourage students to note the frequent scriptural connection between the Fall and the Atonement as they study their scriptures. Consider sharing this quotation: "A connection is a relationship or link between ideas, people, things or events. ... Prayerfully identifying, learning about, and pondering such connections ... yields inspired insights and treasures of hidden knowledge" [David A. Bednar, "A Reservoir of Living Water" (Church Educational System fireside for young adults, Feb. 4, 2007), 4, [lds.org/media-library](http://lds.org/media-library).]

Ask a student to read aloud the following, which is a continuation of the statement by Elder M. Russell Ballard:



"Nathan's being taken so suddenly from our mortal presence has turned each of our hearts and minds to the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. ...

"The Savior's precious birth, life, Atonement in the Garden of Gethsemane, suffering on the cross, burial in Joseph's tomb, and glorious Resurrection all became a renewed reality for us. The Savior's Resurrection assures all of us that someday we, too, will follow Him and experience our own resurrection. What peace, what comfort this great gift is which comes through the loving grace of Jesus Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of all mankind. Because of Him we know we can be with Nathan again" ("The Atonement and the Value of One Soul," 84).

- How does the response of Elder Ballard's family to the death of their family member illustrate how the Atonement of Jesus Christ can help families cope with the universal effects of the Fall?
- What does the Atonement make possible for Nathan's family and for each of our families in eternity?

Allow students a moment to ponder the following question before calling on them to respond:

- In what ways has the Atonement of Christ helped your family overcome some of the effects of the Fall? (As part of the discussion, explain that only those who have been made perfect through the power of Jesus Christ's Atonement will be able to live together eternally in marriages and families.)

Conclude by displaying and inviting a student to read this statement by Sister Julie B. Beck, former Relief Society general president:



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"In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we have a theology of the family that is based on the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement. The Creation of the earth provided a place where families could live. God created a man and a woman who were the two essential halves of a family. It was part of Heavenly Father's plan that Adam and Eve be sealed and form an eternal family.

"The Fall provided a way for the family to grow. Adam and Eve were family leaders who chose to have a mortal experience. The Fall made it possible for them to have sons and daughters.

"The Atonement allows for the family to be sealed together eternally. It allows for families to have eternal growth and perfection. The plan of happiness, also called the plan of salvation, was a plan created for families" ("Teaching the Doctrine of the Family," *Ensign*, Mar. 2011, 12).

Encourage students to ponder their testimonies of the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement and what they can do to invite the power of the Atonement to be a greater force in their own lives and in the lives of their families.

### Student Readings

- Moses 1:27–39; 3:16–17; 5:6–12; 2 Nephi 2:19–25; 9:6–12; Doctrine and Covenants 49:15–17.
- Julie B. Beck, "Teaching the Doctrine of the Family," *Ensign*, Mar. 2011, 12–17.

## LESSON 5

# The Conditions of Mortality

### Introduction

In the premortal world we “accepted [Heavenly Father’s] plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*,

Nov. 2010, 129). Our mortal bodies are a great blessing; however, they are subject to many of Satan’s temptations. Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we can overcome these temptations and return to our Heavenly Father.

### Background Reading

- David A. Bednar, “Things as They Really Are,” *Ensign*, June 2010, 16–25.
- David A. Bednar, “The Atonement and the Journey of Mortality,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2012, 40–47.

### Suggestions for Teaching

#### 2 Nephi 2:27–29; Abraham 3:25

*Our mortal experience is essential for eternal life*

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



2001, 14).

“Have we ever really considered why having a physical body is so important? ... Do we really understand why a body is so central to the Father’s plan of happiness? Do we perhaps recite this answer so frequently and routinely that we fail to recognize its true importance? I would like for us to dig a bit deeper into this eternally important question about why a body is so important. Ultimately the answer affects everything we do” (“Ye Are the Temple of God,” *Ensign*, Sept.

- According to Elder Bednar, why should we seek to understand why our physical bodies are so important?

Invite students to write a response to the following question. As the lesson progresses, encourage them to write additional thoughts and ideas.

- Why are our physical bodies so important in Heavenly Father’s plan of happiness?

Invite students to silently read the third paragraph of “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” and look for the statement that clarifies why a physical body is necessary to our eternal progression.

Ask a student to read aloud the following statement by Elder David A. Bednar. Ask class members to listen for why our bodies are so crucial in Heavenly Father’s plan. Consider giving each student a copy of this statement before it is read.



"Our physical bodies make possible a breadth, a depth, and an intensity of experience that simply could not be obtained in our premortal estate. President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has taught, 'Our spirit and our body are combined in such a way that our body becomes an instrument of our mind and the foundation of our character' ["The Instrument of Your Mind and the Foundation of Your Character" (Brigham Young University fireside address, Feb. 2, 2003), speeches.byu.edu]. Thus, our relationships with other people, our capacity to recognize and act in accordance with truth, and our ability to obey the principles and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ are amplified through our physical bodies. In the classroom of mortality, we experience tenderness, love, kindness, happiness, sorrow, disappointment, pain, and even the challenges of physical limitations in ways that prepare us for eternity. Simply stated, there are lessons we must learn and experiences we must have, as the scriptures describe, 'according to the flesh' (1 Nephi 19:6; Alma 7:12–13)" ("Things as They Really Are," *Ensign*, June 2010, 16).

- What did Elder Bednar teach about why a physical body is necessary for our eternal progression? (Though answers may vary, emphasize this truth: **With a physical body, we experience conditions of mortality that can prepare us for eternity.**)
- In what ways are our bodies "an instrument of our mind and the foundation of our character"?
- How is "our ability to obey the principles and ordinances of the gospel ... amplified through our physical bodies"? (Possible answers include the following: A body enables us to obey the command to multiply and replenish the earth. A body allows us to experience the joys of living in families, where we learn and practice gospel principles in the home—for instance, we learn how to control our tempers within our families.)

Invite several students to take turns reading aloud from Abraham 3:25 and 2 Nephi 2:27–29 as the class looks for how these scripture passages work together to help us further understand the purposes of having a body.

- Though having a body is a great blessing, how is having a body part of our mortal test? (Many of Satan's temptations are amplified because we have bodies.)
- How does choosing the "will of the flesh" give the devil "power to captivate"?

### **Mosiah 3:19; Moses 6:49, 53–55**

#### *"The natural man is an enemy to God"*

Invite a student to read Moses 6:53–54 aloud, and ask the class to look for and then explain what these verses teach about our condition at the time of our birth. Note that the word "whole" in this context means free from the effects of Adam's transgression.

Then ask the student to read Moses 6:49 and 55, and ask class members:

- What do these verses teach about how the Fall of Adam and Eve affects us throughout our mortal lives? (When we yield to Satan's temptations we taste the bitter consequences of our choices to be carnal, sensual, and devilish. You



might refer to Ether 3:2, which teaches that “because of the fall our natures have become evil continually.”)

Ask a student to read aloud the first few lines of Mosiah 3:19. Write the following questions on the board:

*What is the natural man?*

*Why is the natural man an enemy to God?*

Give students a few minutes to search for answers to these questions and to expand their understanding of the term “natural man” by studying the footnotes for verse 19 (particularly footnote *a* as well as other passages referred to in the footnotes). After sufficient time, discuss students’ findings. Point out that this term describes a condition that applies equally to both men and women.

- If a person has the characteristics of a natural man, what effect could this have on a marriage or a family?

Ask the same student to finish reading Mosiah 3:19, and invite the class to look for a principle about how we can overcome the natural man. (As students respond, write this principle on the board: **Through accepting the Atonement of Jesus Christ and yielding to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, we can put off the natural man and become a saint.**)

Explain that in this context, to *yield* means to submit or surrender to the promptings of the Holy Ghost.

- How can a person discern what the Holy Spirit is prompting him or her to do?
- Can you share an experience that is not too personal in which the Holy Spirit prompted you to put off the natural man?

Testify that as we yield to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, we gain access to the power of the Atonement.

### **Mosiah 3:19; 16:3–6**

#### *Applying the Atonement of Christ*

Invite a student to read Mosiah 16:3–6 aloud as the class follows along, looking for what will help us overcome the effects of the Fall in our lives.

- What provision in Heavenly Father’s plan enables us to overcome our fallen nature? (Write the following doctrine on the board: **Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we can be redeemed from our lost and fallen condition.**)

Display the following statement by Elder David A. Bednar, and ask a student to read it aloud:



"Every appetite, desire, propensity, and impulse of the natural man may be overcome by and through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. We are here on the earth to develop godlike qualities and to bridle all of the passions of the flesh" ("We Believe in Being Chaste," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 43).

Explain to students that when we have faith in the Atonement, we receive the grace of Jesus Christ, made possible by His atoning sacrifice. The main idea of the word *grace* is "divine means of help or strength, given through the bounteous mercy and love of Jesus Christ." It is an "enabling power" that helps us to repent and to develop attributes that we cannot develop on our own (see Bible Dictionary, "Grace"). To help students identify Christlike attributes that we should develop, ask them to review the list of qualities that lead us to become saints, as found in Mosiah 3:19.

- How has the Savior helped you to develop one of the attributes listed in Mosiah 3:19?
- How have you seen individuals who possess one or more of these attributes be a blessing in their families?
- How might developing one or more of these attributes through the enabling power of the Savior's grace help you to become a better husband or wife, father or mother?

Explain to students that each of us is left with an important question to answer as a result of today's lesson. Display the following statement by Elder David A. Bednar and ask students to read it silently:



"The precise nature of the test of mortality, then, can be summarized in the following question: Will I respond to the inclinations of the natural man, or will I yield to the enticings of the Holy Spirit and put off the natural man and become a saint through the Atonement of Christ the Lord (see Mosiah 3:19)? That is the test" ("We Believe in Being Chaste," 43).

Give students a few minutes to write a response to Elder Bednar's question. Invite them to ponder the Christlike attributes found in Mosiah 3:19 and make a plan to begin developing one of those attributes more fully.

## Student Readings

- 2 Nephi 2:27–29; Mosiah 3:19; 16:3–6; Moses 6:49, 53–55; Abraham 3:25.
- David A. Bednar, "The Atonement and the Journey of Mortality," *Ensign*, Apr. 2012, 40–47.

## LESSON 6

# The Family Is Central to Heavenly Father's Plan

### Introduction

Modern prophets and apostles have proclaimed that “the family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129). This lesson will help

students see that by being “more diligent and concerned at home” (D&C 93:50) they can make their families more central in their lives.

### Background Reading

- Robert D. Hales, “The Eternal Family,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 64–67.
- David A. Bednar, “More Diligent and Concerned at Home,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 17–20.
- *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* [2010], 1.1.1, 1.1.4, and 1.4.1 (if available).

### Suggestions for Teaching

#### The family is central to Heavenly Father's plan

Mention to your class that of all the topics addressed in recent general conferences, the family is among the topics most frequently discussed.

- Why do you think Church leaders speak about the family so frequently?

Write the following truth from the family proclamation on the board, and ask students to share what it means to them:

*“The family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children.”*



To help students better understand how the family is central to our eternal destiny, distribute copies of the handout found at the end of this lesson.

Divide the class into small groups. Assign each group to read one of the three sections of the handout and to discuss the questions included. Make sure each section is assigned.

After sufficient time, invite at least one person assigned to each section of the handout to share an overview of their small-group discussion with the class. Testify of the following truth: **The family is a central part of God’s plan for premortal, mortal, and eternal life.**

- What experiences have helped you feel the central importance of the family in Heavenly Father’s plan?

## Doctrine and Covenants 93:39–50

### *Making the family a priority*

Prepare students to learn from Doctrine and Covenants 93 by explaining that this section records, among other things, the Lord’s instruction about the importance of bringing up children in “light and truth” and making our families a priority. Write the following references on the board:

*Doctrine and Covenants 93:39–43*

*Doctrine and Covenants 93:44*

*Doctrine and Covenants 93:45–48*

*Doctrine and Covenants 93:50*

Ask students to read at least one of the references (make sure each reference is read by at least one student). Ask students to look for whom the Lord was addressing and what instruction He gave. After sufficient time, ask students to report what they learned. Make sure that students recognize that the four men addressed were the First Presidency and the bishop of the Church in Ohio; thus, these scriptures remind all Church members, even those in leadership positions, to make their families a priority. You might suggest to students that they mark the repetition or pattern found in these verses—Church members should “set in order” their families (see verses 43, 44, and 50).

- According to verses 42, 48, and 50, what can we do to help set our families in order? (Students should identify the following: teach children light and truth, repent, forsake unrighteous things, be more diligent and concerned at home, and pray always.)

Write the following principle on the board: **We help fulfill the Lord’s commandment to set our families in order when we are more diligent and concerned at home.**

- What can a young adult do to be more diligent and concerned at home?

Display the following statement from a letter written by the First Presidency in 1999, and ask a student to read it aloud:

“The home is the basis of a righteous life, and no other instrumentality can take its place or fulfill its essential functions in carrying forward this God-given responsibility.

“We counsel parents and children to give highest priority to family prayer, family home evening, gospel study and instruction, and wholesome family activities. However worthy and appropriate other demands or activities may be, they must not be permitted to displace the divinely-appointed duties that only parents and families can adequately perform” (First Presidency letter, Feb. 11, 1999, quoted in *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* [2010], 1.4.1).

- In your experience, what are some “essential functions” and “divinely-appointed duties” that are best performed in the family?

Display the following statement, and encourage students to consider the blessings that come when each family member seeks to fulfill divinely appointed family duties:

“Wherever Church members live, they should establish a home where the Spirit is present. ...

“A home with loving and loyal parents is the setting in which the spiritual and physical needs of children are most effectively met. A Christ-centered home offers adults and children a place of defense against sin, refuge from the world, healing from emotional and other pain, and committed, genuine love” (*Handbook 2: Administering the Church*, 1.4.1).

- How do you help create a Christ-centered home for your family?
- What difference does it make in your family?

Display the following statement by Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and ask a student to read it aloud:



“Put everything you do outside the home in subjection to and in support of what happens inside your home. Remember President Harold B. Lee’s counsel that ‘the most important ... work you will ever do will be within the walls of your own homes’ ... and President David O. McKay’s timeless ‘No other success can compensate for failure in the home’” (“That the Lost May Be Found,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2012, 99).

Give students a moment to write down a few things they could do to be more diligent and concerned at home and to make their family more of a central focus in their lives. Encourage students to make a goal to follow through with one idea they have written. Testify that as students act on their goal, the Lord will strengthen them spiritually and help them see how their actions also strengthen their families.

## Student Readings

- Doctrine and Covenants 93:39–50.
- Robert D. Hales, “The Eternal Family,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 64–67.

# Our Premortal, Mortal, and Eternal Families

## Our Premortal Family

"The family is ordained of God. It is the most important unit in time and in eternity. Even before we were born on the earth, we were part of a family. Each of us 'is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents' with 'a divine nature and destiny' ['The Family: A Proclamation to the World,' *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129]. God is our Heavenly Father, and we lived in His presence as part of His family in the premortal life. There we learned our first lessons and were prepared for mortality (see D&C 138:56)" (*Handbook 2: Administering the Church* [2010], 1.1.1).



"We worship the great God who created the universe. He is our Father in heaven. We came into being because of him; we are his spirit children. We dwelt with him in a premortal life in a family relationship. We knew him as intimately and as well as we know our mortal fathers in this sphere of existence" (Bruce R. McConkie, *How to Worship*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year [July 20, 1971], 2).

Discussion questions:

- How was the family a central part of our premortal life?
- How is it helpful to know that God is your Father and that you were a beloved member of His family in the premortal world?
- What do you imagine your interaction with your Heavenly Parents was like?

## Our Mortal Family

"As part of our Heavenly Father's plan, we were born into families. He established families to bring us happiness, to help us learn correct principles in a loving atmosphere, and to prepare us for eternal life.

"Parents have the vital responsibility to help their children prepare to return to Heavenly Father. Parents fulfill this responsibility by teaching their children to follow Jesus Christ and live His gospel" (*Handbook 2: Administering the Church* [2010], 1.1.4).



"God is the designer of the family. He intended that the greatest of happiness, the most satisfying aspects of life, the deepest joys should come in our associations together and our concerns one for another as fathers and mothers and children" (Gordon B. Hinckley, "What God Hath Joined Together," *Ensign*, May 1991, 74).

Discussion questions:

- In what ways is the family a central part of our mortal lives?
- How might life on earth be different if we had been sent to earth as individuals without family relationships—no father, mother, siblings, ancestors, or posterity?
- What experiences have helped you understand the role and importance of the mortal family?

## Our Eternal Family

"The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave" ("The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129).



“While our individual salvation is based on our individual obedience, it is equally important that we understand that we are each an important and integral part of a family and the highest blessings can be received only within an eternal family. When families are functioning as designed by God, the relationships found therein are the most valued of mortality. The plan of the Father is that family love and companionship will continue into the eternities. Being one in a family carries a great responsibility of caring, loving, lifting, and strengthening each member of the family so that all can righteously endure to the end in mortality and dwell together throughout eternity. It is not enough just to save ourselves. It is equally important that parents, brothers, and sisters are saved in our families. If we return home alone to our Heavenly Father, we will be asked, ‘Where is the rest of the family?’ This is why we teach that families are forever. The eternal nature of an individual becomes the eternal nature of the family” (Robert D. Hales, “The Eternal Family,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 65).

Discussion questions:

- In what ways is the family a central part of our eternal destiny?
- What are some righteous actions family members could take to help bring about one another’s salvation?
- When has a family member lifted or strengthened you in a way that inspired you to endure to the end?



## LESSON 7

# Marriage between a Man and a Woman Is Ordained of God

### Introduction

Heavenly Father established the divine pattern of marriage with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. In our day, the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles have confirmed this pattern by stating, “Marriage between a man

and a woman is ordained of God” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129). Although laws of men may attempt to alter this definition, God’s laws remain the same forever.

### Background Reading

- D. Todd Christofferson, “Why Marriage, Why Family,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 50–53.
- Dallin H. Oaks, “No Other Gods,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 72–75.
- Sheri L. Dew, “It Is Not Good for Man or Woman to Be Alone,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 12–14.
- “The Divine Institution of Marriage,” [mormonnewsroom.org/article/the-divine-institution-of-marriage](http://mormonnewsroom.org/article/the-divine-institution-of-marriage).
- Gospel Topics, “Same-Sex Marriage,” [lds.org/topics](http://lds.org/topics).

### Suggestions for Teaching

#### Doctrine and Covenants 49:15–17; Moses 3:21–24

##### *Marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God*

Write the following doctrine on the board: “**Marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God.**” Ask students what the word *ordain* means in this sentence. (Possible answers include the following: to order, decree, or appoint by virtue of superior authority.) Ask students how this definition helps them to understand the meaning of the doctrine on the board. Ask students to silently read Doctrine and Covenants 49:15–17 to find a scriptural restatement of this doctrine.

Ask a student to read Moses 3:21–24 aloud. Invite the class to look for which important step in the plan of salvation is described in these verses. (As students respond, explain that the reference to Adam’s rib is symbolic—God did not actually remove a rib from Adam. You may also want to suggest that students write the following definition of the word *cleave* in the margin of their scriptures: “create a close, lasting, and unwavering union.”)

- What do you think God wanted to teach us by describing the physical creation of Eve in this manner? (Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “The rib, coming as it does from the side, seems to denote



partnership. The rib signifies neither dominion nor subservience, but a lateral relationship as partners, to work and to live, side by side” [“Lessons from Eve,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 87].)

- What can we learn from Moses 3:24? (Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said that God “joined [Adam and Eve] as husband and wife. ... Neither we nor any other mortal can alter this divine order of matrimony. It is not a human invention” [“Why Marriage, Why Family,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 52].)

Display the following statement by Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and ask a student to read it aloud. Ask the class to look for insights into why God has ordained that marriage take place only between a man and a woman.



“After the earth was created, Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden. Importantly, however, God said ‘it was not good that the man should be alone’ (Moses 3:18; see also Genesis 2:18), and Eve became Adam’s wife and helpmeet. The unique combination of spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional capacities of both males and females was needed to enact the plan of happiness. ‘Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord’ (1 Corinthians 11:11). The man and the woman are intended to learn from, strengthen, bless, and complete each other” (“We Believe in Being Chaste,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 41–42).

- Based on your understanding of Heavenly Father’s plan of happiness, why is marriage between a man and a woman ordained by Him?

### Moses 3:18; 5:1–5, 12, 16

#### *Husbands and wives are equal partners*

- What value is there in following a pattern when making something like an item of clothing?
- What value would there be in studying the ideal pattern of marriage?

Explain that the marriage of Adam and Eve presents the Lord’s pattern of what a marriage should be. Ask a student to read Moses 3:18 aloud.

- What is your understanding of the term “help meet”? (“Help” is translated from a combination of two Hebrew roots, one meaning to rescue or save, and the other meaning to be strong. “Meet” is translated from a Hebrew word suggesting suitable and equal. Thus, a “help meet” is a suitable and equal companion possessing power to save. Suggest that students write this definition in their scriptures next to Moses 3:18. See also Howard W. Hunter, “Being a Righteous Husband and Father,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 51.)
- What kind of relationship does this term suggest for a husband and wife? (Summarize students’ responses by writing the following doctrine on the board: **Heavenly Father has ordained that a husband and wife are to be equal partners.**)
- What do you think it means for a husband and wife to be equal partners?

Divide the class into small groups, with perhaps three or four students in a group. Ask students to scan Moses 5:1–5, 12, and 16, looking for ways in which Adam and Eve labored together as equal partners, and to discuss their findings within their groups.

Display the following statements by President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) and Sister Sheri L. Dew, former counselor in the Relief Society general presidency. Ask a student to read them aloud:



"From this inspired record [Moses 5:1–2, 4, 12, 16] we see that Adam and Eve provided us with an ideal example of a covenant marriage relationship. They labored together; they had children together; they prayed together; and they taught their children the gospel—together. This is the pattern God would have all righteous men and women imitate" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* [2014], 183).



"Ponder the scriptural accounts of Adam and Eve and see what the Lord will teach you that will strengthen your marriage [and] your family. ... Our Father's patterns help us avoid deception. Look to the Lord and not to the world for your ideas and ideals about men and women" (Sheri L. Dew, "It Is Not Good for Man or Woman to Be Alone," *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 14).

- When have you have seen a husband and wife labor together as equal partners?
- How do you think understanding the divine pattern for marriage could influence your future?

Give students a few minutes to make two lists: (1) the attitudes they currently have that will help lead them to a marriage ordained of God, and (2) the attitudes they may need to change in order to move closer toward that goal. Express confidence that the Lord will bless them in their efforts.

### **Mormon 9:9**

#### *The Lord's teachings about same-sex marriage*

(*Note:* Be sensitive to students who express differing opinions on this issue. Focus the class discussion on the statements of the General Authorities of the Church.)

- How is God's ordained pattern of marriage affected when governments pass laws legalizing behaviors that are contrary to this pattern? (As students respond, use Mormon 9:9 to show that God and His laws are unchanging. God's unchanging nature helps us to have confidence and faith in Him.)

Give each student a copy of the following statement from the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and invite students to look for reasons why Church leaders have spoken on same-sex marriage:

"Legal proceedings and legislative action in a number of countries have given civil recognition to same-sex marriage relationships, and the question of same-sex marriage continues to be widely debated. As we confront this and other issues, we encourage all to bear in mind our Heavenly Father's purposes in creating the earth and providing for our mortal birth and experience here as His children [see Genesis 1:27–28; 2:24]. ... Marriage between a man and a woman was instituted by God and is central to His plan for His children and for the well-being of society. Strong families, guided by a loving mother and father, serve as the fundamental institution for nurturing children, instilling faith, and transmitting to future generations the moral strengths and values that are important to civilization and crucial to eternal salvation.

"Changes in the civil law do not, indeed cannot, change the moral law that God has established. God expects us to uphold and keep His commandments regardless of divergent opinions or trends in society. His law of chastity is clear: sexual relations are proper only between a man and a woman who are legally and lawfully wedded as husband and wife" (quoted in Gospel Topics, "Same-Sex Marriage," [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics)).

- How does understanding God's plan and doctrine help us to recognize the importance of marriage between a man and a woman?

Also give each student a copy of the following statement, which comes from a document published by the Church titled "The Divine Institution of Marriage." Ask students to look for reasons why the definition of marriage between a man and a woman should be preserved in laws and policies:

"Marriage is far more than a contract between individuals to ratify their affections and provide for mutual obligations. Rather, marriage is a vital institution for rearing children and teaching them to become responsible adults. Throughout the ages, governments of all types have recognized marriage as essential in preserving social stability and perpetuating life. Regardless of whether marriages were performed as a religious rite or a civil ceremony, in almost every culture marriage has been protected and endorsed by governments primarily to preserve and foster the institution most central to rearing children and teaching them the moral values that undergird civilization. ...

"In view of the close links that have long existed between marriage, procreation, gender, and parenting, same-sex marriage cannot be regarded simply as the granting of a new 'right.' It is a far-reaching redefinition of the very nature of marriage itself. It marks a fundamental change in the institution of marriage in ways that are contrary to God's purposes for His children and detrimental to the long-term interests of society" ("The Divine Institution of Marriage," [mormonnewsroom.org/article/the-divine-institution-of-marriage](https://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/the-divine-institution-of-marriage)).

- What are some reasons why societies have traditionally endorsed and protected marriage between a man and a woman?
- How could a person come to recognize the truth of the Church's position on this significant issue?

Encourage students to consider how their opinions compare to God's teachings on marriage as taught by Church leaders. Share your testimony that believing in and supporting God's pattern for marriage will bring eternal blessings.

## Student Readings

- Mormon 9:9; Doctrine and Covenants 49:15–17; Moses 3:18–25; 5:1–16.
- “The Divine Institution of Marriage,” [mormonnewsroom.org/article/the-divine-institution-of-marriage](http://mormonnewsroom.org/article/the-divine-institution-of-marriage).

## LESSON 8

# Gender and Eternal Identity

### Introduction

Our gender was established before we were born into mortality and is an essential characteristic of our eternal identity. Church leaders distinguish between same-sex attraction, which is not sinful, and homosexual behavior, which is considered sinful because it conflicts with Heavenly

Father's plan for our exaltation. This lesson will help students see the prophetic basis for this distinction and also recognize that all of God's children are equally beloved and deserve to be treated with love and civility.

### Background Reading

- Robert D. Hales, "The Plan of Salvation: A Sacred Treasure of Knowledge to Guide Us," *Ensign*, Oct. 2015.
- Jeffrey R. Holland, "Helping Those Who Struggle with Same-Gender Attraction," *Ensign*, Oct. 2007, 42–45.
- Dallin H. Oaks, "Same-Gender Attraction," *Ensign*, Oct. 1995, 7–14.
- Gospel Topics, "Same-Sex Attraction," [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics).
- "Love One Another: A Discussion on Same-Sex Attraction," [mormonsandgays.org](http://mormonsandgays.org). If students raise questions about the Church's policy regarding homosexuality, please refer them to this official Church website.

### Suggestions for Teaching

#### Doctrine and Covenants 76:24; Moses 2:27; "The Family: A Proclamation to the World"

##### *Gender is an essential part of our eternal identity*

Ask three students to read aloud Doctrine and Covenants 76:24; Moses 2:27; and the second paragraph of "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129). Invite the class to consider what these sources teach or imply about gender.

- How would you summarize what these sources teach about our eternal identity? (Students should identify the following: **Our gender is an essential characteristic of our eternal identity and purpose.**)
- Why is it helpful for us to understand that our gender existed long before we came to earth? (As students respond, you might share the following statement by President Joseph Fielding Smith [1876–1972]: "In Genesis we read: ... 'So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and *female* created he them.' [Genesis 1:27; italics added.] Is it not feasible to believe that female spirits were created in the image of a 'Mother in Heaven'?" [*Answers to Gospel Questions*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., 5 vols. (1957–66), 3:144].)

- How can understanding the eternal nature of gender help us to live in harmony with Heavenly Father's plan of happiness, even when society sometimes condones very different standards of behavior?

To help address the above question, share the following doctrinal statements by Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Consider reading each paragraph individually and discussing what it teaches about how homosexual behavior is in opposition to Heavenly Father's plan for the exaltation of His children.



"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 destiny—to become like our heavenly parents.

"Our eternal destiny—exaltation in the celestial kingdom—is made possible only through the atonement of Jesus Christ (through which we became and can remain 'innocent before God' [D&C 93:38]) and is only available to a man and a woman who have entered into and been faithful to the covenants of an eternal marriage in a temple of God (see D&C 131:1–4; 132). ...

"Because Satan desires that 'all men might be miserable like unto himself' (2 Ne. 2:27), his most strenuous efforts are directed at encouraging those choices and actions that will thwart God's plan for his children. He seeks to undermine the principle of individual accountability, to persuade us to misuse our sacred powers of procreation, to discourage marriage and childbearing by worthy men and women, and to confuse what it means to be male or female" ("Same-Gender Attraction," *Ensign*, Oct. 1995, 7–8).

### Doctrine and Covenants 59:6

#### *The Church distinguishes between same-sex attraction and homosexual behavior*

Give each student a copy of the following statement by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Invite students to study the statement, looking for principles that Elder Holland teaches about those who are attracted to people of the same sex and how to respond to them with love.



"A pleasant young man in his early 20s sat across from me. He had an engaging smile, although he didn't smile often during our talk. What drew me in was the pain in his eyes.

" 'I don't know if I should remain a member of the Church,' he said. 'I don't think I'm worthy.'

" 'Why wouldn't you be worthy?' I asked.

" 'I'm gay.'

"I suppose he thought I would be startled. I wasn't. 'And ... ?' I inquired.

"A flicker of relief crossed his face as he sensed my continued interest. 'I'm not attracted to women. I'm attracted to men. I've tried to ignore these feelings or change them, but ...'

"He sighed. 'Why am I this way? The feelings are very real.'

"I paused, then said, 'I need a little more information before advising you. You see, same-gender attraction is not a sin, but acting on those feelings is—just as it would be with heterosexual feelings. Do you violate the law of chastity?'

"He shook his head. 'No, I don't.'

"This time I was relieved. 'Thank you for wanting to deal with this,' I said. 'It takes courage to talk about it, and I honor you for keeping yourself clean.'

"'As for why you feel as you do, I can't answer that question. A number of factors may be involved, and they can be as different as people are different. Some things, including the cause of your feelings, we may never know in this life. But knowing why you feel as you do isn't as important as knowing you have not transgressed. If your life is in harmony with the commandments, then you are worthy to serve in the Church, enjoy full fellowship with the members, attend the temple, and receive all the blessings of the Savior's Atonement.'

"He sat up a little straighter. I continued, 'You serve yourself poorly when you identify yourself primarily by your sexual feelings. That isn't your only characteristic, so don't give it disproportionate attention. You are first and foremost a son of God, and He loves you' " ("Helping Those Who Struggle with Same-Gender Attraction," *Ensign*, Oct. 2007, 42).

- What principles did you identify in Elder Holland's counsel?

Write the following bold principles on the board as students share them, and discuss them with sensitivity:

- **We can feel God's love when we focus on our identity as His sons and daughters.**
- **Being attracted to people of the same sex is not a violation of the law of chastity, but acting on that attraction is.** Consider sharing Doctrine and Covenants 59:6: "Thou shalt not ... commit adultery ... nor do anything like unto it," pointing out that "anything like unto it" refers to any sexual intimacy outside the bonds of marriage. Homosexual behavior is a sin, just as heterosexual relations outside of marriage are sinful. Anyone who participates in any type of sexual sin can be forgiven through repentance.
- **Regardless of the reasons that some people are attracted to those of the same sex, all people can choose to live in harmony with God's commandments.** Emphasize the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "There is so much we don't understand about this subject, that we'd do well to stay close to what we know from the revealed word of God. What we do know is that the doctrine of the Church, that sexual activity should only occur between a man and a woman who are married, has not changed and is not changing" ("What Needs to Change," [mormonsandgays.org](http://mormonsandgays.org)).
- **When we live in harmony with God's commandments, we can enjoy all the privileges of Church membership and the blessings of the Savior's Atonement.** Even though individuals may not choose to be attracted to people of the same sex, they can choose how to respond to that attraction.

After listing these principles on the board, ask:

- In what ways can these principles provide hope to those who experience same-sex attraction?
- What other principles do we learn from Elder Holland's statements?

### Matthew 7:12; John 8:1–11; 15:12

#### *We should treat others with love and respect*

(*Note:* As you teach this section of the lesson, be sure to emphasize that those who are attracted to people of the same sex without acting on that attraction are not sinful like the woman taken in adultery. However, Christ's actions toward the woman are an example of how we should treat all people—whether or not they are participating in immoral behavior.)

Tell students that the Apostle John recorded an occasion when the Savior was faced with a very sensitive situation. Give students a few moments to study John 8:1–11, looking for how the Savior treated the woman taken in adultery. Help students liken this account to their own attitudes and actions toward those who engage in homosexual and other immoral behavior by asking the following questions:

- What do the Savior's actions teach us about how we are to treat others? (Although He did not condone the woman's sin, He treated her with kindness and respect, not with cruelty.)
- How can we apply the Savior's example to our own attitudes and actions toward our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters, regardless of whether they have participated in immoral behavior? As students respond, write the following principle on the board: **We follow the Savior's example when we have empathy for all of God's children and treat them with sensitivity and kindness.** (See also Matthew 7:12; John 15:12.)

Consider displaying the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and asking a student to read it aloud:



"The Lord obviously did not justify the woman's sin. He simply told her that He did not condemn her—that is, He would not pass final judgment on her at that time. This interpretation is confirmed by what He then said to the Pharisees: 'Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man' (John 8:15). The woman taken in adultery was granted time to repent, time that would have been denied by those who wanted to stone her" (" 'Judge Not' and Judging," *Ensign*, Aug. 1999, 8).

Students might benefit from learning that, according to the Joseph Smith Translation of John 8:11, following her interaction with the Savior "the woman glorified God from that hour, and believed on his name" (in John 8:11, footnote c).

Display the following statement by Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and ask a student to read it aloud:





"As a church, nobody should be more loving and compassionate. Let us be at the forefront in terms of expressing love, compassion and outreach. Let's not have families exclude or be disrespectful of those who choose a different lifestyle as a result of their feelings about their own gender" ("Love One Another: A Discussion on Same-Sex Attraction," [mormonsandgays.org](http://mormonsandgays.org)).

Invite students to evaluate their own attitudes and actions toward people who are attracted to the same sex. Are those attitudes and actions in harmony with the Lord's teachings and example?

- What would you do if you were in a group where derogatory comments were being made about people who experience same-sex attraction?

Testify that if we will show greater love and kindness toward our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters, lives can be changed, families can be healed, and people who feel alienated from the Church can feel more welcomed by Church members.

Remind students that the blessings of Jesus Christ's Atonement are available to anyone who seeks to keep the commandments and remain true to gospel covenants.

Invite students to think of individuals they know who are attracted to the same sex and ponder what they will do to be more compassionate toward them while holding true to the Lord's law of chastity.

## Student Readings

- Matthew 7:12; John 8:1–11; 15:12; Doctrine and Covenants 76:24; Moses 2:27; and the second paragraph of "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129.
- Jeffrey R. Holland, "Helping Those Who Struggle with Same-Gender Attraction," *Ensign*, Oct. 2007, 42–45.

## LESSON 9

# The Divine Roles and Responsibilities of Men

### Introduction

As an important part of His plan of happiness, Heavenly Father has appointed men to become husbands and fathers. This lesson focuses on their responsibilities: “By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and

righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129).

### Background Reading

- Richard G. Scott, “The Eternal Blessings of Marriage,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 94–97.
- D. Todd Christofferson, “Let Us Be Men,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2006, 46–48.
- Linda K. Burton, “We’ll Ascend Together,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 29–32.
- Howard W. Hunter, “Being a Righteous Husband and Father,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 66–70.
- “The Sacred Callings of Fathers and Mothers,” chapter 15 in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* (2014), 191–96.

### Suggestions for Teaching

#### Ephesians 5:25

*Men are to marry and to cherish their wives*

Begin class by asking:

- What men have been influential in your life? Why did they have such an effect on you?

Explain that this lesson will discuss the divinely appointed roles of men. There are no more important roles for a man than the roles of husband and father. As men seek to righteously fulfill these roles, they become more like their Father in Heaven.

Ask a student to read Ephesians 5:25 aloud.

- What principle do you learn from this scripture about how husbands should act? (Though they may use different words, students should identify this principle: **Husbands are to love their wives as Jesus Christ loved the Church.**)
- What are some ways in which Jesus Christ shows His love for the Church?
- What could husbands do to emulate Jesus Christ in the way they treat their wives?

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



"Christ loved the church and its people so much that he voluntarily endured persecution for them, suffered humiliating indignities for them, stoically withstood pain and physical abuse for them, and finally gave his precious life for them.

"When the husband is ready to treat his household in that manner, not only the wife but all the family will respond to his leadership" ("Home, the Place to Save Society," *Ensign*, Jan. 1975, 5).

- What thoughts do you have as you consider President Kimball's statement?
- In what ways might a father make sacrifices for his family in our day?

Testify that Heavenly Father wants men to strive to be righteous husbands.

### Ephesians 5:23; Doctrine and Covenants 121:36–46

#### *Fathers are to preside in righteousness*

Ask students to search the seventh paragraph of "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" to learn what our Heavenly Father expects of fathers.

- What does the word *preside* mean? (To give guidance and direction to others.)
- How could remembering the phrase "by divine design" help a man to fulfill the responsibilities God has given to fathers?

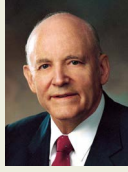
To help students better understand how a father is to preside in the home, ask a student to read Ephesians 5:23 aloud. Then ask a different student to read the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994):



"The Apostle Paul points out that 'the husband is the head of the wife, *even as* Christ is the head of the church' (Ephesians 5:23; italics added). That is the model we are to follow in our role of presiding in the home. We do not find the Savior leading the Church with a harsh or unkind hand. We do not find the Savior treating His Church with disrespect or neglect. We do not find the Savior using force or coercion to accomplish His purposes. Nowhere do we find the Savior doing anything but that which edifies, uplifts, comforts, and exalts the Church. ... He is the model we must follow as we take the spiritual lead in our families" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* [2014], 196).

- How would you state a principle taught by the Apostle Paul and President Benson? (Students should state a principle like the following: **When a man exercises the priesthood worthily in his home, he can righteously influence his wife and children.** In addition, share this principle with students: **As men seek to righteously fulfill the roles of husband and father, they become more like their Father in Heaven.**)

To further explain how a husband and father is to preside in the home, consider sharing the following statement by President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95):



"By divine appointment, the responsibility to preside in the home rests upon the priesthood holder (see Moses 4:22). The Lord intended that the wife be a helpmeet for man (*meet* means equal)—that is, a companion equal and necessary in full partnership. Presiding in righteousness necessitates a shared responsibility between husband and wife; together you act with knowledge and participation in all family matters. For a man to operate independent of or without regard to the feelings and counsel of his wife in governing the family is to exercise unrighteous dominion" ("Being a Righteous Husband and Father," *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 50–51).

Ask students to turn to Doctrine and Covenants 121:36–46. Suggest that they cross-reference Ephesians 5:23, 25 with these verses. (Help students develop the scripture study skill of cross-referencing by inviting them to create such references whenever appropriate.)

Give students a few minutes to study Doctrine and Covenants 121:36–39 and consider how the leadership described in these verses is contrary to the type of leadership Jesus Christ exemplified.

- What do you think the phrase "the rights of the priesthood" means? (When a man receives the priesthood, God confers certain rights and authorities upon him. The man can exercise these rights only when he acts in righteousness.)
- What happens when a priesthood holder does not live righteously? (God withdraws the powers of heaven from that man, and the man can no longer exercise priesthood authority; the Holy Ghost is grieved.)

To understand how a father should lead his family, ask several students to take turns reading aloud Doctrine and Covenants 121:41–46.

- What are some of the Christlike attributes described in these verses? Why do you think that a father who has these attributes is able to draw upon the powers of heaven?
- How would these Christlike attributes help fathers to preside in their families? (You might clarify that these Christlike attributes should also be developed by women.)
- Describe what it might feel like to be the spouse or child of a man who seeks to follow the example of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ in the way he leads his family.

Display and share the following statement written by the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1973:

"Fatherhood is leadership, the most important kind of leadership. It has always been so; it always will be so. Father, with the assistance and counsel and encouragement of your eternal companion, you preside in the home. It is not a matter of whether you are most worthy or best

qualified, but it is a matter of law and [divine] appointment" ("Father, Consider Your Ways," *Ensign*, June 2002, 16).

- Sisters, what could you do to encourage young men to magnify their divine roles and responsibilities in their future families?
- What could each of you—both men and women—do now to be better prepared to lead in your future family?

### **Matthew 2:13–16; 1 Timothy 5:8; Doctrine and Covenants 75:28; 83:2, 4**

#### *Fathers are to provide for and protect their families*

Ask students to read 1 Timothy 5:8 and Doctrine and Covenants 75:28; 83:2, 4, and identify another important duty of fathers. (You might suggest that students cross-reference these passages.)

- Why do you think the Lord expects fathers to provide the necessities of life for their families? (As students respond, point out that in homes with a single mother, the mother can provide for her family.)
- What meaning might these passages have for a young man who is not yet married?

Ask a student to read the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008):



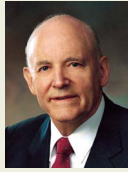
"Work for an education. Get all the training that you can. The world will largely pay you what it thinks you are worth. ... It is your primary obligation to provide for your family" ("Living Worthy of the Girl You Will Someday Marry," *Ensign*, May 1998, 50).

Emphasize to students that for the future security of their families, it is vital for both young men and young women to take advantage of this time in their lives to get as much education and job training as possible.

Point out that in the family proclamation, Church leaders taught that fathers are to provide for and protect their families.

- What are some dangers that threaten families today?
- How have you seen righteous fathers protect their families?

Display the following statement by President Howard W. Hunter, and ask a student to read it aloud:



"A righteous father protects his children with his time and presence in their social, educational, and spiritual activities and responsibilities" ("Being a Righteous Husband and Father," *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 51).

- How might you apply this counsel in your future family or in your family now?

Invite students to consider how they will seek to strengthen and protect their families and then record their impressions.

Explain that we can learn an important principle from Joseph's care of the young Jesus. Ask a student to read Matthew 2:13–16, looking for what Joseph did to protect the Christ child from danger.

Tell students that although it is unlikely they will need to relocate in order to protect their families, they can liken or apply these verses to themselves by analyzing some important details:

- What did the Lord communicate to Joseph in verse 13?
- When and how did Joseph respond to this warning?
- In what ways can fathers follow Joseph's example in protecting their families? (Make sure students understand this principle: **As fathers seek and follow guidance from the Lord, they can better protect their families.**)

### Men and Women Should Fulfill the Lord's Plan

Display the following statement by Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and ask a student to read it aloud:



"If you are a young man of appropriate age and are not married, don't waste time in idle pursuits. Get on with life and focus on getting married. Don't just coast through this period of life. Young men, serve a worthy mission. Then make your highest priority finding a worthy, eternal companion. ...

"... Marriage provides an ideal setting for overcoming any tendency to be selfish or self-centered. I think one of the reasons that we are counseled to get married early in life is to avoid developing inappropriate character traits that are hard to change" ("The Eternal Blessings of Marriage," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 95–97).

- In today's world, what pressures are there for young men and young women to delay marriage?
- Why does the adversary seek to distract young men and young women from pursuing relationships that could lead to marriage and bearing children?
- Why do you think Church leaders consistently counsel young men to actively seek relationships that can lead to marriage?

(*Note:* During this discussion, be sensitive to the fact that some young men in your class may never marry or become fathers due to circumstances beyond their control.)

As you conclude, think of the circumstances of your students. What could you challenge your male students to do to fulfill their obligations to become righteous husbands and fathers? You could invite all of your students to focus on developing a specific Christlike virtue, such as patience or expressing love to others, that will benefit their families.

## **Student Readings**

- Matthew 2:13–16; Ephesians 5:23, 25; 1 Timothy 5:8; Doctrine and Covenants 75:28; 83:2, 4; 121:36–46.
- D. Todd Christofferson, “Let Us Be Men,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2006, 46–48.

## LESSON 10

# The Divine Roles and Responsibilities of Women

### Introduction

As an important part of His plan of happiness, Heavenly Father has given women the divine roles of being wives and mothers. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” teaches that “mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of

their children” and that fathers and mothers are to “help one another as equal partners” (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129).

### Background Reading

- Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Influence of Righteous Women,” *Ensign*, Sept. 2009, 5–9.
- “Understand the Divine Roles of Women,” *Ensign*, Feb. 2009, 67.
- “The Women of the Church,” chapter 20 in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 214–25.

### Suggestions for Teaching

#### Doctrine and Covenants 25:1–3, 10, 13–16

##### *The great influence of righteous Latter-day Saint women in the last days*

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



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

- Why do you think that righteous Latter-day Saint women will be the reason for major growth in the Church?

To expand on this idea, ask students to search Doctrine and Covenants 25:1–3, 10, 13–16, looking for words and phrases that show how Latter-day Saint women can be happily “distinct and different” from women of the world. Help students understand the context of this revelation by explaining that it is a personal revelation for Emma Smith, but it is applicable to all women in the Church.

- What can we learn from these verses about the characteristics that righteous women should seek to have?



- How would you state a doctrine or principle taught in Doctrine and Covenants 25? (As students respond, point out this principle: **As disciples of the Lord, women can use their divine gifts and talents to help build the kingdom of God.**)

Share the following statements by President Spencer W. Kimball and by Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



"To be a righteous woman is a glorious thing in any age. To be a righteous woman during the winding up scenes on this earth, before the second coming of our Savior, is an especially noble calling. The righteous woman's strength and influence today can be tenfold what it might be in more tranquil times" (*Teachings: Spencer W. Kimball*, 217).



"Sisters, your sphere of influence is a unique sphere—one that cannot be duplicated by men. No one can defend our Savior with any more persuasion or power than can you—the daughters of God who have such inner strength and conviction. The power of the voice of a converted woman is immeasurable, and the Church needs your voices now more than ever" (M. Russell Ballard, "Men and Women and Priesthood Power," *Ensign*, Sept. 2014, 33).

Ask the women in your class what thoughts and feelings they have as they consider the influence they can have in their homes, in the Church, and in their communities. Emphasize the prominent roles that women have as leaders in the Church.

You might ask the brethren in your class to share how they have seen the strength and influence of women in their ward or branch bring individuals closer to Heavenly Father.

## 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14–15; Alma 56:47–48; 57:21

### *Women's divinely appointed role as mothers in Zion*

Invite a student to read aloud the following statement by Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



"Men and women have different gifts, different strengths, and different points of view and inclinations. That is one of the fundamental reasons we need each other. It takes a man and a woman to create a family, and it takes men and women to carry out the work of the Lord" ("Men and Women and Priesthood Power," 32).

- Other than the obvious physical differences, what are some ways you have observed that men and women are generally different from each other?

Explain that apart from these general differences, men and women also have different divinely appointed roles, as described in “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” (see the seventh paragraph). Display the following statement by Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



“You sisters were chosen before the foundation of the world to bear and care for God’s children; in doing so, you glorify God (see D&C 132:63)” (“What Will You Choose?” *Ensign*, Jan. 2015, 19).

- How can women glorify God as they bear and care for God’s children? (As students share their thoughts, help them understand this principle: **As women embrace their divinely appointed role as mothers to bear and care for God’s children, they glorify Him and become more like our Divine Parents.** Explain that bringing children into the world is an essential part of Heavenly Father’s plan of salvation.)

Share the following statement by Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



“Many voices in the world today marginalize the importance of having children or suggest delaying or limiting children in a family. My daughters recently referred me to a blog written by a Christian mother (not of our faith) with five children. She commented: ‘[Growing] up in this culture, it is very hard to get a biblical perspective on motherhood. . . . Children rank way below college. Below world travel for sure. Below the ability to go out at night at your leisure. . . .

Below any job you may have or hope to get.’ She then adds: ‘Motherhood is not a hobby, it is a calling’” (“Children,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 28).

- What does it mean to “marginalize” the importance of having children?
- What pressures have you seen on women to “marginalize” the importance of having children?
- What can young adults in the Church do to keep a proper perspective on the importance of bearing children?

Assure students that decisions about when to have children and how many children to have are private matters between a husband and wife and God. An upcoming lesson will discuss these matters in more detail.

Invite students to read and compare 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14–15 and Alma 56:47–48; 57:21, looking for the righteous influence mothers can have on their children. (Learning to compare scripture passages is a scripture study skill that students can use throughout their lives.)

- What do these passages teach about a mother's role? (Emphasize the following principle: **When mothers teach the gospel to their children, they help their children to gain faith and prepare them to live righteously.**)
- How do these passages help explain why Satan is laboring so hard to demean the role of mothers?
- What characteristics do women have that can help them succeed in their roles as mothers?

Be sensitive to the fact that some young women in your class may never marry, and if they do marry, they may not be able to bear children. Use the following statement by Sister Sheri L. Dew, a former counselor in the Relief Society general presidency, to help your students understand that the role of mother is the divine heritage of all women:



"Just as worthy men were foreordained to hold the priesthood in mortality, righteous women were endowed premortally with the privilege of motherhood. Motherhood is more than bearing children, though it is certainly that. It is the essence of who we are as women. It defines our very identity, our divine stature and nature, and the unique traits our Father gave us. ...

"... Some women are required to wait to have children. ... But the Lord's timetable for each of us does not negate our nature. Some of us, then, must simply find other ways to mother. And all around us are those who need to be loved and led" ("Are We Not All Mothers?" *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 96–97).

- How does Sister Dew's statement help expand your understanding of motherhood?

Ask students if any of them would like to share their thoughts and feelings about the righteous influence of their own mother.

Display the following statement by Sister Julie B. Beck, former Relief Society general president, who spoke to women about their need to fulfill the roles given to them by God. Ask a student to read it aloud, and invite students to consider what would happen if women failed to fulfill their roles.



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"If we don't do our part, no one else is going to do it for us. ... We can't delegate [our part in Heavenly Father's plan of happiness]. We can't pass it off to anyone. It's ours. We can refuse it, we can deny it, but it's still our part, and we're accountable for it. There will come a day when we will all remember what we knew before we were born. We will remember that we fought in a great conflict for this privilege. How do we meet this responsibility? We daily put our energies into the work that is uniquely ours to do" ("Understand the Divine Roles of Women," *Ensign*, Feb. 2009, 67).

- What are your thoughts and feelings about the phrase "If we don't do our part, no one else is going to do it for us"?

- What would be lost from the family, from your ward or branch, or from the world if women no longer did their “part”?
- What are some ways that young adult women can fulfill their divine roles as women in Heavenly Father’s kingdom?

Testify of the sacred and essential roles of women to be righteous wives and mothers, and emphasize that our Father in Heaven will someday give all blessings to His righteous children. Invite students to consider telling a mother they know how much they admire her for the way she has fulfilled her divine role.

Conclude by asking students if any of them would like to share their testimonies of the blessings that come when women know who they are in Heavenly Father’s plan of salvation and act on that knowledge.

### **Student Readings**

- 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14–15; Alma 56:47–48; 57:21; Doctrine and Covenants 25:1–3, 10, 13–16.
- “Understand the Divine Roles of Women,” *Ensign*, Feb. 2009, 67.

## LESSON 11

# Preparing for Eternal Marriage

### Introduction

As young single adults live the gospel of Jesus Christ, they can look forward to the future and live their lives with hope. Heavenly Father will guide them in their decisions about eternal marriage as they seek direction from Him. This lesson

will help students approach marriage with greater confidence, knowing that they can receive divine assistance from the Lord.

### Background Reading

- Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Reflection in the Water” (Church Educational System devotional, Nov. 1, 2009), [lds.org/media-library](http://lds.org/media-library).
- Jeffrey R. Holland, “Be Not Afraid, Only Believe” (evening with Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, Feb. 6, 2015), [lds.org/broadcasts](http://lds.org/broadcasts).

### Suggestions for Teaching

#### Doctrine and Covenants 88:40

##### *Preparing for marriage*

Ask students to raise their hands if they have created a list of characteristics they are looking for in a future spouse. Invite a few students to share some of the characteristics on their lists.

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



“Some young people seem to have a shopping list of characteristics they want in a companion and measure their potential: ‘Do you have all the things that I require?’ If you hope to have an eternal companion who has certain spiritual qualities, then you must strive to develop those spiritual qualities in yourself. Then someone who has those qualities will be attracted to you” (“Understanding Heavenly Father’s Plan,” LDS.org).

- What principle do we learn from Elder Bednar’s statement? (Make sure students identify the following principle: **“If you hope to have an eternal companion who has certain spiritual qualities, then you must strive to develop those spiritual qualities in yourself.”**)

Ask students to read Doctrine and Covenants 88:40, looking for how this verse supports the principle just identified.

- How might individuals who are pursuing marriage apply the truths recorded in this verse?

- How have you seen the truths in this verse apply to the choices made by young people about their friends?

Ask students to consider the qualities they would like to see in their future spouse. Invite students to consider whether they possess those same qualities. Ask them to consider how they might use the principles in Doctrine and Covenants 88:40 to better prepare themselves for marriage.

### Mark 5:35–36; Doctrine and Covenants 6:36

#### *“Be not afraid, only believe”*

Ask students:

- What are you looking forward to about marriage?
- What are some things that can cause young people to be fearful of marriage? (List responses on the board.)

Invite a student to read aloud the following statement by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and ask the class to listen for reasons why some young people are fearful of marriage.



“In extreme cases [young people] are fearful that the world is about to end in blood and disaster—something they don’t want to take a spouse or child into. In less severe, more common cases, they are fearful that the world will just get more difficult, that jobs will be too hard to find, and that one should be out of school, out of debt, have a career, and own a home before considering marriage. ...

“Furthermore, so many young people I talk to fear that if they do marry they will be just another divorce statistic. ... Couple that leering about the success of marriage with the tawdry, foul, often devilish mocking of chastity and fidelity and family life so regularly portrayed in movies and on television and you see the problem” (“Be Not Afraid, Only Believe” [evening with Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, Feb. 6, 2015], [lds.org/broadcasts](https://www.lds.org/broadcasts)).

- How many of you know someone who is fearful of marriage because of one of the reasons mentioned by Elder Holland?

Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 6:36 and consider how the Lord’s counsel to Oliver Cowdery applies to preparing for eternal marriage. Then invite a student to read Mark 5:35–36 aloud. Explain that Jairus, the ruler of a synagogue, came to Jesus hoping that He would heal his daughter. Ask the class to consider how the Savior’s encouragement to Jairus might be applied to those preparing for marriage.

- How can looking to the Lord “in every thought” help us to “doubt not, fear not” as we consider our future?
- How can the Lord’s counsel to Oliver Cowdery and to Jairus help individuals who have fears about getting married? (As students respond, write the following principle on the board: **As we look to Jesus Christ in faith, we can overcome fear and have confidence in the future.**)

Share the following statement by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland. Ask the class to listen for why Elder and Sister Holland needed faith to choose to marry when they did.



"When [Sister Holland and I] got married we were both still undergraduates at BYU, with neither set of parents able to help us at all financially, no way to imagine all the graduate education we had yet ahead of us, and this with \$300 between us on our wedding day! Now that may not be the ideal way to start a marriage, but what a marriage it has been and what we would have missed if we had waited even one day longer than we did once we knew that that marriage was right. ... I tremble to think what we would have lost if we had taken 'counsel from our fears,' as President James E. Faust would later tell me over and over and over that I and no one else should ever do" ("Be Not Afraid, Only Believe").

- How was Elder and Sister Holland's situation similar to the situation of many young people today?
- What does it mean to take counsel from your fears? Why is this a poor way to make decisions?

Invite a student to read aloud this testimony and promise from President Thomas S. Monson:



"My beloved brothers and sisters, fear not. Be of good cheer. The future is as bright as your faith" ("Be of Good Cheer," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 92).

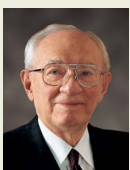
- What thoughts and feelings about the future do you have as you ponder this prophetic encouragement?

Help students contemplate how they might apply this portion of the lesson by asking them to consider whether they have any fears about getting married. Invite them to ponder how they might replace any fears about the future with faith in the Lord.

### **Doctrine and Covenants 6:22–23; 8:2–3; 9:7–9; 11:12–14**

#### *Seeking divine direction in choosing whom to marry*

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



"This will be the most important decision of your life, the individual whom you marry. There is no substitute for marrying in the temple. ... Marry the right person in the right place at the right time" ("Life's Obligations," *Ensign*, Feb. 1999, 2).

- How can you correctly make this most important decision about whom to marry?

Divide the class into pairs. Assign each pair to read the following scripture passages together: Doctrine and Covenants 6:22–23; 8:2–3; 9:7–9; 11:12–14. (These verses are examples of the recurring theme of how to receive personal revelation, which is found in many early sections of the Doctrine and Covenants. “Themes are overarching, recurring, and unifying qualities or ideas” [David A. Bednar, “A Reservoir of Living Water” (Brigham Young University fireside, Feb. 4, 2007), 6, speeches.byu.edu].)

Ask students to consider the following scenario as they study the verses from the Doctrine and Covenants: Imagine that your friend has been dating someone for some time and comes to you for counsel about whether he or she should marry that person. What would you counsel your friend to do?

After the students have had time to study the scriptures, ask one student in each pair to play the part of the friend who is in the dating relationship. Ask the other student in each pair to explain how these verses could help the friend to make a decision. After this activity is complete, make sure the students understand the following principles about making decisions: We should “study out” a decision in our minds, make the best decision we can, and then ask God if the decision is right. Then, if peace and joy come to our hearts and minds, the decision is a good one. Emphasize the following principle: **As we seek the Lord’s guidance as we make our decisions, He will speak to our minds and fill our souls with peace and joy when our choices are right.**

- How have you come to know the truthfulness of what these verses teach about receiving personal revelation?

Ask students to consider how they would respond to the following scenario: the person you have been dating explains that he or she has followed this process for making decisions and has received an impression that the two of you should be married.

Display the statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and ask a student to read the statement aloud:



“I have heard of cases where a young man told a young woman she should marry him because he had received a revelation that she was to be his eternal companion. If this is a true revelation, it will be confirmed directly to the woman if she seeks to know. In the meantime, she is under no obligation to heed it. She should seek her own guidance and make up her own mind. The man can receive revelation to guide his own actions, but he cannot properly receive revelation to direct hers. She is outside his stewardship” (“Revelation” [Brigham Young University devotional, Sept. 29, 1981], 6, speeches.byu.edu).

Testify that students will feel peace as they look forward to eternal marriage with an eye of faith. Encourage them to use the principles discussed in this lesson to prepare for the glorious opportunity of eternal marriage.



## Student Readings

- Mark 5:35–36; Doctrine and Covenants 6:22–23, 36; 8:2–3; 9:7–9; 11:12–14; 88:40.
- Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Reflection in the Water” (Church Educational System devotional, Nov. 1, 2009), [lds.org/media-library](https://www.lds.org/media-library).

## LESSON 12

# Temple Ordinances and Covenants

### Introduction

Latter-day prophets have declared, “Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov.

2010, 129). In this lesson, students will learn that through receiving temple ordinances they can enjoy sacred blessings during mortality and obtain eternal life.

### Background Reading

- Boyd K. Packer, “The Holy Temple,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2010, 29–35.
- D. Todd Christofferson, “The Power of Covenants,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 19–23.

### Suggestions for Teaching

**Doctrine and Covenants 97:10–17; 109:12–21; 124:37–40, 55**

#### *Purposes of temples*

Show the class a picture of your favorite temple, and share why it is your favorite.

- Why do we have temples?

To help answer this question, write the following passages on the board. Invite students to read one of the passages, looking for reasons why Heavenly Father provides temples:

*Doctrine and Covenants 97:10–17*

*Doctrine and Covenants 124:37–40, 55*

- According to these verses, what are some reasons why Heavenly Father provides temples? (As students respond, help them understand the following principle: **Heavenly Father provides temples so His children can receive essential ordinances and knowledge and prepare to dwell in His presence.**)
- What phrases in these verses teach that temples help prepare us to live in God’s presence?

Tell students that Doctrine and Covenants 109 contains the dedicatory prayer for the Kirtland Temple. Ask students to scan Doctrine and Covenants 109:12–21 and make a list of ways in which temples prepare us to dwell in God’s presence.

- According to these verses, how do temples prepare us to dwell with God? (Students might suggest the following: in temples we feel the Lord's power, learn wisdom, and receive the fulness of the Holy Ghost; we are encouraged to repent quickly in the temple; and we are required to be clean when we enter the temple. If time permits, you might refer students to Exodus 19:10–14, which describes how Moses sought to prepare ancient Israel physically and spiritually to come into the presence of the Lord.)

Display the following statements by Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and President Brigham Young (1801–1877):



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



"Your [temple] 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" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 302).

- How do these statements help you appreciate the importance of receiving temple ordinances?

### Doctrine and Covenants 84:19–21

*Priesthood ordinances received in temples help us become more like God*

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

"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" (*True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* [2004], 109).

- How do "saving ordinances" differ from other gospel ordinances? (Other ordinances, such as the blessing of babies and administering to the sick, are not required for exaltation.)

Before proceeding, point out that some saving ordinances, such as baptism and ordination to the Melchizedek Priesthood, take place before we receive temple ordinances; however, this portion of the lesson focuses on saving ordinances performed in the temple. Invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 84:19–21

aloud. Ask the class to look for what we can receive as we participate in ordinances administered by the Melchizedek Priesthood.

- What do you think the term “power of godliness” means? (Consider explaining that the “power of godliness” is the power to become godly or godlike.)
- How would you state a principle taught in Doctrine and Covenants 84:20–21? (As students respond, write the following on the board: **Through temples ordinances and covenants we can become more like God.**)

Give each student a copy of the following statement by Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Ask students to mark words or phrases that teach how participating in temple ordinances helps us become more godlike.



“The greatest of priesthood blessings available to [young men or women] are found in the temple. There, they get a glimpse of heaven. ... The joys of eternity, which can seem so distant outside the temple, suddenly seem within reach.

“In the temple, the plan of salvation is explained and sacred covenants are made. These covenants, together with the wearing of sacred temple garments, strengthen and protect the endowed person against the powers of the

adversary. ...

“In the culminating temple ordinance—eternal marriage—bride and groom are promised that, if they are faithful, they will enjoy a family union with one another, with their children, and with the Lord throughout all eternity. It is called eternal life” (“Blessings of the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 34).

Discuss what students marked.

- How has participating in temple ordinances blessed you in ways similar to those described by Elder Hales?

Give students a few moments to write down what they might do to make temple worship more meaningful and more focused on helping them become like God.

### Exodus 19:3–6; Doctrine and Covenants 109:22–26

#### *Keeping temple covenants*

Inform students that there is another important purpose of temple worship that is closely related to receiving temple ordinances. Ask them to listen for that purpose as you share the following statement by Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



“I testify that in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is found the priesthood authority to administer the ordinances by which we can enter into binding covenants with our Heavenly Father in the name of His Holy Son. I testify that God will keep His promises to you as you honor your covenants with Him” (“The Power of Covenants,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 22).

- When we receive saving ordinances of the gospel, what do we enter into?

Display the following statements by Elders David A. Bednar and Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and invite students to look for important characteristics of our covenants with the Lord:



"A covenant is an agreement between God and His children upon the earth, and it is important to understand that God determines the conditions of all gospel covenants. You and I do not decide the nature or elements of a covenant. Rather, exercising our moral agency, we accept the terms and requirements of a covenant as our Eternal Father has established them" (David A. Bednar, "That We May Always Have His Spirit to Be with Us," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2006, 28–29).



"A covenant is a binding spiritual contract, a solemn promise to God our Father that we will live and think and act in a certain way—the way of His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. In return, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost promise us the full splendor of eternal life" (Jeffrey R. Holland, "Keeping Covenants: A Message for Those Who Will Serve a Mission," *New Era*, Jan. 2012, 3).

- What stands out to you in these statements about covenants?
- Why is it important that God determines the conditions of all gospel covenants? (Since He is the one offering us eternal life, He is entitled to establish the conditions upon which it is received. The only offering we can give Him is our agency as we choose to obey. As part of this discussion, emphasize the following: **As we keep our covenants with the Lord, we are blessed in mortality and can obtain eternal life.**)

Ask students to pair up. Ask one student in each pair to study Exodus 19:3–6 and the other to study Doctrine and Covenants 109:22–26. Invite students to look for blessings that are available to those who keep their covenants, particularly temple covenants. After sufficient time, invite pairs to discuss what they found. (In connection with the Exodus verses, you may want to make sure students understand that it is in holy temples that we begin to qualify as kings and queens who can someday become a holy nation and dwell in the presence of God; see also Revelation 1:6; 5:10; 19:16; D&C 76:55–56.)

- How have your covenants with the Lord been a blessing or a protection to you?

Ask a student to read aloud the following statement by President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972):



"If we go into the temple we raise our hands and covenant that we will serve the Lord and observe his commandments and keep ourselves unspotted from the world. If we realize what we are doing then the endowment will be a protection to us all our lives—a protection which a man who does not go to the temple does not have.

"I have heard my father [President Joseph F. Smith] say that in the hour of trial, in the hour of temptation, he would think of the promises, the covenants that he had made in the

House of the Lord, and they were a protection to him. ... This protection is what these ceremonies are for, in part. They save us now and they exalt us hereafter, if we will honor them" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Fielding Smith* [2013], 235–36).

- What thoughts or impressions have you had during this lesson that you would like to share with the class?

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



"Life is a homeward journey for all of us, back to the presence of God in his celestial kingdom.

"Ordinances and covenants become our credentials for admission into His presence. To worthily receive them is the quest of a lifetime; to keep them thereafter is the challenge of mortality" ("Covenants," *Ensign*, May 1987, 24).

Testify that receiving temple ordinances is indeed "the quest of a lifetime." Temple ordinances help us acquire the credentials necessary for admission into Heavenly Father's presence.

Invite students to ponder whether worshipping and receiving ordinances in the temple is a priority in their lives. Ask them to write down what they could do to focus more on the covenants they have made or will make in the temple.

## Student Readings

- Exodus 19:3–6; Doctrine and Covenants 84:19–21; 97:10–17; 109:12–26; 124:37–40, 55.
- Boyd K. Packer, "The Holy Temple," *Ensign*, Oct. 2010, 29–35.

## LESSON 13

# Improving Temple Worship

### Introduction

Worshipping in holy temples prepares us to become better disciples of Jesus Christ, and the “sacred ordinances and covenants available [there] make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129). President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) encouraged Church members

to make the temple “the great symbol of their membership” (“The Great Symbol of Our Membership,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1994, 2). In this lesson students will learn ways to enrich their temple worship, thereby bringing greater blessings into the lives of their families.

### Background Reading

- Richard G. Scott, “Temple Worship: The Source of Strength and Power in Times of Need,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 43–45.
- L. Lionel Kendrick, “Enhancing Our Temple Experience,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 78–79.
- *Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple* (booklet, 2002).

### Suggestions for Teaching

**Psalm 24:3–5; John 2:13–16; Doctrine and Covenants 109:10–13, 20–22**

#### *Worthiness to enter the temple*

Display a picture of the temple nearest your home. Point out that the phrase *Holiness to the Lord* is engraved on the exterior of every temple. Invite students to read John 2:13–16 and consider how this account illustrates the holy nature of temples.

- How does this account illustrate the attitude we should have toward the temple?
- In what ways might people today show disrespect for the temple?

Ask a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 109:20, which is part of the dedicatory prayer for the Kirtland Temple:

- What principle can we learn from this verse? (Students’ answers should include this principle: **God has commanded that no unclean thing be permitted to enter His house.** Point out that in the scriptures, temples are always portrayed as places of cleanliness, purity, holiness, and worthiness. You might encourage students to watch for this connection when they read about temples.)
- What are some of the worthiness standards that individuals must meet before they can enter the temple?

Give students a few minutes to study Doctrine and Covenants 109:10–13, 21–22, and Psalm 24:3–5 and identify blessings associated with worshipping in the temple worthily. You might suggest that students mark what they find.

- What promises are given in these verses to those who enter the temple worthily? (The Lord's glory will rest upon His people; those who enter the temple will feel the Lord's power and acknowledge that it is a sanctified and holy place; in temples, the Lord will place His name upon us, and we will leave armed with His power; and in temples we can receive blessings and righteousness from the Lord.)
- Why do you think these promises are contingent upon our worthiness?
- What would you say to someone who is wondering whether qualifying for a temple recommend is worth the effort?

Invite a student to read aloud the following statement by President Thomas S. Monson:



"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. ... They understand that the saving ordinances received in the temple that permit us to someday return to our Heavenly Father in an eternal family relationship and to be endowed with blessings and power from on high are worth every sacrifice and every effort" ("The Holy Temple—A Beacon to the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 92).

- What blessings have you received as you have participated in temple ordinances?

Encourage students to obtain and keep a current temple recommend for the remainder of their lives. Emphasize that as they humbly worship the Lord in His temple, they will receive the blessings made available only to the faithful in His holy house.

### 3 Nephi 17:1–3

#### *Enhancing our temple worship*

Write the following on the board and ask students how they would complete the sentence:

*What we gain from the temple will depend on \_\_\_\_\_.*

After several responses, display the following statement by President Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



"What we gain *from* the temple will depend to a large degree on what we take *to* the temple in the way of humility and reverence and a desire to learn. If we are teachable we will be taught by the Spirit, in the temple" (*The Holy Temple* [1980], 42).



- How do you think your experience in the temple would be affected if you went with a spirit of “humility and reverence and a desire to learn”? (As students respond, write the following principle on the board: **If we go to the temple with humility, reverence, and a desire to learn, we will be taught by the Spirit.**)

Explain to students that when the Savior visited the Nephites, He taught them a pattern for understanding sacred things that we can follow when attending the temple. Invite a student to read 3 Nephi 17:1–3 aloud.

- What did the Savior teach His listeners to do that would help them prepare to understand sacred things?
- How can we follow this pattern in order to improve the quality of our experiences at the temple? (We should ponder what we experience in the temple, pray for understanding, prepare to attend the next time, and return as often as circumstances permit.)

Read aloud the following statement by Elder L. Lionel Kendrick of the Seventy, and ask students to listen for phrases that suggest ways we can enhance our temple worship.



“There is a difference in just attending the temple and having a rich spiritual experience. The real blessings of the temple come as we enhance our temple experience. To do so, we must feel a spirit of reverence for the temple and a spirit of worship. ...

“To be reverent is not just to be quiet. It involves an awareness of what is taking place. It involves a divine desire to learn and to be receptive to the promptings of the Spirit. It involves a striving to seek added light and knowledge. Irreverence is not only an act of disrespect for Deity, but it makes it impossible for the Spirit to teach us the things that we need to know” (“Enhancing Our Temple Experience,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 78).

- What phrases in this statement have particular meaning to you? Why?

Read the following counsel from Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and ask students to listen for suggestions they could apply as they visit the temple:



“• Understand the doctrine related to temple ordinances, especially the significance of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

“• While participating in temple ordinances, consider your relationship to Jesus Christ and His relationship to our Heavenly Father. This simple act will lead to greater understanding of the supernal nature of the temple ordinances.

“• Always prayerfully express gratitude for the incomparable blessings that flow from temple ordinances. Live each day so as to give evidence to Father in Heaven and His Beloved Son of how very much those blessings mean to you.

“• Schedule regular visits to the temple.

“• Leave sufficient time to be unhurried within the temple walls.

- “• Rotate activities so that you can participate in all of the ordinances of the temple.
- “• Remove your watch when you enter a house of the Lord.
- “• Listen carefully to the presentation of each element of the ordinance with an open mind and heart.
- “• Be mindful of the individual for whom you are performing the vicarious ordinance. At times pray that he or she will recognize the vital importance of the ordinances and be worthy or prepare to be worthy to benefit from them” (“Temple Worship: The Source of Strength and Power in Times of Need,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 43–44).

- Which of these ideas could be of greatest benefit for you to apply?
- What have you or others done to make worshipping in the house of the Lord more meaningful? What difference does it make when you do those things? (As part of the discussion, consider discussing the following statement from the First Presidency: “When members of the Church find the names of their ancestors and take those names to the temple for ordinance work, the temple experience can be greatly enriched” [First Presidency letter, Oct. 8, 2012].)

Encourage students to write down what they have felt impressed to do in order to enhance their temple experience. Encourage them to follow through with what they wrote.

### Doctrine and Covenants 109:8

#### *A place of revelation*

Explain that in the dedicatory prayer for the Kirtland Temple, the Prophet Joseph Smith described some of the purposes of temples. Ask students to read Doctrine and Covenants 109:8. Point out that one of the purposes is to be a “house of learning.”

- What might we expect to learn in temples?

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



“This sacred edifice becomes a school of instruction in the sweet and sacred things of God. Here we have outlined the plan of a loving Father in behalf of His sons and daughters of all generations. Here we have sketched before us the odyssey of man’s eternal journey from premortal existence through this life to the life beyond. Great fundamental and basic truths are taught with clarity and simplicity well within the understanding of all who hear” (“The Salt Lake Temple,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1993, 5–6).

- How does participating in temple ordinances help us learn the great fundamental truths of Heavenly Father’s plan?
- How can following the pattern recorded in 3 Nephi 17:1–3 help us learn more while we are in the temple?

Display this statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley:



"Legion are those who in times of stress, when difficult decisions must be made and perplexing problems must be handled, have come to the temple in a spirit of fasting and prayer to seek divine direction. Many have testified that while voices of revelation were not heard, impressions concerning a course to follow were experienced at that time or later which became answers to their prayers" ("The Salt Lake Temple," *Ensign*, Mar. 1993, 6).

Conclude by asking students if any of them would like to share their feelings and testimonies about the temple. Emphasize that the students are in a very important time of their lives, when many decisions need to be made. Testify that in the house of the Lord, students can feel God's Spirit, comfort, and guidance.

## Student Readings

- Psalm 24:3–5; John 2:13–16; 3 Nephi 17:1–3; Doctrine and Covenants 109:8–22.
- Richard G. Scott, "Temple Worship: The Source of Strength and Power in Times of Need," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 43–45.

## LESSON 14

# Becoming Saviors on Mount Zion

### Introduction

Through temple work, the Lord has made it possible for all who have died without a knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ “to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the

World,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129). In this lesson, students will learn how the spirit of Elijah motivates us to participate in family history work and to become “saviours ... on mount Zion” (Obadiah 1:21).

### Background Reading

- David A. Bednar, “The Hearts of the Children Shall Turn,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 24–27.
- Quentin L. Cook, “Roots and Branches,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2014, 44–48.

### Suggestions for Teaching

#### Doctrine and Covenants 138:27–37, 58–59

##### *Jesus Christ’s ministry in the spirit world*

Invite students to consider how many of their ancestors have died without hearing the gospel or receiving saving ordinances.

Remind students that after the Savior died, He appeared to the spirits of the dead. Details of this visit, as seen in vision by President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918), are recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 138. (Note that this is an example of helping students to understand context when studying scriptures.)

Ask a few students to take turns reading aloud from Doctrine and Covenants 138:27–37. Invite the class to follow along, looking for what the Lord did during His ministry in the spirit world.

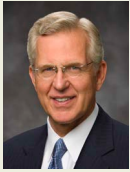
- How did the Savior prepare the way for the spirits of the dead to be redeemed? (Emphasize the following truth: **The Savior commissioned, instructed, and prepared righteous spirits to preach the gospel to those in spirit prison.**)
- According to verse 34, why must the principles of the gospel be preached to those in spirit prison? (Explain that being “judged according to men in the flesh” means that all of God’s children, living or dead, will have the opportunity to accept the gospel and receive saving ordinances so that all can be judged by the same standard. See also D&C 137:7–9.)

Ask students to read Doctrine and Covenants 138:31, 58–59, looking for what individuals who are taught the gospel in the spirit world must do in order to become “heirs of salvation.”

- According to these verses, what must the spirits of the dead do to become “heirs of salvation”? (Help clarify this principle: **After individuals in spirit**

**prison are taught the gospel message, they can choose to repent and accept the ordinances vicariously performed in temples.)**

Share the following statement by Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



"Some have misunderstood and suppose that deceased souls 'are being baptized into the Mormon faith without their knowledge' or that 'people who once belonged to other faiths can have the Mormon faith retroactively imposed on them.' They assume that we somehow have power to force a soul in matters of faith. Of course, we do not. God gave man his agency from the beginning. 'The dead who repent will be redeemed, through obedience to the ordinances of the house of God' [D&C 138:58], but only if they accept those ordinances" ("The Redemption of the Dead and the Testimony of Jesus," *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 10).

Invite students to divide into pairs and role-play explaining to a nonmember how God's plan makes it possible for all individuals, both living and dead, to receive the gospel and saving ordinances.

### **Obadiah 1:21; Malachi 4:5–6; Doctrine and Covenants 110:13–16; 128:18**

*We are to become "saviours ... on mount Zion" (Obadiah 1:21)*

Invite students to list ways in which we can participate in family history work. (Finding family names and taking them to the temple, collecting and preserving family photographs and stories, indexing, and so forth.)

- How can participating in family history work affect our feelings toward deceased family members?

To help students identify the source of those feelings, display the following statement by Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and ask a student to read it aloud:



"Elder Russell M. Nelson has taught that the Spirit of Elijah is 'a manifestation of the Holy Ghost bearing witness of the divine nature of the family' ('A New Harvest Time,' *Ensign*, May 1998, 34). This distinctive influence of the Holy Ghost draws people to identify, document, and cherish their ancestors and family members—both past and present. The Spirit of Elijah affects people inside and outside of the Church" ("The Hearts of the Children Shall Turn," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 25).

Consider writing the following definition of "the Spirit of Elijah" on the board:

*The Spirit of Elijah is a manifestation of the Holy Ghost that influences us to identify, document, and cherish our past and present family members.*

Ask a student to read Malachi 4:5–6 aloud.

- According to this passage, how would the promised visit of the prophet Elijah influence the families of the world and the Lord's work of salvation in the latter days? (Remind students that the resurrected Elijah appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on April 3, 1836, in the Kirtland Temple and conferred upon them the sealing keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood [see D&C 110:13–16].)
- What does it mean that the hearts of fathers and children would be turned to each other?

Invite a student to read aloud the following explanation of these verses by the Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44):



"Now, the word *turn* here should be translated *bind*, or seal. But what is the object of this important mission? or how is it to be fulfilled? The keys are to be delivered, the spirit of Elijah is to come, ... and the Saints to come up as saviors on Mount Zion [see Obadiah 1:21].

"But how are they to become saviors on Mount Zion? By building their temples, erecting their baptismal fonts, and going forth and receiving all the ordinances ... in behalf of all their progenitors who are dead, and redeem them ... ; and herein is the chain that binds the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, which fulfills the mission of Elijah" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 472–73).

- What did Joseph Smith say we become as we receive temple ordinances on behalf of our kindred dead? (Saviors on Mount Zion.)

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



"We literally become saviors on Mount Zion. What does this mean? Just as our Redeemer gave His life as a vicarious sacrifice for all men, and in so doing became our Savior, even so we, in a small measure, when we engage in proxy work in the temple, become as saviors to those on the other side who have no means of advancing unless something is done in their behalf by those on earth" ("Closing Remarks," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2004, 105).

Explain that Jesus Christ performed the Atonement vicariously for us. When we perform vicarious ordinances in behalf of those who have died, we become "saviors on Mount Zion." The term "Mount Zion" can refer to several locations, including the heavenly city of God or the city of New Jerusalem (see Hebrews 12:22; D&C 76:66; 84:2–4; 1 Kings 8:1).

- In what ways can understanding the phrase "saviors on Mount Zion" motivate us to do more to help our past and present family members receive the blessings of the temple?

As part of the discussion, you might share the following statement by Elder D. Todd Christofferson:



"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. Christ 'died for all.' [2 Corinthians 5:15.]" ("The Redemption of the Dead and the Testimony of Jesus," *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 10).

Explain that Doctrine and Covenants 128 records a letter that the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote to the Saints in which he quoted Malachi 4:5–6 and then provided inspired commentary on those verses.

Invite students to silently read Doctrine and Covenants 128:18. Ask them to mark the reasons Joseph Smith gave for participating in the work of redeeming our deceased family members. After discussing what students identified, discuss the following:

- How can our efforts to provide saving ordinances for our ancestors also bring salvation to us?

On the board, write the following words: *Find*, *Take*, and *Teach*.

Ask students to explain how these three words could describe the steps we are encouraged to take as we perform temple and family history work. (Make sure students identify the following: *Find* and prepare names for temple ordinance work; *take* those names to the temple and perform proxy temple ordinances for those individuals; *teach* others to do the same.)



To help students understanding the blessings that come from following these steps, display and ask a student to read aloud the following statement by Elder David A. Bednar, or show the video "The Promised Blessings of Family History" ([lds.org/topics/family-history/fdd-cook/blessings-video](https://www.lds.org/topics/family-history/fdd-cook/blessings-video)). As students read or watch, invite them to look for promised blessings that come from participating in family history work.



"I invite the young people of the Church to learn about and experience the Spirit of Elijah. I encourage you to study, to search out your ancestors, and to prepare yourselves to perform proxy baptisms in the house of the Lord for *your* kindred dead (see D&C 124:28–36). And I urge you to help other people identify their family histories.

"As you respond in faith to this invitation, your hearts shall turn to the fathers. ... Your love and gratitude for your ancestors will increase. Your testimony of and conversion to the Savior will become deep and abiding. And I promise you will be protected against the intensifying influence of the adversary. As you participate in and love this holy work, you will be safeguarded in your youth and throughout your lives" ("The Hearts of the Children Shall Turn," 26–27).

- What blessings come to those who participate in family history work?

Ask if any students can share personal experiences with receiving blessings through participating in family history work.

- For those of you who have received ordinances for ancestors, what feelings can you share about participating in these sacred experiences?

Invite students to research their family histories using the resources available at FamilySearch.org and to seek help from a family history consultant in their ward or branch as needed. Encourage students to make a plan to *find* the names of their ancestors, *take* the names of these ancestors to the temple and perform ordinances in their behalf, and *teach* others to do the same.

### Student Readings

- Obadiah 1:21; Malachi 4:5–6; Doctrine and Covenants 110:13–16; 128:18; 138:27–37, 58–59.
- David A. Bednar, “The Hearts of the Children Shall Turn,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 24–27.



## LESSON 15

# Eternal Marriage

### Introduction

Eternal marriage is essential for exaltation in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom, and it is attained only through being sealed by the proper authority in the temple and then living in accordance with the covenants entered

into at that time. This lesson will reaffirm to students that marrying the right person in the right place and by the right authority is the most important decision they will ever make.

### Background Reading

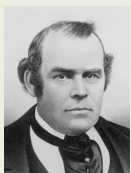
- Russell M. Nelson, “Celestial Marriage,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 92–95.
- “Honorable, Happy, Successful Marriage,” chapter 18 in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 189–201.
- Cree-L Kofford, “Marriage in the Lord’s Way, Part One,” *Ensign*, June 1998, 7–12.

### Suggestions for Teaching

#### Doctrine and Covenants 132:1–24

##### *The doctrine of eternal marriage*

Explain that the importance of marriage has been taught since the earliest days of the Church. The doctrine of eternal marriage, however, was not widely taught by the Prophet Joseph Smith until the Nauvoo era. Display the following statement by Elder Parley P. Pratt (1807–57) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, which describes how he felt as he learned for the first time that marriage could last for eternity. Invite a student to read it aloud:



“It was from [Joseph Smith] that I learned that the wife of my bosom might be secured to me for time and all eternity. ... It was from him that I learned that we might cultivate these affections, and grow and increase in the same to all eternity; while the result of our endless union would be an offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven, or the sands of the sea shore. ... I had loved before, but I knew not why. But now I loved—with a pureness—an intensity of elevated, exalted feeling” (*Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr. [1938], 297–98).

- What effect did Elder Pratt’s new understanding of marriage have on his feelings for his wife?

Explain that many of the Lord’s teachings about eternal marriage are found in Doctrine and Covenants 132. Invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 132:19 aloud. Ask the class to follow along and identify the conditions that must be met in order for a marriage to be eternal.

- What conditions must be met in order for a marriage to be eternal? (Students should understand the following: **Marriage is eternal for those who are**

**married by God’s word, whose marriage is sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, and who abide in the covenant.)**

- What does it mean to “abide in the covenant”? (To keep the terms and conditions of the marriage covenant. As a man and a woman enter into eternal marriage, they make solemn promises to each other and to God. To the spouse, they promise that they will unfailingly love and serve him or her with complete fidelity. To God, they solemnly promise to keep the terms and conditions of the covenants made in the temple.)
- What does it mean that a marriage is “sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise”? (Consider pointing out that the Holy Spirit of Promise is one of the Holy Ghost’s titles. The Holy Ghost has many titles, including Comforter or Revelator. Each of these titles refers to one of His specific responsibilities or functions.)

To help students understand the title Holy Spirit of Promise, display the following statement and ask a student to read it aloud:

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

- How does this statement help explain why exaltation requires more than being sealed in the temple? What else must happen? (We must also live righteous lives and remain faithful to all the saving ordinances, including baptism, the sacrament, priesthood ordinations, and temple ordinances. Only as we remain faithful will the Holy Ghost witness to the Father that the covenants have been kept.)

Help students better understand eternal marriage by comparing and contrasting it with civil marriage using the following diagram. Copy the diagram on the board:

Civil Marriage	Celestial Marriage
Doctrine and Covenants 132:15–18	Doctrine and Covenants 132:19–24

Divide the class into pairs. Ask one student in each pair to study Doctrine and Covenants 132:15–18 and the other student to study Doctrine and Covenants 132:19–24. Invite students to note words and phrases that describe the conditions

that await those who marry civilly and the blessings that await those who marry for eternity.

After sufficient time, ask students to share their findings with each other. Then ask:

- After death, how do the conditions of those who marry civilly differ from those who marry for eternity? (As students respond, you might add their responses to the diagram on the board. You may want to point out that the conditions described in verses 20–24 are similar to the blessings promised in the Abrahamic covenant [see Genesis 17:1–7; 22:17].)

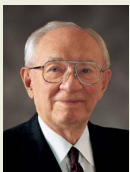
To help answer this question, consider sharing the following statement by Elder Cree-L Kofford of the Seventy:



"The authority for the promises in a celestial marriage comes from God, and the consequences of your failure to honor those promises also will come from God. In a civil marriage, the authority for the promises between bride and groom is the integrity of the two people. It rises no higher than that. It cannot. Its authority comes from man and not from God" ("Marriage in the Lord's Way, Part One," *Ensign*, June 1998, 9).

- What thoughts do you have as you compare the conditions listed on the board?
- What blessings have you observed in the homes of those who marry in the temple and strive to live true to their covenants? What do you see these couples doing to honor their covenants? (As part of this discussion, you might share this statement about marriage by Elder L. Whitney Clayton of the Seventy: "No other relationship of any kind can bring as much joy, generate as much good, or produce as much personal refinement" ["Marriage: Watch and Learn," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 83].)

Explain to the class that Doctrine and Covenants 132 also contains some of the Lord's instructions on the practice of plural marriage. The Lord commanded the Saints to practice the law of plural marriage as a part of the restoration of all things (see Acts 3:21; D&C 132:45). Church members practiced this law until 1890, when the Lord revealed to President Wilford Woodruff that He no longer required Church members to do so. To clarify the Church's position on plural marriage today, invite a student to read aloud the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008):



"If any of our members are found to be practicing plural marriage, they are excommunicated, the most serious penalty the Church can impose. ... More than a century ago God clearly revealed unto His prophet Wilford Woodruff that the practice of plural marriage should be discontinued, which means that it is now against the law of God. Even in countries where civil or religious law allows polygamy, the Church teaches that marriage must be monogamous and does not accept into its membership those practicing plural marriage" ("What Are People Asking about Us?" *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 71–72).

If students have questions about plural marriage, refer them to Gospel Topics, “Plural Marriage in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics).

### Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–4

#### *The importance of choosing eternal marriage*

Invite a student to read aloud Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–4. Ask the class to look for why it is important for us to marry in the way the Lord has decreed.

- What blessing awaits those who choose to enter into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage? (Make sure students understand this principle: **When we enter into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage, we can be exalted in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom.** Explain that in this context the word *new* means that this covenant was newly restored in our dispensation. The word *everlasting* means that this covenant will endure through eternity and that it was ordained in the premortal spirit world as part of the plan of salvation. It has been part of the gospel of Jesus Christ from the time of Adam. About the word *increase*, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught that those who obtain the highest degree of the celestial kingdom “will continue to increase and have children in the celestial glory” [in *History of the Church*, 5:391].)

Display the following statements by Elder Russell M. Nelson and ask a student to read them aloud:

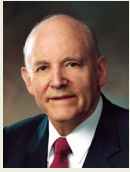


“[Salvation] means to be saved from physical and spiritual death. ... [Exaltation] refers to the highest state of happiness and glory in the celestial realm” (“Salvation and Exaltation,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2008, 8).

“While salvation is an individual matter, exaltation is a family matter. Only those who are married in the temple and whose marriage is sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise will continue as spouses after death and receive the highest degree of celestial glory, or exaltation” (“Celestial Marriage,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 92).

- Why is eternal marriage so important? (As students respond, and as directed by the Spirit, you may want to emphasize the devastating trend in today’s world of people choosing not to marry because they value such things as a career more than fulfilling God’s plan for them. By rejecting marriage, they are forfeiting blessings God would like to give them now and in eternity.)
- Why do you think that a temple marriage gives a couple greater possibilities for happiness than a civil marriage or living together without marriage?

To help students understand that all Saints will ultimately receive the blessing of an eternal marriage as long as they do not compromise their standards in any way, ask a student to read aloud the following statement by President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95):



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

- How many of you know people who desire to be married in the temple but have not had this opportunity? How might the promise in President Hunter's statement help these people?

Conclude by inviting students to answer one or both of the following questions in writing:

- What decisions am I making that will lead me toward being sealed in the temple?
- What areas of my life require change or growth so that I will be ready to be sealed in the temple?

Invite several students to share what they are doing to prepare for temple marriage. Share your testimony that when a husband and wife keep the covenants they made when they were sealed in the temple, they will be united eternally. Share how this knowledge has been a blessing to your life.

## Student Readings

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

## LESSON 16

# The Sacred Powers of Procreation

### Introduction

"God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife" ("The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129). For all of

God's children, living the law of chastity requires us to be virtuous in our actions as well as our thoughts. Intimacy between husband and wife is beautiful and sacred, and it is ordained of God for procreation and for expressing love.

### Background Reading

- David A. Bednar, "We Believe in Being Chaste," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 41–44.
- Dallin H. Oaks, "Pornography," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2005, 87–90.
- Linda S. Reeves, "Protection from Pornography—a Christ-Focused Home," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 15–17.
- "Sexual Purity," *For the Strength of Youth* (booklet, 2011), 35–37.

### Suggestions for Teaching

**Psalm 24:3–4; Matthew 5:8; Jacob 2:31–35; Alma 39:3–5, 9; Doctrine and Covenants 42:22–24; 121:45–46**

*The Lord's law of chastity*

Write the following sentence on the board and ask students how they would complete it:

"The plaguing sin of our generation is \_\_\_\_\_."

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



"The plaguing sin of this generation is sexual immorality. This, the Prophet Joseph said, would be the source of more temptations, more buffetings, and more difficulties for the elders of Israel than any other" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* [2014], 220).

- How does President Benson's statement apply to our current society?

Display the following statement from *For the Strength of Youth*, and ask a student to read it aloud. As they listen, ask students to consider how they would state the Lord's law of chastity in one sentence.

"The Lord's standard regarding sexual purity is clear and unchanging. Do not have any sexual relations before marriage, and be completely faithful to your spouse after marriage. ...

"... Before marriage, do not participate in passionate kissing, lie on top of another person, or touch the private, sacred parts of another person's body, with or without clothing. Do not do anything else that arouses sexual feelings. Do not arouse those emotions in your own body" (*For the Strength of Youth* [booklet, 2011], 35–36).

- How would you state the Lord's law of chastity in one sentence? (As students respond, emphasize the following doctrine from the family proclamation: **"God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife"** ["The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129].)
- How might the precautions outlined in the second paragraph of the quotation from *For the Strength of Youth* help prevent someone from committing more serious moral sins?

Copy the chart below on the board. Divide the class in half and invite one group to study the passages under the "consequences" heading and the other group to study those under the "blessings" heading. Encourage students to refer to the scripture footnotes as they study.

***Consequences of breaking the law of chastity:***

*Jacob 2:31–35*

*Alma 39:3–5, 9*

*D&C 42:22–24*

***Blessings of living the law of chastity:***

*Psalms 24:3–4*

*Matthew 5:8*

*D&C 121:45–46*

After sufficient time, discuss with the class what they learned. Ask questions such as the following:

- How do the consequences of violating the law of chastity indicate the importance of keeping this commandment?
- How have you experienced the blessings of obeying the law of chastity?

Display the following truth from the family proclamation:

**"We declare the means by which mortal life is created to be divinely appointed"** ("The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129).

- What does this statement mean to you?

Use the following statements by Elders Jeffrey R. Holland and David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to help deepen students' understanding of this truth. Ask a student to read the statements aloud while the class listens for why the law of chastity is of eternal importance.



*"The body is an essential part of the soul. This distinctive and very important Latter-day Saint doctrine underscores why sexual sin is so serious. We declare that one who uses the God-given body of another without divine sanction abuses the very soul of that individual, abuses the central purpose and processes of life, 'the very key' to life, as President Boyd K. Packer once called it. In exploiting the body of another—which means exploiting his or her soul—one desecrates the Atonement of Christ, which saved that soul and which makes possible the gift of eternal life"* (Jeffrey R. Holland, "Personal Purity," *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 76).



*"Marriage between a man and a woman is the authorized channel through which premortal spirits enter mortality. Complete sexual abstinence before marriage and total fidelity within marriage protect the sanctity of this sacred channel.*

*"The power of procreation is spiritually significant. Misuse of this power subverts the purposes of the Father's plan and of our mortal existence. Our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son are creators and have entrusted each of us with a portion of Their creative power. ... How we feel about and use that supernal power will determine in large measure our happiness in mortality and our destiny in eternity"* (David A. Bednar, "We Believe in Being Chaste," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 42).

- Why is the law of chastity of eternal importance?
- How does our use of the power of procreation affect our happiness in mortality and in eternity?

Give students a moment to write down precautions they can take to help them obey the law of chastity.

### **Matthew 5:27–28; Romans 8:6; Doctrine and Covenants 63:16**

#### *The dangers of pornography*

Ask students to read the following verses: Matthew 5:27–28; Romans 8:6; and Doctrine and Covenants 63:16. Consider asking students to practice the scripture study skill of creating scripture chains by starting with the first passage, writing a cross-reference to the next, and so on to the last passage.

- What behaviors do these passages forbid? (One behavior the students should identify is the use of pornography.)



- What consequences of viewing or reading pornography do these scriptures identify?

Display the following statements by Elders Dallin H. Oaks and Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and Sister Linda S. Reeves, second counselor in the Relief Society general presidency. Ask a student to read them aloud, and invite the class to look for additional consequences of pornography use.



"Pornography impairs one's ability to enjoy a normal emotional, romantic, and spiritual relationship with a person of the opposite sex" (Dallin H. Oaks, "Pornography," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2005, 89).



"Satan has become a master at using the addictive power of pornography to limit individual capacity to be led by the Spirit. The onslaught of pornography in all of its vicious, corroding, destructive forms has caused great grief, suffering, heartache, and destroyed marriages" (Richard G. Scott, "To Acquire Spiritual Guidance," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 8).



"[Children and youth] need to know the dangers of pornography and how it overtakes lives, causing loss of the Spirit, distorted feelings, deceit, damaged relationships, loss of self-control, and nearly total consumption of time, thought, and energy" (Linda S. Reeves, "Protection from Pornography—a Christ-Focused Home," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 15).

Encourage students who are struggling with pornography use or other types of immorality to visit with their bishops or branch presidents. Assure them that they can find the way back to peace and happiness through repentance. Testify of the following truth: Avoiding pornography will lead to greater happiness in this life and in eternity. Consider listing the following Church websites on the board to help students who are involved in pornography use:

*overcomingpornography.org*  
*addictionrecovery.lds.org*

## Genesis 2:21–24

### *The role of intimacy in marriage*

*Note:* Because of the sensitive nature of this portion of the lesson, rely on prophetic teachings and avoid teaching beyond what is found here, including sharing details about your relationship with your spouse.

Testify that physical intimacy is sacred, appropriate, and special when it occurs within the marriage relationship, the way the Lord has prescribed.

Ask a student to read Genesis 2:21–24 aloud.

- Although it is not specifically mentioned, what do these verses imply is a purpose of physical intimacy between a husband and wife? (To become one with our spouse.)

Display the following statement by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland:



“Human intimacy is reserved for a married couple because it is the ultimate symbol of total union, a totality and a union ordained and defined by God. From the Garden of Eden onward, marriage was intended to mean the complete merger of a man and a woman—their hearts, hopes, lives, love, family, future, everything” (“Personal Purity,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 76).

- How does Elder Holland’s statement help you better understand the purposes of physical intimacy between a husband and wife? (Students should understand the following: **Intimacy within marriage strengthens the spiritual and emotional bonds between husband and wife.**)

Consider distributing the following statements in a handout. Provide a copy to each student, and ask students to underline the purposes of physical intimacy in marriage.



“The union of the sexes, husband and wife (and *only* husband and wife), was for the principal purpose of bringing children into the world. Sexual experiences were never intended by the Lord to be a mere plaything or merely to satisfy passions and lusts” (Spencer W. Kimball, “The Lord’s Plan for Men and Women,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1975, 4).



“The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has a single, undeviating standard of sexual morality: intimate relations are proper only between a man and a woman in the marriage relationship prescribed in God’s plan. Such relations are not merely a curiosity to be explored, an appetite to be satisfied, or a type of recreation or entertainment to be pursued selfishly. . . . Rather, they are in mortality one of the ultimate expressions of our divine nature and potential and a way of strengthening emotional and spiritual bonds between husband and wife” (David A. Bednar, “We Believe in Being Chaste,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 42).

Discuss what purposes the students underlined.

Invite students to ponder what they have learned about the law of chastity and then write answers to the following questions in their journals:

- How does understanding the law of chastity strengthen your determination to live a morally clean life?

- What are the reasons you live the law of chastity?

Conclude by sharing your testimony of the principles discussed in class.

## Student Readings

- Genesis 2:21–24; Psalm 24:3–4; Matthew 5:8, 27–28; Romans 8:6; Jacob 2:28, 31–35; Alma 39:1–9; Doctrine and Covenants 42:22–24; 63:16; 121:45–46.
- David A. Bednar, “We Believe in Being Chaste,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 41–44.
- “Sexual Purity,” *For the Strength of Youth* (booklet, 2011), 35–37.

## LESSON 17

# The Commandment to Multiply and Replenish the Earth

### Introduction

The commandment to multiply and replenish the earth is a vital part of Heavenly Father's eternal plan and remains in force today. This lesson will help students see that they can

be guided in their decisions about bringing children into the world as they study the words of living prophets and seek Heavenly Father's guidance through prayer.

### Background Reading

- Neil L. Andersen, "Children," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 28–31.
- Russell M. Nelson, "Abortion: An Assault on the Defenseless," *Ensign*, Oct. 2008, 32–37.

### Suggestions for Teaching

**Genesis 1:27–28; 9:1; 35:11**

*The commandment to bear children remains in force*

Write the following lines from "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" on the board before class:

*"The first commandment that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God's commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force."*

Begin class by asking:

- What are your thoughts as you consider these two sentences?

Invite students to search Genesis 1:27–28, Genesis 9:1, and Genesis 35:11, looking for names of the individuals whom God commanded to multiply and replenish the earth. You might encourage students to link these references in their scriptures, making a scripture chain. Make sure students understand that this commandment has been given in every gospel dispensation.

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



"It is a crowning privilege of a husband and wife who are able to bear children to provide mortal bodies for these spirit children of God. We believe in families, and we believe in children.

"When a child is born to a husband and wife, they are fulfilling part of our Heavenly Father's plan to bring children to earth" ("Children," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 28).

Emphasize the last sentence in this statement by presenting the following principle:

**When a husband and wife bring a child into the world, they are fulfilling part of Heavenly Father's plan of happiness.** Refer to the sentences on the board and ask:

- Why do you think that the Lord, through His modern prophets, has repeated the commandment to "multiply and replenish the earth" in our modern times? (As an example, you might tell students that since 1960, the birthrate to married mothers in the United States of America has decreased by 45 percent.)
- What are possible reasons why there is a trend for married couples to have fewer children? (Answers may include such things as lack of finances, finishing an education, and waiting to start a career.)
- How can an understanding of God's plan for His children help a husband and wife who are deciding when to have children and how many to have?

Explain that husbands and wives will receive blessings from God that will enable them to keep the commandment to bear children, even during difficult circumstances. Share the following experience from the life of Elder James O. Mason of the Seventy, as told by Elder Neil L. Andersen:



"Elder Mason had [an] experience just weeks after his marriage that helped him prioritize his family responsibilities. He said:

"'Marie and I had rationalized that to get me through medical school it would be necessary for her to remain in the workplace. Although this was not what we [wanted] to do, children would have to come later. [While looking at a Church magazine at my parents' home,] I saw an article by Elder Spencer W. Kimball, then of the Quorum of the Twelve, [highlighting] responsibilities associated with marriage. According to Elder Kimball, one sacred responsibility was to multiply and replenish the earth. My parents' home was [close to] the Church Administration Building. I immediately walked to the offices, and 30 minutes after reading his article, I found myself sitting across the desk from Elder Spencer W. Kimball.' (This wouldn't be so easy today.)

"'I explained that I wanted to become a doctor. There was no alternative but to postpone having our family. Elder Kimball listened patiently and then responded in a soft voice, "Brother Mason, would the Lord want you to break one of his important commandments in order for you to become a doctor? With the help of the Lord, you can have your family and still become a doctor. Where is your faith?"

"Elder Mason continued: 'Our first child was born less than a year later. Marie and I worked hard, and the Lord opened the windows of heaven.' The Masons were blessed with two more children before he graduated from medical school four years later" ("Children," 29).

- What impresses you about this experience?

Emphasize that being married is an essential part of keeping the commandment to bear children. Read the following statement from the family proclamation:

“Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity.”

- What advantages do children have when they are born “within the bonds of matrimony”?
- What thoughts and feelings do you have about helping Heavenly Father fulfill His plan by bringing children into this world?

### 1 Nephi 15:11; Doctrine and Covenants 29:6

#### *Seeking the Lord’s guidance*

Display the following statement from Elder Neil L. Andersen, and ask a student to read it aloud:



“*When* to have a child and *how many* children to have are private decisions to be made between a husband and wife and the Lord. These are sacred decisions—decisions that should be made with sincere prayer and acted on with great faith” (“Children,” 28; italics added).

- What does it mean that these decisions should be “acted on with great faith”?

Ask students to study 1 Nephi 15:11 and Doctrine and Covenants 29:6 to learn some principles that husbands and wives could use when they are seeking answers to questions about *when* to have a child and *how many* children to have.

- What principles did you find in these passages that can help husbands and wives decide when to have children and how many children to have? (Emphasize the following principle: **As husbands and wives exercise faith and seek the Lord in prayer, He will guide them in their decisions about childbearing.**)
- Why do you think it is important for husbands and wives to counsel with the Lord on these matters?

Display the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and ask a student to read it aloud:



"How many children should a couple have? All they can care for! Of course, to care for children means more than simply giving them life. Children must be loved, nurtured, taught, fed, clothed, housed, and well started in their capacities to be good parents themselves" ("The Great Plan of Happiness," *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 75).

- How might Elder Oaks's teachings help a couple determine how many children to have?

During this lesson, be sensitive to those students who may not have the opportunity to be parents in this life. The following statement from Elder Neil L. Andersen may be helpful:



"The bearing of children can ... be a heartbreaking subject for righteous couples who marry and find that they are unable to have the children they so anxiously anticipated or for a husband and wife who plan on having a large family but are blessed with a smaller family.

"We cannot always explain the difficulties of our mortality. Sometimes life seems very unfair—especially when our greatest desire is to do exactly what the Lord has commanded. As the Lord's servant, I assure you that this promise is certain: 'Faithful members whose circumstances do not allow them to receive the blessings of eternal marriage and parenthood in this life will receive all promised blessings in the eternities, [as] they keep the covenants they have made with God' [*Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 1.3.3]" ("Children," 30).

## Psalm 127:3; Doctrine and Covenants 59:6

### *The sanctity of life*

Ask a student to read Psalm 127:3 aloud.

- What does it mean that "children are an heritage of the Lord"? (Children are a gift from God.)

Read the following from the family proclamation: "We affirm the sanctity of life and of its importance in God's eternal plan." Testify of this principle: **When we understand that children are gifts from God, we better understand the sanctity of their lives.** In many parts of the world, abortion is considered acceptable, and many millions of abortions are performed each year. To help students understand the Church's policy on abortion, share the following statement and ask students to listen for circumstances when an abortion might be justified:

"Human life is a sacred gift from God. Elective abortion for personal or social convenience is contrary to the will and the commandments of God. ... Latter-day prophets have denounced abortion, referring to the Lord's declaration, 'Thou shalt not ... kill, nor do anything like unto it' (D&C 59:6). Their counsel on the matter is clear: Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints must not submit to, perform, encourage, pay for, or arrange for an abortion. Church members who encourage an abortion in any way may be subject to Church discipline.

"Church leaders have said that some exceptional circumstances may justify an abortion, such as when pregnancy is the result of incest or rape, when the life or health of the mother is judged by competent medical authority to be in serious jeopardy, or when the fetus is known by competent medical authority to have severe defects that will not allow the baby to survive beyond birth. But even these circumstances do not automatically justify an abortion. Those who face such circumstances should consider abortion only after consulting with their local Church leaders and receiving a confirmation through earnest prayer" (Gospel Topics, "Abortion," [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics)).

- Under what exceptional circumstances might an abortion be justified?
- Even when those circumstances are present, what counsel should be sought by those considering an abortion?

Share the following statement to help students understand that adoption is an unselfish alternative to having an abortion:

"We ... express our support of unwed parents who place their children for adoption in stable homes with a mother and a father. We also express our support of the married mothers and fathers who adopt these children.

"... Having a secure, nurturing, and consistent relationship with both a father and a mother is essential to a child's well-being. When choosing adoption, unwed parents grant their children this most important blessing. Adoption is an unselfish, loving decision that blesses the child, birth parents, and adoptive parents in this life and throughout the eternities" (First Presidency statement, Oct. 4, 2006, as cited in *Ensign*, Oct. 2008, 37).

As you conclude the lesson, share your testimony of the joy children have brought into your life. Encourage students to worthily prepare for the sacred opportunity of bringing children into this world.

## Student Readings

- Genesis 1:27–28; 9:1; 35:11; Psalm 127:3; 1 Nephi 15:11; Doctrine and Covenants 29:6; 59:6; Moses 2:27–28.
- Neil L. Andersen, "Children," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 28–31.



## LESSON 18

# Nurturing the Marriage Relationship

### Introduction

"Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other" ("The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129). By including Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ in their relationships and

unitedly living the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ, husbands and wives can attain the ultimate happiness that is the object of God's plan.

### Background Reading

- Russell M. Nelson, "Nurturing Marriage," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2006, 36–38.
- David A. Bednar, "Marriage Is Essential to His Eternal Plan," *Ensign*, June 2006, 82–87.
- L. Whitney Clayton, "Marriage: Watch and Learn," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 83–85.

### Suggestions for Teaching

**Matthew 19:3–8; Ephesians 5:25, 28–31; Doctrine and Covenants 25:5, 13–15; 42:22**

#### *Building a successful marriage*

Display the following statement by Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and invite a student to read it aloud:



"Marriage brings greater possibilities for happiness than does any other human relationship. Yet some married couples fall short of their full potential. They let their romance become rusty, take each other for granted, allow other interests or clouds of neglect to obscure the vision of what their marriage really could be. Marriages would be happier if nurtured more carefully" ("Nurturing Marriage," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2006, 36).

- What habits or attitudes do you think might cause a marriage to "become rusty"?

Explain that couples who allow their marriages to become rusty sometimes choose to end their marriages through divorce. Tell students that during the Savior's mortal ministry, some Pharisees argued that divorce was justified for even trivial reasons, and they sought to involve Jesus in the controversy by asking His opinion about divorce. Ask a student to read Matthew 19:3–8 aloud, and invite students to look for the contrast between the Savior's and the Pharisees' attitudes toward marriage. If needed, explain that a writing of divorcement was a legal document that a man was to give his wife before sending her away.

- What words in verse 3 illustrate the Pharisees' attitude toward marriage and divorce? (It was permissible to "put away," or divorce, "for every cause.")
- What did Jesus teach in verse 8 that countered this thinking and affirmed the solemn nature of marriage? (From the time of Adam and Eve, God intended for marriages to last eternally. To reinforce this doctrine, consider asking students to cross-reference verse 8 with Ecclesiastes 3:14 and Moses 4:18.)

Share the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



"The kind of marriage required for exaltation—eternal in duration and godlike in quality—does not contemplate divorce. In the temples of the Lord, couples are married for all eternity. But some marriages do not progress toward that ideal. Because 'of the hardness of [our] hearts' [Matthew 19:8], the Lord does not currently enforce the consequences of the celestial standard. He permits divorced persons to marry again without the stain of immorality specified in the higher law" ("Divorce," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2007, 70).

To help students understand what husbands and wives can do to achieve the kind of marriage required for exaltation, ask students to read the first sentence of paragraph six in the family proclamation.

- What obligation do husbands and wives have to each other? (As students respond, write on the board this phrase from the family proclamation: **"Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other."**)
- What does it mean to you that married couples have a "solemn responsibility to love and care for each other"?

To help students better understand this responsibility, invite half of the class to read Doctrine and Covenants 25:5, 13–15, and the other half to read Doctrine and Covenants 42:22 and Ephesians 5:25, 28–31. Ask students to look for principles that teach how to nurture a marriage and then write what they find on the board. After sufficient time, ask students to select one of the items written on the board and explain what it means to them.

Share the following statement by Elder L. Whitney Clayton of the Presidency of the Seventy and ask the class to listen for specific insights into the words *cleave* and *leave*:



"The happiest marriages I have seen radiate obedience to one of the happiest commandments—that we 'live together in love' [D&C 42:45]. Speaking to husbands, the Lord commanded, 'Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else' [D&C 42:22]. A Church handbook teaches: 'The word *cleave* means to be completely devoted and faithful to someone. Married couples cleave to God and one another by serving and loving each other and by keeping covenants in complete fidelity to one another and to God.' Both the husband and wife 'leave behind their single life and establish their marriage as [their] first priority. ... They

allow no other person or interest to have greater priority ... than keeping the covenants they have made with God and each other' [*Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 1.3.1]. Watch and learn: successful couples love each other with complete devotion" ("Marriage: Watch and Learn," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 85).

- What are some things husbands or wives may have to "leave behind" in order to "cleave" to one another?
- How do married couples you know demonstrate love and care for their spouses?
- What are you doing now that will help prepare you to unselfishly love and care for your future spouse?

### Abraham 5:15–18

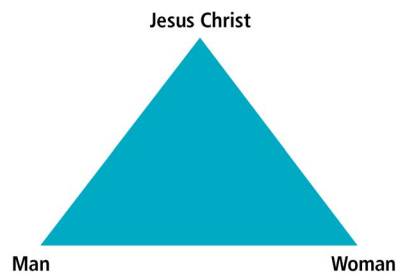
#### *Becoming one in marriage*

Invite a student to read Abraham 5:15–18 aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for what these verses teach about the relationship between husbands and wives.

- According to these verses, what goal should a husband and wife work toward? (To become "one flesh.")

Draw the following diagram on the board:

Provide each student with a copy of the following statement by Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and ask a student to read the first paragraph aloud while the class looks for what the diagram represents:



"The Lord Jesus Christ is the focal point in a covenant marriage relationship. Please notice how the Savior is positioned at the apex of this triangle, with a woman at the base of one corner and a man at the base of the other corner. Now consider what happens in the relationship between the man and the woman as they individually and steadily 'come unto Christ' and strive to be 'perfected in Him' (Moroni 10:32). Because of and through the Redeemer, the man and the woman come closer together.

"As a husband and wife are each drawn to the Lord (see 3 Nephi 27:14), as they learn to serve and cherish one another, as they share life experiences and grow together and become one, and as they are blessed through the uniting of their distinctive natures, they begin to realize the fulfillment that our Heavenly Father desires for His children. Ultimate happiness, which is the very object of the Father's plan, is received through the making and honoring of eternal marriage covenants" ("Marriage Is Essential to His Eternal Plan," *Ensign*, June 2006, 86).

- According to Elder Bednar, what makes it possible for a husband and wife to come closer together? (As students respond, emphasize the following principle: **As husbands and wives strive to come unto Christ, they can become one in their marriage.**)
- How do you think coming unto Christ helps a husband and wife grow closer?

Ask a student to read aloud the second paragraph of Elder Bednar's statement.  
Then ask:

- According to Elder Bednar, what must couples do to receive the "ultimate happiness" that God wants for them?
- What types of things have you seen couples do to achieve unity and joy in marriage?

Read and then testify of the truth of the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994):



"Marriage itself must be regarded as a sacred covenant before God. A married couple have an obligation not only to each other, but to God. He has promised blessings to those who honor that covenant" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* [2014], 183).

- How might spouses act differently if they regarded marriage as a sacred covenant made not only with each other but also with God?
- What can you do now to prepare for a temple marriage?

Challenge students to write in their personal journals about what they are doing now and what they might do in the future to prepare for eternal marriage.

## Student Readings

- Matthew 19:3–8; Ephesians 5:25, 28–31; Doctrine and Covenants 25:5, 13–15; 42:22; Abraham 5:15–18.
- L. Whitney Clayton, "Marriage: Watch and Learn," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 83–85.

## LESSON 19

# Building Christ-Centered Lives and Homes

### Introduction

The prophet Helaman taught his sons that if they would build their lives upon the sure foundation of Jesus Christ, Satan would not have power to destroy them (see Helaman 5:12). In this lesson, students will discuss how to build their families

upon the foundation of Jesus Christ. As family members center their lives on the teachings of Jesus Christ, they can repair and strengthen relationships and find greater happiness.

### Background Reading

- Henry B. Eyring, “Our Perfect Example,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 70–73.
- Richard G. Scott, “For Peace at Home,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 29–31.

### Suggestions for Teaching

**John 15:1–5, 10–11; Helaman 5:12**

#### *Building Christ-centered lives and homes*

Begin class by drawing a simple house or other building on the board. Discuss the following with students:

- What value is a foundation to a home or other structure?
- Why do some building materials make stronger building foundations than others?

Remind students that all families experience difficulties to some degree, and Satan seeks to destroy all families. From the Book of Mormon we learn a sure way to minimize Satan’s influences on our families.

Ask students to study Helaman 5:12, looking for what it teaches about a foundation.

- What do you think it means to build our foundation on Jesus Christ?
- What can a family do to build on the foundation of Jesus Christ? (Possible answers include the following: study and live the gospel of Jesus Christ, seek to follow Jesus Christ’s example, obey God’s commandments, and draw upon the power of Christ’s Atonement.)
- How can the promises in Helaman 5:12 apply to families who seek to build their foundation upon the rock of Jesus Christ? (Answers should show understanding of the following principle: **As families build their foundation on Jesus Christ, Satan will not have power to destroy them.**)

Explain that shortly before His death, the Savior gave an analogy that can help families understand how to build their foundations on Him. Invite several students to read John 15:1–5, 10–11 aloud. Ask the class to follow along and consider how

the Savior's metaphor in these passages can apply to families who are striving to build their foundations on Jesus Christ.

- If Jesus Christ is the vine and we are the branches, what might the fruit represent? (The fruit can represent the good works and actions of Jesus Christ's disciples.)

Help students recognize that the Savior used the words "abide" or "abideth" several times in John 15:4–10. Explain that the word *abide* in this context means to remain and "stay—but stay *forever*," implying that we should remain firmly and permanently attached to Jesus Christ and His Church (Jeffrey R. Holland, "Abide in Me," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2004, 32). You might briefly explain to students that recognizing word repetitions is a scripture study skill they can use in their personal study. The repetition of a word in the scriptures often means that the author is emphasizing an important idea.

- According to verses 5 and 11, what are the blessings of abiding in the Savior? **(If we abide in the Savior, we can bring forth much fruit and receive a fulness of joy.)**
- What blessings do you think will come to families when family members strive to abide in the Savior?

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



"Regardless of your circumstances, you can center your home and your life on the Lord Jesus Christ, for He is the source of true peace in this life" ("For Peace at Home," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 29).

- How would you describe a home that is centered on Jesus Christ? What characteristics would make a home Christ-centered?

Encourage students to ponder what they can do to abide more completely in the Savior, thus inviting more of the Savior's influence into their homes. Encourage them to think about what changes they might make in their relationships with family members.

### Helaman 14:30–31; 3 Nephi 11:29–30

#### *Controlling our emotions by using our agency righteously*

Transition to the next portion of the lesson by reiterating that all families face challenges. Even when family members are trying to center their lives on Jesus Christ, they can face circumstances that challenge their righteous desires. Write the following on the board:

*"You made me angry!"*

*"You made me lose my temper!"*

Invite students to ponder whether these statements are based on truth.

Ask a student to read Helaman 14:30–31 aloud. Invite the class to consider how these verses relate to the statements on the board.

- What important truth is found in these verses that applies to our relationships with others? (Emphasize the following truth: **Because Heavenly Father has given us agency, we can choose whether or not to become angry.** Explain that Elder Lynn G. Robbins of the Seventy taught, "Becoming angry is a conscious choice, a decision; therefore, we can make the choice not to become angry. *We choose!*" ["Agency and Anger," *Ensign*, May 1998, 80].)
- What problems result from believing that the actions or words of others can "make" us angry?

Ask students to read 3 Nephi 11:29–30 silently. Point out the Savior's teaching that contention "should be done away" (3 Nephi 11:30). Remind students that speaking harshly and other unrighteous behavior, such as emotional and physical abuse, is never justified.

Invite students to think of things they can do to help them remember to choose not to become angry. Ask them to share their ideas. Ask students to commit to use their agency righteously by choosing not to become angry, especially in family settings.

**3 Nephi 12:22–24; Moroni 7:45, 48; Doctrine and Covenants 64:9–11; 88:119, 123–25**

*Repentance and forgiveness can heal damaged family relationships*

On the board, write the following principle:

*"Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ."*

Tell students that this phrase comes from "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129).

To help students identify some of the teachings of Jesus Christ that can bring greater happiness to families, ask students to silently read Doctrine and Covenants 88:119, 123–25. Suggest that they mark or highlight key teachings. Then ask students to discuss how families could be strengthened by living the teachings found in these verses.

Remind students that problems and difficulties often occur in families when the teachings of Jesus Christ are neglected. Display the following statement by

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the First Presidency, and ask a student to read it aloud:



"Strained and broken relationships are as old as humankind itself. ... I imagine that every person on earth has been affected in some way by the destructive spirit of contention, resentment, and revenge. Perhaps there are even times when we recognize this spirit in ourselves" ("The Merciful Obtain Mercy," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2012, 70).

- What teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ can help to heal strained or even broken relationships between family members?

Write the following scripture references on the board. Explain that these verses each contain truths taught by the Savior that can strengthen family relationships.

*3 Nephi 12:22–24*

*Moroni 7:45, 48*

*Doctrine and Covenants 64:9–11*

Invite students to read these passages, and then discuss the following:

- What teachings from these verses can help heal family relationships that have been damaged by contention, unkindness, or other actions?
- How have you seen forgiveness improve family relationships?
- Why is it sometimes harder to forgive family members who offend us than other people?

Display the following statements by President Dieter F. Uchtdorf and President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95), and ask a student to read them aloud:



"None of us is without sin. Every one of us makes mistakes, including you and me. We have all been wounded. We all have wounded others.

"It is through our Savior's sacrifice that we can gain exaltation and eternal life. As we accept His ways and overcome our pride by softening our hearts, we can bring reconciliation and forgiveness into our families and our personal lives" (Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "One Key to a Happy Family," *Ensign*, Oct. 2012, 6).



"Whatever Jesus lays his hands upon lives. If Jesus lays his hands upon a marriage, it lives. If he is allowed to lay his hands on the family, it lives" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Howard W. Hunter* [2015], 150).



- How can following the principles discussed today allow the Savior to lay His hands upon a family?

Invite students to consider how the principles of repentance and forgiveness could help repair or strengthen their own family relationships. Encourage them to act promptly to apply these principles in their family relationships.

## **Student Readings**

- John 15:1–5, 10–11; Helaman 5:12; 14:30–31; 3 Nephi 11:29–30; 12:22–24; Moroni 7:45, 48; Doctrine and Covenants 64:9–11; 88:119, 123–25.
- Richard G. Scott, “For Peace at Home,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 29–31.

## LESSON 20

# Safeguarding Faith and Testimony

### Introduction

Families and individuals have a sacred duty to develop faith in Jesus Christ and maintain strong testimonies. The Savior warned that in the last days, even “the very elect” might be

deceived (Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:22). This lesson focuses on strengthening testimony to safeguard against the adversary’s forces, which seek to destroy faith.

### Background Reading

- Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Come, Join with Us,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 21–24.
- Jeffrey R. Holland, “Lord, I Believe,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 93–95.

### Suggestions for Teaching

**John 14:26–27; Ephesians 4:11–14; 1 Nephi 15:23–24; 2 Nephi 31:19–20; Alma 5:45–46; Helaman 3:28–30; Doctrine and Covenants 11:13–14; 21:4–6**

*Strong testimonies provide protection from the adversary*

Explain that Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles once spoke about packs of wolves that roamed the countryside in Ukraine many years ago. The only thing that frightened them was fire. When traveling away from cities, people had to build large bonfires and keep them burning throughout the night to repel the wolves.

Invite a student to read the following statement:



“Travelers understood that building and maintaining a roaring bonfire was not just a matter of convenience or comfort; it was a matter of survival. ...

“We do not have to protect ourselves from wolf packs as we travel the road of life today, but, in a spiritual sense, we do face the devious wolves of Satan in the form of temptation, evil, and sin. We live in dangerous times when these ravenous wolves roam the spiritual countryside in search of those who may be weak in faith or feeble in their conviction. ... We are all vulnerable to attack. However, we can fortify ourselves with the protection provided by a burning testimony that, like a bonfire, has been built adequately and maintained carefully” (“Spiritual Bonfires of Testimony,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 34).

- Why is maintaining a strong testimony “a matter of survival” in today’s world? (After some discussion, write the following on the board: **When we fortify our testimonies, we become less vulnerable to attacks on our faith.**)
- How can having a strong testimony help you to strengthen family members and others against attacks on their faith?

Display or write the following chart on the board. Do not include the bold principles in parentheses; these principles are provided for the benefit of the teacher. Ask students to read the verses in one of the columns, searching for principles that help protect against forces that weaken faith. Invite students to summarize what they read in a clear statement of doctrine or principle and then share their statements.

2 Nephi 31:19–20 Helaman 3:28–30	Ephesians 4:11–14 D&C 21:4–6	John 14:26–27 D&C 11:13–14	1 Nephi 15:23–24 Alma 5:45–46
<i>(When we maintain steadfast faith in Jesus Christ, we can press forward on the strait and narrow path leading to eternal life.)</i>	<i>(When we follow the Lord's apostles, prophets, and other Church leaders, we can be protected from deception.)</i>	<i>(Through the Holy Ghost, the Lord can send peace and direction when our faith is attacked.)</i>	<i>(Fasting, prayer, and scripture study strengthen faith and testimony and enable us to withstand challenges.)</i>

- How have these principles strengthened you or someone you know against attacks on faith?
- How might you use this information to strengthen someone you know who is struggling with his or her faith?

Remind students of the following: *“Faith is a gift of God bestowed as a reward for personal righteousness. It is always given when righteousness is present, and the greater the measure of obedience to God’s laws the greater will be the endowment of faith”* (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [1966], 264). Testify that having faith in Jesus Christ, following the prophets, seeking the Spirit, and studying the scriptures will safeguard and strengthen testimonies. When we fail to do these things, faith can be weakened and testimonies lost.

Invite a student to read aloud the following statement by Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to illustrate this point:



"One of my fine missionaries who served with me when I was the mission president in Toronto came to see me some years later. I asked him, 'Elder, how can I help you?'"

"'President,' he said, 'I think I'm losing my testimony.'"

"I couldn't believe it. I asked him how that could be possible."

"'For the first time I have read some anti-Mormon literature,' he said. 'I have some questions, and nobody will answer them for me. I am confused, and I think I am losing my testimony.'"

"I asked him what his questions were, and he told me. They were the standard anti-Church issues, but I wanted a little time to gather materials so I could provide meaningful answers. So we set up an appointment 10 days later, at which time I told him I would answer every one of his questions. As he started to leave, I stopped him."

"'Elder, you've asked me several questions here today,' I said. 'Now I have one for you.'"

"'Yes, President?'"

"'How long has it been since you read from the Book of Mormon?' I asked."

"His eyes dropped. He looked at the floor for a while. Then he looked at me. 'It's been a long time, President,' he confessed."

"'All right,' I said. 'You have given me my assignment. It's only fair that I give you yours. I want you to promise me that you will read in the Book of Mormon for at least one hour every day between now and our next appointment.' He agreed that he would do that."

"Ten days later he returned to my office, and I was ready. I pulled out my papers to start answering his questions, but he stopped me."

"'President,' he said, 'that isn't going to be necessary.' Then he explained: 'I know that the Book of Mormon is true. I know Joseph Smith is a prophet of God.'"

"'Well, that's great,' I said. 'But you're going to get answers to your questions anyway. I worked a long time on this, so you just sit there and listen.'"

"And so I answered all his questions and then asked, 'Elder, what have you learned from this?'"

"And he said, 'Give the Lord equal time.'"

"May we engrave that thought on our minds and carry it with us as we walk through this process of mortality. Let us give the Lord equal time" ("When Shall These Things Be?" *Ensign*, Dec. 1996, 60).

- What did you learn from the experience that Elder Ballard shared?
- How might giving the Lord "equal time" in your personal and family life strengthen you and your family against Satan?
- How might practicing these principles now prepare you to be a better spouse and parent?

Conclude this portion of the lesson by asking a student to read the following statement by Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



"When we are consistently praying morning and night, studying our scriptures daily, having weekly family home evening, and attending the temple regularly, we are actively responding to [Jesus Christ's] invitation to 'come unto Him.' The more we develop these habits, the more anxious is Satan to harm us but the less is his ability to do so. Through the use of these tools, we exercise our agency to accept the full gifts of His atoning sacrifice.

"... I testify that as we actively come unto Him, we can endure every temptation, every heartache, every challenge we face" ("Make the Exercise of Faith Your First Priority," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 94).

Ask students if any of them could share an experience that is not too personal in which they overcame challenges to his or her faith.

### **Luke 22:31–32; 3 Nephi 18:32; Doctrine and Covenants 108:7–8**

#### ***Fortifying the faith of others***

Ask students to raise their hands if they know someone who is struggling to maintain his or her testimony.

Ask students to study and compare Luke 22:31–32; 3 Nephi 18:32; and Doctrine and Covenants 108:7–8 to learn the duty that we have as faithful members of the Church, particularly toward family members. After sufficient time, invite students to share what they learned. Students should understand the following principle:

**When we are converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ, we have a duty to strengthen the faith of others.**

Share the following statement by President Thomas S. Monson:



"I have found that two fundamental reasons largely account for a return to activity and for changes of attitudes, habits, and actions. First, individuals return because someone has shown them their eternal possibilities and has helped them decide to achieve them. The less active can't long rest content with mediocrity once they see that excellence is within their reach.

"Second, others return because loved ones or 'fellowcitizens with the saints' [Ephesians 2:19] have followed the admonition of the Savior, have loved their neighbors as themselves, and have helped others to bring their dreams to fulfillment and their ambitions to realization.

"The catalyst in this process has been—and will continue to be—the principle of love" ("Our Responsibility to Rescue," *Ensign*, Oct. 2013, 5).

- Why do you think love is such an important catalyst in strengthening the faith of others?
- What have you or someone you know done to help strengthen the faith of someone who was struggling spiritually?
- What steps can you take to be more effective in fortifying others' faith?

Conclude by bearing your testimony that students can help restore and strengthen the faith of their friends and family as they show love and follow the principles discussed in this lesson.

### **Student Readings**

- Luke 22:31–32; John 14:26–27; Ephesians 4:11–14; 1 Nephi 15:23–24; 2 Nephi 31:19–20; Alma 5:45–46; Helaman 3:28–30; 3 Nephi 18:32; Doctrine and Covenants 11:13–14; 21:4–6; 108:7–8.
- Jeffrey R. Holland, “Lord, I Believe,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 93–95.

## LESSON 21

# Rearing Children in Love and Righteousness

### Introduction

"Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness" ("The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129). Parents help accomplish

this duty as they express their love and testimony in word and action and establish regular habits of holding family home evening, family prayer, and family scripture study.

### Background Reading

- Richard G. Scott, "Make the Exercise of Faith Your First Priority," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 92–95.
- Jeffrey R. Holland, "A Prayer for the Children," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2003, 85–87.

### Suggestions for Teaching

**Luke 15:11–20; Ephesians 6:4**

*The responsibility of parents to love and care for their children*

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



"When our youngest daughter was about four years of age, I came home from hospital duties quite late one evening. I found my dear wife to be very weary. ... So I offered to get our four-year-old ready for bed. I began to give the orders: 'Take off your clothes, hang them up; put on your pajamas; brush your teeth; say your prayers' and so on, commanding in a manner befitting a tough sergeant in the army. Suddenly she cocked her head to one side, looked at me with a wistful eye, and said, 'Daddy, do you own me?'"

"She taught me an important lesson. ... No, we don't own our children. Our parental privilege is to love them, to lead them, and to let them go" ("Listen to Learn," *Ensign*, May 1991, 22).

- What principle did Elder Nelson teach with this experience? (**Parents have the privilege of loving and leading their children.**)

Read or display the following from the family proclamation, and ask students to identify key words and phrases: "Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. ... Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness" ("The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129). Ask students what key words stand out to them and why. If needed, ask:

- Why do you think that the words "solemn" and "sacred" are used to describe the responsibilities and duties of parents?

Tell students that the Savior taught a parable that shows how a child who is raised with love can continue to trust in his or her family relationships. Invite students to silently read Luke 15:11–20, looking for evidence that the prodigal son knew he was loved by his father. After sufficient time, invite students to share what they found.

To help students understand the father in the parable, invite a student to read aloud the following statement by Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



"In the parable of the prodigal son, we find a powerful lesson for families and especially parents. After the younger son 'came to himself' [Luke 15:17], he decided to go home.

"How did he know his father wouldn't reject him? Because he knew his father. Through the inevitable misunderstandings, conflicts, and follies of the son's youth, I can visualize his father being there with an understanding and compassionate heart, a soft answer, a listening ear, and a forgiving embrace. I can also imagine his son knowing he could come home because he knew the kind of home that was awaiting him" ("With All the Feeling of a Tender Parent: A Message of Hope to Families," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2004, 90).

- What expressions of love from the father did Elder Hales identify? What other parental actions lead to a loving, caring home environment? (Consider using Ephesians 6:4 to supplement the class discussion for this question.)
- What examples have you seen of parents who demonstrate love for their children?
- What are you doing now to prepare to love and care for your own children someday?

## Doctrine and Covenants 68:25–28; 93:36–40

### *Rearing children in righteousness*

Show students a picture of a young child, perhaps your own child.

- What are essential teachings that a child needs in order to develop spiritually?

Ask students to consider this question as they study and compare the teachings found in Doctrine and Covenants 93:36–40 and 68:25–28. (*Note*: "A passage of scripture or a doctrine or principle is often clarified when it is compared" with another passage of scripture [*Gospel Teaching and Learning* (2012), 22].)

- What principle concerning the responsibilities of parents can we learn from these verses? (Though they may use different words, students should understand the following principle: **Parents obey the Lord's command when they bring up their children in light and truth.** Explain that in the context of these verses, "light" refers to spiritual knowledge and understanding of righteous principles.)
- Why is it essential for parents to teach children the principles and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the home?



To help answer this question, share the following statement by President Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



"The scriptures speak of 'the shield of faith wherewith,' the Lord said, 'ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked' (D&C 27:17).

"This shield of faith is best fabricated in a cottage industry [in the home]. While the shield can be polished in classes in the Church and in activities, it is meant to be handcrafted in the home and fitted to each individual" ("Do Not Fear," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2004, 79).

- How have you seen parents effectively teach their children righteous principles that lead them to light and truth?
- What consequence is mentioned in Doctrine and Covenants 68:25 for parents who know the gospel of Jesus Christ but fail to teach their children gospel principles? (Help students understand the following principle: **Parents who know the gospel of Jesus Christ will be accountable to God if they fail to teach their children the principles of the gospel.**)

Explain that Church leaders have repeatedly identified righteous practices that parents should implement in the home in order to teach their children the principles of the gospel.



Distribute the handout found at the end of the lesson to each student, and read the instructions on the handout. After sufficient time and as prompted by the Holy Ghost, ask questions like the following:

- How have you benefited from these three family practices?
- Why do you think it is important to develop habits of praying, studying the scriptures, and holding family home evenings before you marry and begin having children?

To help students understand that there are other settings in which parents can teach gospel principles to their children, share the following statements by Elders David A. Bednar and Jeffrey R. Holland:



"Parents should be vigilant and spiritually attentive to spontaneously occurring opportunities to bear testimony to their children. Such occasions need not be programmed, scheduled, or scripted. In fact, the less regimented such testimony sharing is, the greater the likelihood for edification and lasting impact. ...

"For example, a naturally occurring family conversation at dinner may be the perfect setting for a parent to recount and testify of specific blessings he or she received during the course of relatively routine activities that day" (David A. Bednar, "Watching with All Perseverance," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2010, 42).



"Live the gospel as conspicuously as you can. Keep the covenants your children know you have made. Give priesthood blessings. And bear your testimony! Don't just assume your children will somehow get the drift of your beliefs on their own. ...

"... Do our children know that we love the scriptures? Do they see us reading them and marking them and clinging to them in daily life? Have our children ever unexpectedly opened a closed door and found us on our knees in prayer? Have they heard us not only pray *with* them but also pray *for* them out of nothing more than sheer parental love? Do our children know we believe in fasting ... ? Do they know we love being in the temple ... ? Do they know we love and sustain local and general leaders, imperfect as they are ... ? Do those children know that we love God with all our heart and that we long to see the face—and fall at the feet—of His Only Begotten Son? I pray that they may know this" (Jeffrey R. Holland, "A Prayer for the Children," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2003, 86–87).

- How have your parents or other parents you have seen taken advantage of spontaneous opportunities to teach gospel principles?
- Why is it important for parents to live the gospel conspicuously?
- What are you doing now to deepen your knowledge of the gospel so that you will be able to teach your children light and truth?

Testify that parents can "rear their children in love and righteousness" by guiding them back to their Heavenly Father through loving them, teaching them gospel principles, and setting a good example.

### Student Readings

- Luke 15:11–20; Ephesians 6:4; 2 Timothy 3:15; 3 Nephi 18:21; Doctrine and Covenants 68:25–28; 93:36–40.
- Jeffrey R. Holland, "A Prayer for the Children," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2003, 85–87.

# Blessings of Family Prayer, Family Scripture Study, and Family Home Evening

As you read the following teachings of Church leaders, underline blessings that come from daily family prayer and scripture study and weekly family home evening.



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

“Parents, help safeguard your children by arming them morning and night with the power of family prayer. . . . Protect your children from daily worldly influences by fortifying them with the powerful blessings that result from family prayer. Family prayer should be a nonnegotiable priority in your daily life.

“. . . Make [the scriptures] an integral part of everyday life. If you want your children to recognize, understand, and act on the promptings of the Spirit, you must study the scriptures with them. . . . Through daily, consistent scripture study, you will find peace in the turmoil around you and strength to resist temptations. You will develop strong faith in the grace of God and know that through the Atonement of Jesus Christ all will be made right according to God’s timing” (“Make the Exercise of Faith Your First Priority,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 93–94).



Sister Linda S. Reeves of the Relief Society general presidency taught:

“I must testify of the blessings of daily scripture study and prayer and weekly family home evening. These are the very practices that help take away stress, give direction to our lives, and add protection to our homes” (“Protection from Pornography—a Christ-Focused Home,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 16–17).



President Thomas S. Monson declared:

“Family prayer is the greatest deterrent to sin, and hence the most beneficent provider of joy and happiness” (“Hallmarks of a Happy Home,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 69).

Ponder the following questions:

- Which of these blessings have you experienced in your family or seen in other families?
- What can you do now to more fully receive these blessings?



## LESSON 22

# Creating a Successful Family

### Introduction

"The Family: A Proclamation to the World" describes principles that parents should teach their children. This lesson will discuss the responsibility of parents to teach children about "respect, ... compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities." It will also discuss parents' duty to

teach children "to love and serve one another, observe the commandments of God, and be law-abiding citizens" (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129). Teaching these principles helps parents create successful families.

### Background Reading

- Dallin H. Oaks, "Good, Better, Best," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 104–8.
- Susan W. Tanner, "Did I Tell You ... ?" *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2003, 73–75.

### Suggestions for Teaching

#### Principles for successful families

Prepare students for this lesson by displaying the following statement from President David O. McKay (1873–1970):



"No other success can compensate for failure in the home" (quoted from J. E. McCulloch, *Home: The Savior of Civilization* [1924], 42; in Conference Report, Apr. 1935, 116).

- Considering what you have learned in this course, what are some principles that contribute to creating a successful family?

To help address this question, display and read aloud the following statement from "The Family: A Proclamation to the World":

"Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities."

Explain to students that most of the principles in this statement have been discussed in previous lessons. To focus on the qualities that have not been discussed, write the following on the board:

*Respect*

*Compassion*

*Work**Wholesome recreational activities*

Divide the class into small groups and assign one of these qualities to each group. Ask groups to discuss the following questions:

**Respect**

- What are some of the good things that occur in families when parents show respect to their children? When children show respect to their parents? When parents show respect to each other?
- What examples of showing respect can you share from your family's experiences?

**Compassion**

- What are some ways in which parents can teach children to feel compassion for other family members?
- What examples of teaching compassion can you share from your family or from families you have known?

**Work**

- Why is work part of a successful family?
- How can parents help their children to find pleasure and satisfaction in work?
- What examples of teaching children to work can you share from your family or from families you have known?

**Wholesome recreational activities**

Tell this group that when families have limited time to spend together in family activities, it is wise to choose those activities that are most valuable. Ask this group to read the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and discuss the questions that follow:



"As we consider various choices, we should remember that it is not enough that something is good. Other choices are better, and still others are best. ...

"Some of our most important choices concern family activities. ... In choosing how we spend time as a family, we should be careful not to exhaust our available time on things that are merely good and leave little time for that which is better or best. A friend took his young family on a series of summer vacation trips,

including visits to memorable historic sites. At the end of the summer he asked his teenage son which of these good summer activities he enjoyed most. The father learned from the reply, and so did those he told of it. 'The thing I liked best this summer,' the boy replied, 'was the night you and I laid on the lawn and looked at the stars and talked.' Super family activities may be good for children, but they are not always better than one-on-one time with a loving parent" ("Good, Better, Best," *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 104–5).

- How can the experience of this father and son help us understand the value of “wholesome recreational activities” in a family?
- How could a family work together to make recreational activities more meaningful?

After sufficient time, ask groups to share summaries of their discussions with the entire class.

Conclude this portion of the lesson by displaying the following statement by President Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the First Presidency and asking a student to read it aloud:



“Since ‘no other success can compensate for failure’ [in our families], we must place high priority on our families. We build deep and loving family relationships by doing simple things together, like family dinner and family home evening and by just having fun together. In family relationships *love* is really spelled *t-i-m-e*, time. Taking time for each other is the key for harmony at home” (“Of Things That Matter Most,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 21–22).

- Can you share an experience you have had when a parent or other family member spent meaningful time with you?

Ask students if any of them would like to share their thoughts or testimonies about how any of the qualities listed on the board can bless families.

### Deuteronomy 6:4–7; Doctrine and Covenants 134:5–6; Articles of Faith 1:12

#### *Parents’ duty to teach children*

Ask students to search the sixth paragraph of “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” looking for the specific things that parents have a sacred duty to teach to their children. As students respond write the following on the board:

*To love and serve one another*

*To observe the commandments of God*

*To be law-abiding citizens*

Emphasize the following principle: **Parents are commanded to teach their children to love and serve each other, to keep the commandments of God, and to be law-abiding citizens.**

Ask students to turn to Deuteronomy 6. Explain that this chapter records Moses’s instructions to the children of Israel about how to keep the commandments. Invite students to silently read Deuteronomy 6:4–7 and liken the message to themselves by substituting their own name every time the scripture says “thee,” “thou,” “thine,” or “thy.”

- How does substituting your own name affect your understanding of these verses?
- According to verse 7, how often should parents teach their children?

Point out the phrase “to love and serve one another” on the board. Discuss the meaning of this phrase by reading the following statement by President James E. Faust (1920–2007) of the First Presidency and asking the questions that follow:



“Almost every day brings opportunities to perform unselfish acts for others. Such acts are unlimited and can be as simple as a kind word, a helping hand, or a gracious smile” (“What’s in It for Me?” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2002, 21–22).

- How many opportunities do you have each day to love and serve members of your family?
- What could you do to make serving your family members a higher priority in your life?

Give students a moment to ponder what they could do to better serve family members and show love to them.

Point out the phrase “to observe the commandments of God” on the board, and ask:

- Why should parents be the ones who are primarily responsible to teach their children the commandments of God?

Share the following statement by Sister Susan W. Tanner, former Young Women general president. Explain that in this talk, Sister Tanner recalled counsel she gave to one of her daughters who had recently married and begun creating her own home:



“Look to the example of your grandparents’ homes. Both sets of grandparents brought up their ‘children in light and truth’ (D&C 93:40). [The home in which your father grew up] was a house of learning. He said at his father’s funeral that he had never learned a gospel principle at a Church meeting that he hadn’t already learned in his own home. The Church was a supplement to his home” (“Did I Tell You ... ?” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2003, 73).

- How can you prepare to create a house of learning—like the ones Sister Tanner describes—for your family? What thoughts might you have if your future children were to say this about the home in which they grew up?

Point out the phrase “to be law-abiding citizens” on the board. Tell students that Doctrine and Covenants 134 records a “declaration of belief regarding governments and laws” (heading to section 134). Help students understand the context of this section by having a student read the section heading aloud. Then invite one student

to read aloud Doctrine and Covenants 134:5–6 and another to read the twelfth article of faith. Ask the class to look for what the Lord teaches about the laws of the land.

- What teachings about governments and the laws of the land stand out to you? (For additional instruction, consider inviting students to read and cross-reference Doctrine and Covenants 58:21 and 98:4–6.)
- Why do you think it is important that the home be the primary place for children to learn to obey the laws of the land?

Consider sharing the following statement by Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



"As parenting declines, the need for policing increases. There will always be a shortage of police if there is a shortage of effective parents! Likewise, there will not be enough prisons if there are not enough good homes" ("Take Especial Care of Your Family," *Ensign*, May 1994, 89).

- How do you think parents could teach children to obey the laws of the land?
- Do you know someone who conscientiously obeys and shows respect for the laws of the land and for government officials? What effect do you think this behavior would have on that person's children?

Encourage students to take some time in the coming days to ponder the principles that parents must teach to create a successful family. Ask them to make plans for how they might follow these principles in their lives now and incorporate them into their future families.

## Student Readings

- Deuteronomy 6:1–7; Joshua 24:15; Mosiah 4:14–15; Doctrine and Covenants 58:21; 98:4–6; 134:5–6; Articles of Faith 1:12.
- Dallin H. Oaks, "Good, Better, Best," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 104–8.



## LESSON 23

# Providing for Temporal Needs

### Introduction

God entrusts individuals with the responsibility of providing for their own temporal needs and the basic needs of their families. Parents have a sacred duty to provide their children with the temporal “necessities of life” (“The Family: A

Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129). In this lesson, students will learn how the principle of self-reliance can contribute to their temporal and spiritual stability now and in the future.

### Background Reading

- M. Russell Ballard, “Becoming Self-Reliant—Spiritually and Physically,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2009, 50–55.
- Robert D. Hales, “Becoming Provident Providers Temporally and Spiritually,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 7–10.
- Marvin J. Ashton, “One for the Money,” *Ensign*, Sept. 2007, 37–39.
- Provident Living website, [providentliving.org](http://providentliving.org)

### Suggestions for Teaching

#### Mark 6:1–3; Luke 2:51–52

#### *Self-reliance*

Write the following question on the board: “In what ways did Jesus Christ prepare Himself for His mortal ministry?” Invite students to read Mark 6:1–3 and Luke 2:51–52, looking for ways in which the Savior prepared Himself in His early years for His later ministry. As students give answers, list the following on the board:

*Worked with his father as a carpenter (vocationally)*

*Increased in wisdom (educationally)*

*Increased in stature (physically)*

*Increased in favor with God (spiritually)*

*Increased in favor with man (socially)*

- How can following the Savior’s example in the five identified areas help you prepare to meet your own needs and those of your future family?

Read the following statement by President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985), and ask students to listen for what President Kimball identifies as the responsibility of every Latter-day Saint:



"The Church and its members are commanded by the Lord to be self-reliant and independent. (See D&C 78:13–14.)

"The responsibility for each person's social, emotional, spiritual, physical, or economic well-being rests first upon himself, second upon his family, and third upon the Church if he is a faithful member thereof.

"No true Latter-day Saint, while physically or emotionally able, will voluntarily shift the burden of his own or his family's well-being to someone else. So long as he can, under the inspiration of the Lord and with his own labors, he will supply himself and his family with the spiritual and temporal necessities of life" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* [2006], 116).

- What responsibility did President Kimball say we each have?
- Why is it important to become "self-reliant and independent"? (Students should identify the following: **As we become self-reliant, we can provide ourselves and our families with the spiritual and temporal necessities of life.**)

Invite students to share what self-reliance means to them. Then display the following statement by Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and ask a student to read it aloud:



"Self-reliance is taking responsibility for our own spiritual and temporal welfare and for those whom Heavenly Father has entrusted to our care. Only when we are self-reliant can we truly emulate the Savior in serving and blessing others.

"It is important to understand that self-reliance is a means to an end. Our ultimate goal is to become like the Savior, and that goal is enhanced by our unselfish service to others. Our ability to serve is increased or diminished by the level of our self-reliance" ("A Gospel Vision of Welfare: Faith in Action," *Basic Principles of Welfare and Self-Reliance* [booklet, 2009], 1–2).

- What is the ultimate purpose of self-reliance?
- How is our ability to serve others diminished if we are not self-reliant?

To help students further understand self-reliance, display the following statement by Sister Julie B. Beck, former Relief Society general president:



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"How do we become self-reliant? We become self-reliant through obtaining sufficient knowledge, education, and literacy; by managing money and resources wisely, being spiritually strong, preparing for emergencies and eventualities; and by having physical health and social and emotional well-being" ("The Welfare Responsibilities of the Relief Society President," *Basic Principles of Welfare and Self-Reliance*, 4).

Write the following words along the top of the board: *education, finances, spiritual strength, home production and storage, health, and employment*. Instruct students that

self-reliance involves these six areas of a balanced life (see *Providing in the Lord's Way: Summary of a Leader's Guide to Welfare* [booklet, 2009], 1–2). Take some time as a class to discuss what young single adults might do to become more self-reliant in each of these areas so that they will be better able to provide for the temporal and spiritual needs of their future families and to serve in the Church. Write students' responses on the board. Ideas might include the following:

Education: Obtain a degree or certification from a university or trade school, improve study habits, learn additional work skills, learn to perform basic home and auto repairs.

Finances: Pay an honest tithe and fast offering, learn to create a budget and adhere to it, learn self-discipline, avoid unnecessary debt, pay off debts, save some money from each paycheck.

Spiritual strength: Pray, study the scriptures, fast with a purpose, attend the temple regularly.

Home production and storage: Learn how to preserve and store foods, grow a garden (even just a few plants).

Health: Obey the Word of Wisdom, exercise regularly, eat healthily, get sufficient sleep, obtain health insurance.

Employment: Develop new job skills, foster a strong work ethic, earn advanced certifications.

- What have you done to increase your self-reliance in one of these areas? How did this effort increase your feelings of self-reliance and self-worth? How did it increase your ability to provide for yourself and to serve more fully in the Church?

Invite students to set a goal to improve in one of these six areas.

**Malachi 3:8–12; Matthew 6:19–21; 1 Timothy 6:7–10; 2 Nephi 9:51; Jacob 2:13–14, 18–19; Doctrine and Covenants 104:13–18**

### *Financial management*

Remind students that if they aren't already, they will someday be responsible for providing for themselves and possibly for a family. Therefore, they must learn to be wise with their temporal resources.

Assign each student to read some of the following passages and identify principles related to prudent financial management.

Malachi 3:8–12 (obey the law of tithes and offerings)

Matthew 6:19–21 (avoid setting our hearts on worldly possessions)

1 Timothy 6:7–10 (be content with what we have—"the love of money is the root of all evil")

2 Nephi 9:51 (do not spend money or labor on things without worth)

Jacob 2:13–14, 18–19 (seek riches for righteous purposes)

Doctrine and Covenants 104:13–18 (use our abundance to help the poor and needy)

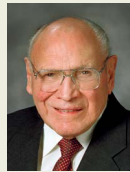
After sufficient time, invite students to share what they found with the class. Make sure students understand the following principle: **By applying wise financial principles, individuals and families can increase their own financial stability and be prepared to help others.** (You might point out that in the scriptures the Lord often draws a connection between obtaining riches and the obligation to assist the poor and the needy. For example, see Jacob 2:18–19 and D&C 104:18.)

- What blessings have you experienced from applying wise financial principles in your life?

### Doctrine and Covenants 104:78

#### *Avoiding unnecessary debt*

Read Doctrine and Covenants 104:78. Then display the following statement by Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and ask a student to read it aloud:



"Remember this: debt is a form of bondage. It is a financial termite. When we make purchases on credit, they give us only an illusion of prosperity. We think we own things, but the reality is, our things own us.

"Some debt—such as for a modest home, expenses for education, perhaps for a needed first car—may be necessary. But never should we enter into financial bondage through consumer debt without carefully weighing the costs" ("Earthly Debts, Heavenly Debts," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2004, 40–41).

- Why is debt a form of bondage? (As students respond, help them understand the following principle: **Avoiding unnecessary debt helps keep individuals and families free from financial bondage.**) President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) taught, "Self-reliance cannot [exist] when there is serious debt hanging over a household. One has neither independence nor freedom from bondage when he is obligated to others" ("To the Boys and to the Men," *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 53).

Invite a student to read the following counsel from President Thomas S. Monson aloud:



"Avoid the philosophy and excuse that yesterday's luxuries have become today's necessities. They aren't necessities unless we ourselves make them such. Many of our young couples today want to begin with multiple cars and the type of home Mother and Dad worked a lifetime to obtain. Consequently, they enter into long-term debt on the basis of two salaries. Perhaps too late they find that changes do come, women have children, sickness stalks some families, jobs are lost, natural disasters and other situations occur, and no longer can the mortgage payment, based on the income from two salaries, be made. It is essential for us to live within our means" ("Constant Truths for Changing Times," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2005, 20).

- What are some possible consequences for individuals and families who fail to recognize the difference between wants and needs?
- What are some ways to distinguish between wants and needs?

Encourage students to think about the following questions and write their answers in their journals:

- In what areas of life could you become more self-reliant?
- How can you better manage your temporal resources?

### **Student Readings**

- Malachi 3:8–12; Matthew 6:19–21; Mark 6:1–3; Luke 2:51–52; 1 Timothy 6:7–10; 2 Nephi 9:51; Jacob 2:17–19; Doctrine and Covenants 56:17; 75:28; 104:13–18, 78.
- Robert D. Hales, “Becoming Provident Providers Temporally and Spiritually,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 7–10.

## LESSON 24

# Single Adult Church Members

### Introduction

The gospel of Jesus Christ emphasizes the eternal blessings obtained through marriage and family relationships. Yet many members of the Church find themselves in circumstances where they do not currently have the opportunity for marriage and family. This lesson emphasizes

that Church members who are single make significant contributions to the Lord's kingdom. While the blessings of marriage and family are sometimes delayed, they are never denied to those who righteously keep their covenants with God.

### Background Reading

- Gordon B. Hinckley, "A Conversation with Single Adults," *Ensign*, Mar. 1997, 58–63.
- Spencer J. Condie, "Claim the Exceeding Great and Precious Promises," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 16–18.

### Suggestions for Teaching

#### 1 Corinthians 12:12–20, 25–27

##### *Single members in a family-oriented Church*

Invite students to share some of the challenges that single members of the Church may experience when participating in a ward or branch where many members are married and have children. (Single Church members could feel discouraged, isolated, and left out of meetings and classes that teach about marriage and family.)

- How do you think other Church members can help single adults feel included and valued in Church meetings and activities?

Display the following statement by President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95), and ask a student to read it aloud:



"The Church is for all members. ... All of us, single or married, have individual identities and needs, among which is the desire to be seen as a worthwhile individual child of God. ...

"This is the church of Jesus Christ, not the church of marrieds or singles or any other group or individual" ("The Church Is for All People," *Ensign*, June 1989, 76).

Explain that the Apostle Paul compared the Church to a human body and individual Church members to parts of the body. Invite a few students to take turns reading 1 Corinthians 12:12–20 aloud, while the rest of the class looks for how Paul compared parts of the physical body to members of the Church.

- What challenges would we face if one or more parts of our bodies were missing?
- What principle does Paul's analogy teach us about the Church and its members? (Students may identify several important principles. Make sure the following principle is emphasized: **Every member of the Church has value and can make an important contribution to the Church.**)
- What contributions have you seen single members of your ward or branch make to the Church?

Ask a student to read 1 Corinthians 12:25–27. Invite the class to look for what Church members can do to become unified.

- What can all Church members, married or single, do to help each other feel unified with other members of the ward or branch?

Display and read the following statement from Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



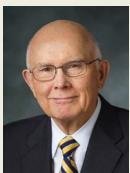
"We all belong to a community of Saints, we all need each other, and we are all working toward the same goal. Any one of us could isolate ourselves from [our ward or branch] family on the basis of our differences. But we must not shut ourselves out or isolate ourselves from opportunities because of the differences we perceive in ourselves. Instead, let us share our gifts and talents with others, bringing brightness of hope and joy to them, and in so doing lift our own spirits" ("Belonging to a Ward Family," *Ensign*, Mar. 1996, 16).

- How have your efforts to accept callings and participate in your ward or branch helped you to feel more unified with other members?

### Hebrews 11:1, 6, 8–13, 16

#### *Waiting for promised blessings*

Display the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and ask a student to read it aloud:



"Those who are single should desire a temple marriage and exert priority efforts to obtain it. Youth and young singles should resist the politically correct but eternally false concept that discredits the importance of marrying and having children" ("Desire," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 45).

- Why do you think some single members may feel discouraged when they ponder the doctrine that "marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children"? ("The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129).

Explain that although marriage and family are the ideal, many single adult Church members are unsure whether they will ever marry. Those who are divorced or widowed may wonder whether they will marry again.

Read aloud the following statement from Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and ask students to look for what the Savior has done to make eternal blessings possible for those who do not have the blessings of marriage and family:



"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" ("Why Marriage, Why Family," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 52).

- What doctrine does Elder Christofferson teach about who will receive God's greatest blessings? (Write the following doctrine on the board: **The Atonement of Jesus Christ makes it possible for each of us to ultimately receive all of our Father in Heaven's promised blessings.**)
- What must a person do to obtain the hope described in this doctrine?

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



"We promise you that insofar as eternity is concerned, no soul will be deprived of rich and high and eternal blessings for anything which that person could not help, that the Lord never fails in his promises, and that every righteous person will receive eventually all to which the person is entitled and which he or she has not forfeited through any fault of his or her own" ("The Importance of Celestial Marriage," *Ensign*, Oct. 1979, 5).

Testify that while God's blessings are sometimes delayed, they are never denied in the eternities to those who seek to live righteously.

Ask students to consider the examples of Abraham and Sarah, who received promises from God regarding their family that were delayed or unfulfilled during their mortal lives (see Genesis 13:14–17; 15:4–7; 17:1–8, 15–16). Remind students that, like Abraham and Sarah, our faith will sometimes be tested by promises that are delayed or unfulfilled in mortality.



Ask a student to read Hebrews 11:1, 6 aloud, while the class looks for a definition of *faith*.

- What do these verses teach about the meaning of faith? (Remind students to look at verse 1, footnote *b*, which states that *substance* can also mean *assurance*, *basis*, or *foundation*. Remember to help students develop personal scripture study skills by referring to study tools during class.)
- What is meant by the phrase “evidence of things not seen”? (Faith is an assurance or testimony of unseen realities. This assurance of things hoped for and things unseen comes only when we act upon and obey the principles of the gospel—especially when it is difficult to do so. Faith is the obedient action that results in the spiritual gift of testimony. It is believing and trusting in the Lord enough to obey Him without first seeing the end result.)

Invite a few students to take turns reading from Hebrews 11:8–13, 16 aloud, while the rest of the class looks for how Abraham and Sarah exercised faith during difficult circumstances. Suggest to the class that they might underline words and phrases showing how Abraham and Sarah exercised faith.

- Verse 13 says that although Abraham, Sarah, and many others died without “having received the promises,” they saw the promises “afar off” and had faith in God’s ability to fulfill these promises. How could the example of these ancient Saints help modern Saints whose faith is challenged because they do not receive promised blessings in mortality? (We all must learn the need to exercise faith and obey the Lord’s commandments even when the blessings we hope for do not seem to come when we desire them.)
- What do you think it means that these ancient Saints lived as “strangers and pilgrims on the earth”? (They knew that mortal life was temporary and that this world was not their permanent home.)

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



“Some blessings come soon, some come late, and some don’t come until heaven; but for those who embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ, *they come*. Of that I personally attest” (“An High Priest of Good Things to Come,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 38).

- How can knowing that no blessing will be denied to the faithful help Church members who feel sadness or despair because they are not married or do not have children?
- Can you think of a time when you felt discouraged but chose to act in faith and move forward in your life anyway?

If time permits, share the following counsel from Elder Dallin H. Oaks:



"If you are just marking time waiting for a marriage prospect, stop waiting. You may never have the opportunity for a suitable marriage in this life, so stop waiting and start moving. Prepare yourself for life—even a single life—by education, experience, and planning. Don't wait for happiness to be thrust upon you. Seek it out in service and learning. Make a life for yourself. And trust in the Lord" ("Dating versus Hanging Out," *Ensign*, June 2006, 14).

Encourage students to consider what they can do to increase their faith in Jesus Christ and trust in His ability to bring about the fulfillment of promised blessings.

### Student Readings

- 1 Corinthians 12:12–20, 25–27; Hebrews 11:1, 6, 8–13, 16.
- Gordon B. Hinckley, "A Conversation with Single Adults," *Ensign*, Mar. 1997, 58–63.

## LESSON 25

# Exercising Faith in Difficult Family Circumstances

### Introduction

"The Family: A Proclamation to the World" states that "disability, death, or other [family] circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation. Extended families should lend support when needed" (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov.

2010, 129). When difficult circumstances arise, the gospel of Jesus Christ affords perspective and strength to make necessary adjustments.

### Background Reading

- David A. Bednar, "The Atonement and the Journey of Mortality," *Ensign*, Apr. 2012, 40–47.
- "Strengthening the Family: Adapting to Circumstances," *Ensign*, Dec. 2005, 34–35.

### Suggestions for Teaching

#### 1 Nephi 16:34–39; 17:1–4

#### *Adapting to challenging family circumstances*

Begin class by explaining that Church leaders generally teach us how to achieve and maintain the ideal—including the ideal marriage and family. In some instances, however, life circumstances prevent us from achieving that ideal. Ask a student to read aloud the following statement by Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



"Through the restored gospel we learn there is an *ideal family*. It is a family composed of a righteous Melchizedek Priesthood bearer with a righteous wife sealed to him and children born in the covenant or sealed to them. With a mother in the home in an environment of love and service, the parents teach their children, through example and precept, the ways of the Lord and His truths. They fulfill their divinely appointed roles mentioned in the family proclamation. Their children mature by living teachings instilled from birth. They develop characteristics of obedience, integrity, love of God, and faith in His holy plan" ("First Things First," *Ensign*, May 2001, 7).

- What are some events or circumstances that may prevent us, at least for a time, from achieving an ideal family situation? (Answers might include the following: death, disability, divorce, inability to have children, loss of employment, and parents working multiple jobs.)
- Invite students to search the seventh paragraph of the family proclamation, looking for what Heavenly Father expects us to do if our family situation is not ideal:

"Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation. Extended families should lend support when needed" ("The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129).

Then read the following statement and ask students to look for the types of adaptations that families may need to make when challenges arise:

"In an ideal world all adults would be happily married, all marriages would be blessed with children, and all family members would be healthy, obedient, and supportive of each other. But life is rarely ideal. Each individual experiences adversity, and no family's mortal sojourn is consistently trouble free. ...

"Disease, disability, death, divorce, and other disruptive factors can create challenges. In such situations, 'individual adaptation' of roles may be necessary. A father may need to take on additional household and nurturing responsibilities, or a mother who has been a full-time homemaker may need to enter the workforce. Even children may need to accept new responsibilities.

"When unsettling events occur, the extended family may also need to assist. Support may range from providing financial assistance to donating time to tend children, help with chores, or care for an ill or disabled family member. The degree of extended-family involvement depends on the situation and the family's needs" ("Strengthening the Family: Adapting to Circumstances," *Ensign*, Dec. 2005, 34–35).

- What are some adaptations that families or individuals may need to make when challenges arise?
- What are some things you have seen families or individuals do to adapt and remain strong when facing difficult or disruptive circumstances?
- When have you seen extended family members offer help and assistance when needed?

Invite a student to read aloud the following statement by Elder Merrill J. Bateman of the Seventy. Ask the class to listen for what Elder Bateman says can help families who face difficult circumstances.



"Trials and tribulations take many forms: the death of a loved one, a marriage that is different than expected, no marriage, a divorce, a child born with a disability, no children, losing a job, parents who make mistakes, a wayward son or daughter, ill health. The list is endless. Why did God make allowances in His plan for disappointment, pain, suffering, and death? ...

"An understanding of the plan of salvation, of premortality, earth life, and life after death provides perspective" ("Living a Christ-Centered Life," *Ensign*, Jan. 1999, 13).

- How does an understanding of God's plan prepare families to face challenges? (Write the following principle on the board: **Understanding the Lord's plan allows families to face earthly challenges with increased faith and an eternal perspective.**)

- How can a gospel perspective give us greater courage to make adaptations or even assume new responsibilities in our families when necessary?

Ask students if they can think of any families in the scriptures who faced challenges and received divine help to overcome or endure those challenges. Remind students of the families of Lehi and Ishmael, who journeyed through the desolate wilderness after they left Jerusalem. Invite students to think about some of the challenges these families might have faced on their journey toward the promised land and then share their thoughts with the class.

Invite a few students to take turns reading from 1 Nephi 16:34–39 and 17:1–4 aloud. Ask the class to listen for examples of how different members of Lehi and Ishmael’s family responded to the challenges they faced.

- Why do you think some members of Lehi’s and Ishmael’s families were able to persevere with faith and trust in God, while others murmured because of their difficulties?
- In what ways have you seen a knowledge and testimony of the gospel bless families experiencing challenges?

As prompted by the Spirit and the needs of your students, you might share the following statement by Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



“Throughout your life on earth, seek diligently to fulfill the fundamental purposes of this life *through the ideal family*. While you may not have yet reached that ideal, do all you can through obedience and faith in the Lord to consistently draw as close to it as you are able. Let nothing dissuade you from that objective. ... Never do anything that would make you unworthy of it. If you have lost the vision of eternal marriage, rekindle it. If your dream requires patience, give it”

(“First Things First,” 7).

### **Proverbs 3:5–6; Matthew 11:28–30; Mosiah 24:8–16; Doctrine and Covenants 121:7–8**

*As we come unto Christ, He will strengthen us*

Remind students of the Book of Mormon account in which Alma and his people fled from the army of King Noah and established a righteous city. After living in peaceful circumstances for a time, Alma and his people were discovered by a Lamanite army, who placed them in bondage. As Alma and his people exercised faith and patience, the Lord eased their burdens and eventually delivered them from bondage.

Invite a few students to take turns reading Mosiah 24:8–16 aloud. Ask the class to visualize how the difficulties identified in these verses might have affected the families of Alma and his people. (Note that visualizing is a scripture study skill that can make scriptural accounts more real and vivid to readers.) Also ask the class to also look for what Alma and his people did to cope with their difficulties.

- Having visualized the events of these verses, how do you think families were affected by their circumstances?

- What did Alma's people do to obtain the Lord's help? (Although students may identify several important principles, emphasize the following: **When we exercise faith and patience in our afflictions and call upon God, He can strengthen us to bear our burdens with greater ease.**)
- How do you think the Lord strengthened them so that "they could bear up their burdens with ease"?

Ask a student to read aloud the following statement, in which Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles speaks about the account of the people of Alma:



"What was changed in this episode? It was not the burden that changed; the challenges and difficulties of persecution were not immediately removed from the people. But Alma and his followers were strengthened, and their increased capacity and strength made the burdens they bore lighter. These good people were empowered through the Atonement to *act* as agents and *impact* their circumstances. And 'in the strength of the Lord' Alma and his people were then directed to safety in the land of Zarahemla" ("The Atonement and the Journey of Mortality," *Ensign*, Apr. 2012, 44).

- Why is it important to recognize that the Lord doesn't always remove the burdens of individuals and families, take away our challenges, or enable us to experience ideal circumstances?
- In what ways can our knowledge of Jesus Christ and His Atonement empower us to act in faith when we are confronted with difficult family circumstances?

To help answer this question, display the following statement by Elder Steven E. Snow of the Seventy, and ask a student to read it aloud:



"Our hope in the Atonement empowers us with eternal perspective. Such perspective allows us to look beyond the here and now on into the promise of the eternities" ("Hope," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 54).

Write the following scripture references on the board. Invite students to study these passages and identify promises made to those who faithfully endure trials:

*Proverbs 3:5–6*

*Matthew 11:28–30*

*Doctrine and Covenants 121:7–8*

- How could remembering these promises help families who are facing challenges?

As you conclude, invite students to think of a time when, despite difficulties, their families felt strengthened by faith in God or were blessed because of their knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Invite any students who feel impressed to do so to share appropriate experiences with the class. Encourage students to write their testimonies of how God can bless and strengthen families in a personal journal.

### **Student Readings**

- Proverbs 3:5–6; Matthew 11:28–30; 1 Nephi 16:34–39; 17:1–4; Mosiah 24:8–16; Doctrine and Covenants 121:7–8.
- “Strengthening the Family: Adapting to Circumstances,” *Ensign*, Dec. 2005, 34–35.

## LESSON 26

# Accountable before God

### Introduction

Prophets and apostles have warned that “individuals who violate covenants of chastity, who abuse spouse or offspring, or who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129). This lesson

explores how these serious violations of God’s law will bring consequences in this life and the next. It also emphasizes that the Atonement of Jesus Christ provides hope and healing to the repentant.

### Background Reading

- Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Tongue of Angels,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2007, 16–18.
- Richard G. Scott, “To Heal the Shattering Consequences of Abuse,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2008, 40–43.

### Suggestions for Teaching

**Matthew 18:1–6; Doctrine and Covenants 42:22–25; 93:39–44**

*Violation of covenants of chastity, abuse, and failure to fulfill family responsibilities*

Remind students that in previous lessons they have learned about important family responsibilities, including the following: (1) husbands and wives should love and care for each other, (2) children should be reared in love and righteousness, and (3) parents should provide for the needs of their family.

- What might happen in a family if spouses and parents neglected these responsibilities?

To help students discover what modern prophets have said about the importance of fulfilling family responsibilities, ask a student to read aloud paragraph 8 of “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.” Emphasize the following principle:

**“Individuals who violate covenants of chastity, who abuse spouse or offspring, or who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God.”**

- What does it mean that individuals who commit these offenses will stand accountable before God? (At the Judgment Day we will stand before God and be accountable to Him for sins we have not repented of; see Revelation 20:11–15; 2 Nephi 9:15–16.)

Display the following statement by Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander of the Seventy:





"Our accountability to God, as our Father and Creator, is one of the most basic lessons of the gospel" ("The Path of Growth," *Ensign*, Dec. 1999, 15).

- How does the principle of accountability to God for our actions help us to grow spiritually?

Write the following words on the board as headings to three columns:

<i>Violating Covenants of Chastity</i>	<i>Abusing Spouse or Offspring</i>	<i>Failing to Fulfill Family Responsibilities</i>
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Divide the class into thirds. Invite one-third of the class to read Doctrine and Covenants 42:22–25, another third to read Matthew 18:1–6, and the last third to read Doctrine and Covenants 93:39–44. Ask students to match their scripture passage to the correct heading on the board. Ask them also to look for words and phrases that teach about the serious nature of these offenses. After sufficient time, invite students to share what they learned. (As students respond, write the scripture references under the appropriate headings.)

- What words and phrases in these passages teach about the serious nature of the offenses?

Consider pointing to each heading on the board and asking the following questions in connection with each offense. As students respond, write their answers under each heading.

- What are some attitudes or behaviors that, if not controlled, could lead a person to commit this offense? (For example, answers for the offense of abusing spouse or offspring could include impatience with others, a tendency to criticize others, and believing incorrect stereotypes about men or women.)
- What counsel would you give to someone who demonstrates these attitudes or behaviors?
- How can a Church member overcome these attitudes or behaviors? (As students share their answers, help them understand that as we practice gospel principles such as repentance, Christlike service, empathy, patience, and forgiveness, we can draw upon the enabling power of the Atonement.)

## 2 Corinthians 5:17–21

### *Hope for repentance, forgiveness, and change*

Testify that the gospel of Jesus Christ provides the means for individuals and families to succeed and enjoy abundant lives. However, we all make bad choices,

and some of them can have far-reaching effects on ourselves or on others. Fortunately there is hope.

Explain that some Church members are victimized by others—such as an unfaithful spouse or an abusive spouse or parent—and the victims wonder what they can do about their circumstances. Ask a student to read the following statement by Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



"If you have been abused, Satan will strive to convince you that there is no solution. Yet he knows perfectly well that there is. Satan recognizes that healing comes through the unwavering love of Heavenly Father for each of His children. He also understands that the power of healing is inherent in the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Therefore, his strategy is to do all possible to separate you from your Father and His Son. Do not let Satan convince you that you are beyond help" ("To Heal the Shattering Consequences of Abuse," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2008, 41).

- Why does Satan try to convince those who have been abused to believe that there is no solution to their problems?
- What can be the results when people believe there is no hope or solution to their problems?

Share the following testimony and counsel from Elder Richard G. Scott:



"I testify that I know victims of serious abuse who have successfully made the difficult journey to full healing through the power of the Atonement. After her own concerns were resolved by her faith in the healing power of the Atonement, one young woman who had been severely abused by her father requested another interview with me. She returned with an older couple. I could sense that she loved the two very deeply. Her face radiated happiness. She began, 'Elder Scott, this is my father. I love him. He's concerned about some things that happened in my early childhood. They are no longer a problem for me. Could you help him?' What a powerful confirmation of the Savior's capacity to heal! She no longer suffered from the consequences of abuse, because she had adequate understanding of His Atonement, sufficient faith, and was obedient to His law. As you conscientiously study the Atonement and exercise your faith that Jesus Christ has the power to heal, you can receive the same blessed relief. ...

"Healing may begin with a thoughtful bishop or stake president or a wise professional counselor. If you had a broken leg, you wouldn't decide to fix it yourself. Serious abuse can also benefit from professional help" ("To Heal the Shattering Consequences of Abuse," 40–42).

- How might Elder Scott's inspired counsel help someone who has suffered abuse?

Display the following statement from President Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and ask a student to read it aloud:



"The mercy and grace of Jesus Christ are not limited to those who commit sins either of commission or omission, but they encompass the promise of everlasting peace to all who will accept and follow Him and His teachings. His mercy is the mighty healer, even to the wounded innocent" ("The Reason for Our Hope," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 7).

- How does the Atonement of Jesus Christ provide hope and healing? (As students share their responses, help them understand the following principle: **All who follow Jesus Christ and His teachings can obtain healing and everlasting peace through His mercy and grace.**)

To teach students how the Atonement of Jesus Christ can help individuals who abuse others or harm them in other ways, read 2 Corinthians 5:17–21 together as a class.

- What does it mean to become "a new creature" in Christ? (Possible answers include the idea that in response to our diligent obedience to the Lord's commandments, He blesses us with gifts of the Spirit, which are divine attributes. These gifts produce fundamental changes in us, and we become new creatures who are more like God.)
- According to verse 21, how does this happen? (Jesus was completely without sin, but He took upon Himself our sins so that upon condition of our repentance, we could become righteous through Him. He became a substitutionary sacrifice for us. As we repent and seek to follow His example, we can draw upon His power to help us become new creatures.)
- What is the meaning of the word *reconciliation* in verse 18? ("Reconciliation is the process of ransoming man from his state of sin and spiritual darkness and of restoring him to a state of harmony and unity with Deity. Through it God and man are no longer enemies" [Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. (1965–73), 2:422].)

Ask students if they know any individuals who have experienced the hope and healing made possible through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Invite a few students to share their examples if they feel comfortable and if the examples are not too personal.

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



"I do not know who in this vast audience today may need to hear the message of forgiveness inherent in [the parable of the laborers in the vineyard; see Matthew 20:1–15], but however late you think you are, however many chances you think you have missed, however many mistakes you feel you have made or talents you think you don't have, or however far from home and family and God you feel you have traveled, I testify that you have *not* traveled beyond the reach of divine love. It is not possible for you to sink lower than the infinite light of Christ's Atonement shines. ...

"So if you have made covenants, keep them. If you haven't made them, make them. If you have made them and broken them, repent and repair them. It is *never* too late so long as the Master of the vineyard says there is time. Please listen to the prompting of the Holy Spirit telling you right now, this very moment, that you should accept the atoning gift of the Lord Jesus Christ and enjoy the fellowship of His labor" ("The Laborers in the Vineyard," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2012, 33).

Invite students to record what the Holy Spirit has confirmed to them today.

### Student Readings

- Matthew 18:1–6; 2 Corinthians 5:17–21; Mosiah 4:30; Alma 5:15–22; 12:14; Doctrine and Covenants 42:22–25; 93:39–44.
- Richard G. Scott, "To Heal the Shattering Consequences of Abuse," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2008, 40–43.

## LESSON 27

# Prophetic Warnings Concerning the Family

### Introduction

Modern prophets have warned that “the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or

*Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129). This lesson emphasizes that families will be protected if they are obedient to God’s commands. Spiritual power is promised to help righteous parents raise their children in the last days.

### Background Reading

- Russell M. Nelson, “Faith and Families,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2007, 36–41.
- Quentin L. Cook, “Lamentations of Jeremiah: Beware of Bondage,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 88–91.
- Bonnie L. Oscarson, “Defenders of the Family Proclamation,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 14–17.

### Suggestions for Teaching

#### 2 Timothy 3:1–7, 13

##### *Consequences will come when the family is neglected*

Invite a few students to share examples of situations or places in which one would expect to see posted warnings (examples might include on traffic signs, medicine bottles, or hazardous materials containers.)

- What are some possible consequences of ignoring these warnings?
- What are some warnings that prophets have given about the temporal and spiritual dangers that exist in our day?

Ask a student to read 2 Timothy 3:1–7 and 13 aloud while the class looks for dangers that the Apostle Paul warned would exist in the last days.

- Which of the dangers that Paul describes have you seen or heard about?
- What effect might these dangers have on individuals, marriages, and families?

Ask a student to read the following statement by Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Invite the class to listen for reasons that Satan is so focused on destroying families.



"Because of the importance of the family to the eternal plan of happiness, Satan makes a major effort to destroy the sanctity of the family, demean the importance of the role of men and women, encourage moral uncleanness and violations of the sacred law of chastity, and to discourage parents from placing the bearing and rearing of children as one of their highest priorities.

"So fundamental is the family unit to the plan of salvation that God has declared a warning that ... the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets" ("The Eternal Family," *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 65).

Emphasize the following principle: **"The disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets"** ("The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129). Remind students that this warning comes from the family proclamation.

Write the following on the board:

<i>Disintegration of the family</i>	<i>Consequences</i>
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Invite students to think about evidences they see that the "disintegration of the family" is happening around the world. (These might include the following: increasing divorces, abortions, and abuse; fewer marriages and fewer children born to married couples; and more dysfunctional families.) Ask them to list evidences on the board under the heading "Disintegration of the family."

Invite students to think about examples of the individual and societal consequences that may come as a result of the disintegration of the family. (These might include the following: loss of the Spirit, sorrow and unhappiness, increased crime rate, juvenile delinquency, and loss of peace and stability in society.) Ask them to list examples on the board under the heading "Consequences."

Then ask the following:

- How might adhering to the doctrine and principles in the family proclamation help individuals, families, communities, and nations avoid these consequences?

### 1 Nephi 14:14–17; 22:16–17; Doctrine and Covenants 97:22–28

#### *There is hope for families*

Explain to students that despite the wickedness that prevails in today's world, it is not too late to strengthen families. They can make a difference in their own families, wards or branches, and communities. Testify that there is hope for individuals and families who obey the Lord's commandments.

Ask students to read Doctrine and Covenants 97:22–28 silently, looking for what we can do to escape the Lord's vengeance and the consequences that come

because of sin. (Clarify that in these verses *Zion* refers to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its members.) You may want to suggest that students mark the word *if* wherever it occurs in these verses. (Help students understand that identifying cause-and-effect or if/then statements is a useful scripture study skill.)

- How would you summarize these verses in a simple statement of principle? (Student responses should reflect the following principle: **If we are obedient to all of the commandments, we can receive great blessings and escape the Lord's vengeance.**)

Read the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



"We do not say that all of the Saints will be spared and saved from the coming day of desolation. But we do say there is no promise of safety and no promise of security except for those who love the Lord and who are seeking to do all that he commands. ...

"And so we raise the warning voice and say: Take heed; prepare; watch and be ready. There is no security in any course except the course of obedience and conformity and righteousness.

"For thus saith the Lord: 'The Lord's scourge shall pass over by night and by day, and the report thereof shall vex all people; yea, it shall not be stayed until the Lord come. ...

"'Nevertheless, Zion shall escape if she observe to do all things whatsoever I have commanded her' [D&C 97:23, 25]" ("Stand Independent above All Other Creatures," *Ensign*, May 1979, 93–94).

- How might this statement help motivate a family to be obedient to the Lord's commandments?

Remind students that Nephi beheld several visions of the last days. In those visions, he saw that the righteous would be protected.

Ask students to read 1 Nephi 14:14–17 and 22:16–17, looking for ways in which the Saints will be protected. (*Note:* These passages highlight the common scriptural theme that obedience brings the Lord's promise of protection. Elder David A. Bednar has emphasized the importance of searching for such scriptural "connections, patterns, and themes" ["A Reservoir of Living Water" (Church Educational System fireside for young adults, Feb. 4, 2007), 3, [lds.org/media-library](http://lds.org/media-library)]. This theme or pattern is particularly common in the Book of Mormon.)

- How do Nephi's writings give you hope?

Read the following statement by Elder Bruce D. Porter of the Seventy. Invite students to listen for blessings that will be given to faithful parents in the last days:



"Regardless of what the future may hold, God has ordained that in the dispensation of the fullness of times, the parents of the Church will be given power to help save their children from the darkness around them. As the hearts of fathers and mothers turn to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents, we eventually will witness the rise of a generation refined and prepared to meet the Savior at His coming. The triumph of God's kingdom in the latter days will be a triumph not only of the Church as an organization but of tens of thousands of individual families who by faith have overcome the world" ("Defending the Family in a Troubled World," *Ensign*, June 2011, 18).

- What blessing is promised to parents of this dispensation who are seeking to raise their children in righteousness?
- How have you seen the Lord empower parents in their efforts to strengthen and protect their children from the darkness of the world?

Invite students to consider what influences or forces are working to destroy their own families, and how Satan is attempting to prevent them from working toward having their own families in the future. Encourage students to ponder what they can do to gain the Lord's help to strengthen themselves and protect their families.

### Student Readings

- 2 Timothy 3:1–7, 13; 1 Nephi 14:14–17; 22:16–17; Doctrine and Covenants 97:22–28.
- Bonnie L. Oscarson, "Defenders of the Family Proclamation," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 14–17.



## LESSON 28

# Promoting the Family as the Fundamental Unit of Society

### Introduction

Modern prophets have declared: “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,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129). This lesson will help students understand how they might follow and defend this prophetic counsel.

### Background Reading

- Thomas S. Monson, “Be Strong and of a Good Courage,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 66–69.
- Dallin H. Oaks, “Balancing Truth and Tolerance,” *Ensign*, Feb. 2013, 24–31.
- L. Tom Perry, “Why Marriage and Family Matter—Everywhere in the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 39–42.
- “Transcript of News Conference on Religious Freedom and Nondiscrimination” (Jan. 27, 2015), [mormonnewsroom.org/article/publicstatement-on-religious-freedom-and-nondiscrimination](http://mormonnewsroom.org/article/publicstatement-on-religious-freedom-and-nondiscrimination).

### Suggestions for Teaching

**Alma 43:9, 30, 45, 48**

*Our duty to defend the doctrine and moral foundations of the family*

Prepare students for this lesson by telling them that it focuses on our responsibility to defend the family. Share the following statement by Elder Bruce D. Porter of the Seventy:



“The Church is a small institution compared with the world at large. Nevertheless, the Latter-day Saints as a people should not underestimate the power of our example, nor our capacity to persuade public opinion, reverse negative trends, or invite seeking souls to enter the gate and walk the Lord’s chosen way. We ought to give our best efforts, in cooperation with like-minded persons and institutions, to defend the family and raise a voice of warning and of invitation to the world” (“Defending the Family in a Troubled World,” *Ensign*, June 2011, 18).

- What are your thoughts about the responsibility of Latter-day Saints to defend the family in today’s world?

Tell students that at various times, the Nephites found their religious freedoms and family values threatened by the Lamanites. By studying their experiences, we can learn principles that can be likened to our day. (Likening the scriptures to ourselves

is a scripture study skill that you can emphasize in this lesson.) Explain that one experience of the Nephites is recorded in Alma 43.

Write *Alma 43:9, 30, 45, 48* on the board, and ask students to search for words and phrases that help us understand the importance of defending family values and religious freedoms in today's world. Suggest to students that they mark these words and phrases.

- What words and phrases show the importance of defending our family values and religious freedoms? What principle did you learn about the importance of defending our family values and religious freedoms? (Answers should include the following principle: **We have a sacred duty to defend and promote our family values and religious freedoms.**)
- Why do you think it is important for Church members to promote and defend the family in their communities?
- How can we promote and defend the family using social media?

Display the following statement by Elder L. Tom Perry (1922–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



"We want our voice to be heard against all of the counterfeit and alternative lifestyles that try to replace the family organization that God Himself established. We also want our voice to be heard in sustaining the joy and fulfillment that traditional families bring. We must continue to project that voice throughout the world in declaring why marriage and family are so important, why marriage and family really do matter, and why they always will" ("Why Marriage and Family Matter—Everywhere in the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 42).

- According to Elder Perry, what should we declare about the family?
- What have you observed others do to stand up and affirm the importance of the family or to defend against attacks on the family? (Point out that defending the family includes raising a strong family as well as publicly defending the family when needed.)

Share the following experience told by Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



"Recently, I spoke with a Laurel from the United States. I quote from her email:  
 " 'This past year some of my friends on Facebook began posting their position on marriage. Many favored same-sex marriage, and several LDS youth indicated they "liked" the postings. I made no comment.  
 " 'I decided to declare my belief in traditional marriage in a thoughtful way.  
 " 'With my profile picture, I added the caption "I believe in marriage between a man and a woman." Almost instantly I started receiving messages. "You are selfish." "You are judgmental." One compared me to a slave owner. And I received this post from a great friend who is a strong member of the Church: "You need to catch up with the times. Things are changing and so should you."

"'I did not fight back,' she said, 'but I did not take my statement down.'

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

- What experiences have you had with promoting and defending the family?
- What effect did your words or actions have on others?

Testify that we can have a positive influence on our communities and further the purposes of our Heavenly Father's plan as we promote and defend measures that strengthen families.

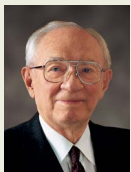
### Alma 46:10–13, 16; 48:7–13

#### *Defending the family with God's help and with respect toward others*

Tell students that chapters 46 and 48 of Alma record that the Nephites were again threatened by the Lamanites. Divide the class in half. Ask half of the class to study Alma 46:10–13, 16, and the other half to study Alma 48:7–13. Ask students to identify how we might follow Captain Moroni's example in appropriate ways to promote measures that maintain and strengthen the family. After sufficient time, help students liken these passages to our day by asking the following questions:

- How might the efforts of Amalickiah and his followers be likened to the efforts of those who are attacking the family today?
- What can we learn from Captain Moroni's actions? (Help students understand the following principle: **When we seek God's help and strive to use all of our own resources, we will receive wisdom and strength to defend our families, our religion, and our freedoms.**)
- What are some appropriate ways in which we might promote measures to strengthen and defend families?

Consider using the following statements by President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) and Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to supplement the discussion of the preceding question:



"Let us be involved in good community causes. There may be situations where, with serious moral issues involved, we cannot bend on matters of principle. But in such instances we can politely disagree without being disagreeable. We can acknowledge the sincerity of those whose positions we cannot accept. We can speak of principles rather than personalities" (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [1997], 131).



"When believers promote their positions in the public square, they should always be tolerant of the opinions and positions of those who do not share their beliefs. Believers must always speak with love and show patience, understanding, and compassion toward their adversaries. Christian believers are under command to love their neighbors (see Luke 10:27) and to forgive (see Matthew 18:21–35). They should also remember the Savior's teaching to 'bless them that curse [them], do good to them that hate [them], and pray for them which despitefully use [them], and persecute [them]' (Matthew 5:44)" (Dallin H. Oaks, "Balancing Truth and Tolerance," *Ensign*, Feb. 2013, 30–31).

- How do you think you might practice the principles taught by President Hinckley and Elder Oaks?

Emphasize the following principle: As we promote measures to defend and strengthen the family, we should show respect to others and tolerance toward their opinions.

### Promoting measures that strengthen the family

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

"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," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129).

Tell students that in January 2015, Church leaders held an official press conference during which they called upon government officials to pass laws that would protect religious freedoms and guard the sanctity of the family. Explain that although Church leaders were specifically addressing the defense of religious freedoms in this statement, their words apply to defending family values as well. Many religious freedoms are directly related to the family, such as the sanctity of marriage.

Share with students the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks as a summary of what was presented at that press conference:



"The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints asserts the following principles based on the teachings of Jesus Christ, and on fairness for all, including people of faith:

"1. We claim for everyone the God-given and Constitutional right to live their faith according to the dictates of their own conscience, without harming the health or safety of others.

"2. We acknowledge that the same freedom of conscience must apply to men and women everywhere to follow the religious faith of their choice, or none at all if they so choose.

"3. We believe laws ought to be framed to achieve a balance in protecting the freedoms of all people while respecting those with differing values.

"4. We reject persecution and retaliation of any kind, including persecution based on race, ethnicity, religious belief, economic circumstances or differences in gender or sexual orientation"

(Dallin H. Oaks, "Transcript of News Conference on Religious Freedom and Nondiscrimination" [Jan. 27, 2015], [mormonnewsroom.org/article/publicstatement-on-religious-freedom-and-nondiscrimination](http://mormonnewsroom.org/article/publicstatement-on-religious-freedom-and-nondiscrimination)).

- What did you learn from this statement that can help you promote measures that strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society? (As part of this discussion, emphasize that raising children in the ways of the Lord, supporting other families, magnifying Church callings, and strengthening our communities are all measures that promote the family.)

Invite students to consider what they might do to promote measures that strengthen and defend the family.

## Student Readings

- Alma 43:9, 30, 45, 48; 46:11–16; 48:9–13.
- Dallin H. Oaks, "Balancing Truth and Tolerance," *Ensign*, Feb. 2013, 24–31.
- L. Tom Perry, "Why Marriage and Family Matter—Everywhere in the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 39–42.



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