

New Testament

S E M I N A R Y



TEACHER RESOURCE MANUAL

New Testament Teacher Resource Manual

**Prepared by the
Church Educational System**

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“The objective of religious education in the Church Educational System is to assist the individual, the family, and priesthood leaders in accomplishing the mission of the Church” (*Teaching the Gospel: A Handbook for CES Teachers and Leaders* [1994], 3). The first area of emphasis in meeting this objective is to teach students the gospel of Jesus Christ as it is found in the standard works and the words of the prophets. This manual is provided to help you accomplish that—whatever your teaching experience and in whatever language or country you teach.

The second area of emphasis is to teach by precept, by example, and by the power of the Spirit. Those who teach by precept and example teach the gospel most effectively. To teach by precept you must first seek, “by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118), to understand the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. To teach by example you must live the gospel in your personal life. And you must rely on the Spirit for direction. Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught: “Power comes when a teacher has done all that he can to prepare, not just the individual lesson, but in keeping his life in tune with the Spirit. If he will learn to rely on the Spirit for inspiration, he can go before his class . . . secure in the knowledge that he can teach with inspiration” (*Teach Ye Diligently* [1975], 306). The power Elder Packer spoke of is often manifest as a teacher bears personal testimony of the principle or doctrine being taught.

How to Use This Manual

The scriptures are to be your primary source as you prepare your lessons. To help you with your scripture study and in preparing your lessons, you should have the following manuals:

- This manual—*New Testament Teacher Resource Manual* (item no. 34590)
- The home-study seminary student manual—*New Testament Student Study Guide* (item no. 34188)
- The support materials for the New Testament video series—*New Testament Video Guide* (item no. 34232)
- The institute student manual for Religion 211 and 212—*The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles* (item no. 32474)

These manuals do not replace your study of the scriptures, nor do they substitute for the inspired guidance of the Holy Ghost as you prepare to teach your students. They are additional resources and support for your lesson preparation. In particular, the *New Testament Teacher Resource Manual* provides introductory information to the scripture blocks, outlines important gospel principles to look for, and suggests ways many of those principles might be taught so as to help students understand them and apply them in their lives.

“The CES administration has determined that in the CES weekday setting, where more time is available for instruction, the scriptures should be taught in a sequential manner. One

of the best ways to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ is to teach the scriptures sequentially. *Sequential scripture teaching* is teaching the scriptures in the sequence they appear in the standard works” (*Teaching the Gospel: A Handbook*, 20; see that page for more information on sequential scripture teaching). This manual follows the sequence of the scriptures but does not provide teaching helps for all of the verses in each scripture block. Additional helps are found in the institute student manual and the seminary student study guide.

Teaching the Gospel: A Handbook for CES Teachers and Leaders (item no. 34829) gives detailed help on teaching a CES class. You should become very familiar with its contents. The following general suggestions may be helpful in your lesson preparation.

Prepare Yourself to Study and Teach the Gospel

- Live the gospel.
- Pray for the Spirit to guide you as you study, as you prepare, and as you teach.
- Exercise faith in the Lord, in the power of the Spirit, and in the power of the scriptures to meet the needs of your students.

Decide What You Will Teach

- Decide what portion of the scriptures you want to cover in your lesson. This manual is divided into scripture blocks that indicate where the story line or the subject changes. The pacing guide on pages 5–6 can help you determine how much material to cover each day or week.
- Study the scripture block thoroughly. Read it several times, making note of the doctrines, principles, events, and difficult words or phrases. This manual, the institute student manual, and the student study guide will help you understand the scripture block and decide what is important for your students. You will be more effective in your teaching if *you* have discovered something inspiring in the scripture block. You might then lead your students to make a similar discovery.
- Choose those doctrines, principles, and events that are most important for your students to know. Let the promptings of the Spirit and the needs of your students guide you as you decide what to teach.

Decide How You Will Teach

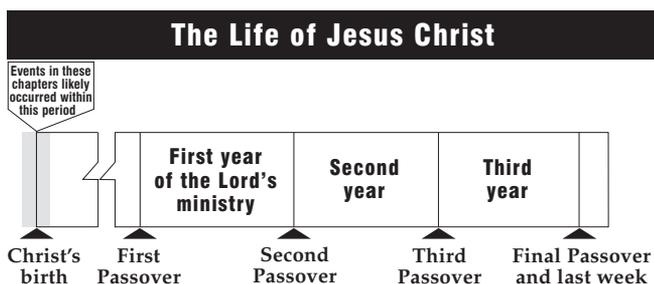
- Choose one or more teaching methods for each event, principle, or doctrine you want to teach. Use your own methods or those suggested in the curriculum materials.
- Choose methods that encourage student readiness, participation, and application.



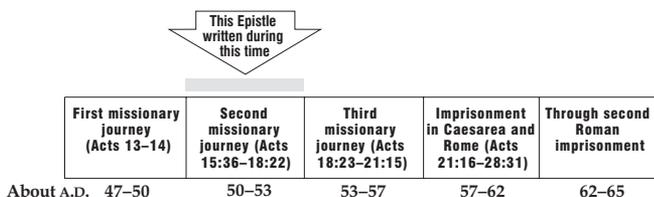
1. *Readiness* means that students are prepared spiritually and intellectually, alert, focused, and willing to participate in the learning experience. “Readiness is a condition of the heart as well as the mind” (*Teaching the Gospel: A Handbook*, 13). It is not a gimmick used to start a lesson; it is a continual assessment of your students’ focus.
2. *Participation* means that students are involved in the learning process. Their participation may be physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual. The more involved students are in the learning process, the more they will understand, remember, and apply.
3. *Application* means that students accept the ideas being taught, understand how they can apply them to their lives, and then seek to live according to those principles.

How This Manual Is Organized

Each scripture block in the four Gospels begins with a time line showing the approximate times of the events covered in that block. Times are based on the “Harmony of the Gospels” chart in the Bible Dictionary (pp. 684–96).



The introductions for each of Paul’s Epistles include a similar time line placing the Epistles in relation to the book of Acts. This information is based on “Pauline Epistles” in the Bible Dictionary (pp. 743–48).



The resource materials for the scripture blocks are found in four sections.

Introductory Material

This section provides background material and other information to help you understand the scripture block in its historical and scriptural setting. Introductory material is also provided for each book of scripture. These, together with background information in the student study guide and the institute student manual, can enhance your own study and understanding of the scriptures. You can also use the introductory material to provide:

- Motivating questions to ask your students and promote learner readiness.
- Background information, things for students to look for as they read, and other prereading helps.
- Quotations to display or write on the board, or notes for the students to write in their scriptures.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

You may find many important doctrines and principles in a scripture block. This section lists *some* of those you might want to teach your students. The following are ways to use them in your teaching:

- Use them as a standard to ensure that correct doctrine is being taught.
- Use them to help determine what your students need to be taught.
- Write them on the board to give students principles to look for as they study the scripture block.
- Invite students to look for additional scripture references that support or explain the doctrine.

Additional Resources

The commentary in the institute student manual—*The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*—is organized as a harmony of the New Testament (scripture passages are treated in the order the events are thought to have occurred). This manual—the *New Testament Teacher Resource Manual*—follows a sequential approach to the New Testament (scripture passages are treated in the order they appear in the Bible). This section provides corresponding page numbers in the institute student manual to help you locate resource information. References to materials in the appendix are included as well.

Suggestions for Teaching

This section contains teaching ideas you may want to consider as you decide how to teach the events, principles, and doctrines you have chosen from the scripture block. You are not required to use these teaching suggestions. They are provided as a resource for you as you consider the needs of your students with the direction of the Spirit. You will also find useful suggestions in the student study guide that can be adapted for use in the classroom (see “An Introduction for Teachers to the *New Testament Student Study Guide*,” p. 3).

The headings for the teaching suggestions include the following:

- **Statement of Focus.** Introducing each suggestion is a section in bold type telling what scripture block and principle that particular teaching suggestion focuses on. These often correspond to the principles found in the “Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For” section of the scripture block.

- 
Scripture Mastery. Teaching suggestions that include scripture mastery passages are identified with the icon shown here. President Howard W. Hunter, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said, “We would hope none of your students would leave your classroom fearful or embarrassed or ashamed that they cannot find the help they need because they do not know the scriptures well enough to locate the proper passages” (*Eternal Investments* [address to religious educators, 10 Feb. 1989], 2). “Scripture mastery” is a method for teaching students how to find scripture verses, gain an understanding of their meaning, and apply them in their lives. One hundred scriptural passages—twenty-five for each scripture course—have been chosen to receive special emphasis in seminary. These references are labeled “Scripture Mastery” in the teaching suggestions where they are found. You should help students master the scripture mastery references by reviewing them in class and encouraging students to learn them on their own. For suggestions on how to encourage scripture mastery in your classes, see *Teaching the Gospel: A Handbook*, pages 34–35.
- 
Weekly Icon. Some teaching suggestions are also identified with the icon shown here. This icon identifies teaching suggestions recommended for a teacher in a home-study program or one who wants help teaching larger blocks of scripture.
- Time Designation.** At the end of the heading is an approximate amount of time it would take to teach that suggestion. It is included only to help you plan your daily lessons and is not an indication of how much time should be spent teaching that suggestion.

Other Teaching Helps

- 
New Testament Video (item no. 53141). This video package contains presentations to help you teach the New Testament. Teaching suggestions for the *New Testament Video* presentations are found in the *New Testament Video Guide* (item no. 34232). Scripture blocks for which there is a video presentation are designated with the icon shown here and a note at the beginning of the teaching suggestions section.
- Appendix.** Occasionally a teaching suggestion refers to a chart, a harmony, or a handout in the appendix that can help you teach that lesson. These items are referred to by title and page number for your convenience.
- Student Reading of the New Testament.** Encourage students to read the entire New Testament. President Spencer W. Kimball once said: “I find that when I get casual in my relationships with divinity and when it seems that no divine ear is listening and no divine voice is speaking, that I am far, far away. If I immerse myself in the scriptures the distance narrows and the spirituality returns” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 135).

Encourage your students to follow the assignments in the “New Testament Reading Chart” in the *New Testament Student Study Guide*. (You may need to adapt this chart to your school year.) This will help them pace their reading to correspond with class activities. Students who want to read ahead may do so, but encourage them to review the scripture block the class will be studying during the week. Using the reading chart will challenge you to pace yourself during the year so you can teach the entire New Testament.

- Students with Special Needs.** “Special needs” is a general term used to identify students of unique circumstances. It may include those with reading or learning disabilities, behavioral disorders, and intellectual disabilities. It may also include those who are incarcerated, attending alternative schools, confined to wheelchairs, homebound, hearing or visually impaired, and so forth.

The Prophet Joseph Smith said, “All the minds and spirits that God ever sent into the world are susceptible of enlargement” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 354). You should make every reasonable effort to meet the learning needs of all your students. It may not be possible to meet all the needs of all the students all the time. You can, however, be aware of the special needs of your students and adapt the regular curriculum materials so that all students can gain something from at least part of each lesson. Other students can also be given the opportunity to help students with special needs. Such selfless service is a blessing to both the giver and the receiver.

In addition to the regular curriculum materials, other materials are available to help teach those with special needs. The CES publications catalog lists items in Braille and on audiocassette or videocassette (all new CES videos produced for the classroom are closed-captioned). The catalog also includes the Beginning Course materials, a highly visual, simplified curriculum for students on a second- to fourth-grade reading level (see “Specialized Curriculum Materials”). The Church Distribution Center catalog includes many helpful items (see especially the “Audiocassettes,” “Disabilities, Materials for Members with,” “Videocassettes,” and “Videocassettes, American Sign Language” sections in the subject index). The Church magazines are good sources for articles, pictures, and ideas that may relate to the special needs of your students. The Gospel Art Picture Kit (item no. 34730) is a collection of 161 colored pictures that depict scripture and Church history stories or illustrate gospel principles.

An Introduction for Teachers to the *New Testament Student Study Guide*

The *New Testament Student Study Guide* helps students read the New Testament and then ponder and apply its teachings. It is required for the home-study program, but most daily teachers will find it useful in their preparation and teaching.

Use in the Home-Study Seminary Program

Seminary is a five-day-a-week program (or its equivalent) throughout the school year. Because home-study seminary classes meet only once a week, home-study students should use the student study guide the other four days. Although all students are encouraged to read the scriptures daily, home-study students should understand that they are expected to spend 30–40 minutes each day for four school days each week working on the activities and assignments in the study guide.

Students do not write in their study guides. Use one of the following options for written assignments:

- Have each student do the written work on pages in a loose-leaf notebook and submit the pages completed each week. When you return the work, the student can put the pages back in the notebook.
- Have each student use two notebooks and alternate between them. The first week, the student works in one notebook and submits it to you when class is held. The next week the student writes in the other notebook, and then exchanges it in class for the first notebook, and so on.

After you collect the students' work each week, read it and write comments to the students. This is an excellent way for you to get to know each of your students and determine how well they are understanding their studies. You can help motivate your students by inviting any who are willing to share some of what they wrote in their notebooks as part of the weekly class lessons.

Grading the Student Notebooks

There is no answer sheet for checking the activities in the student study guide. Some of the answers are found in the scriptures and should be apparent to you as you familiarize yourself with each activity. Other answers are based on the

students' ideas, experiences, opinions, and testimonies. In these cases there may not be a single correct answer. Evaluate and grade students on the degree of effort made based on their abilities. As you write your comments, correct any misunderstandings or answers that are clearly incorrect, and praise students for their effort.

Be sensitive to students with special needs, and adapt the student study guide accordingly. For example, if a student has a disability that makes writing difficult, you might allow the student to use a tape recorder to record his or her work or have a friend or family member write for the student. You may need to adapt the number of study activities assigned to some students because of special needs. Other students may be advanced and could be encouraged to go beyond the minimum requirements.

Use in the Daily Seminary Program

The *New Testament Student Study Guide* is not required for students in daily seminary programs, but you should provide a desk copy for each student. You can then have students refer to the "Understanding the Scriptures" sections for help in understanding difficult words and phrases and for quotations and explanations.

While preparing lessons, look at the introductions to each scripture block and the "Studying the Scriptures" sections for help in deciding what and how to teach. For example, some of the introductions provide discussion questions that help create learner readiness. Occasionally, you may want to have students do one of the "Studying the Scriptures" activities during class and then have them share what they wrote—either in groups or with the whole class. Even when the activities are not followed exactly as prescribed in the study guide, they may provide good ideas that can be adapted for use in a classroom setting.

PACING YOUR TEACHING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

There is not enough time in a school year to discuss every verse in the New Testament. The challenge is to pace your teaching. If you move slowly and spend too much time teaching the Gospels, you will miss the messages of the Epistles and the book of Revelation. If you move too fast, your students may not understand and appreciate significant parts of the New Testament. Use this pacing guide to help you decide how much you need to cover each day and week and what chapters to assign your students to read.

Because there are many types of seminary programs throughout the world, it is not possible to organize this manual to fit every situation. You may need to adapt this 36-week guide to your program and the needs of your

students. Seminary is taught five days per week, but lesson material is provided for only four days to allow time for interruptions such as school activities and assemblies, special seminary activities and presentations, scripture mastery, and tests and quizzes. You may choose to spend more than one day to teach a scripture block more effectively. This flexibility is to encourage you to seek the direction of the Spirit to meet the specific needs of your students. *Note:* For help teaching the Gospels as a harmony, see the charts on pages 277–78.

Teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to the youth of the Church is a sacred trust and a joyous duty. May the Lord bless you and your students as you study the ministry of Jesus Christ and His Apostles in the New Testament this year.

Pacing Guide for a 36-Week School Year

Week	Suggested Scripture Block to Be Taught
1	Day 1: "An Introduction to the New Testament" and "Scripture Study Helps" Days 2–3: "Plan of Salvation Overview" Day 4: "The Time between the Old and New Testaments"
2	Day 1: Matthew 1–2 Day 2: Matthew 3 Day 3: Matthew 4 Day 4: Matthew 5
3	Days 1–2: Matthew 5–7 (continued) Day 3: Matthew 8–9 Day 4: Matthew 10
4	Day 1: Matthew 11–12 Day 2: Matthew 13 Day 3: Matthew 14–15 Day 4: Matthew 16
5	Day 1: Matthew 17 Day 2: Matthew 18 Day 3: Matthew 19–20 Day 4: Matthew 21–23
6	Day 1: Matthew 24 Day 2: Matthew 25 Days 3–4: Matthew 26
7	Day 1: Matthew 27 Day 2: Matthew 28 Day 3: Mark 1 Day 4: Mark 2–3
8	Day 1: Mark 4–5 Day 2: Mark 6 Day 3: Mark 7–8 Day 4: Mark 9–10
9	Days 1–2: Mark 11–13 Days 3–4: Mark 14–16
10	Day 1: Luke 1 Day 2: Luke 2–3 Day 3: Luke 4 Day 4: Luke 5–6

Week	Suggested Scripture Block to Be Taught
11	Days 1–2: Luke 7 Day 3: Luke 8 Day 4: Luke 9
12	Day 1: Luke 10 Day 2: Luke 11–13 Day 3: Luke 14 Day 4: Luke 15
13	Day 1: Luke 16 Day 2: Luke 17–18 Day 3: Luke 19 Day 4: Luke 20–21
14	Days 1–2: Luke 22 Day 3: Luke 23 Day 4: Luke 24
15	Day 1: John 1 Day 2: John 2 Day 3: John 3 Day 4: John 4–5
16	Days 1–2: John 6 Day 3: John 7 Day 4: John 8
17	Day 1: John 9 Day 2: John 10 Day 3: John 11 Day 4: John 12
18	Day 1: John 13 Day 2: John 14 Day 3: John 15 Day 4: John 16–17
19	Day 1: John 18 Day 2: John 19 Day 3: John 20 Day 4: John 21
20	Day 1: Acts 1 Day 2: Acts 2 Day 3: Acts 3 Day 4: Acts 4–5

Week	Suggested Scripture Block to Be Taught
21	Day 1: Acts 6–7 Day 2: Acts 8–9 Day 3: Acts 10 Day 4: Acts 11–12
22	Day 1: Acts 13–14 Day 2: Acts 15 Day 3: Acts 16–18 Day 4: Acts 19–20
23	Day 1: Acts 21 Day 2: Acts 22–23 Day 3: Acts 24–26 Day 4: Acts 27–28
24	Day 1: Romans 1–3 Day 2: Romans 4–5 Day 3: Romans 6 Day 4: Romans 7–8
25	Day 1: Romans 9–10 Day 2: Romans 11 Day 3: Romans 12 Day 4: Romans 13–16
26	Day 1: 1 Corinthians 1–4 Day 2: 1 Corinthians 5–7 Day 3: 1 Corinthians 8–11 Day 4: 1 Corinthians 12–14
27	Day 1: 1 Corinthians 15–16 Day 2: 2 Corinthians 1–3 Day 3: 2 Corinthians 4–7 Day 4: 2 Corinthians 8–13
28	Day 1: Galatians 1–2 Day 2: Galatians 3–6 Day 3: Ephesians 1–3 Day 4: Ephesians 4–6

Week	Suggested Scripture Block to Be Taught
29	Day 1: Philippians 1–4 Day 2: Colossians 1–4 Day 3: 1 Thessalonians 1–5 Day 4: 2 Thessalonians 1–3
30	Day 1: 1 Timothy 1–6 Day 2: 2 Timothy 1–4 Day 3: Titus 1–3 Day 4: Philemon
31	Day 1: Hebrews 1–2 Day 2: Hebrews 3–6 Day 3: Hebrews 7–10 Day 4: Hebrews 11–13
32	Day 1: James 1–2 Day 2: James 3–5 Day 3: 1 Peter 1–2 Day 4: 1 Peter 3–5
33	Day 1: 2 Peter 1–3 Day 2: 1 John 1–5 Day 3: 2 John; 3 John Day 4: Jude
34	Day 1: Revelation 1 Day 2: Revelation 2–3 Day 3: Revelation 4–5 Day 4: Revelation 6–7
35	Day 1: Revelation 8–9 Day 2: Revelation 10–11 Day 3: Revelation 12–14 Day 4: Revelation 15–16
36	Day 1: Revelation 17–19 Day 2: Revelation 20–22 Day 3: Teacher choice Day 4: Testimony and farewell to students

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

Introduction

In an address to Church Educational System teachers, Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve said:

“There is great value in presenting a *brief* but very carefully organized overview of the entire course at the very beginning. . . .

“Those few beginning periods, so brief an investment of time by comparison, make it possible for the students to locate themselves anywhere along the way. They have something of a feeling. They retain much more when they know how all of the pieces fit together, and the light of learning shines more brightly. The preview forms a framework and is more than worth the time and work invested in it” (*The Great Plan of Happiness* [address to religious educators at a symposium on the Doctrine and Covenants/Church history, Brigham Young University, 10 Aug. 1993], 2; or *Charge to Religious Educators*, 3rd ed. [1994], 113).

Take the time to develop and teach an introduction and overview of the New Testament. This will help your students understand the importance of the New Testament and look forward to the materials they will read and learn during the school year. An introduction and overview will strengthen your own and your students’ understanding of the divine mission of Jesus Christ.

What Is the New Testament?

The New Testament is a record of the life, teachings, and mission of Jesus Christ and the ministry of His disciples in promoting the spread of the early Christian Church. The word that was translated as *testament* could also be translated as *covenant*; thus the New Testament is the new covenant. In a gospel sense, a covenant is a sacred vow or agreement between a person or group and the Lord. When we enter into a covenant we promise to do certain things, and the Lord in turn promises blessings. The Lord sets the terms for both the efforts we must make (obedience to laws and ordinances) and the blessings we receive. If we keep our covenants and endure to the end in faith, the Lord blesses us during mortality and promises us salvation and exaltation when this life is over. The New Testament contains covenants and doctrines the Lord and His Apostles gave to His children during His mortal ministry to teach them how to return and live in His presence.

Why Should We Study the New Testament?

Both ancient and modern prophets have stressed the value of the scriptures in helping us come to know God. Jesus taught, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). The Apostle Paul taught Timothy about the value of holy writings:

- They are able to make one “wise unto salvation” (2 Timothy 3:15).
- They are “given by inspiration of God” (v. 16).
- They are “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (v. 16).
- They help the righteous become perfect and “thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (v. 17).

The prophet Mormon wrote:

“Yea, we see that whosoever will may lay hold upon the word of God, which is quick and powerful, which shall divide asunder all the cunning and the snares and the wiles of the devil, and lead the man of Christ in a strait and narrow course across that everlasting gulf of misery which is prepared to engulf the wicked—

“And land their souls, yea, their immortal souls, at the right hand of God in the kingdom of heaven” (Helaman 3:29–30).

The scriptures help us “divide asunder” (overcome) the lies and temptations of the devil and follow a course that will “land us in” (bring us to) the celestial kingdom.

Elder Boyd K. Packer taught:

“In the New Testament course, you learn of the birth and ministry of Jesus the Christ and His divine Sonship. You learn about ordinances, about baptism by immersion for the remission of sins.

“You read of the call of the Twelve and follow their ministry. You learn of the fatherhood of God. You learn of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, and personal revelation.

“You relive the days of the Betrayal and the Crucifixion, and learn transcendent truths of the Atonement and the Resurrection. You learn of love and law and why a Redeemer.

“From the four Gospels to the book of Revelation, the teachings of the Master and of His Apostles—the Lord Jesus Christ’s gospel—are opened to you” (in Conference Report, Mar.–Apr. 1990, 49; or *Ensign*, May 1990, 38).

The following doctrines, all taught in the New Testament, show why a careful study of the New Testament is not only meaningful but crucial:

- God is literally our Father in Heaven.
- Heavenly Father created the heavens and the earth through His Son Jesus Christ.
- Heavenly Father sent His Son into the world that “the world through him might be saved” (John 3:17).
- Heavenly Father has given all judgment to the Son.
- God can and does intervene directly in the lives of men.
- Heaven is divided into different kingdoms of glory.
- We receive blessings from God by making and keeping sacred covenants.

- Idolatry in any form is spiritually destructive.
- Jesus Christ's Second Coming is prophesied, including events of the last days.

Being far removed in time and culture from the New Testament period brings special challenges to those who study the Bible. In addition, the record we now have is not complete. Many parts "which are plain and most precious" were taken away (1 Nephi 13:26). Much that was lost has been restored by the Book of Mormon, the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, and other modern revelations (see 1 Nephi 13:33–41). Further, some portions of the Bible are cloaked or hidden in symbolic language. Such prophetic cloaking has been useful because those who sought to remove the "plain and precious" parts have left many of the more obscure passages relatively intact. Thus, many great truths have been preserved to be read and understood by the power of the Holy Ghost and the "spirit of prophecy" (2 Nephi 25:4) that God has made available to the Saints of the latter days.

How Is the New Testament Organized?

The Bible is not one book but a collection of books; that is what the word *bible* means. These books do not necessarily appear in the Bible in the order in which they were written. The New Testament contains twenty-seven books that can be grouped into four main categories based on the nature of their content.

1. **Historical Books**—This group consists of the four Gospels and the book of Acts. The Gospels record the testimonies of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John concerning the ministry of the Savior. The book of Acts is an account of the ministry of several of the Lord's Apostles. The Gospels can also be divided into two groups. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are known as the synoptic (meaning "see-alike") Gospels because of their similarities. John's testimony is a separate and distinct witness and is thought to have been written specifically to members of the Church. (See Bible Dictionary, "Gospels," pp. 682–83.) According to one Latter-day Saint educator: "In Bibles that are published today each of the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John . . . is titled, 'The Gospel According to. . . .' Scholars tell us, however, that these titles were added sometime around the fourth century A.D., and that before that time probably only the name of the writer appeared; that is, only the name of Matthew, for example" (Robert J. Matthews, *Behold the Messiah* [1994], 22).
2. **Epistles of Paul**—This group consists of the books of Romans through Hebrews. The word *epistle* means "letter." Most of Paul's letters were written to specific branches of the Church organized in cities where Paul had proclaimed the gospel and which he had established. Hebrews and Philemon are exceptions to this rule. Paul's letters are arranged according to their length, except for Hebrews. (See Bible Dictionary, "Pauline Epistles," pp. 743–48.)

3. **General Epistles**—This group consists of letters written by James, Peter, John, and Jude. They are called General Epistles because they are not addressed to specific branches of the Church or individuals, except for John's second and third letters. (See Bible Dictionary, "General Epistles," p. 678.)
4. **The Apocalypse**—This is the last book in the New Testament and is known as the book of Revelation. It is a record of a vision received by the Apostle John while imprisoned on the Isle of Patmos. John saw the history of the earth, including the events of the last days and the eventual victory of Jesus Christ over the kingdom of Satan. (See Bible Dictionary, "Revelation of John," pp. 762–63.)

For more detailed information on the origin and history of the Bible, see "Bible" in the Bible Dictionary (pp. 622–24).

Prayerfully consider these introductory materials and the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The New Testament helps us come unto Christ.
- The New Testament was preserved for our day and for our benefit.

Suggestions for Teaching

Use the following video presentations or some of your own ideas to teach an overview of the New Testament. *Note:* The two teaching ideas provided below cover some of the same material as the videos and may be especially useful to those without access to the videos.



New Testament Video presentation 1, "Come unto Me" (11:36), shows how studying the New Testament can help us learn more about the Savior and how He can help us in our lives. Presentation 2, "The Maze" (10:07), teaches that the New Testament can give us perspective on resolving life's questions and problems. (See *New Testament Video Guide* for teaching suggestions.)

New Testament Overview. The New Testament helps us come unto Christ. (15–20 minutes)

Put some wet sand in a shallow container. Invite several students to each press a finger into the sand and then pull it out. Ask them to count the particles of sand that stick to their fingers. Have them guess how many particles are in the box. Invite the class to imagine trying to count the particles of sand along the western coast of Alaska to the tip of South America. Have students read Moses 7:30, and ask:

- What does this verse teach about the extent of Christ's creations and power?
- Read John 1:1–3. What do these verses say concerning Jesus Christ and His power?

Tell the students that Jesus was a God (the Word) before He was born on earth, and that He created the heavens and the earth under the direction of our Heavenly Father.

- Read John 1:14. Why do you think Jesus Christ, who created all things, would choose to come to this earth and take on mortality? (see Mosiah 3:7–9).
- What is His relationship to our Heavenly Father?
- Read Matthew 11:28–30. What invitation does Jesus Christ extend to us?
- What are some reasons that we should come unto Jesus Christ? (List responses on the board.)

Remind students that the Savior is willing to use all His power to help those who come unto Him. Invite them to think of times the Savior has helped them or their families. Invite any who would like to share appropriate experiences with the class to do so.

Testify that this year is a wonderful opportunity to learn of Jesus Christ through their study of the New Testament. Explain that during their study they will witness many people who came to the Savior and obtained His rest, as well as many who rejected His invitation. Tell the students that they will have that same opportunity. Ask: How do you accept His invitation and come unto Him?

New Testament Overview. The New Testament was preserved for our day and for our benefit. (15–20 minutes)

Have students open their Bibles to the table of contents. Help them mark the groupings of the New Testament (the

Histories, the Epistles of Paul, the General Epistles, and the Apocalypse), and discuss what each part contains (see “How Is the New Testament Organized?” above).

Have students name some of their favorite stories or teachings from the New Testament and tell why they like them. Ask:

- Have you ever been asked to accomplish something that seemed impossible?
- Have you ever been accused or punished for doing something you didn’t do?
- Have you ever been confronted by bullies?
- Have you ever felt alone?

Have the students read Hebrews 2:18 and footnote *a*, and ask: How can the Savior know how to succor (comfort) us in our trials? (He suffered similar trials and more.) Tell students that the New Testament Saints also faced problems much like our own. Remind them that although the New Testament is a scripture from the past, its doctrines, histories, and stories are of great value today. The New Testament was organized and preserved for our day and for our benefit.

Tell students that we can come to understand the New Testament only if we open and study it. Ask: What do you think is the relationship between people’s attitude toward the New Testament and their ability to understand the gospel principles it teaches? Encourage students to approach their study of the New Testament with sincere effort and a prayerful attitude.

SCRIPTURE STUDY HELPS

Study Helps in the LDS Edition of the King James Bible

In 1979 the Church published a Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Version of the Bible in English. Included in this edition were numerous helps to make a study of the scriptures more meaningful and rewarding. Speaking of this new edition of the scriptures, Elder Boyd K. Packer testified: “This work . . . will one day emerge as a signal inspired event of our generation. Because of it, we shall raise up generations of Latter-day Saints who will know the gospel and know the Lord” (*Bruce R. McConkie, Apostle* [address at the funeral of Elder Bruce R. McConkie, 23 Apr. 1985], 4).

See the section “Study Helps in the Latter-day Saint Editions of the Scriptures” in the *New Testament Student Study Guide* for a detailed explanation of these study helps.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The Latter-day Saint editions of the scriptures contain significant study aids that can help us increase our understanding of the scriptures.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons on the scripture study helps.

Scripture Study Helps. Knowing the names and the order of the books in the New Testament helps us find scripture references more quickly. (10–15 minutes)

Students often enjoy learning the books of the New Testament by singing “The Books in the New Testament” (*Children’s Songbook*, 116). Singing this song several times and then again at the beginning of class each day for about a week could help students quickly learn the books.

Scripture Study Helps. The study helps provided in the Latter-day Saint editions of the scriptures help us get the most out of our scripture study. (40–45 minutes)

The Church has included numerous study helps in the scriptures. These are explained in the “Study Helps in the Latter-day Saint Editions of the Scriptures” section of the student study guide. The following suggestions can help you teach the study helps.

Chapter Headings and Section Introductions. Have students turn to the chapter heading for Matthew 5. Read it and explain that the headings emphasize the main points of each chapter and often present doctrinal insights.

Have students read the designated chapter headings and answer the following questions:

- Matthew 17—Who accompanied Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration?
- John 1—Who created all things?
- Acts 7—Who does Moses remind us of?
- Galatians 3—Why was the Mosaic law given to the children of Israel?

Have students examine the headings to a section in the Doctrine and Covenants. Explain that the first heading contains background information and the second is a synopsis of the section’s contents.

Italicized Words in the Bible. Explain that italicized words in the King James Version of the Bible are words the translator inserted to render a correct English reading. When the Bible was translated from Greek and Hebrew, a direct translation into English was not always possible. Therefore, it was necessary to insert words in order for the scriptures to be grammatically correct.

Footnotes. Choose a couple of pages in the New Testament that illustrate the several types of footnotes available in the Latter-day Saint editions of the scriptures. Have the students turn to the pages, and share with them the advantages of the footnote system.

- Point out that each verse is independently footnoted and that each footnote in the verse is in alphabetical sequence.
- Show examples of footnotes that point to the Topical Guide (TG).
- Show examples of footnotes that give Hebrew (HEB) and Greek (GR) meanings.
- Show examples of footnotes that give modern synonyms and explanations (OR and IE) for archaic or obscure words and phrases in the King James Version of the Bible.
- Show examples of footnotes that present insights from the Joseph Smith Translation (JST).

Refer to the study helps section in the student study guide for additional help and examples.

Use the following questions to give students an opportunity to practice using the footnotes:

- What is the Greek meaning of the word that was translated as “rule” in Matthew 2:6? (see footnote 6*d*).
- Read Matthew 5:48. What does it mean to be perfect, as the Lord said we should be? (see footnote 48*b*).
- Read Luke 7:41. How long would it have taken a workman to earn five hundred “pence”? (see footnote 41*a*).
- What is the “dearth” referred to in Acts 7:11? (see footnote 11*a*).

- What is the Hebrew meaning of the word translated as *Sabaoth* in Romans 9:29? (see footnote 29a). What is the Greek meaning of the word *seed*? (see footnote 29b).
- What is the “sea of glass” referred to in Revelation 4:6? (see footnote 6a, and then see D&C 77:1).

The Joseph Smith Translation. Share with your students the information from “Joseph Smith Translation” in the Bible Dictionary (p. 717). Tell them that not all of the changes from the Joseph Smith Translation are included in the Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Version of the Bible, but more than 600 verses with changes are included. Some verses or passages that are too long to be included as footnotes have been placed in a separate appendix in the Bible.

For examples of Joseph Smith Translation contributions, have your students refer to the JST footnotes for John 4:24 and 1 Corinthians 15:40 and determine what changes the Prophet made.

Topical Guide. Tell students that they can use the Topical Guide to search more than 750 gospel topics as deeply as they want. Help them understand that this guide contains scriptural references from all of the standard works and that it can serve as a concordance or an index. The following exercises can help students become familiar with the Topical Guide:

- Have each student select a subject he or she would like to talk on if asked to speak in a Church meeting. Have the students use the Topical Guide to determine scripture references they could use to prepare their talks.
- Have students turn to the Topical Guide and note the various topic headings about Jesus Christ.

Index to the Triple Combination. Explain that the index in the triple combination is a combined index for the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price and contains numerous references from each on many topics. It is similar to the Topical Guide in the Bible but the index gives a short summary of each scripture reference, while the Topical Guide quotes from each reference. The index also only gives references from the triple combination, while the Topical Guide covers all of the standard works. One very helpful feature of the index is that it identifies people or places with the same name by superscript numbers and brief descriptions to differentiate between them.

Have the class turn to the first page of the index and find out how many men were named Aaron and who each one was. Also note that by searching for key words in the index, students can quickly locate scripture references.

Bible Dictionary. Look through the Bible Dictionary with the students. Explain that it contains 1,285 biblical topics prepared from a Latter-day Saint point of view. Share several specific topics and point out the following sections:

- Chronological tables (“chronology,” pp. 635–45)
- A harmony of the four Gospels (“Gospels, harmony of,” pp. 684–96)
- An analysis of the Apostle Paul’s letters (“Pauline Epistles,” pp. 743–48)
- Old Testament quotations found in the New Testament (“quotations,” pp. 756–59)
- A list of weights and measures mentioned in the Bible (“weights and measures,” pp. 788–89)

Bible Maps and Photographs. In 1999, the Church added a new maps and photographs section to the Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Bible. Indexes and helps for both the photographs and maps are grouped together at the beginning of the section. The color maps and photographs themselves appear together at the end.

Have students look at several photographs from the back of the Bible Maps and Photographs section and determine what each shows. The photographs in this section depict sites from Bible history. Ask the students to find a photo of the Temple of Herod (no. 9). Refer them to the description of the temple under the “Photographs of Scriptural Sites” heading at the front of the section. Ask them to name three important events that took place at this temple.

Have students turn to the “Maps and Index of Place-Names” heading. The first page of this subsection explains map features. Refer students to the second paragraph for an explanation of how to use the index of place-names. Show them the index, beginning on the next page. The index lists the names of places alphabetically and includes coordinates for locating them on the maps.

Some of the individual maps are accompanied by notes and scriptural references related to locations on those maps. Have the students turn to map 12 and the accompanying page of notes. Ask them to find the temple and to identify two events that took place there during the life of Jesus Christ (see note 9).

Church History Chronology, Maps, and Photographs. In 1999 the Church also added new maps and photographs to the triple combination. These features are similar to the corresponding ones in the Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Bible. This section also includes a chronology of Church history events. Have the students turn to this section and find what year and month Joseph Smith completed his translation of the Book of Mormon.

Pronouncing Guide. The pronouncing guide at the end of the Book of Mormon provides a standard for the pronunciation of Book of Mormon names. Have the students become familiar with this guide.

Scripture Study Helps. Using the study aids can help increase our understanding of the scriptures.

(5–10 minutes)

Share the following story from Elder Richard G. Scott, then a member of the Seventy. It illustrates the worth of the study aids in the new publication of the standard works.

“I remember when the new triple combination was introduced to the Brethren. Elder McConkie made the presentation. He held up a book and read from the flyleaf, ‘To Bruce R. McConkie.’ It was signed ‘Amelia’ [his future wife] and dated the day he entered the mission home. He said, ‘I have carried these scriptures all over the world. I’ve used them extensively. They have been bound three times. I can tell you the location on the page for many of the scriptures in that book.’ He then added, ‘But I’m not going to use that book anymore. It does not have the precious teaching aids and powerful tools to enhance study and understanding that are in this new volume.’ I was really impressed by that. The next day I had occasion to go into his office. He has a large desk, and there he sat, book in hand, with ruler and red pencil marking the new edition of the scriptures. Well, if someone who knows the scriptures as well as he does finds it worthwhile to use the new edition, I have resolved to do likewise” (“Spiritual Communication,” in *Principles of the Gospel in Practice*, Sperry Symposium 1985 [1985], 18–19).

Scripture Study Helps. Help students use what they learned about using the scripture study aids. (30–35 minutes)

After you have taught students about the scripture study aids, have them use the aids to complete the following quiz as a review of what they learned. You may want them to work in groups.

1. Answer the following questions about baptism:

- What does the word *baptism* mean?
- What evidence is there that baptism was practiced before the time of Christ?
- What does baptism symbolize?
- What are four purposes of baptism?

- Find the meaning of the italicized word in each of the following phrases. Notice how knowing what these words mean brings added understanding to the scripture passages.
 - “They have no *cloke* for their sin” (John 15:22)
 - “Trucebreakers, false accusers, *incontinent*” (2 Timothy 3:3)
 - “The word of God is *quick*, and powerful” (Hebrews 4:12)
 - “A *peculiar* people” (1 Peter 2:9)
- List three scripture references for each of the following topics:
 - Last days
 - Lost scriptures
 - Prophecy
 - Revelation
- Answer the following questions after reading the verses and referring to the footnotes:
 - Matthew 4:23—Why were those people in Galilee healed?
 - Matthew 4:24—What is palsy?
 - Matthew 4:25—Where is the region of Decapolis? (see the map section).
 - Matthew 5:3—What are some other meanings of the word *blessed*?
 - Matthew 5:3—What does the Book of Mormon add to our understanding of this verse?
 - Matthew 5:5—What are some other meanings of the word that was translated as *meek*?
- Read the parable of the wheat and the tares in Matthew 13:24–30 and, using the cross-references in the footnotes, identify what the following symbols represented:
 - Field
 - Sower of the good seed
 - Tares
 - Sower of the tares
 - Reapers
- Identify the following people and tell where they are mentioned in the scriptures:
 - Matthias
 - Sadducees
- What direction from the city of Jerusalem was the hill Golgotha and the Gardon Tomb?

PLAN OF SALVATION OVERVIEW

Introduction

In 1993 Elder Boyd K. Packer told teachers in the Church Educational System that, along with a brief overview of the subject to be studied, they should give an overview of the plan of salvation at the beginning of every school year. The following teaching suggestions refer frequently to Elder Packer's talk, parts of which are included, with other helps, in the appendix. Please refer to it as you prepare to teach the plan of salvation to your students. (See "The Great Plan of Happiness," pp. 279–82.)

Prayerfully study "The Great Plan of Happiness" and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Heavenly Father is a glorified, perfected, celestial Father who possesses a fulness of joy (see Mosiah 4:9; 3 Nephi 28:10).
- We lived with Heavenly Father before we came to earth. We are His spirit children and He wants us to have the same joy that He has by becoming like Him (see Jeremiah 1:5; Hebrews 12:9).
- In order to become like God, we must have a resurrected, glorified physical body and we must grow to possess the qualities of godhood (see Alma 11:43–44; 3 Nephi 27:27; D&C 130:22).
- Our mortal life on earth is designed to help us gain godly attributes. It provides us with the opportunity to gain a physical body and learn the lessons of godhood by having the freedom to choose to follow the counsel of God or the enticements of Satan (see Genesis 2:16–17; 2 Nephi 2:25–27; Alma 34:32–34).
- The Creation of the earth and the Fall of Adam brought about the necessary conditions of mortality, including spiritual and physical death and a world where there is toil, pain, and sorrow (see Genesis 2:17; 3:6–7; 2 Nephi 2:15–25).
- The Atonement of Jesus Christ provides for the Resurrection so that everyone will receive an immortal physical body (see Job 19:25–27; Ezekiel 37:12–14; Alma 11:42–45; 42:23).
- The Atonement can also cleanse us from personal sins through our repentance and enable us to obtain eternal life and become like God (see Isaiah 1:18; 2 Nephi 10:24–25; Mosiah 3:19; Moroni 10:32–33).
- In every dispensation, Jesus Christ has sent prophets to teach His gospel to God's children on earth. The Church of Jesus Christ has been established in these latter days to invite all to come unto Christ and partake of His plan of happiness (see Amos 3:7; Alma 12:32–34; D&C 1:1–14).

Additional Resources

- "The Great Plan of Happiness," 279–82 in this manual.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare to teach a plan of salvation overview.

Note: The four teaching suggestions for the plan of salvation overview will be the same for each of the four scripture courses. It is recommended that you choose a different one each year.



Plan of Salvation Overview: Suggestion 1. (90–120 minutes)

Help the students visualize the plan of salvation (the plan of happiness) by stretching a string from one wall of your classroom to the other. Hang a paper clip over the string so that it can easily slide along the string. Prepare two identical figures, one of clear plastic and another of white paper, that can be attached to the paper clip.

Tell students that the string represents the line of our lives and that one end of the string represents our past and the other our future. The clear plastic figure represents our spirit body, and the white paper figure represents our physical body. Move the paper clip along the string and add the figures to it as you discuss our progression from premortal past to postmortal future. When you discuss death, separate the paper clip and clear plastic figure from the white paper one. Ask questions such as those listed in the following sections as you teach the plan of happiness, and use the information in the appendix as needed. It is usually preferable to let the students discover as many of the answers as they can by letting them search the suggested scripture references.

Premortal life

- Where does the life line begin and end? (see D&C 93:29; Abraham 3:18; "Spiritual Creation," p. 280). Explain that the line of our lives actually extends beyond the walls of the room and continues forever in both directions. Our lives did not have a beginning, and they will have no end.
- What do you know about your Father in Heaven and your life with Him before you were born on earth? (see "Premortal Existence," p. 279).
- What does it mean to be a spirit child of God? (see "Premortal Existence," p. 279; "Spiritual Creation," p. 280). Hang the plastic figure on the paper clip to illustrate this step.
- Since we lived with Heavenly Father in the premortal world and we were immortal, why didn't we stay there? (see "Agency," "The Grand Council and the War in Heaven," p. 280).

- What do we know about the differences between Heavenly Father’s plan and Lucifer’s alternative? (see Moses 4:1–4; “The Grand Council and the War in Heaven,” p. 280).
- Why do you think the Lord prizes the freedom to choose (agency) so much that He would even allow Lucifer and his followers to rebel and start a war in heaven? (see “Agency,” p. 280).

Mortal life

- Since Satan will eventually be cast into outer darkness, why did God allow him and his followers to come to earth and tempt us? (see D&C 29:39).
- Why was it necessary for us to come to a physical earth and get a physical body? (see D&C 93:33–34; Moses 1:39; “The Grand Council and the War in Heaven,” “Physical Creation,” p. 280).
- What were the consequences of the transgression of Adam and Eve? Why was the Fall of Adam and Eve necessary? (see 2 Nephi 2:19–25; “The Fall and Mortality,” p. 280).
- Why was a Redeemer chosen even in premortality? What would result if there were no Redeemer? (see 2 Nephi 9:7–10; “The Grand Council and the War in Heaven,” p. 280; “The Atonement,” p. 281).
- Why did Jehovah (Jesus Christ) need to come to earth and take upon Himself a mortal body? (see “The Atonement,” p. 281).
- Since we face so much temptation in the world today, what can we do in cooperation with the Lord to change our natures and resist evil? (see 1 Nephi 2:16; Mosiah 3:19; 4:1–3; 5:1–2; Ether 12:27).

Postmortal life

- What is the difference between physical death and spiritual death? How are we rescued from each one? What is our part in overcoming spiritual death? (see 2 Nephi 9:6–23; Alma 40:11–14; D&C 29:40–44; “The Mission of the Church and the Principles and Ordinances of the Gospel,” “The Atonement,” p. 281; “The Spirit World,” p. 282).
- Where do we go upon death? What important works that we know of are going on in the spirit world? (see Alma 40:11–14; D&C 138:11–37; “The Spirit World,” p. 282).
- Who is the great Judge? When will we be judged? Is there more than one judgment? (see “Judgment,” p. 282).
- For what will we be judged? By what standard will we be judged? (see Mosiah 2:36–41; Alma 41:3–7; D&C 82:3; “Judgment,” p. 282).
- What possibilities are available to those who don’t hear about the gospel in this life? (see D&C 138:1–37; “Judgment,” p. 282).
- What will we be like when we are resurrected? (see Alma 11:42–45; “Judgment,” “Resurrection,” p. 282).
- What is our ultimate destiny and what can we become if we follow the “great plan of happiness”? (see D&C 76:50–70).

- Why couldn’t our Father in Heaven bestow godhood upon us without our having to go through this mortal experience? (see Alma 34:32–34).

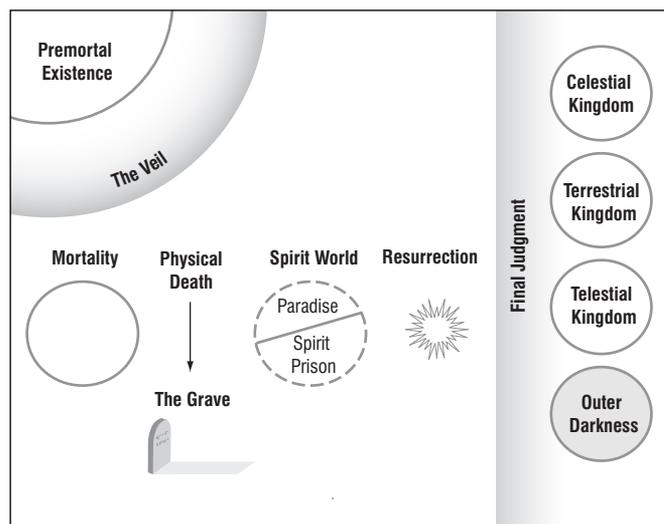
Consider leaving the string up for a time and referring to it as needed to help students see how what they are learning fits into the plan.

Ask students how a knowledge of the plan helps them understand why the Lord commands certain things and forbids others. Choose a commandment that some young people in your area seem to struggle with (perhaps honesty, morality, or Sabbath observance) and ask students why keeping that commandment makes sense when you understand the plan of happiness.

Share your testimony of the beauty of the plan and the importance of remembering why we are here and what the Lord has done to help us return to Him.

 **Plan of Salvation Overview: Suggestion 2.**
(90–100 minutes)

A diagram, such as the one below, can be used to teach the plan of salvation. This method is good for teaching the plan visually but does not teach the chronology as well as suggestion 1.

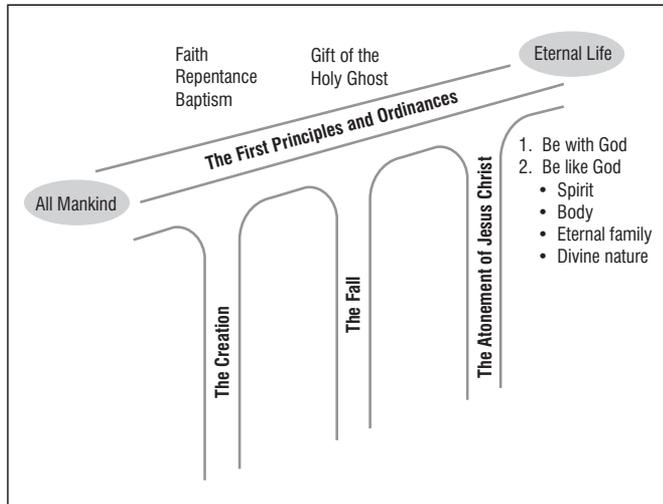


Ask questions such as those listed in suggestion 1 as you draw the diagram on the board (or you could use a handout) and discuss the elements of the plan of salvation. Draw arrows to help indicate our progression through the stages of our existence, according to the plan. Where possible, let the students discover the answers to the questions by searching the suggested scripture references. Consider displaying the chart in the classroom so that you can refer to it throughout the year.

 **Plan of Salvation Overview: Suggestion 3.**
(60–70 minutes)

A simple yet effective way to review the plan of salvation that emphasizes the importance of mortality is to use an illustration of a bridge. Draw the accompanying diagram on the board or on a poster. Leave the labels off at first and write

them in as your students discover the elements of the plan as you study the scriptures together.



Show students the bridge and ask: What purpose does a bridge serve that a road alone cannot? (It helps you cross a canyon or gap.) Read Abraham 3:22 with your students and help them understand where we were before we came to earth. Then read Moses 1:39 to help them understand what Heavenly Father is seeking to bring to pass, where He wants to take us. (*Immortality* means to live forever as resurrected beings; *eternal life* means to be with God and to be like Him; see “Premortal Existence,” p. 279; “Spiritual Creation,” “Agency,” p. 280.) Write *All Mankind* at the lower end of the bridge and *Eternal Life*, with its definition, at the other end.

Ask the following questions:

- Why were we encouraged to leave the premortal world and come to this earth?
- What “gap” or “canyon” (what differences) existed between Heavenly Father and ourselves when we lived with Him as His spirit children?

Help students discover that although we lived with Heavenly Father and were His children, in many ways we were not yet like Him (see 3 Nephi 12:48; D&C 76:70; 88:41; 130:22; “Premortal Existence,” p. 279).

Tell students that the pillars supporting the bridge represent what Heavenly Father has brought about to help us become like Him, and the span on top of the pillars represents what we are to do. Have your students read Abraham 3:24–27 to find what Heavenly Father did for us; then discuss why that was necessary (see “Agency,” “The Grand Council and the War in Heaven,” “Physical Creation,” p. 280). Write *The Creation* on the first pillar.

Ask students:

- What do you think the second pillar represents?
- After the physical creation of the earth, what part did Adam and Eve fulfill to prepare the way for us to become more like Heavenly Father? (see 2 Nephi 2:22–25; “The Fall and Mortality,” p. 280).

Write *The Fall* on the second pillar and discuss briefly how the Fall brought opposition, sin, and death into the world.

Ask students: What would happen to us physically and spiritually if everything remained in a fallen condition? Read 2 Nephi 9:6–10 and discuss what God did to help us overcome the effects of the Fall (see “The Atonement,” p. 281). Ask students what the third pillar represents and label it *The Atonement of Jesus Christ*. Ask:

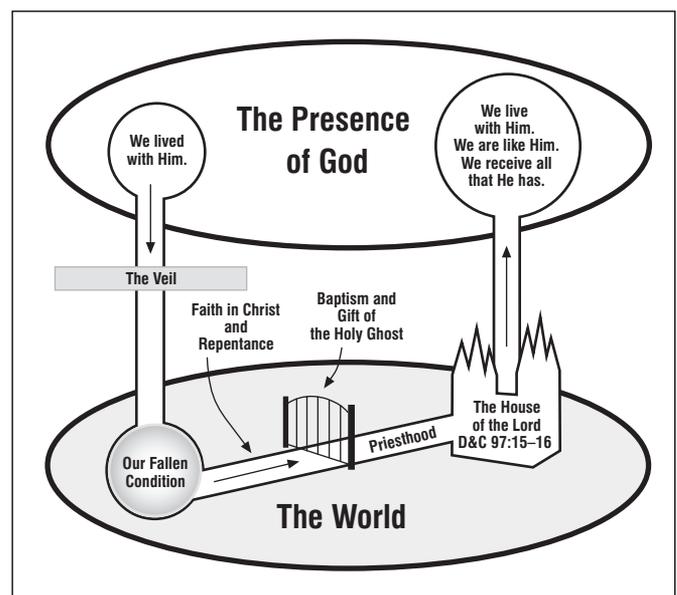
- Why can Jesus Christ promise to redeem us from our sins?
- On what conditions can we be forgiven of our sins and bring about the plan of redemption in our lives? (see Alma 42:9–15).

Have students read Helaman 14:15–17 looking for the blessings of the Atonement that are given to all mankind regardless of how they live. (The Resurrection and being brought back into God’s presence for judgment.) There are other blessings that are given only to those who earnestly seek them and live by His gospel. Have students read Articles of Faith 1:3–4 and list the first things God requires us to do to be forgiven of our own sins and to be perfected (see also “The Mission of the Church and the Principles and Ordinances of the Gospel,” p. 281).

Finish labeling the bridge as in the diagram and ask students how understanding the plan of salvation helps them understand why we are commanded to do some things and forbidden to do others. Choose commandments that some young people in your area might be struggling with and discuss what the plan teaches us about why God has given us those commandments.

Read to your students Elder Boyd K. Packer’s statement in “Judgment” (p. 282) and share your testimony of the “great plan of happiness” that Heavenly Father has prepared for His children.

Plan of Salvation Overview: Suggestion 4. (40–45 minutes)



Prepare the accompanying diagram as a handout for each student or as an overhead transparency. Review with students that we once lived in the presence of God (see “Premortal Existence,” p. 279) and the circumstances that brought us to our fallen condition (see “The Fall and Mortality,” p. 280).

Ask students:

- Where does the strait and narrow path lead?
- What has our Heavenly Father given to help us stay faithfully on the path?

Invite a student to read the following statement by Elder Orson F. Whitney, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, to help them understand the seriousness of our fallen condition and the only way we can be freed from it:

“When Adam fell, it was as if the human race had fallen into a pit, from which they were powerless, by any act of their own, to emerge; having no means whereby to climb up and out, and not even knowing how to climb. But a Friend, all-wise and all-powerful, comes to the mouth of the pit . . . and proposes to rescue them from their unhappy situation. *He makes of his own life a ladder*; lets it down into the pit and says: ‘Now climb!’ They who climb, get out of the pit. They who refuse to climb, remain in the pit—and who is to blame but themselves?” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1927, 149).

Have students, individually or in groups, study the following questions to help them discover how the Atonement of Jesus Christ and the principles and ordinances of the gospel provide the way for us to overcome our fallen condition:

- What is the path that leads us out of our fallen condition? What are the first steps we must take to get on that path? (see 2 Nephi 31:17–19; “The Mission of the Church and the Principles and Ordinances of the Gospel,” p. 281).
- What are some of the ways the gift of the Holy Ghost helps us overcome our fallen condition and press forward

on the path? (see John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13; 3 Nephi 27:20; D&C 45:56–57).

- Who provided and pointed out this path for us? What must we do to stay on it? (see 2 Nephi 31:19–21; “The Atonement,” p. 281).
- In addition to the covenant of baptism, what other ordinances and covenants has Heavenly Father given to help us rise above our fallen condition? (see D&C 84:33–40; 131:1–4).
- What will we be like when we return to live with Heavenly Father if we have been faithful in making and keeping our sacred covenants? (see 1 John 3:1–4; Moroni 7:48).
- How does a knowledge of the plan of salvation help us understand why we are commanded to pray? to be baptized? to be honest? to be morally clean?
- How does a knowledge of the plan of salvation help us understand why we are commanded to be free from addictive substances? to pay tithing? to serve a mission? to attend the temple?

When students have completed the exercise, invite them to share what they learned with the class. Share your testimony of what the plan of salvation means to you. Encourage students to ponder often about the plan of salvation and determine how an understanding of it can help them live the gospel in their daily lives. Conclude by reading the following statement by President Hugh B. Brown, who was a member of the First Presidency:

“The leaders of the Church have, from the beginning, taught faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and we acknowledge him as our Savior and Redeemer. It is our duty to teach this to our children . . . and, because they are children of God, [to] teach them to be loyal to the royal spirit that is in them” (in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1966, 104).

THE TIME BETWEEN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

Introduction

Between Malachi and Matthew, four hundred years passed in the Holy Land for which we have no prophetic record. Much happened during this period that affects our understanding of the New Testament, so it is important to be familiar with at least the major events that occurred in this intertestamental period. After the Babylonian captivity Judea was ruled in turn by the Persians, the Greeks, the Egyptians, the Syrians, and the Romans, with a brief period of self-rule under the Hasmoneans. The Old Testament was translated into a Greek version called the Septuagint, which is the version most often quoted in the New Testament. Also, this period saw the rise of the Pharisees and Sadducees and an increase in the influence of the scribes.

Prayerfully study “The Intertestamental Period” (pp. 283–85) and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Knowing the background of the intertestamental period helps us better understand the New Testament.
- Although many still yearned for the coming of the Messiah during this period, apostasy and misunderstanding caused many Jews to “look beyond the mark” and reject Jesus Christ as the Messiah (see Matthew 16:13–16; Jacob 4:14).
- Although many Jews greatly disliked Samaritans and Gentiles, the gospel of Jesus Christ brings all people together as children of God (see Acts 10:34–35).
- Just as in our day, there were many religious groups in the Holy Land in New Testament times. Jesus proved many of these groups. Some good people, however, belonged to them (see John 3:1–12; 7:50–51; 19:38–40; Acts 21:40–22:3; 23:6).

Additional Resources

- “The Intertestamental Period,” 283–85 in this manual.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons on the intertestamental period.



New Testament Video presentation 3, “New Testament Setting” (12:45), can be used in teaching the religious and political climate at the time of Christ (see *New Testament Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).

Intertestamental Period. Knowing the background of the intertestamental period helps us better understand the New Testament. (30–40 minutes)

The period between the end of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament is known as the “intertestamental period.” The following activity is designed

to help students understand the significance of this period to their study of the New Testament. Divide the class into small groups. Give each group a copy of this chart with the items rearranged (they are now in chronological order). Have them look up each item in the Bible Dictionary and then identify or describe it briefly. (The words in quotation marks are the titles of relevant entries in the Bible Dictionary.)

Historical Item	Description
“Temple of Zerubbabel”	
“Temple on Mount Gerizim”	
Alexander the Great (“Alexander”)	
“Septuagint”	
“Antiochus Epiphanes”	
“Maccabees”	
Feast of Dedication (“Feasts”)	
“Roman Empire”	
Herod the Great (“Herod”)	
“Temple of Herod”	

Discuss each item with the class to help them understand its importance to the New Testament. With the students’ help, write each on the board in its correct historical order (refer students to the chronology tables on pages 635–45 of their Bible Dictionaries).

Intertestamental Period. Although many Jews yearned for the coming of the Messiah, apostasy and misunderstanding caused others to “look beyond the mark” and reject Jesus Christ (see Matthew 16:13–16; Jacob 4:14). (30–40 minutes)

Have students read “Messiah” in the Bible Dictionary (p. 731), and ask:

- What does the word *Messiah* mean?
- Who prophesied concerning the Messiah? (see Jacob 7:11).
- How is it that many Jews, who had long awaited the Messiah, overlooked Him and rejected Him when He came? (see Jacob 4:14–15).

Read the following true incident or share a similar one of your own:

“I’ll never forget what happened the day I returned from my mission. When I left for my mission to Norway my younger brother was in ninth grade. When I arrived at the airport I walked right past him. What I expected him to look like was so completely different from what he looked like that I didn’t recognize him at all.”

Explain that this incident helps us partly understand why the Jews did not recognize Jesus as the Messiah. Centuries had passed since the last recorded prophet of the Old Testament had declared, “Thus saith the Lord” (Malachi 1:4).

Ask students: Which is the last book of the Old Testament? Invite them to find when Malachi was written by looking up “Malachi” in the Bible Dictionary (430 B.C.; see p. 728). What happened between then and the birth of Jesus Christ?

Help students understand that we do not have record of a true prophet in the Holy Land between the time of Malachi and the period of the New Testament. Many of the Jews believed in and lived by that portion of the gospel they had, but many doctrinal truths had become lost or mixed with the philosophies of men. Write the following on the board:

Some Misunderstandings of the Jews Concerning the Coming Messiah

- They thought He would be a powerful military leader.
- They thought His first coming would be in glory.
- They thought He would free them from their earthly enemies.

Read the following scriptures with your students to show how, even though many rejected Jesus as the Messiah, others who were spiritually in tune accepted Him.

- John 1:10–12 (Most people did not receive Jesus as the Messiah.)
- Luke 2:25–38 (Simeon and Anna, by the power of the Holy Ghost, recognized that the baby Jesus was the Messiah.)
- Matthew 16:13–17 (By the spirit of revelation, Peter knew who Jesus was.)

Tell students that as they read the New Testament this year they will learn of humble people who accepted Jesus as the Messiah and instances of people who rejected Him.

Intertestamental Period. “God is no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34). (20–30 minutes)

Write the words *German, Mexican, American, Japanese, Syrian, Iraqi,* and *Korean* on the board.

- Which of these nationalities are invited to become members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?
- How does the gospel unite all nationalities, races, tribes, and cultures?

Tell your students the following incident, retold by Elder James M. Paramore, a member of the Seventy:

“I remember a story recounted during World War II, when a German Latter-day Saint soldier was struck by

an American bullet and lay perilously ill. He told his leader, ‘Please take a white flag and go to the other side and see if there is a Mormon elder who could administer to me.’ What a bizarre request in a war of two mortal enemies. But seeing his condition, and anxious to satisfy what appeared to be a last request, the leader took the white flag, went across the enemy line, and asked for a Mormon elder. One was found and he, with the German, crossed the enemy line, laid his hands upon that brother’s head, and commanded in the name of the Lord that he remain alive until help could be had. There is a sense of belonging that is fulfilled by the gospel of Jesus Christ—first to our Father in Heaven; then to our family, which can be an eternal unit; and then to members everywhere upon this earth” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1983, 37; or *Ensign*, May 1983, 28).

Have students read 2 Nephi 26:33, and ask:

- Who is invited to come unto Jesus Christ?
- How can the gospel help break down barriers of hatred and prejudice?
- Can you think of examples from the scriptures showing how racial hatred and cultural differences can be overcome? (One example is the mission of the sons of Mosiah to the Lamanites; see Alma 17–24.)

Have students find Samaria on Bible map 11. Have them read the entries for “Samaria” and “Samaritans” in the Bible Dictionary (p. 768). Ask: Why was there such intense dislike between Jews and Samaritans?

Ask the students to read the following scripture passages and tell how they apply to the discussion:

- Luke 10:29–37 (In the parable of the good Samaritan, a priest and a Levite pass by a man who has been beaten and robbed, but a Samaritan stops and helps.)
- John 4:3–10, 27 (Jesus talked to a Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well. His disciples were surprised that He talked with her.)
- Acts 1:8 (Jesus told His disciples that they would preach the gospel in Judea, in Samaria, and to “the uttermost part of the earth.”)

Help students understand how Jesus Christ provides the way and the example for overcoming divisions between people.

Intertestamental Period. As in our time, there were many religious groups in the Holy Land in Jesus Christ’s day. (25–35 minutes)

Ask: Why are there so many different churches and religious beliefs in the world today? Explain that this was the case among the Jews of Jesus Christ’s day as well.

Among the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus were the Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes. To help students understand the differences between these groups, give each student a copy of the following handout with the answers blank. Have them use their Bible Dictionaries to identify which group each definition describes. Then have them write "S" for Sadducees, "P" for Pharisees, or "Sc" for scribes in the blanks.

1. S They formed the Jewish aristocracy.
2. Sc These were the lawyers among the ancient Jews.
3. P The name means "separatists." They held themselves aloof from the common masses.
4. P They upheld the authority of oral tradition as equal with scripture.
5. S This group was small in numbers but very powerful.
6. P These people avoided contact with gentile things.
7. Sc They were primarily teachers.
8. S These held to the letter of Mosaic law and rejected ancient tradition.
9. P This group believed in the Resurrection of the body and in angels.
10. S They did not believe in either the Resurrection or angels.
11. S They fostered the spread of Greek culture in Israel.
12. Sc This group interpreted the law of Moses in great detail and applied it to their time.

Discuss the various religious groups as you go over the answers.

- How did Jesus Christ feel about these groups? (see Matthew 3:7; 5:20; 16:6; 23:13–32).
- What examples can you find of members of some of these groups who were good and honorable? (Paul, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and Gamaliel were all Pharisees.)

Testify that a similar situation exists in our own day.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT MATTHEW

Author: Matthew the son of Alphaeus was sometimes called by his surname, Levi (Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27). He lived in Capernaum and was a publican, or tax collector. Matthew was one of the Lord's original Twelve Apostles and therefore was an eyewitness to many of the things he described (see Matthew 9:9). Matthew was well-versed in the Old Testament and made many references to Old Testament passages in his Gospel. As a publican, he needed to communicate with both Jews and Romans and would have spoken both Aramaic and Greek. One evidence that Matthew spoke Greek is his use of Greek names, such as "Esaias" for Isaiah (Matthew 12:17), "Jonas" for Jonah (Matthew 12:39–40), "Elias" for Elijah (Matthew 17:3), and even "Jesus" for Jeshua, the Aramaic form of the Lord's name.

Audience: Matthew's Gospel was likely directed to the Jews. Matthew assumed his audience was already familiar with Jewish traditions and customs. He frequently quoted Old Testament sources in an effort to help Jews recognize the promised Messiah. He emphasized the Savior's Davidic lineage and arranged the material so the Jews could see a reflection of their history in the life of Jesus Christ.

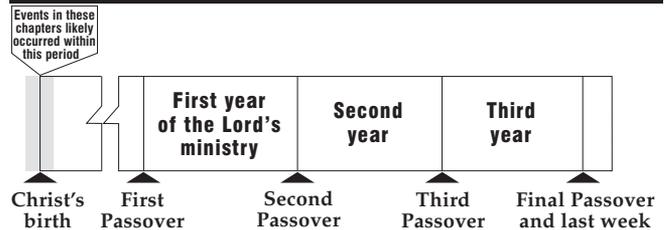
Historical Background: At the time of the events described by Matthew, the Jews sought deliverance from Roman oppression. Many Jews saw Jesus as their deliverer until they realized He would not deliver them from the Romans.

Unique Features: Since Matthew wrote to a Jewish audience, he frequently recorded events and principles in his testimony that would appeal to them. He gave special emphasis to Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah that were fulfilled in the life of Jesus Christ (see Bible Dictionary, "Gospels," 683). Some of these prophecies are that Christ would be born of a virgin (see Matthew 1:21–23; Isaiah 7:14), that He would be born in Bethlehem (see Matthew 2:6; Micah 5:2), and that He would flee to Egypt with His family (see Matthew 2:15; Hosea 11:1). Matthew is the only one of the Gospel writers to include the visit of the wise men to the Christ child and the star appearing in the east (see Matthew 2:1–12), the killing of the children in Bethlehem (see Matthew 2:16), several of the Savior's parables (see Matthew 13:24–30, 36–52), the most complete record of the Sermon on the Mount (see Matthew 5–7), and the fact that "many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection" (Matthew 27:52–53).

Theme: Matthew testified that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah prophesied of in the Old Testament (see Bible Dictionary, "Matthew," 729).

Matthew 1–2

The Life of Jesus Christ



Introduction

Matthew chapters 1–2 record information about the birth and childhood of the Lord. The unusual circumstances surrounding His birth show that He was different from all others who have lived on the earth. Many prophets have performed miracles similar to those the Savior performed. But the Lord's birth, Atonement, and Resurrection are the events that most clearly witness of His divinity.

Prayerfully study Matthew 1–2 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Jesus Christ is the divine son of Heavenly Father and Mary (see Matthew 1:18–25; see also Luke 1:32, 35; 1 Nephi 11:13–22; Mosiah 3:8; Alma 7:10).
- The birth, life, and mission of Jesus Christ fulfilled many promises made to ancient prophets (see Matthew 1:21–23; 2:6, 15–18, 23; see also Isaiah 7:14; Jeremiah 31:15; Hosea 11:1; Micah 5:2; 2 Nephi 10:3).
- Those who understand and follow the teachings of the scriptures will be better prepared to meet the Lord (see Matthew 2:1–11; see also D&C 18:34–36).
- The purposes of the Lord cannot be frustrated or stopped (see Matthew 2:13–21; see also D&C 121:33).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 21–23.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Matthew 1–2.

Matthew 1:1–17 (see also Luke 3:23–38). Knowing our genealogies and where we came from is important.

(10–15 minutes)

Invite a few students to come to the board and outline their genealogies. See who can list the most generations. Or ask a few students to tell something interesting about someone in their family history. (Since this lesson will come at the beginning of the year, if you have not taken the opportunity to introduce the class members, this might be a good way to do it. Invite all your students to tell their names and briefly describe an ancestor.) Tell a brief story from your own family history that illustrates how interesting family history research can be.

Explain that Matthew started his testimony by recording the genealogy of Jesus Christ. Ask students to quickly read Matthew 1:1–17 looking for names they recognize in the Savior’s genealogy (for example, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Ruth). Ask:

- To whom did Matthew trace the Savior’s genealogy?
- What two people in the Savior’s genealogy did Matthew focus on?
- What type of leaders were David and Abraham? (One was a king, the other a prophet.)
- Why would it be important that Jesus Christ be the heir of both an Israelite political leader and a religious leader?

Ask students to read Revelation 19:16 and consider how the titles used in this verse to describe the Messiah could apply to Him as both a political and a religious leader. (For additional information see the commentary for Matthew 1:17 and Luke 3:23–28 in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, p. 21.)

Have students identify the woman spoken of both in Matthew 1:5 and Ruth 1:4.

- From what country did this ancestor of Jesus come?
- Of what nationality was she?

Tell students that Jesus Christ had some ancestors who were valiant and others who succumbed to temptation. Consider asking the following questions:

- How important is it to be born into a family that has been in the Church for many generations?
- What advantages are there to having righteous ancestors?
- What effect do our ancestors’ mistakes have on our ability to do what is right?



Matthew 1:18–23. Jesus Christ is the divine son of Heavenly Father and Mary. From Mary He inherited mortality, which allowed Him to die. From His Heavenly Father He inherited immortality and the power to resurrect. (10–15 minutes)

Write the following phrases, without the scripture references, on the board:

Fasted forty days (Exodus 34:28)

Healed the sick (2 Kings 5:10–14)

Multiplied food (1 Kings 17:10–16)

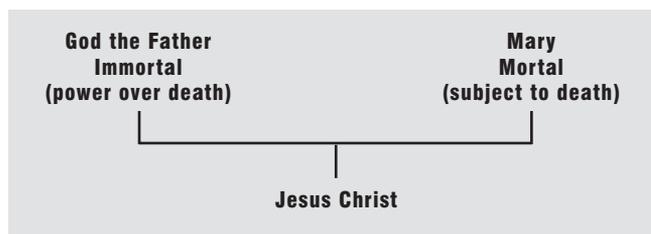
Walked on water (Matthew 14:25–29)

Raised the dead (3 Nephi 19:4)

Was scourged and put to death for the truth’s sake (Mosiah 17:13, 20)

Ask the students which of the miracles and experiences listed on the board were unique to the Savior. Help students answer the question for each item by showing them a picture of a prophet performing that miracle or having that experience or by reading the scripture references included above.

Ask: If others also performed these miracles, how was Jesus different? Read Mosiah 3:7 and Alma 34:8–10 looking for what the Savior did that no one else could do. Read Matthew 1:18–23 and Luke 1:32, 35 and look for what gave Him the ability to work out the Atonement. To help students visualize this principle, draw the following diagram. Help students understand that Jesus was literally the son of God, and that His ability to perform the Atonement and bring about the Resurrection are proofs of that divine sonship. (See “Points to Ponder” in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, pp. 23–25.)



Matthew 1:18–25. Certain qualities make good parents.

(10–20 minutes)

Ask two students to describe a characteristic they like about their parents. Invite a father or mother of a student to come to class and speak for three to five minutes and describe their feelings when their child was born, tell what the child was like as a baby, and express their love for the child. (Or, if available, use a speaker phone in the classroom to call some parents and ask them to do the same. Or ask some parents to do so in writing or on audio- or videotape, and then share the parents’ responses with the class.)

Invite students to list the qualities of a good parent. Divide your class in half. Ask one half to read Matthew 1:18–25 looking for good qualities Joseph had as a husband and father. Invite the other half to read Luke 1:28–30, 38, 46–55 looking for good qualities of Mary.

Read Romans 8:16–17 and look for the relationship we have with our Father in Heaven as we are led by His Spirit. Read Ephesians 2:4 and look for how our Heavenly Father feels about us. Ask:

- How does being a good parent in this life help prepare us for godhood?

- What could you be doing now to prepare to be good parents in the future?

List the students' answers on the board.



Matthew 1:22–23. The birth and life of Jesus Christ fulfilled many promises made to ancient prophets.
(15–20 minutes)

Invite students to write a prediction of some future event on a piece of paper. Collect the predictions and share some of them with the class. Ask:

- How likely is it that some of these predictions will come to pass?
- How sure is it that all of them will occur?
- Does making a true prediction necessarily prove that someone is a prophet? Why or why not?

Help students understand that prophets don't guess the future. Prophets have the future revealed to them by God, and their prophecies are always fulfilled.

Reproduce the accompanying chart, leaving the middle column blank. Invite students to read the verses and write in the blank spaces the fulfillment of the prophecy.

Prophecy	Event	Fulfillment
Isaiah 7:14	A virgin conceived	Matthew 1:21–23
Micah 5:2	Christ was born in Bethlehem	Matthew 2:6
Hosea 11:1	Joseph and Mary fled with Jesus to Egypt	Matthew 2:15
Jeremiah 31:15	Herod ordered the killing of babies in Bethlehem	Matthew 2:16–18
1 Nephi 11:13	Christ came from Nazareth	Matthew 2:23
Isaiah 40:3–5	John the Baptist prepared the way	Matthew 3:3
Isaiah 9:1–2	Christ labored in Capernaum	Matthew 4:14–16
Isaiah 53:4	Christ healed the sick	Matthew 8:17
Malachi 3:1	John the Baptist was the promised messenger	Matthew 11:10
Isaiah 42:1–4	Christ avoided confrontation with the leaders of the Jews; the people put their hope in Him	Matthew 12:17–21
Isaiah 6:9–10; 53:1	Many heard but would not understand or believe Christ	Matthew 13:14–15
Psalms 78:2	Christ taught in parables	Matthew 13:35
Zechariah 9:9	Christ entered Jerusalem triumphantly, riding a donkey	Matthew 21:5
Psalms 118:22–23	The Jews rejected Christ, the Cornerstone	Matthew 21:42
Zechariah 13:7	Jesus was arrested, and the disciples fled	Matthew 26:31, 54–56

When they have finished, ask:

- What do these prophecies and their fulfillment show about Jesus?
- Why was it important that Jesus fulfill the prophecies of the Old Testament?
- How can prophecies from scriptures about the last days help us today?



Matthew 2:1–11. Wise men from the East were led to the Christ child. (15–20 minutes)

Ask students to draw a picture of the nativity scene, or invite a student to draw on the board the nativity as described by the other students. Tell them to include everything they can from memory alone to make it as accurate as possible. After a few minutes, read Matthew 2:1–11 and Luke 2:1–16, and have the students look for details they should add or subtract from their pictures to make them more accurate. (For example, many students will draw three wise men, though Matthew doesn't refer to any specific number. Also, Matthew 2:11 seems to imply that the wise men came later, when Mary and the Christ child were staying in a house.) Discuss the following questions:

- Why do some people have misconceptions about Christ's birth?
- Why are the scriptures frequently misunderstood? (People often don't read the scriptures enough, or carefully enough. Errors in translation can also lead to misconceptions.)
- How can we avoid misunderstanding principles and stories from the scriptures? (We can search the scriptures and study the prophets' and apostles' interpretations of them.)

Matthew 2:1–9. Those who understand and follow the teachings of the scriptures will be better prepared to meet the Lord. (10–15 minutes)

Before class place a small paper star somewhere in view of the students. Begin class by drawing on the board the outline of a stop sign without the word *stop*. Ask students:

- What does this sign represent?
- Are seeing the shape of the sign and knowing what it means the same thing? (Not necessarily.)
- How many of you saw the new star in the room when you came in?
- Did anyone know what it meant?

Invite students to read Matthew 2:1–9 and look for where the new star signifying the Christ child's birth appeared.

- Could there have been some who saw the star but did not understand its meaning?
- Why were the wise men able to discern the meaning of the star?

- Why didn't many others recognize the significance of the star?

To help students understand how the wise men not only saw the new star but also understood its meaning, read the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“The probability is [that the wise men] were themselves Jews who lived, as millions of Jews then did, in one of the nations to the East. It was the Jews, not the Gentiles, who were acquainted with the scriptures and who were waiting with anxious expectation for the coming of a King” (*The Mortal Messiah: From Bethlehem to Calvary*, 4 vols. [1979–81], 1:358).

Invite students to read Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:29–31 and look for what signs God has revealed today. Ask:

- To whom are these signs meaningful today?
- How may we, like the wise men of old, find the Savior?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 18:34–35 and 45:39 and look for other ways we can find Jesus today.

Matthew 2:11. Just as the wise men gave Jesus gifts, we can give Him gifts too. (5–10 minutes)

Bring in a couple of packages wrapped as gifts. Ask students:

- What was the last gift you gave someone?
- Why did you select that gift?
- How does knowing someone influence the gift you choose to give that person?
- How does our love for someone affect the kind of gift we choose for that person?

Read Matthew 2:11 and look for what the wise men gave Jesus. Ask: Why do you think the wise men chose the gifts they did? (Gold, frankincense, and myrrh were all expensive gifts befitting a king. Frankincense was a type of incense offered to the Lord in the temple in Jerusalem. Myrrh, which was used in embalming, may have been a prophetic indication of Christ's sacrifice.)

Invite students to read Matthew 11:29–30; Alma 11:42–44; Doctrine and Covenants 14:7; 19:16–19 and identify the gifts the Savior has offered to us. (If desired, list their responses on the board.) Give students a piece of paper and invite them to write a list of gifts they could give Jesus today (for example, keeping the commandments and living righteously, treating others kindly, and being grateful for what Jesus does for us).

Matthew 2:13–21. The purposes and work of the Lord cannot be frustrated. (5–10 minutes)

Show the students a glass of water and a teaspoon of sugar. Stir the sugar into the water. Then invite a student to separate the sugar from the water. Read Doctrine and Covenants 121:33 and ask students:

- How is the difficulty of separating sugar and water like what is taught in this scripture?
- What power can stay the heavens?

Read Matthew 2:14–21 and ask:

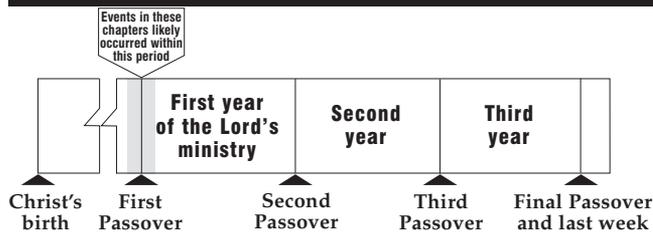
- What did Herod do in an attempt to destroy the work of the Lord?
- What did the Lord do to foil Herod's actions?
- According to verse 14, what role did Joseph and Mary play in stopping Herod's plan?

To help students apply this principle, ask:

- How can we help to thwart the designs of Satan in our own lives?
- What difference does it make in your life to know that the Lord and His plans will be victorious and that His plan and purposes will all be fulfilled?

Matthew 3–4

The Life of Jesus Christ



Introduction

Matthew 3–4 recounts the preparations Jesus made prior to His formal ministry. His example of preparation reminds us that if we “are prepared [we] shall not fear” (D&C 38:30). During this period Jesus also experienced temptations similar to ours (see Matthew 4:3–11).

Prayerfully study Matthew 3–4 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- We must be baptized in order to receive celestial glory (see Matthew 3:13–15; see also 2 Nephi 9:24; 31:5–7).
- The Godhead is made up of three separate individuals: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost (see Matthew 3:16–17; see also Acts 7:55–56; D&C 130:22).
- Fasting helps us to draw closer to Heavenly Father, to gain spiritual strength, and to obtain blessings (see Matthew 4:1–2; JST, Matthew 4:1).
- By being righteous we gain power to resist the temptations of Satan (see Matthew 4:3–11; see also James 4:7; 1 Nephi 22:26; Alma 48:17).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 27–31, 43–46.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Matthew 3–4.

 *New Testament Video* presentation 4, “New Testament Customs” (14:32), can be used to explain the culture and customs of New Testament times. You could use it during a single class period or show each of its sixteen brief segments as the scriptures they treat come up in the curriculum. (See *New Testament Video Guide* for teaching suggestions.)

Matthew 3:13–17 (see also Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21–22; John 1:32–34). We must be baptized in order to receive celestial glory. (15–20 minutes)

Invite the class to imagine that you are an investigator with sincere questions about the need for baptism. Have two students come forward to play the role of missionaries. Ask them:

- I was baptized as an infant. Why do I need to be baptized again?
- Why do I have to be baptized by immersion?
- Why is this ordinance essential to my salvation?
- What does the ordinance of baptism signify?

Write the following references on the board: Matthew 3:13–17; John 3:3–5; Romans 6:3–5; Mosiah 5:5–12; Alma 5:14; 3 Nephi 11:26; Moroni 8:25; Doctrine and Covenants 13:1; 20:73–74; 128:12. Invite the class to use the references to help the “missionaries” answer the questions.

Invite a priest in the Aaronic Priesthood to read Doctrine and Covenants 20:46. Ask him what authority he holds. Ask if he or any other priest in the class has had the opportunity to baptize someone. If so, invite that student to briefly share his experience with the class. Ask the priest how he would feel if

he were asked to baptize the Savior. Have the class read Matthew 3:14–15, and discuss the following questions:

- What did John the Baptist say when Jesus came to him to be baptized?
- What was Jesus’ response?
- What does it mean “to fulfill all righteousness”? (see 2 Nephi 31:4–11).
- What do you remember most about your own baptism?

Have students read Mosiah 18:8–10, and discuss how their baptism continues to apply today.

 **Matthew 3:16–17 (see also Mark 1:10–11; Luke 3:21–23; John 1:32–34). The Godhead is made up of three separate individuals: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.** (5–10 minutes)

Show the class a triple combination (a Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price all in one book). Ask students:

- In what ways are the three books one?
- How are they different?
- How is the triple combination like the Godhead?

Invite students to read Matthew 3:16–17 and list the evidence this passage gives that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are three different individuals. Invite students to look in their Topical Guides under “Godhead” (p. 183) to find other scriptures that support the idea that the Godhead is made up of three different individuals (see especially Acts 7:55–56; D&C 130:22–23; Joseph Smith—History 1:17). Have the students share what they find with the class. Read the following statement from the *Lectures on Faith*, compiled under the direction of the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“Let us here observe, that three things are necessary in order that any rational and intelligent being may exercise faith in God unto life and salvation.

“First, the idea that he actually exists.

“Secondly, a *correct* idea of his character, perfections, and attributes.

“Thirdly, an actual knowledge that the course of life which he is pursuing is according to his will” (*Lectures on Faith* [1985], 38).

After sharing this statement, ask students:

- Why must we understand the true nature of God before we can have faith in Him “to life and salvation”?
- How can we grow in our understanding of the true nature of God?

Have students read John 17:3, and ask:

- How does this verse apply to the statement in *Lectures on Faith*?
- What does it mean to you?

Read Alma 34:38 and ask:

- What relationship should we have with the members of the Godhead?
- What can we do now to cultivate this relationship?

Matthew 4:1–2 (see also Mark 1:12–13; Luke 4:1–2). Fasting helps us draw closer to our Heavenly Father, gain spiritual strength, and obtain blessings. (5–10 minutes)

Ask the class to raise their hands if they look forward to fast Sundays. Why or why not? Read Matthew 4:1–2 and look for what the Savior did as preparation for His ministry.

Divide the class into four groups. Have each group read one of the following scripture references and report on what they learned about fasting: Matthew 17:14–21; Alma 5:46; Alma 17:2–3; Doctrine and Covenants 59:13–14.

Have students read the following passages and answer the questions:

- What does Matthew 6:16–18 say we should avoid when we fast?
- According to Isaiah 58:3–5, how much good does fasting do us if we fast without the proper spiritual motivation? (see footnote 4b).
- What do verses 6–7 say we must also do when we fast?
- What provision has the Lord made for His Church and people to help the poor?



Matthew 4:1–11 (see also Mark 1:12–13; Luke 4:1–13). By being obedient we gain power to resist the temptations of Satan. (20–25 minutes)

Put an orange into a large transparent container of water (it should float). Ask the students to guess what makes it float. Peel the orange and remove the pithy center, and then put the orange back in the water (it should sink). Ask:

- What do you think helped keep the orange afloat?
- How could the orange peel be likened to our ability to resist temptation today?

Have students read Matthew 4:1–11 (note the Joseph Smith Translation changes).

- What did the Savior do to overcome temptation? (He fasted, He sought to be with God, He quoted truths from the scriptures, and He left the tempter and the place of temptation; see also D&C 20:22).
- How can we apply these helps in overcoming temptation in our own lives? (*Note:* Spend some time with real-life

situations that affect your students today. For example, discuss getting out of the place of temptation by changing the television channel, walking out of an inappropriate movie, or leaving a party.)

- What temptations does Satan use today to “peel away” the protection of the righteous?

Read Matthew 4:1–11 again, this time looking for the different kinds of temptations that Satan presented to the Savior. Read the following statement by Elder David O. McKay, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Now, nearly every temptation that comes to you and me comes in one of those forms. Classify them, and you will find that under one of those three nearly every given temptation that makes you and me spotted, ever so little maybe, comes to us as (1) *a temptation of the appetite*; (2) *a yielding to the pride and fashion and vanity of those alienated from the things of God*; or (3) *a gratifying of the passion, or a desire for the riches of the world, or power among men*” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1911, 59).

Write three headings on the board: (1) *Physical Appetites*; (2) *Pride, Fashion, and Vanity*; and (3) *Riches or Power*. Invite students to name some temptations common to youth today. As each temptation is mentioned, ask students which category it should be listed under, and then write it under the appropriate heading on the board.

Remind students of the orange analogy and ask:

- In what condition is the fruit of the orange after it has lost its outer peel?
- How long will the fruit remain good and sweet without the peel as compared to fruit that keeps its peel?
- If we succumb to temptation, is there any way to regain divine protection? How?

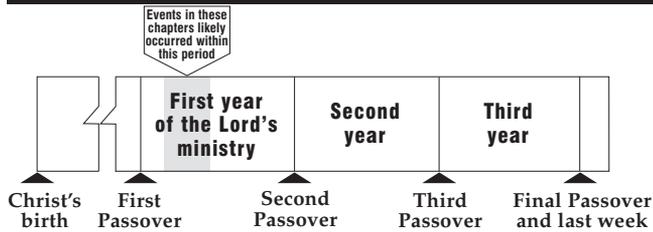
Read Mosiah 26:29–32 and ask: What can we do if Satan has penetrated some of our protection and we have succumbed to temptation? Read Alma 34:32–34 and ask:

- What is the danger of putting off repenting?
- Which is the better way, to resist temptation or to give in to temptation and repent later?

Point out to the students that the Savior’s example in Matthew 4 teaches us that it is better to resist temptation than to give in and repent later. (For additional help with this concept, see Spencer W. Kimball, “God Will Forgive,” *Ensign*, March 1982, p. 7.) Assure them, however, that through the Savior’s Atonement, forgiveness is available to all those who sincerely repent of their sins.

Matthew 5–7

The Life of Jesus Christ



Introduction

Matthew 5–7 records what President Joseph Fielding Smith called the “greatest [sermon] that was ever preached” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1941, 95). This sermon is the first of five great discourses given by the Savior as recorded in Matthew (the other discourses are found in Matthew 10; 13; 18; and 24–25). It has come to be known as the Sermon on the Mount and was given near the shores of the Sea of Galilee.

Luke records a sermon known as “the Sermon on the Plain” which is similar but not identical to the Sermon on the Mount. Some have thought that the Sermon on the Mount was given before the selection of the Twelve Apostles, but Elder Bruce R. McConkie, then a member of the Seventy, pointed out that some of the material in the Sermon was directed specifically to the Twelve. Elder McConkie explained:

“It is clear that the Sermon on the Plain, as given by Luke, was delivered immediately following the selection and ordination of the Twelve. . . . The Nephite version [of the Sermon on the Mount] was given after the call of the Nephite Twelve, and portions of the sermon are addressed expressly to those apostolic ministers rather than to the multitude in general. (3 Ne. 13:25.) In Matthew’s account, as found in the Inspired Version [the Joseph Smith Translation], the Prophet adds a considerable amount of material that applies to those called to the Twelve rather than to people in general. ([JST,] Matt. 5:3–4; 6:25–27; 7:6–17.) . . .

“It follows that the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Plain are one and the same” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. [1966–73], 1:213–14).

In this sermon, Jesus presented a higher level of living for His followers. Of the importance of this sermon, President Ezra Taft Benson said:

“The Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount are the foundation principles upon which all civilized government and our present civilization are built (see Exodus 20:1–17; Matthew 5–7). To disregard them will lead to inevitable personal character loss and ruin. To disregard them as a nation inevitably will lead that nation to destruction” (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [1988], 677–78).

Prayerfully study Matthew 5–7 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Our treatment of others affects the way God treats us (see Matthew 5:7; 6:14–15; 7:2, 12).
- Christ fulfilled the law of Moses and restored the gospel fulness, bringing a higher law (see Matthew 5:21–48).
- We should strive to become perfect like Jesus and Heavenly Father (see Matthew 5; see also 3 Nephi 12:48).
- We should not boast of our righteous acts (see Matthew 6:1–23).
- Heavenly Father gave us prayer as a way to express our thanks and desires to Him (see Matthew 6:5–15). He answers our prayers and wants to bless us (see Matthew 7:7–11).
- We can discern the righteous from the wicked by their actions. Only those whose intentions and actions are righteous will “enter into the kingdom of heaven” (see Matthew 7:15–27; see also Moroni 7:5–6).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 57–62, 114.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Matthew 5–7.

Matthew 5–7 (see also Luke 6:17–49). An introduction to the Sermon on the Mount. (3–5 minutes)

Ask students:

- When was the last time you went to a Sunday fireside?
- If you knew Jesus would be the speaker at the next fireside, what would you do to be there?

Explain that Matthew 5–7 is a sermon given by the Lord, and while we weren’t there to hear it from the Savior, we can read and study what He taught. To emphasize the importance of these chapters, share the quotes by Joseph Fielding Smith and Ezra Taft Benson in the introduction to this scripture block.

Matthew 5:1–12 (see also Luke 6:20–26). The Beatitudes are a guide to help us become more like the Savior. (15–20 minutes)

One by one hold up three or four different magazine or newspaper pictures of unknown people. As you hold up each picture, ask students if they think the person whose picture you are holding is righteous or wicked.

- Can we tell righteous people by the way they look?

- How can we know if someone is righteous or wicked?
- Which is more important, inner or outer beauty?

While we can change only so much of our outward beauty, we have a lot of ability to change our inner character. Explain that Jesus gave us a list of “beautiful attitudes” that are called the Beatitudes. Ask how many students have heard of the Beatitudes. If we develop these qualities or character traits in our lives then we will receive certain blessings. (The word *beatitude* means “blessedness.”) Invite students to read Matthew 5:1-12 and find each attitude that Jesus mentions and the corresponding blessing. Read the following statement on the Beatitudes by President Harold B. Lee:

“In that matchless Sermon on the Mount, Jesus has given us eight distinct ways by which we might receive . . . joy. . . . These declarations of the Master are known . . . as the Beatitudes and have been referred to by Bible commentators as the preparation necessary for entrance into the kingdom of heaven. . . . They embody in fact THE CONSTITUTION FOR A PERFECT LIFE” (*Decisions for Successful Living* [1973], 56-57).

Make copies of the following eight statements on the Beatitudes by President Lee, and invite eight different students to read them to the class.

1. **Blessed are the poor in spirit:** “To be poor in spirit is to feel yourselves as the spiritually needy, ever dependent upon the Lord for your clothes, your food and the air you breathe, your health, your life; realizing that no day should pass without fervent prayer of thanksgiving, for guidance and forgiveness and strength sufficient for each day’s need.”
2. **Blessed are they that mourn:** “To mourn, as the Master’s lesson here would teach, one must show that ‘godly sorrow that worketh repentance’ and wins for the penitent a forgiveness of sins and forbids a return to the deeds of which he mourns.”
3. **Blessed are the meek:** “A meek man is defined as one who is not easily provoked or irritated and forbearing under injury or annoyance. Meekness is not synonymous with weakness. The meek man is the strong, the mighty, the man of complete self-mastery. He is the one who has the courage of his moral convictions, despite the pressure of the gang or the club.”
4. **Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness:** “Did you ever hunger for food or thirst for water when just a crust of stale bread or a sip of tepid water to ease the pangs that distressed you would seem to be the most prized of all possessions? If you have so hungered then you may begin to understand how the Master meant we should hunger and thirst after righteousness. It’s that hungering and thirsting that leads those away from home to seek fellowship with saints in sacrament services and that induces worship on the Lord’s Day wherever we are. It is that which prompts fervent prayer and leads our feet to holy temples and bids us be reverent therein.”
5. **Blessed are the merciful:** “Our salvation rests upon the mercy we show to others. Unkind and cruel words, or wanton acts of cruelty toward man or beast, even though in seeming retaliation, disqualify the perpetrator in his claims for mercy when he has need of mercy in the day of judgment before earthly or heavenly tribunals. Is there one who has never been wounded by the slander of another whom he thought to be his friend? Do you remember the struggle you had to refrain from retribution? Blessed are all you who are merciful for you shall obtain mercy!”
6. **Blessed are the pure in heart:** “If you would see God, you must be pure. There is in Jewish writings the story of a man who saw an object in the distance, an object that he thought was a beast. As it drew nearer he could perceive it was a man and as it came still closer he saw it was his friend. You can see only that which you have eyes to see. Some of the associates of Jesus saw him only as a son of Joseph the carpenter. Others thought him to be a winebibber or a drunkard because of his words. Still others thought he was possessed of devils. Only the righteous saw him as the Son of God. Only if you are the pure in heart will you see God, and also in a lesser degree will you be able to see the ‘God’ or good in man and love him because of the goodness you see in him. Mark well that person who criticizes and maligns the man of God or the Lord’s anointed leaders in his Church. Such a one speaks from an impure heart.”
7. **Blessed are the peacemakers:** “Peacemakers shall be called the children of God. The trouble-maker, the striker against law and order, the leader of the mob, the law-breaker are prompted by motives of evil and unless they desist will be known as the children of Satan rather than God. Withhold yourselves from him who would cause disquieting doubts by making light of sacred things for he seeks not for peace but to spread confusion. That one who is quarrelsome or contentious, and whose arguments are for other purposes than to resolve the truth, is violating a fundamental principle laid down by the Master as an essential in the building of a full rich life. ‘Peace and goodwill to men on earth’ was the angel song that heralded the birth of the Prince of Peace.”
8. **Blessed are they which are persecuted:** “May youth everywhere remember that warning when you are hissed and scoffed because you refuse to compromise your standards of abstinence, honesty and morality in order to win the applause of the crowd. If you stand firmly for the right despite the jeers of the crowd or even physical violence, you shall be crowned with the blessedness of eternal joy. Who knows but that again in our day some of the saints or even apostles, as in former days, may be required to give their lives in defense of the truth? If that time should come, God grant they would not fail!” (*Decisions for Successful Living*, 57-62).

Have students write on a piece of paper which of the Beatitudes they live the best and which they would like to apply more fully in their lives.



Matthew 5; 7:15–27 (see also Luke 6:20–36, 44–49). If we do our best to keep the commandments, the Lord can make us perfect.

(25–30 minutes)

Ask the students: Which commandment do you think is the hardest to keep? List their answers on the board. Ask: Which is the hardest commandment of all? If being perfect isn't listed, tell students Matthew 5:48 describes a harder commandment than any listed on the board. Read Genesis 6:9; Job 1:1; 1 Nephi 3:7; Doctrine and Covenants 107:43; and Moses 8:27, and consider whether being perfect is possible. Then read Moroni 10:32–33 and look for how it is possible for us to become perfect and how the men in the previous references became perfect.

Before class, take a large piece of paper or poster board and write in large letters, "Being Perfect like Heavenly Father." Turn it over and draw seventeen puzzle pieces on the back. Write a scripture reference from the accompanying chart on each piece, and then cut out the pieces.

Characteristics of Perfection

Matthew 5:3	Be poor in spirit (humble)
Matthew 5:5	Be meek
Matthew 5:6	Hunger and thirst after righteousness
Matthew 5:7	Be merciful
Matthew 5:8	Be pure in heart
Matthew 5:9	Be a peacemaker
Matthew 5:13–16	Be of value to people; be a good example
Matthew 5:19–20	Keep the commandments and be righteous
Matthew 5:21	Don't kill
Matthew 5:22	Don't get angry or call people names
Matthew 5:23–25	Work out your differences with people
Matthew 5:27	Don't be immoral in any way
Matthew 5:28	Think clean thoughts
Matthew 5:31–32	Work toward a successful marriage and avoid divorce
Matthew 5:33–37	Tell the truth and be true to your word
Matthew 5:38–42	Be forgiving, charitable, and giving
Matthew 5:43–44	Love and pray for your enemies

In class, write *Being Perfect like Heavenly Father* on the board. Distribute the puzzle pieces among your students, and explain that if the puzzle is put together correctly this is what it will spell. Tell students that the word *perfect* in Matthew 5:48 comes from the Greek word *teleios*, which can also be translated as "whole" or "complete." Using this definition, the admonitions of the Savior in Matthew chapter 5 can be seen as pieces of a puzzle that must all be in place before someone can be whole, complete, or perfect.

Ask students to look up the references on the backs of their puzzle pieces. Have them write the characteristic of perfection described in their reference, first on the puzzle piece and then on the board under *Being Perfect like Heavenly Father*. (These don't need to be identical to the ones on the chart.) Then have them work with the other students to put the puzzle together. When the puzzle is completed, remove one of the pieces and ask:

- Is the puzzle still perfect, whole, or complete if one piece is missing?
- How long are we to strive for perfection?
- How long do you think it will take to achieve it?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 67:13 and the following quote to help students understand that becoming perfect happens over a long period of time and only with the Lord's help. Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained:

"Nobody becomes perfect in this life. . . . Becoming perfect in Christ is a process.

"We begin to keep the commandments today, and we keep more of them tomorrow. . . . We can become perfect in some minor things. . . .

"If we chart a course of becoming perfect, and, step by step and phase by phase, are perfecting our souls by overcoming the world, then it is absolutely guaranteed—there is no question whatever about it—we shall gain eternal life. . . . If we chart a course and follow it to the best of our ability in this life, then when we go out of this life we'll continue in exactly that same course. . . .

"The Prophet [Joseph Smith] told us that there are many things that people have to do, even after the grave, to work out their salvation" ("Jesus Christ and Him Crucified," *1976 Devotional Speeches of the Year* [1977], 399–401).

To illustrate this point, set up the desks or chairs in the room to form an obstacle course. Blindfold a student and have him or her go through the course with only your instructions for guidance. When you are finished, ask:

- What help did you need to make it through the course?
- What would have occurred if you depended only on your own efforts?

Read Matthew 7:15–27 and look for how many times the Lord uses the word "doeth" in these verses. How important are our works and deeds to our salvation? Read 2 Nephi 25:23 and ask students to compare it with the experience of the obstacle course.

- What two people have a part to play in our becoming perfect?
- Who in this verse is like the blindfolded person?
- Who is like the guiding voice?

Matthew 5:7; 6:14–15; 7:2, 12 (see also Luke 6:37–42). Our treatment of others affects not only the way others treat us but also the way the Lord treats us. (10–15 minutes)

Invite three students to participate in a role play. Invite one of the students to stand outside the room for a minute where he can't hear what you tell the others. When the student has left the room, explain to the other two students that when the first student comes back in, one of them should treat him in a friendly way (for example shake his hand, smile, look at him, and ask him how he is doing), and that the other student should ignore him (not look at him, turn his back on him, and so forth). After the student outside the room has been invited in and experienced the actions of the other two students, ask:

- How do you feel after “meeting” these two students?
- Which of the two would you rather be with?
- How did you want to treat the student who acted friendly?
- What kind of feelings did you have toward the student who acted unfriendly?

Invite the class to read Matthew 7:12 and look for how this verse might apply to the role play. Tell them that the admonition to do unto others as you would have them do unto you is known as the Golden Rule. Share the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson:

“The formula for successful relationships with others boils down to that divine code known as the Golden Rule. . . . To serve others willingly and unselfishly should be one of our greatest virtues. It is not even a matter of choice. It is an obligation, a sacred command” (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, 447).

- In your experience have you found this principle to be true?
- How should we treat those who have mistreated us?
- What reactions do people have when you treat them kindly after they may have been unkind toward you?

Read Matthew 5:7; 6:14–15; 7:2 and look for how the principle taught in these verses applies to our relationship with the Lord.

- What do these verses teach about the Lord?
- According to the verses, what is the Lord's treatment of us dependent on?
- How does it make you feel to know the Lord will be fair and just?
- How can understanding this principle affect the way we treat others?



Matthew 5:14–16 (Scripture Mastery; see also Luke 8:16; 11:33). We must follow the light of Christ and let that example be seen by others so as to show others the way to come to Christ. (10–15 minutes)

Turn the lights out in the room and turn on a flashlight. Ask students to imagine that they are in a long cave and that the only way to find their way out is by the light of your flashlight. Invite a student to read Matthew 5:14–16 while you hold the flashlight on the book.

- How is the light of the flashlight in the cave like the light in these verses?
- How can our example influence others like a flashlight guides those in the dark?

Use the following questions to help students understand that Jesus Christ is the source of the light we must follow:

- Read Moroni 7:16–17. What are people born with that gives them a sense of right and wrong?
- According to Matthew 5:14–16, what light comes into the lives of the righteous and affects others for good?
- Read Doctrine and Covenants 88:5–13. Who is the source of this light?
- Read 3 Nephi 15:12. Who does He share that light with?

Tell students that when we receive that light, we have the responsibility to let it shine for others. But we must not forget whose light it is that we reflect to the world. The Savior explained, “Behold I am the light which ye shall hold up” (3 Nephi 18:24). Ask: How does our example affect others? Read Alma 39:11 and look for how Corianton's example affected others. Invite students to share instances of people who have been affected positively or negatively by the example of others. Ask: According to Matthew 5:16, when others see our good works, to whom should they be drawn?

Matthew 5:21–48 (see also Luke 6:29–36). Christ fulfilled the law of Moses and restored the gospel fulness, bringing the higher law. (10–15 minutes)

Bring some children's building blocks to class. Write on the board *Christ fulfilled the law of Moses and brought a higher law*. Invite a student to use the blocks to build something that represents the statement on the board and then explain how it relates to the statement. (For example the student might build a foundation to represent the law of Moses and then the rest of a building to represent the higher law of Christ.) Read Matthew 5:21–48 with students and look for examples of how Christ added new laws to what He had established through Moses. Write what you find on the board if desired (use the accompanying chart for reference).

The Old Law of Moses	The New Law of Christ
Don't kill (see Exodus 20:13).	Don't get angry (see Matthew 5:22).
Don't commit adultery (see Exodus 20:14).	Don't have lustful thoughts (see Matthew 5:28).
Don't separate without a legal document (see Deuteronomy 24:1–2).	Don't divorce except for adultery (see Matthew 5:32).
Don't break oaths made to or by the name of the Lord (see Numbers 30:2).	You should not need oaths; your word should be enough (see Matthew 5:34–37).
Justice—take an eye for an eye (see Leviticus 24:20).	Mercy—turn the other cheek (see Matthew 5:39–42).
Love your neighbor (see Leviticus 19:18).	Love your enemy (see Matthew 5:44–47).

Ask students: How many of these laws of Moses do we still believe and practice? Read Matthew 5:48 and ask: How does the new law instituted by Christ relate to becoming perfect?

Matthew 6:1–23. We should not boast of our righteous acts. (15–20 minutes)

Blow up a balloon for the class without tying it off. Tell students you want to show them the air inside the balloon. Let the air out. Ask: Of what use is a balloon without any air in it?

Tell students that some things are best kept to ourselves and not shared with others. Invite students to read Matthew 6:1–4 about offerings, verses 5–7 about prayer, and verses 16–18 about fasting. Discuss the following questions:

- How would making a show of righteous acts be like letting the air out of a balloon?
- How does boasting affect our giving to the poor, praying, or fasting?

Share the following story from Elder Thomas S. Monson, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Recently, I approached the reception desk of a large hospital to learn the room number of a patient I had come to visit. This hospital, like almost every other in the land, was undergoing a massive expansion. Behind the desk where the receptionist sat was a magnificent plaque which bore an inscription of thanks to donors who had made possible the expansion. The name of each donor who had contributed \$100,000 appeared in a flowing script, etched on an individual brass placard suspended from the main plaque by a glittering chain.

“The names of the benefactors were well known. Captains of commerce, giants of industry, professors of learning—all were there. I felt gratitude for their charitable benevolence. Then my eyes rested on a brass placard which was different—it contained no name. One word, and one word only, was inscribed:

‘Anonymous.’ I smiled and wondered who the unnamed contributor could have been. Surely he or she experienced a quiet joy unknown to any other. . . .

“May we look upward as we press forward in the service of our God and our fellowmen. . . . Our hearts will then be lighter, our lives brighter, and our souls richer.

“Loving service anonymously given may be unknown to man—but the gift and the giver are known to God” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1983, 73, 76; or *Ensign*, May 1983, 55, 57).

Tell students that the Lord Himself exemplified this principle by frequently telling those He healed to “tell no man” (Matthew 8:4). Read Matthew 19:16–17 and look for the attitude of the Savior that we should try to emulate. Ask:

- Would you rather be around people who constantly brag about how good they are or people who keep those things to themselves? Why?
- How are we to live when in the presence of parents and Church leaders?
- How are we to live when we are not in their presence?
- Read Doctrine and Covenants 20:77. How can we show Jesus that we “do always remember him”?

Point out that one of the best ways to show the Lord we remember Him is “to keep his commandments which he has given” us all the time, not just when others are watching.

Note: The principle of not doing our alms before men may be confusing when compared with the principle of letting our light shine (see Matthew 5:14–16). Help students understand that we don’t sin when others see our good works unless we do them hypocritically or pridefully, merely to be seen of men.



Matthew 6:5–13; 7:7–11 (see also Luke 11:2–4, 9–13). Heavenly Father gave us prayer as a way to express our thanks and desires to Him. He answers our prayers and wants to bless us. (15–20 minutes)

Bring a telephone to class. Ask students how much time in a day they spend on the phone talking with their friends. Ask them what they would think if they received the following phone call from a friend. Pick up the phone and say: “Hello,” (say the name of one of your students). “I’m calling to see if you want to get together tonight to study for our history test.” (Don’t pause long enough for a response.) “And I really can’t decide what to do this weekend. Should I go to that movie we’ve been wanting to see or to the ball game? What do you think?” (Before there is time for a response, say good-bye and hang up the phone.)

Ask students:

- What problems would you have if you never waited for an answer when you talked to your friends on the phone?
- If your friends never had the chance to respond to your questions, how long would they continue to listen to you?
- How might this phone call resemble some prayers?

Explain that the Lord Himself instructed us in the Sermon on the Mount on how to pray. Read and discuss Matthew 6:5–13, using the accompanying chart as a guide. Or reproduce it as a handout, leaving the right-hand column blank. Have students read the references and fill in what each verse teaches about prayer.

Things the Lord Taught about Prayer	
Matthew 6:5–6	Pray in secret to avoid appearing to be righteous before men.
Matthew 6:7	Pray from the heart, avoiding “vain repetitions.”
Matthew 6:9	Pray to our Father in Heaven.
Matthew 6:10	Remember that God knows best and pray for His will to be done.
Matthew 6:11	Pray for material or temporal needs.
Matthew 6:12	Pray for forgiveness from sins.
Matthew 6:13	Pray to avoid temptation.

Invite students to read Matthew 7:7–11 and look for what else the Lord taught in the Sermon on the Mount about prayer. Share the following statement by Elder Boyd K. Packer:

“No message is repeated more times in scripture than the simple thought: ‘Ask, and ye shall receive’ (D&C 4:7)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1979, 30; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 21).

Read Alma 29:1–4 and ask: What caution does Alma give that we should consider when we pray? Read Matthew 26:39 looking for how Jesus applied this principle in His own life.

Show students a picture of Moroni praying as he buries the golden plates (Moroni Hides the Plates in the Hill Cumorah [Moroni 10], item no. 62462). Sing or read the words of the hymn “Prayer Is the Soul’s Sincere Desire” (no. 145), and invite students to write on a piece of paper what they can do to improve their prayers.



Matthew 6:24 (Scripture Mastery; see also Luke 16:13). We cannot serve God and the things of the world. (10–15 minutes)

Put the word *God* on one wall and the word *Worldliness* on the opposite wall. Invite a student to stand in front of the

class and face one of the two walls. Then have the student turn around and face the other wall. Ask: Is it possible to face both walls at the same time? Invite students to read Matthew 6:24, and ask how serving God and Mammon is like trying to face both walls at the same time.

Share the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“Mammon is an Aramaic word for riches. Thus Jesus is saying, ‘Ye cannot serve God and riches, or worldliness, which always results from the love of money.’” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:240).

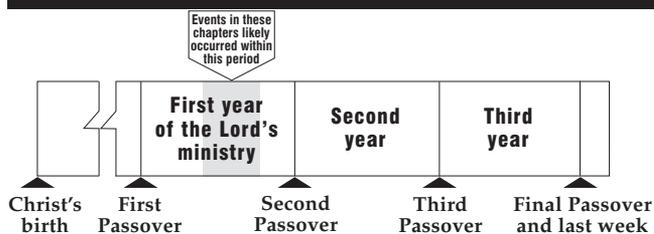
Read 1 Timothy 6:10 and ask students:

- According to this scripture, what is the root of all evil?
- How can we tell what we love the most?
- What do you think about when you don’t have to think?

Have students read Doctrine and Covenants 20:77 and list the covenants that they make that could help them love God more than worldliness.

Matthew 8–10

The Life of Jesus Christ



Introduction

Matthew often organized his Gospel account by topic rather than by a chronological recounting of the Savior’s ministry. For example, he grouped many of Jesus Christ’s miracles into chapters 8 and 9, many Sabbath activities into chapter 12, and many parables into chapter 13. Matthew frequently included Old Testament citations showing that Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah (see the introduction to the Gospel of Matthew, p. 20). As you study Matthew 8–10, watch for Matthew’s quotations from the Old Testament (see Matthew 8:17; 11:10, 14; 12:17–21; 13:35) and consider what we might learn from the way Matthew grouped events.

Prayerfully study Matthew 8–10 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The different kinds of miracles Jesus Christ performed demonstrated His power over all things (see Matthew 8–9; see also Mosiah 4:9; Alma 26:35).
- Jesus Christ gave His authority to the Apostles and called them to be special witnesses of Him and His mission (see Matthew 10:1–15; see also Acts 4:33; D&C 107:23).
- As we receive (obey) the Lord’s servants, we receive the Lord. This is a fundamental part of the oath and covenant of the priesthood (see Matthew 10:40–41; see also D&C 1:38; 84:33–39).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 45, 52–55, 71, 79–83.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Matthew 8–10.

 *New Testament Video* presentation 5, “Thy Faith Hath Made Thee Whole” (16:42), can be used in teaching Matthew 9. Or to help balance video presentations throughout the school year, you could use this presentation to help teach Mark 5 instead. (See *New Testament Video Guide* for teaching suggestions.)

Matthew 8–10 (see also Mark 1:29–34; 4:35–6:11; Luke 4:38–41; 5:17–26; 7:1–9:5; 11:14). The different kinds of miracles the Lord performed show that He has power over all things. He shared this power with the Apostles. (15–20 minutes)

Ask students to imagine being promised power over sickness, over the elements, over devils, or over death. Then consider the following questions:

- Which of these powers would you choose? Why?
- What are some ways you could bless others by this power?

Explain that Jesus possessed all these powers and that the miracles recorded in Matthew 8–9 help show His power over all things (see also Mosiah 4:9; Alma 26:35).

Have students write the four headings from the accompanying chart on a piece of paper. List the scripture references from the chart in random order on the board. Invite students to look up each reference and write it, together with a brief description of the miracle, in the proper column.

Power over Sickness	Power over the Elements	Power over Devils	Power over Death
Healed a leper (Matthew 8:2–4).	Calmed the stormy sea (Matthew 8:18–27).	Cast out a legion of devils into swine (Matthew 8:28–34).	Raised Jairus’s daughter from the dead (Matthew 9:18–19, 23–26).
Healed a centurion’s servant (Matthew 8:5–13).		Cast a devil out of a man who could not speak (Matthew 9:32–33).	
Healed Peter’s mother-in-law (Matthew 8:14–17).			
Healed the man with palsy (Matthew 9:2–8).			
Healed the woman with an issue of blood (Matthew 9:20–22).			
Healed two blind men (Matthew 9:27–31).			

Use the following questions to help students see the connection between Matthew 8–9 and Matthew 10:

- What would be a good title for the chart? (Possible answers include “The Miracles of Jesus” or “Christ Had Great Powers.”)
- How does it affect your faith to know that God has this kind of power?
- To whom did the Lord give this power or authority?
- Who holds this same power today? (see D&C 20:2).

Invite students to read Matthew 10:1–4. Ask the following questions, and list the students’ responses on the board:

- What are the names of the Twelve Apostles?
- What priesthood powers did the Savior give them?
- Read Matthew 10:7–8. What more do these verses say the Apostles were given priesthood power to do?

Share with the class the information found in the introduction to Matthew 8–10 about how Matthew grouped ideas and experiences together. Ask: Why do you think Matthew followed the account of a series of miracles with an account of the calling of the Twelve Apostles?

Matthew 10:1–15 (see also Mark 6:7–11; Luke 9:1–5). Christ gave His authority to the Apostles to heal the sick, cast out devils, and preach the gospel. They also had a special responsibility to be witnesses of Jesus Christ and His mission. (20–25 minutes)

Hold up the keys to your car, and ask a student to come to the front of the class. Tell the student, “Imagine that I forgot

to bring something to class and that I asked you to use my car and go get it. Then imagine that the police stopped you on the way.” Ask questions like the following:

- Would you be in trouble? Why not? (Because you have permission, or authority.)
- Why is having proper authority important?
- How would the situation with the police be different if you took my car without permission?
- How might this experience be likened to receiving and using the priesthood of God?
- How important is it to have Christ’s authority to do His work?

Invite students to read Matthew 10:1–4, and ask: Who did Jesus share His authority with? List the names of the Apostles on the board. Read Matthew 10:5–8 and ask: What were the Apostles charged to do by the Savior’s power? (see vv. 1, 7). Have students cross-reference Matthew 10:5–8 with Acts 4:33 and Doctrine and Covenants 107:23, and ask:

- What are other responsibilities that accompany this authority?
- How is this authority to act for the Lord transferred? (see Articles of Faith 1:5).
- Where is this authority today? How did it come? (see Joseph Smith—History 1:72).
- What evidence do we have in the Church today that shows the priesthood has been restored?
- How have you witnessed the power of the priesthood in your life? (*Note:* Do not encourage answers that are too personal.)

Share the following with the students to illustrate the fact that the same priesthood power Jesus gave His Apostles exists today. In this incident, Ella Jensen, President Lorenzo Snow’s nineteen-year-old niece, had just died of scarlet fever. Ella’s parents sent for President Snow, who came together with Ruder Clawson, Ella’s stake president and later President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. President Clawson relates:

“As we entered the home we met Sister Jensen, who was very much agitated and alarmed. We came to Ella’s bedside. . . .

“Turning to me President Snow said: ‘Brother Clawson, will you anoint her,’ which I did. We then laid our hands upon her head and the anointing was confirmed by President Snow, who blessed her and among other things, used this very extraordinary expression, in a commanding tone of voice, ‘Come back, Ella, come back. Your work upon the earth is not yet completed, come back.’”

Ella’s father, Jacob Jensen, continues the account:

“After President Snow had finished the blessing, he turned to my wife and me and said; ‘Now do not mourn or grieve any more. It will be all right. Brother Clawson and I are busy and must go. . . .’

“Ella remained in this condition for more than an hour after President Snow administered to her, or more than three hours in all after she died. We were sitting there watching by the bedside, her mother and myself, when all at once she opened her eyes. She looked about the room, saw us sitting there, but still looked for someone else, and the first thing she said was: ‘Where is he? Where is he?’ We asked, ‘Who? Where is who?’ ‘Why, Brother Snow,’ she replied. ‘He called me back.’” (in LeRoi C. Snow, “Raised from the Dead,” *Improvement Era*, Sept. 1929, 885–86).

Ella recovered from her illness, served in the Church, married Henry Wight, and eventually had eight children.

Consider asking the following questions:

- How can knowing that the power of God is on the earth today affect us?
- How can that knowledge be a blessing to missionaries?
- How can it affect the father or mother of a sick child?
- What difference has this power made in your life?
- What ordinances of the priesthood have you received in your life?

Testify of the reality of God’s power on the earth today.

Matthew 10:5–15, 21–35 (see also Mark 6:8–11; Luke 9:3–5). The Lord chose His Apostles and gave them priesthood power. (20–25 minutes)

Display a picture of the current Twelve Apostles. If your picture includes names, cover them up. Have students identify as many of the Apostles by name as they can, and write or uncover the names as they do. When you have listed all the names, ask questions such as:

- What of importance do you know about any of the Apostles?
- What are some of your favorite stories about any of these men?
- What talks have they given that have affected your life?

Ask students to read the fifth article of faith and look for what it teaches about how an Apostle is called (see also Luke 6:12–13). Turn with students to Matthew 10:1–4 and look for the names of Jesus Christ’s original Apostles. As students find their names, list them on the board. Testify that these were real men, and, like our Apostles today, had a great impact on the lives of many people.

Ask students to read Matthew 10:5–7 and look for a possible reason that the Lord selected Twelve Apostles (see also D&C 29:12). Point out that the number of Apostles corresponds to the number of the tribes of Israel because the Twelve Apostles taught and will help judge Israel. Read the following statement from Elder Orson Pratt, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Why were there twelve Apostles chosen instead of nine, or thirteen, or any other number? Why that particular number? Because . . . the Lord ordained that . . . the twelve tribes should spring up in the earth, and he would have regard for them. He intended that they should not only be organized as tribes in this life, but also in the world to come. And in order that all may have judges, twelve were chosen to perform the work, instead of any other number” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 19:117; see also 1 Nephi 12:9).

Note: If students ask if Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus, will be among the Twelve Apostles who judge the twelve tribes, point out that Matthias was chosen to take Judas Iscariot’s place among the Twelve (see Acts 1:21–26).

You may choose to spend a few minutes reviewing the background of Jesus’ Apostles (see chart in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, p. 55). Help the students memorize the names of the original Twelve or mark them in their Bibles. You may wish to have them learn the names of the modern Apostles in addition to or instead of the original ones.

Matthew 10:5–42 (see also Mark 6:8–11; Luke 9:3–5). Jesus gave His Apostles power over sickness, disease, and unclean spirits and taught them they would experience great persecution before their missions ended. (15–20 minutes)

Ask students:

- Can you list any of the instructions or rules given to missionaries?
- Why do you think they are given these instructions?

Read Matthew 10:5–14 and look for guidelines the Lord gave the Twelve prior to sending them out to preach the gospel.

Ask some of the following questions:

- Why do you think these instructions would be helpful to the Twelve?
- What are some of the restrictions the Lord placed on the Twelve regarding their ministry?
- Why do you think Jesus told them not to take money or extra clothing on their mission?

Ask students to silently read verses 16–32. Consider asking the following questions as you discuss these verses:

- What impresses you most from this apostolic charge?
- If you were one of those Twelve, which of Jesus’ commissions or prophetic announcements would have given you the most comfort?
- Which of the Savior’s words would have sobered you most?
- Which of His teachings would make you feel the most humble?

Verses 35–42 clarify what the Savior required of those who would heed the teachings of the Apostles. Have students read those verses and look for the responsibility of those who received the Apostles. Discuss the following questions:

- Since we have Apostles on the earth today, how are we to regard them and their messages?
- What are some of the messages the Apostles give us today?
- How can we show our willingness to follow them?
- What blessings do you believe come to those who follow Apostles?

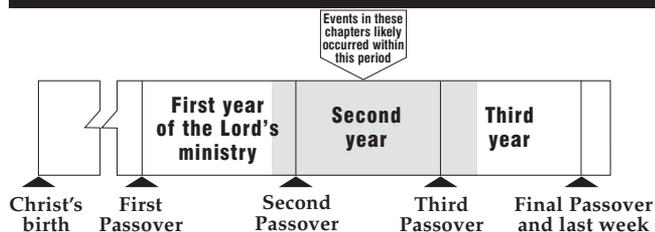
Much is required of Church members today. The following statement from the *Lectures on Faith*, compiled under the direction of Joseph Smith, may help:

“Let us here observe, that a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation. . . . It was through this sacrifice, and this only, that God has ordained that men should enjoy eternal life. . . . When a man has offered in sacrifice all that he has for the truth’s sake, not even withholding his life, and believing before God that he has been called to make this sacrifice because he seeks to do his will, he does know, most assuredly, that God does and will accept his sacrifice and offering, and that he has not, nor will not seek his face in vain. Under these circumstances, then, he can obtain the faith necessary for him to lay hold on eternal life” (*Lectures on Faith*, 69).

The sacrifice required of Jesus and His Apostles was enormous. They gave everything they had. Encourage your students to prepare themselves spiritually and temporally so they will be prepared to make every sacrifice God might require. If desired, have the students list some sacrifices they might be asked to make.

Matthew 11–13

The Life of Jesus Christ



Introduction

The powerful miracles Jesus performed (see Matthew 8–9) and His activities on the Sabbath day (see Matthew 12) caused a great stir among the people. Many of the multitudes who followed Him believed He was the “son of David,” the promised Messiah (see Matthew 12:23). However, most the Jewish leaders of the day accused Him of doing miracles by the power of the devil (see Matthew 12:24). They wanted Jesus to show them a sign to prove His claims (see Matthew 12:38–45). They condemned Him for His Sabbath activities and “held a council against him, how they might destroy him” (see Matthew 12:2, 14). At that time Jesus “withdrew himself from thence” (Matthew 12:15). Thereafter he often spoke in parables to the public (see Matthew 13:34). Speaking in parables allowed Him to teach those who were spiritually attuned while hiding truths that would enrage or condemn those who were unattuned.

Prayerfully study Matthew 11–13 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The burdens we experience in mortality can be lightened through the Atonement of Jesus Christ (see Matthew 11:28–30).
- On the Sabbath day we are to rest from our daily labors and be anxiously engaged in good works (see Matthew 12:1–13; see also Exodus 20:8–11; D&C 59:9–10).
- If we don’t progress in our relationship with the Lord and further His work, then we become antagonistic towards Him and His work (see Matthew 12:30; see also Revelation 3:16).
- We can be forgiven for every sin except blasphemy against the Holy Ghost (see Matthew 12:31–32).
- In the last days the righteous will be gathered as they accept the gospel. The wicked will be destroyed at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (see Matthew 13:1–52).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 65–67, 72–76.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Matthew 11–13.



New Testament Video presentation 6, “Parables” (13:25), can be used in teaching Matthew 13 (see *New Testament Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).

Matthew 11:1–19 (see also Luke 7:18–35). Among those “born of women,” there was not a greater than John the Baptist. (5 minutes)

Explain to students that these verses will be covered in more detail during their study of the book of Luke (see the teaching suggestion for Luke 7:17–35, p. 81). The following is intended to preserve the flow of Matthew’s testimony.

Have students read Matthew 11:2 and find where John the Baptist was during this period. Have them read verse 11, and ask how Jesus described John the Baptist. Share the following statement from the Prophet Joseph Smith, who described three reasons for John’s greatness:

“First. He was entrusted with a divine mission of preparing the way before the face of the Lord. . . .

“Secondly. He was entrusted with the important mission . . . to baptize the Son of Man. . . .

“Thirdly. John, at that time, was the only legal administrator in the affairs of the kingdom there was then on the earth, and holding the keys of power. . . . These three reasons constitute him the greatest prophet born of a woman” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 275–76).

Matthew 11:28–30. The burdens we experience in mortality can be lightened through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. (10–15 minutes)

Bring to class a box of medium to large rocks. Invite a student to come to the front of the room and put on an empty backpack. Ask students to name things that cause stress and anxiety, and have another student list their answers on the board. (Responses might include the death of loved ones, moving to a new apartment or house, starting a new job, sickness, divorce, school, and sin.) With each response place a rock in the backpack. Ask the student with the backpack: How would life be different if you had to carry around that much more weight everywhere you went? Ask the class:

- Have you ever experienced any of these things? Could you share with the class which ones?

- When these things happened to you, what effect did they have on other areas of your life?
- Of the things listed that you have not experienced, which do you think you might experience in the future?
- What can you do now to prepare for when they come?
- Why would it be valuable if we had a way to gain relief from our burdens?

Invite students to read Matthew 11:28–30 and look for what the Savior offers us.

Write the following three questions on the board:

What are some heavy burdens we carry?
 How does the Savior lift our burdens?
 What is the lighter, easier yoke Jesus offers us in place of our burdens?

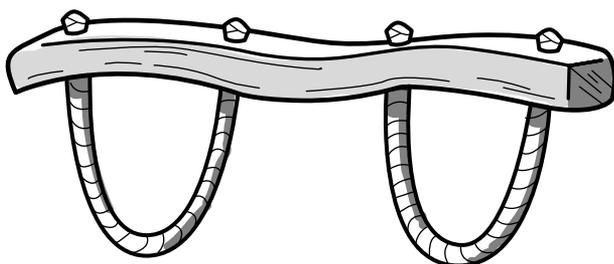
Take time to discuss these questions:

What are the heavy burdens we carry? Have students read Alma 7:11–13 and find words that describe the kinds of burdens we carry that the Lord suffered for (pains, afflictions, temptations, sicknesses, death, infirmities, sins). Ask: According to Alma, which of the causes of anxiety we wrote on the board earlier would be included in what Jesus suffered?

How does the Savior lift our burdens? Ask: When did the Savior suffer the burdens mentioned in Alma 7:11–13? (see Matthew 26:36–39). Share the following statement by President George Q. Cannon of the First Presidency on the results of the Atonement:

“If we are in sorrow, if we have heavy burdens, or are in any manner perplexed, He will hear us; He will lift our burdens, lighten our sorrows, dispel darkness, and fill us with light and with that heavenly feeling that comes from Him through the presence of the Holy Ghost” (“Blessings Not Appreciated,” in Brian H. Stuy, ed., *Collected Discourses Delivered by President Wilford Woodruff, His Two Counselors, the Twelve Apostles, and Others*, 5 vols. [1987–92], 4:12).

Draw on the board or show students this picture of a yoke for oxen.



What is the lighter, easier yoke Jesus offers us in place of our burdens? Notice that the yoke has a place for two oxen. It takes two oxen working together to accomplish the task. Ask: What relationship do we enter into with the Lord when we are baptized? (A covenant relationship.) Read Mosiah 18:8–10 and look for one of the most important covenants we make with the Lord. Share the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“To keep the commandments and serve with fidelity and devotion in the Church is to wear the *Yoke of Christ*, the yoke of service and devotion. Those who love the Lord and desire salvation willingly shoulder this yoke, thereby finding rest to their souls (Matt. 11:28–30) and discovering that the Lord’s commandments are not grievous. (1 John 5:3.)” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [1966], 853).

Help students understand that ultimately a righteous life leads to greater peace and happiness than a wicked life. Conclude by singing or reading the words to the hymn “How Gentle God’s Commands” (no. 125).

Matthew 12:1–13 (see also Mark 2:23–3:5; Luke 6:1–10). On the Sabbath day we should rest from our daily labors and be actively engaged in good works. (25–30 minutes)

Bring an ordinary object to class, such as a glass of water or a small houseplant. Set it in the middle of the room, and use masking tape to tape off a section of the floor around it. Ask students to imagine that the object is something dangerous, such as a vial of sulfuric acid or a poisonous plant.

- If this were really something dangerous, why would it be a good idea to place a barrier around it?
- If you cross the barrier, will you necessarily be burned or poisoned? Why or why not?
- Would it be fair, if some individuals crossed over the tape without touching the dangerous item, if we treated them as though they had been burned or poisoned anyway? Why or why not?

Explain that some religious leaders in the Bible did something similar. They built rules and regulations around the commandments to protect people from breaking them. While their original intent may have been good, they sometimes went too far. This would be like cordoning off the whole room for the “dangerous object” in the object lesson, or even the whole building. By Jesus’ day, the religious leaders felt that crossing one of these man-made barriers was the same as breaking the actual commandment.

Invite students to read Matthew 12:1–9, and ask:

- What commandment did the Pharisees claim Jesus’ disciples broke?

- Read verses 10–14. What did Jesus do then that enraged the Pharisees?

Read Exodus 20:8–11 and Doctrine and Covenants 59:9–10 looking for details in the commandment to keep the Sabbath day holy. According to these verses, was there anything wrong with what Jesus or His disciples did? Read the Joseph Smith Translation of Mark 2:27 and ask:

- What gave Jesus power over the Sabbath day?
- What general principle did Jesus teach to help us know what is appropriate on the Sabbath? (see Matthew 12:12).

Have students read Exodus 20:8–11 and Doctrine and Covenants 59:9–13 and list on a piece of paper appropriate activities for the Sabbath. Invite some of them to share their lists with the class. Ask:

- What are some of the blessings you receive by keeping the Sabbath day holy?
- According to the Lord, for whom was the Sabbath made?
- According to Doctrine and Covenants 59:9, 13–17, what blessings has the Lord promised if we honor the Sabbath day?

Matthew 12:30 (see also Luke 11:23). We are to cultivate our relationship with the Lord and further His work. We cannot be neutral or indifferent and still stand with the Lord. (20–25 minutes)

Bring a toy car, marble, or ball to class. Set up a table or large book on a slight incline. Label the top of the incline “Closer to the Lord” and the bottom of the incline “Further from the Lord.” Set the object in the middle and let it roll down to the end. Ask why the object won’t stay in the middle. Invite students to read Matthew 12:30, and ask: How is our relationship with the Lord like the toy car on the incline?

Share the following conversation with Joseph Smith, recounted by Daniel Tyler, an early member of the Church:

“Soon after the Prophet’s arrival in Commerce (afterwards Nauvoo) from Missouri prison, Brother Isaac Behunnin and myself made him a visit at his residence. His persecutions was the topic of conversation. He repeated many false, inconsistent and contradictory statements made [against him] by apostates, frightened members of the Church and outsiders. . . .

“When the Prophet had ended telling how he had been treated, Brother Behunnin remarked: ‘If I should leave this Church I would not do as those men have done: I would go to some remote place where Mormonism had never been heard of[,] settle down, and no one would ever learn that I knew anything about it.’

“The great Seer immediately replied: ‘Brother Behunnin, you don’t know what you would do. No doubt these men once thought as you do. Before you joined this Church you stood on neutral ground. When the gospel was preached good and evil were set before you. You could choose either or neither. There were two opposite masters inviting you to serve them. When you joined this Church you enlisted to serve God. When you did that you left the neutral ground, and you never can get back on to it.’” (*Juvenile Instructor*, 15 Aug. 1892, 491–92).

Invite students to read Revelation 3:16 and look for how it applies to this idea. Then share the following paraphrase of Matthew 12:30 by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“I am Christ; I cast out devils in my Father’s name; I heal the sick by his power; salvation comes by me. Let none of you longer stand neutral. Either ye are with me, or ye are against me. Unless you come unto me, and espouse my cause, and keep my commandments, ye are against me. There is no middle ground” (*Mortal Messiah*, 2:213).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 58:26–27 and ask:

- What principles mentioned in these verses help us continually move toward the Lord?
- What else can we do to show the Lord that we are on His side?

Encourage students to constantly strive to draw closer to the Lord.

Matthew 12:31–32 (see also Mark 3:28–29; Luke 12:10). All manner of sin and blasphemy may be forgiven unto men except blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. (15–20 minutes)

Ask: Which sin cannot be forgiven?

Ask students to read Matthew 12:31–32 and identify the only sin for which a person cannot obtain forgiveness. Read Doctrine and Covenants 76:31–36 and 132:27 and discuss how these verses define blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Share the following statement from the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“What must a man do to commit the unpardonable sin? He must receive the Holy Ghost, have the heavens opened unto him, and know God, and then sin against Him. . . . He has got to say that the sun does not shine while he sees it; he has got to deny Jesus Christ when the heavens have been opened unto him” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 358).

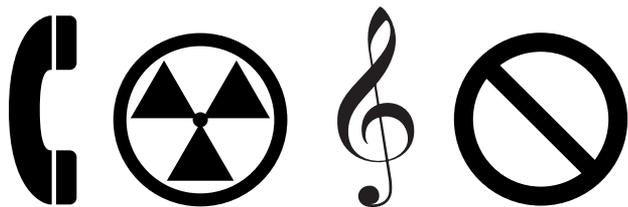
Also share the following statement, in which Elder Melvin J. Ballard, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, explains why sinning against the Holy Ghost is even more serious than sinning against Jesus Christ:

“Unto the Holy Ghost has been given the right and the privilege of manifesting the truth unto men as no other power will. So that when He makes a man see and know a thing he knows it better than he shall ever know anything else; and to sin against that knowledge is to sin against the greatest light there is, and consequently commit the greatest sin there is” (*Millennial Star*, 11 Aug. 1932, 499–500).

Write on the board: *How does knowing that all sins except blasphemy against the Holy Ghost can be forgiven make you feel about the Atonement of Jesus Christ? How can this knowledge give us greater hope?* Have students read Doctrine and Covenants 19:16–19 and the words to “In Memory of the Crucified” (*Hymns*, no. 190). Invite them to write in their notebooks their feelings about the questions on the board.

 **Matthew 13:1–52 (see also Mark 4:1–34; Luke 8:4–18). In the last days the righteous will be gathered as they accept the gospel. The wicked will be destroyed at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.** (45–50 minutes)

Draw the following symbols on the board (or substitute four of your own):



Ask students to do the following:

- Raise your hand if you know what any one of the symbols represents.
- Keep your hand up if you know what two of them represent.
- Keep your hand up if you know three of them.
- Keep your hand up if you know the meaning of all four.

Let someone who knows all four identify what each symbol represents. Ask: Why do some students know the meaning of the symbols while others don't? Have students read the first paragraph of “parables” in the Bible Dictionary (pp. 740–41). How are parables like symbols? Read Matthew 12:14 and look for why Jesus might want to veil His teachings from some.

Before class write the word *gathering* in large letters on a piece of paper. Cut the paper into several pieces, and then cut up a

second piece of paper and mix all the pieces together. Give the pieces to a few students and ask them to separate the pieces of paper with writing on them from the other pieces. Have them assemble the pieces with writing to form the word, and have them throw away the other pieces. Read Matthew 13:27–30 and ask:

- What word appearing several times in these verses applies to the object lesson? (*Gather.*)
- What is the gathering of Israel?

Share the following:

“Gathering Israel in the latter days consists of the following: (1) the spiritual gathering, which includes coming to know that Jesus is the Christ and joining The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; (2) the assembling of Church members to organized stakes; and (3) the gathering of the descendants of Jacob’s twelve sons—including the lost ten tribes (D&C 110:11)—to the lands of their inheritance” (“Israel: Gathering of Israel,” in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. [1992], 2:351).

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that the parables in Matthew 13 “afforded us as clear an understanding upon the important subject of the gathering, as anything recorded in the Bible” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 94). Divide the class into eight groups and assign each a parable from the chart on page 39. Explain that there are other possible interpretations for these parables, but ask them to spend 5–10 minutes searching their parable to see what it teaches about the gathering. Have them look for the answers to questions such as these:

- What kinds of changes do you note in the parable? What grows? What is sorted or gathered together?
- How are some changes that people undergo when they come into the kingdom of God similar to the changes in the parable?

Have a member of each group summarize their assigned parable for the class and tell how it relates to the gathering. Use the chart as an overhead transparency or handout to aid in your discussion if desired. Ask the students:

- How does the gathering apply to us today?
- What are we gathered to?
- Are there some who have been gathered who later stray? Why?
- How can we avoid straying?
- At the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, what happens to those not gathered?

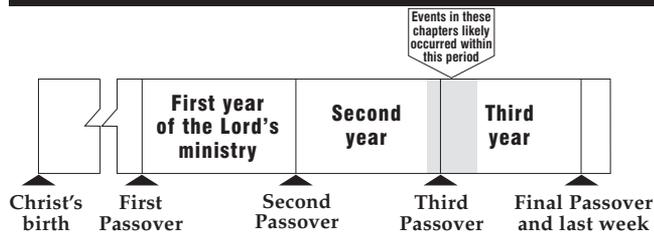
For more information on the meaning of the parables, see *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, pages 71–76.

Matthew 13: Parables on the Gathering

Reference	Parable	The Gathering
vv. 3–9, 18–23	The Sower —the seeds grow differently depending on the ground they fall on.	People react differently to the gospel message. Their willingness to accept the truth determines whether they are gathered. Joseph Smith taught that “this parable was spoken to demonstrate the effects that are produced by the preaching of the word; and we believe that it has an allusion directly, to the commencement, or the setting up of the Kingdom” (<i>Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith</i> , 97).
vv. 24–30	The Wheat and Tares —an enemy plants tares in a wheat field. The householder tells his servants to let the wheat and tares grow together until the harvest.	For a time the righteous and the wicked live together. But in the last days the righteous will be gathered and the wicked will be destroyed. Joseph Smith taught that if the righteous and wicked are separated too soon, “you will destroy the wheat, or the Church, with the tares; therefore it is better to let them grow together until the harvest, or the end of the world” (<i>Teachings</i> , 98).
vv. 31–32	The Mustard Seed —the smallest seed grows into the largest of herbs.	The kingdom of God begins small but grows. Joseph Smith taught: “Let us take the Book of Mormon, which a man took and hid in his field, securing it by his faith, to spring up in the last days. . . . It is truth, and it has sprouted and come forth out of the earth, and righteousness begins to look down from heaven, and God is sending down His powers, gifts and angels, to lodge in the branches thereof” (<i>Teachings</i> , 98).
v. 33	The Leaven —a small amount of yeast in three measures of flour grows until it leavens all the dough.	The Church will grow until it can benefit the entire world. Joseph Smith taught: “It may be understood that the Church . . . has taken its rise from a little leaven that was put into three witnesses. Behold, how much this is like the parable! It is fast leavening the lump, and will soon leaven the whole” (<i>Teachings</i> , 100).
v. 44	Hidden Treasure —a man sells all he has to buy a field with a hidden treasure.	The righteous find the truth and do whatever it takes to gather to it. Joseph Smith applied this to gathering to Missouri: “The Saints work after this pattern. See the Church . . . , selling all that they have, and gathering themselves together unto a place that they may purchase for an inheritance, that they may be together and bear each other’s afflictions in the day of calamity” (<i>Teachings</i> , 101).
vv. 45–46	Pearl of Great Price —a merchant sells all he has to buy the most valuable pearl.	The righteous gather after much searching. “The Saints again work after this example. See men traveling to find places for Zion and her stakes or remnants, who, when they find the place for Zion, or the pearl of great price, straightway sell that they have, and buy it” (<i>Teachings</i> , 102).
vv. 47–50	The Fish Net —fishers catch all kinds of fish in their net, and they separate them later.	The Church gathers all kinds of people at first. At the end of the world the righteous are separated from the wicked. “For the work of this pattern, behold the seed of Joseph, spreading forth the Gospel net upon the face of the earth, gathering of every kind, that the good may be saved in vessels prepared for that purpose, and the angels will take care of the bad. So shall it be at the end of the world” (<i>Teachings</i> , 102).
v. 52	New and Old Treasures —a righteous scribe brings out both old and new treasures.	The Lord uses old and new scriptures to gather His children. “For the works of this example, see the Book of Mormon coming forth out of the treasure of the heart. Also the covenants given to the Latter-day Saints, also the translation of the Bible [the Joseph Smith Translation]—thus bringing forth out of the heart things new and old” (<i>Teachings</i> , 102).

Matthew 14–15

The Life of Jesus Christ



Introduction

The book of Matthew groups many of the Savior's miracles in chapters 8–9, Sabbath activities in chapter 12, parables in chapter 13, and then a second group of miracles in chapters 14–15. As you read chapters 14–15 consider the different ways in which Jesus showed His power.

Prayerfully study Matthew 14–15 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Those who unselfishly serve others and consider others' needs before their own are more Christlike (see Matthew 14:3–23).
- When we center our faith on the Savior, we are more successful at accomplishing His will (see Matthew 14:24–33).
- God's miracles are manifest in the lives of those who have faith in Him (see Matthew 14–15).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 81, 89–90, 95–99.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Matthew 14–15.

Matthew 14:3–23 (see also Mark 6:17–46; Luke 3:19–20; 9:10–17). Those who unselfishly put the needs of others before their own are more Christlike and experience greater happiness. (10–15 minutes)

Present the following hypothetical situation to your students. You are traveling with your family on a train. Suddenly there is a terrible accident and the train derailed and plunges down a steep ravine. Your younger brother and many others on the train are killed. While you feel terrible

about the loss of your brother, many on the train are seriously wounded and need help. Ask:

- What do you think you would do if you found yourself in this situation?
- How difficult would it be to press on and encourage others?

Explain that something like this happened to someone in the scriptures. Read Matthew 14:10–23 with students and ask:

- What loved one did Jesus learn had been killed?
- How did John the Baptist die?
- What was Jesus' reaction?

List on the board Jesus' actions that show He placed the concerns of others before His own (see vv. 13–20).

Share the following statement by Elder William R. Bradford, a member of the Seventy, on selflessness. Ask students to listen for the blessings of being selfless.

“Selflessness is righteousness. It embraces the true spirit of companionship. It is the very essence of friendship. It is the portrayal of true love and oneness in humanity. Its reward is the freeing of the soul, a nearness to divinity, a worthiness for the companionship of the Spirit. Every requirement that God's plan for our salvation places upon us is based on the giving of one's self” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1987, 92; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 76).

Read Mark 8:35 and discuss how it relates to being selfless. What can we do to develop the ability to put others first in our lives? (Try to think of how the Savior would act, try to imagine ourselves in others' situations, try to think how others feel when suffering.)



Matthew 14:24–33 (see also Mark 6:47–52; John 6:15–21). When we focus our faith on the Savior, we can accomplish His will. (15–20 minutes)

Place a strip of masking tape about eight feet long in a straight line on the floor. Invite a student to walk along the strip blindfolded. Ask the student to invite someone he or she trusts in the room to guide the student along the strip of tape. After the student successfully walks along the strip, turn the student around and invite him or her to try to walk back along the strip of tape with no help from the friend. (The student will probably not be able to stay on the tape the whole length.)

Invite the class to read Matthew 14:24–33 and answer the following questions:

- Who in this scripture was like the blindfolded student?
- Who was like the friend who guided the blindfolded student?
- What did Peter do that was like walking on the tape while listening to his guide?

- What did he do that was like walking on the tape without listening to his guide?
- What made the difference between success and failure?

Share the following statement from President Howard W. Hunter, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

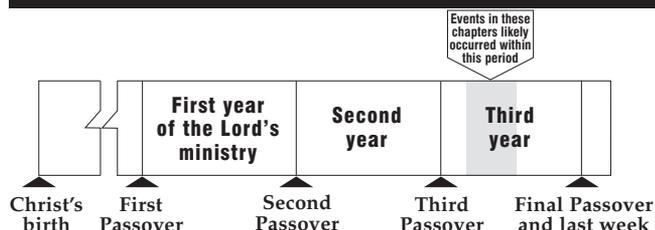
“While [Peter’s] eye was fixed on his Lord, the wind might toss his hair, and the spray might drench his robes, but all was well’ [Frederic W. Farrar, *The Life of Christ* (1964), 311]. Only when with wavering faith he removed his glance from the Master to look at the furious waves and the black gulf beneath him, only then did he begin to sink. . . .

“It is my firm belief that if as individual people, as families, communities, and nations, we could, like Peter, fix our eyes on Jesus, we too might walk triumphantly over the swelling waves of disbelief and remain unterrified amid the rising winds of doubt. But if we turn away our eyes from him in whom we must believe, as it is so easy to do and the world is so much tempted to do, if we look to the power and fury of those terrible and destructive elements around us rather than to him who can help and save us, then we shall inevitably sink in a sea of conflict and sorrow and despair” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 24; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 19).

- What are ways that we can “fix our eyes on the Lord” today?
- What are the blessings of doing so?

Matthew 16–18

The Life of Jesus Christ



Introduction

Matthew 16:15–19 records a powerful testimony Peter gave that Jesus is the Christ, as well as Jesus’ promise to give him the “keys of the kingdom.” Less than a week later, the Lord took Peter, James, and John into seclusion to give them these keys. Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained that the four of them “spent a sacred night enwrapped in the visions of eternity. This blessed

night was one of those seeric periods when the mysteries of the kingdom, ‘which surpass all understanding,’ are shown forth to souls who are in tune with the Infinite. So marvelous are such revealed truths that it is ‘not lawful for man to utter’ them, ‘Neither is man capable to make them known, for they are only to be seen and understood by the power of the Holy Spirit.’ They are reserved by the Lord for those prophets and seers who, ‘while in the flesh,’ are yet able ‘to bear his presence in the world of glory.’ (D&C 76:114–118.)” (*Mortal Messiah*, 3:54).

Prayerfully study Matthew 16–18 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Faith does not come from signs and miracles; signs follow those who believe (see Matthew 16:1–4; see also Mark 16:17; Mormon 9:20; Ether 12:6; D&C 63:9–12).
- False doctrine will corrupt those who are not on their guard against it (see Matthew 16:5–12).
- A testimony of Jesus Christ comes only by revelation (see Matthew 16:13–19; see also Helaman 5:12; Moroni 10:4–5; D&C 42:17).
- Peter, James, and John received priesthood keys (rights or authorities) from heavenly messengers so they could lead the Church after Jesus’ death. The Lord has restored those same keys through heavenly messengers to prophets and apostles in our day (see Matthew 16:19; 17:1–13).
- Sacred personal experiences should be shared only when the Spirit prompts us (see Matthew 17:9; see also Alma 12:9; D&C 63:64).
- Living the law of the land is part of the gospel of Jesus Christ (see Matthew 17:24–27; see also D&C 134:1, 5; Articles of Faith 1:12).
- Jesus taught that to enter the kingdom of heaven a person must become converted, be humble, and become as a little child (see Matthew 18:1–4; see also Mosiah 3:19).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 101–5.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Matthew 16–18.

Matthew 16:1–4 (see also Mark 8:11–12). Faith does not come from signs and miracles, but signs follow those who believe. (15–20 minutes)

Put a piece of fruit in a paper bag. Without showing the fruit to the class, hold up the bag and explain to the students that you have something in the bag that has never been seen by

the human eye. Ask how many believe you. Invite one of the students who believes to come up and look in the bag. When the student looks in the bag and sees the fruit, whisper that no one has seen the seeds inside the fruit. Ask the student to report to the class whether you were telling the truth or not. Ask the class:

- How many believe me now that there is something in the bag that cannot be seen by the eye?
- How many need proof before you believe?

Show the fruit to the class and explain about the seeds. Ask: Why is it so hard to believe in things we do not see or understand? Invite students to read Matthew 16:1–4 and ask:

- How do these verses relate to the object lesson? (Sign-seeking to gain knowledge is not the same as exercising faith to gain knowledge.)
- What basic principle of the gospel were the Pharisees and Sadducees lacking when they asked for a sign? (see Articles of Faith 1:4).

Read Ether 12:6 and Mormon 9:20 and ask:

- Why do you think I chose the student I did to look in the bag? (Because the student believed.)
- What purpose do signs and miracles serve?
- Can signs be interpreted by two people differently?
- What kind of people will the Lord show signs and miracles to?
- Why do signs not permanently persuade or convert?
- What is the difference between seeking a sign and being worthy to witness miracles in our lives?
- What difference do our motives make?

Testify to students that faith precedes miracles in the Lord’s Church.

Matthew 16:1–12 (see also Mark 8:14–21). False doctrine will corrupt those who are not on their guard against it. (20–25 minutes)

Bring some bread to class and show it to the students. Write the following references on the board: Matthew 14:16–21; 15:34–38. Ask students to find what these verses have to do with bread.

Tell students that a lack of bread provided Jesus with a teaching opportunity in Matthew 16. Have students search Matthew 16:1–4 and find answers to the following questions:

- What did the Pharisees and Sadducees want Jesus to do?
- Had Jesus ever given them any evidence of who He was? (Remind students of the feeding of the five thousand and the four thousand they just read about in Matthew 14–15.)
- What difference do you think Jesus’ performing another miracle would make to them?

- How does that help explain why Jesus called them hypocrites?

The “sign of the prophet Jonas” refers to Jesus being resurrected in three days, just like Jonah came out of the belly of the great fish after three days. Ask: How would that be a sign of Christ’s divinity?

Read Matthew 16:5–12 with your students, discussing the following questions as you read:

- What did the disciples forget to take with them?
- What did Jesus say that they misunderstood?
- Considering the feeding of the five thousand and the four thousand, why is it strange for them to think that Jesus was worried about bread?
- How was the false doctrine and the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and Sadducees like leaven (yeast)? (It takes just a little to affect the whole lump of dough.)

Have students list some of the false doctrines taught in the world today. Share with them the following counsel from Elder M. Russell Ballard, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“We should work to stem the tide of sin and evil instead of passively being swept along by it. We each need to help solve the problem rather than avoid or ignore it. I like this simple little poem:

“All the water in the world
No matter how it tried
Could never sink the smallest ship
Unless it got inside.
All the evil of the world
And every kind of sin
Could never damn a human soul
Unless we let it in”

(in Conference Report, Apr. 1989, 101; or *Ensign*, May 1989, 80).



Matthew 16:15–19 (Scripture Mastery; see also Mark 8:29; Luke 9:20). Testimonies come by revelation through the Holy Ghost. (20–25 minutes)

Note: This teaching suggestion follows naturally from the one for Matthew 16:1–4.

Invite the students to think of Nephi and his brothers in the Book of Mormon. Ask:

- What did Nephi’s older brothers do to him after they failed the second time to retrieve the brass plates? (They beat him; see 1 Nephi 3:28.)
- What happened next? (An angel appeared; see v. 29.)
- Which of the brothers saw the angel?

- Read 1 Nephi 3:31. Do you think seeing an angel gave Laman and Lemuel a testimony? Why or why not?

Compare Matthew 16:1–4 with Matthew 16:15–17 and answer the following questions:

- Why do you think the Pharisees and Sadducees wanted to see a sign?
- Would seeing a sign have given them faith? Why or why not?
- How did Peter show his faith that Jesus was the Christ?
- What did Jesus say was the source of Peter’s knowledge?

Invite students to read 1 Kings 19:9–12, and ask them to apply what they learn in these verses to the Pharisees and to Peter. President Joseph Fielding Smith said that knowing that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior of men “comes only through the testimony of the Holy Spirit. Men may *believe* Jesus to be the Christ, but to *know* it requires revelation from the Holy Ghost” (*The Way to Perfection* [1978], 158).

According to President Smith, what is the only way we can gain a testimony? Read Doctrine and Covenants 8:2; 9:8 and ask: How will we feel the Holy Ghost witness to us of the truthfulness of the gospel?

Ask students to read Matthew 16:18–19 and look for what blessings Peter received after sharing his testimony. Read the following verses to identify some additional blessings we receive from having faith and a testimony:

- Romans 5:1 (peace through Jesus Christ).
- Mormon 9:21 (the faith needed to receive answers to our prayers).
- Doctrine and Covenants 42:12–14 (the ability to teach by the power of the Holy Ghost).
- Doctrine and Covenants 52:9 (the ability to be taught by that same Spirit).
- Doctrine and Covenants 121:45 (confidence to stand before God).

Invite students to write on a piece of paper a list of changes they could make in their lives that would help them gain or strengthen their testimonies.

Matthew 16:19; 17:1–13 (see also Mark 9:2–13; Luke 9:28–36). The Lord has given the keys of the kingdom to His prophets and apostles. (20–25 minutes)

Hold up a driver’s license, or if you have a student with a driver’s license, have her or him show it to the class. Ask:

- What can we assume about a person who has a driver’s license? (That person has the “authority” to drive.)

- Does that mean if you have a license and your parents or your boss have a car, you can drive it whenever you want?

Now hold up a set of keys. Ask: If you have a license and your parents or boss give you the keys to their car and ask you to run an errand, can you now drive their car?

Invite students to read Matthew 16:19 and look for what Jesus promised to give Peter. Have them read Matthew 17:1–3. Share the following statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“The Savior, Moses, and Elias, gave the keys [of the kingdom] to Peter, James and John, on the mount, when they were transfigured before him” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 158).

Ask: According to Joseph Smith, what happened on the Mount of Transfiguration regarding the priesthood? Share the following statement by President Joseph F. Smith:

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

“But it is necessary that every act performed under this authority shall be done at the proper time and place, in the proper way, and after the proper order. The power of directing these labors constitutes the *keys* of the Priesthood. In their fulness, the keys are held by only one person at a time, the prophet and president of the Church. He may delegate any portion of this power to another, in which case that person holds the keys of that particular labor. Thus, the president of a temple, the president of a stake, the bishop of a ward, the president of a mission, the president of a quorum, each holds the keys of the labors performed in that particular body or locality” (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [1939], 136).

Ask:

- What is the difference between priesthood authority and priesthood keys?
- Who holds all the keys of the priesthood today? (see D&C 81:2).
- Who are some other men who hold priesthood keys?

Share the following account related by Elder Robert D. Hales, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“At the Copenhagen Denmark Area Conference held August 3–5, 1976, President [Spencer W.] Kimball went to see Thorvaldsen’s beautiful sculpture[s]. . . . After a few spiritual moments admiring *The Christus*, President Kimball bore his testimony to the caretaker who stood nearby. As he turned to the statue of Peter and pointed to the large set of keys in Peter’s right hand, he proclaimed: ‘The keys of priesthood authority which Peter held as President of the Church I now hold as President of the Church in this dispensation.’ Then he stated to the caretaker, ‘You work every day with Apostles in stone, but today you are in the presence of living Apostles.’ He then introduced President N. Eldon Tanner, Elder Thomas S. Monson, and Elder Boyd K. Packer. He presented the caretaker with a Book of Mormon in Danish, and bore his testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith. The caretaker was moved to tears in acknowledgment of the Spirit he felt in the presence of a prophet and Apostles. He acknowledged to me as we left the church, ‘Today I have been in the presence of servants of God.’” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1981, 27; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 20).

- On what condition may individual priesthood holders perform sacred ordinances and other special priesthood functions?
- How do we honor and support those who hold the “keys of the kingdom”?



Matthew 17:1–13 (see also Mark 9:2–13; Luke 9:28–36). Other significant events happened on the Mount of Transfiguration. (40–45 minutes)

Hold up a book with an introduction or endorsement written by someone more well-known than the book’s author.

- Why do authors frequently ask a well-known person to write their book’s introduction? (To give the book more credibility and to promote sales.)
- If you wrote a book, who is the most famous person you know whom you could ask to write an introduction?
- Who would you ask if you could ask anyone?

Ask students to read Matthew 3:17 and answer the following questions:

- Who introduced (or testified of) Jesus to the people?
- What was the occasion of this introduction? (Christ’s baptism.)
- Why was this event so significant?
- On what other occasions has the Father testified of His Son? (see Joseph Smith—History 1:17; 3 Nephi 11:7).

Read Matthew 17:5 and explain to the students that today you will be studying another event so important that Heavenly Father again testified of His Son.

Ask students to carefully read Matthew 17:1–13 and answer the following questions:

- What happened to Jesus on the mountain? (see v. 2).
- According to Moses 1:11, why are mortals transfigured?
- What three Apostles were frequently with Jesus on important occasions? (see Mark 5:22–23, 37; 14:32–34; see also the commentary for Matthew 17:1–9 in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, p. 102).
- Which Apostles were with Jesus at the time of His Transfiguration?
- Who else appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration? (Note that “Elias” is the Greek form of “Elijah”; see footnote 3*b*; see also Bible Dictionary, “Elias,” p. 663.)
- What kind of bodies did Moses and Elijah have when they appeared?

Ask students to read Alma 45:19; 2 Kings 2:11; and Doctrine and Covenants 110:13 to find out how Moses and Elijah left mortality. (They were translated.)

Have students read the scriptures from the accompanying chart and list characteristics of translated beings.

Characteristics of Translated Beings	
3 Nephi 28:7	Translated beings “never taste of death.”
3 Nephi 28:8, 39–40	At the Second Coming translated beings will be immediately changed to a resurrected condition.
3 Nephi 28:30	They can appear and disappear like angels.
3 Nephi 28:38	They suffer neither “pain nor sorrow” except for the sins of the world.
3 Nephi 28:39	Satan cannot tempt them.

Invite students to list on a piece of paper everything they can that happened on the Mount of Transfiguration. Share the following from Elder Bruce R. McConkie. Leave enough time after each point for students to add to their lists anything they missed.

- “(1) Jesus singled out Peter, James, and John from the rest of the Twelve; took them upon an unnamed mountain; there he was transfigured before them, and they beheld his glory. . . .
- “(2) Peter, James, and John, were themselves ‘transfigured before him’ (*Teachings [of the Prophet Joseph Smith]*, p. 158). . . .
- “(3) Moses and Elijah . . . appeared on the mountain; and they and Jesus gave the keys of the kingdom to Peter, James, and John. (*Teachings*, p. 158.)

- “(4) John the Baptist, previously beheaded by Herod, apparently was also present. . . .
- “(5) Peter, James, and John saw in vision the transfiguration of the earth . . . that is to take place at the Second Coming when the millennial era is ushered in. [D&C 63:20–21.] . . .
- “(6) It appears that Peter, James, and John received their own endowments while on the mountain. ([Joseph Fielding Smith,] *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, p. 165.) . . .
- “(7) Apparently Jesus himself was strengthened and encouraged by Moses and Elijah so as to be prepared for the infinite sufferings and agony [of the] atonement. ([James E. Talmage,] *Jesus the Christ*, p. 373.) . . .
- “(8) Certainly the three chosen apostles were taught in plainness ‘of his death and also his resurrection’ [JST, Luke 9:31]. . . .
- “(9) It should also have been apparent to them that the old dispensations of the past [symbolized by Moses and Elijah] had faded away. . . .
- “(10) Apparently God the Father, overshadowed and hidden by a cloud, was present on the mountain, although [Peter, James, and John apparently] heard only his voice and did not see his form” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:399–401).

Ask students:

- Which of the events of Matthew 17:1–13 are most likely to happen to you any time soon?
- How many of you have a goal to go to the temple? Why?
- What ordinances are performed in the temple? (see D&C 124:33).
- Read Doctrine and Covenants 97:15–16. What preparations are necessary for going to the temple?

Invite students to make a list on their paper of things that would help prepare them for the blessings and covenants of the temple.

Matthew 17:9 (see also Mark 9:9; Luke 9:36). Sacred personal experiences should be shared only when the Spirit prompts us. (10–15 minutes)

Ask students:

- Why could it be a problem to give a baby the only existing photograph of your great-grandfather?
- What would most babies do to a photograph?

- Why would it be better to wait until the baby is older? (An older child can appreciate a photograph more and take better care of it.)

Ask students to read Matthew 17:9 and look for what Jesus commanded the three disciples who were with Him at His Transfiguration. Have students read Alma 12:9 and Doctrine and Covenants 63:64, and ask:

- Why would Jesus command His disciples not to speak of His Transfiguration?
- How would telling about the experience of the Transfiguration be like giving a baby a valuable photograph?

Share the following statement by Elder Boyd K. Packer:

“I have learned that strong, impressive spiritual experiences do not come to us very frequently. And when they do, they are generally for our own edification, instruction, or correction. Unless we are called by proper authority to do so, they do not position us to counsel or to correct others.

“I have come to believe also that it is not wise to continually talk of unusual spiritual experiences. They are to be guarded with care and shared only when the Spirit itself prompts you to use them to the blessing of others” (“The Candle of the Lord,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1983, 53).

Tell students that the Transfiguration is recorded in every Gospel except John (see Mark 9:2–13; Luke 9:28–36). Read Matthew 17:1 with students and ask:

- Which of the four Gospel writers was actually present at the Transfiguration?
- Why might John have not recorded this event in his Gospel? (see Matthew 17:9).
- What kinds of experiences do people have today that they should probably share only when prompted by the Spirit? (Patriarchal blessings, father’s blessings, personal or family spiritual experiences, bishop’s interviews.)
- According to Alma 12:9 and Doctrine and Covenants 63:64, when is it appropriate to share sacred personal experiences?

Matthew 17:24–27. Living the law of the land is part of the gospel of Jesus Christ. (10–15 minutes)

Ask students if they know where to find the Articles of Faith (in the back of the Pearl of Great Price). Invite a student to read or repeat the twelfth article of faith. Invite another student to explain its meaning. Read Doctrine and Covenants 134:1, 5 and ask:

- For what purpose should governments be organized?
- For what reasons should governments make laws?

- What responsibilities do we have regarding our government?

Invite students to read Matthew 17:24–27 and look for what Jesus did that shows He kept the law of the land. Share the following statement by Elder James E. Talmage, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“Our Savior’s work on earth was marked throughout by His acknowledgment of the existing powers of the land, both Jewish and Roman. . . . When the tax-collector called for the tribute money demanded by the hierarchy, Christ . . . directed that the tax be paid, and even invoked a miraculous circumstance whereby the money could be provided” (*The Articles of Faith*, 12th ed. [1924], 416).

Ask students if people who do the following are living in harmony with the commandments:

- Exceed the speed limit.
- Cheat on their taxes.
- Take items from work.
- Give less than a full day’s work for a full day’s pay.
- Illegally copy computer software.

Ask:

- What are some other common ways people break the law of the land?
- Read Alma 39:3, 11. According to these verses, what is one reason that we should keep the law of the land? (Our actions, whether good or bad, affect others around us.)

Matthew 18:1–10 (see also Mark 9:33–37, 42–48; Luke 9:46–48). The Savior taught that to enter His kingdom we must become as a little child. (15–20 minutes)

Little children can say and do strange things. Ask students to name some of the funny things they have seen children say or do. Read Matthew 18:1–4 and ask:

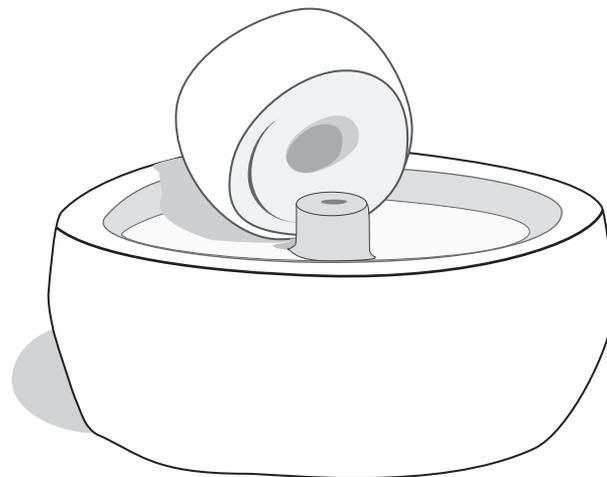
- Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?
- Why would the Savior ask us to become like a child?
- What do you think it means to become as a little child? (see Mosiah 3:19).
- What is the difference between becoming “childish” and “childlike”?

Place the picture Christ and the Children (item no. 80243) or a large picture of a little child in front of the class. Make three columns on the board and label them *Trait*, *What Little Children Do*, and *What I Can Do*. Ask the students to name

childlike qualities, and list their responses in the first column. Ask students to describe how little children manifest each of these qualities, and write their responses in the second column. (See the accompanying chart for examples.) Finally ask what we can do to develop these same qualities, and write those responses in the third column.

Trait	What Little Children Do	What I Can Do
Innocence	Children are born innocent and free from sin.	
Humility	Children are not proud or arrogant.	
Teachability	Children do not have to see to believe.	
Love and forgiveness	Children forget anger and are soon friends again.	
Dependence on parents	Children trust their parents and their Heavenly Father.	
Lack of prejudice	Children more easily accept differences such as race and physical disabilities.	

Have your students read Matthew 18:6, and ask: How serious is it to offend or harm the children of our Father in Heaven? You may want to show students a picture of a millstone or draw one on the board. Tell students that to physically or verbally abuse a child is one of the most serious of spiritual offenses. Another way to harm children is to teach them false principles or to fail to teach them correct ones.

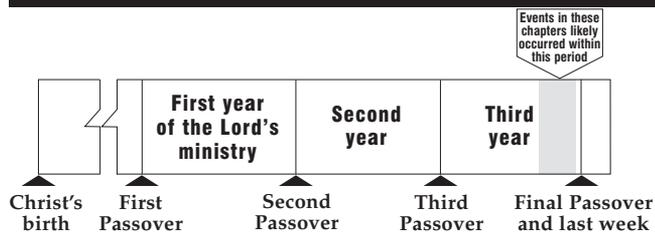


- Who might the term “little ones” apply to other than children? (see Mosiah 3:18–19).
- Who else should we not offend or harm?

Help your students understand how these principles apply to them. If we physically or verbally abuse our younger brothers or sisters or any of God’s children, we are guilty of an offense that the Savior severely condemned.

Matthew 19–20

The Life of Jesus Christ



Introduction

In Matthew 19–20 the Savior begins the trek to Jerusalem for the Passover to offer Himself as the sacrificial lamb. Along the way He continues to minister and teach, and multitudes follow Him (see Matthew 19:2). The teachings and events of these two chapters bring us to the time just before Jesus' triumphal entry and the beginning of the last week of His life.

Prayerfully study Matthew 19–20 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Marriage is ordained of God and is designed by Him to endure forever. While divorce is sometimes necessary in mortality, "from the beginning it was not so" (see Matthew 19:8; see also 1 Corinthians 11:11–12; D&C 131:1–3).
- We all fall short of perfection, but if we ask humbly, the Lord can lead us to perfection step by step (see Matthew 19:16–26; see also Moroni 10:32–33).
- Leaders have a great responsibility and opportunity to serve (see Matthew 20:25–28; see also Ezekiel 3:17–21; Jacob 1:19).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 130–33.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Matthew 19–20.

Matthew 19:3–8 (see also Mark 10:2–9). Marriage is ordained of God and is designed to last forever. While divorce is sometimes necessary in mortality, "from the beginning it was not so." (20–25 minutes)

Invite a student to the front of the class. Show him two different kinds of candy and ask him to choose one or the other. Ask the class:

- How many decisions do you make in an average day?
- What are some of the important decisions you have had to make today? (List responses on the board.)
- What do you think will be the most important decision you will make in this life?

Share the following statement by Elder Spencer W. Kimball, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"The greatest single factor affecting what you are going to be tomorrow, your activity, your attitudes, your eventual destiny . . . is the one decision you make that moonlit night when you ask that individual to be your companion for life. That's the most important decision of your entire life!" (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 301).

- How do you think some people of the world feel about the importance of marriage?
- What are some ways you have observed for couples to solve problems in their marriage?

Invite students to read Matthew 19:5–6 looking for what the Savior taught about marriage. Show the class a picture of a temple and ask students where they want to be married. Then read verses 7–9 and ask: What do we learn about marriage by understanding Jesus' teachings about divorce? (*Note:* Be sensitive to students whose parents or family members may be divorced. The emphasis should not be on others' problems but on helping the students prepare for eternal marriage.) Share the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

"Celestial or eternal marriage is the gate to exaltation. To fill the full measure of his creation and obtain eternal life a man must enter into this order of matrimony and keep all of the covenants and obligations that go with it. If a couple is so sealed, the two persons become husband and wife in this life and continue in the same relationship in the world to come. (D. & C. 131:1–4; 132.) . . .

"Divorce is not part of the gospel plan no matter what kind of marriage is involved. But because men in practice do not always live in harmony with gospel standards, the Lord permits divorce for one reason or another, depending upon the spiritual stability of the people involved. . . . Under the most perfect conditions there would be no divorce permitted except where sex sin was involved. In this day divorces are permitted in accordance with civil statutes, and the divorced persons are permitted by the Church to marry again without the stain of immorality which under a higher system would attend such a course" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:547).

Stress that although there is a lot of divorce in the world, even with members of our own families in some cases, it is important not to judge those who have had difficulties in their lives. Rather we should apply these teachings of the Savior in our own lives in a positive way. Ask: How can you prepare to make the right decision regarding marriage? (Set a goal to be married in the temple, live the way you would want your future spouse to live, associate with youth who are worthy to go to the temple.)

Matthew 19:16–26 (see also Mark 10:17–27; Luke 18:18–27). We all fall short of perfection, but if we ask humbly, the Lord can lead us to perfection step by step. (20–25 minutes)

Write the word *Worship* on the board. Ask students to define the word. (There are many correct answers.) After a few definitions, share the following definition Elder Bruce R. McConkie gave:

“Perfect worship is emulation” (*The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ* [1978], 568).

Have students read 3 Nephi 27:27, and ask: How does this verse relate to Elder McConkie’s statement? Read Matthew 19:16–26 and ask: What did the young man need to do to become more like the Savior?

To give students ideas about ways in which we could be more like the Savior, sing or read the words to “More Holiness Give Me” (*Hymns*, no. 131). Ask students to write on a piece of paper the biggest single change they need to make in their lives to become more like Jesus. Ask: Do you think everyone wrote the same thing? Why not?

Share the following statement by President Harold B. Lee:

“The rich young ruler did not need to be taught repentance from murder nor from murderous thoughts. He did not have to be schooled in how to repent from adultery, nor from stealing, lying, defrauding, or failing to honor his mother. All these he said he had observed from his youth. . . .

“The Master, with His keen discernment and the power of a Great Teacher, diagnosed the young man’s case perfectly: His need and his lack were to overcome his love for worldly things. . . .

“Every one of us, if we would reach perfection, must one time ask ourselves this question, ‘What lack I yet?’ if we would commence our climb upward on the highway to perfection. The effective leader is one who helps the learner to discover that lack, to diagnose his basic difficulties, and then to prescribe his spiritual remedies” (*Stand Ye in Holy Places* [1974], 208–10).

Encourage students to put forth real efforts to change their lives to become better people. Encourage them to pray to know what else they can do to become more like the Savior.

Matthew 20:25–28 (see also Mark 10:42–45; Luke 22:24–27). Leaders have the greatest responsibility to serve. (10–15 minutes)

Ask students to pretend that they have just been made the leader of their country. Have them imagine that the press is about to interview them and will want to know what the focus of their administration will be. Ask: What would you say?

Ask them to list some of the characteristics of a good leader. Have students read Matthew 20:25–28 and list what the Lord says in these verses about leaders. Have them read Mosiah 2:11–19, 27 and count the number of times the words *serve* or *service* appear. Ask:

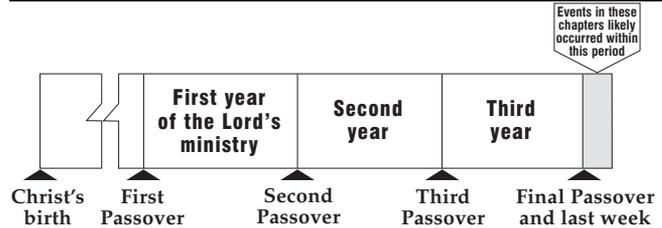
- How did King Benjamin feel about service?
- How do these verses compare to what the Savior taught in Matthew 25:34–40?

Read Jacob 1:19 and Ezekiel 3:17–21 and ask:

- What did you learn from these verses about the role of a leader?
- In what ways do you think you might be called to lead? (Point out that almost all of us are called on at some time in our lives to give leadership at church, school, work, or in our families.)
- What can you do now to prepare to be a leader?
- How can we support our leaders now in ways that help them fulfill their responsibilities?

Matthew 21–23

The Life of Jesus Christ



Introduction

Matthew 21–23 begins the last week of the Savior’s mortal life. (For a detailed harmony of these events, see “The Last Week of the Savior’s Life” in the appendix, p. 288.) For three years the Savior had taught, healed, encouraged, and shown such love that multitudes followed Him. At His triumphal entry and later in the temple, the people acknowledged Jesus

as the promised Messiah (see Matthew 20:9, 15). This infuriated the Jewish leaders, who sought all the more to take away His life. After cleansing the temple, Jesus spent much time teaching the people there.

Prayerfully study Matthew 21–23 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- When we view Jesus Christ in His true majesty and greatness, we can better understand the importance of praising Him as our Savior and Redeemer (see Matthew 21:1–11; see also Mosiah 3:17).
- Jesus holds us accountable for our wrongdoing (see Matthew 21:12–16; see also D&C 97:15–16).
- The greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind (see Matthew 22:36–38).
- The second great commandment is to love others as we love ourselves (see Matthew 22:39).
- We can influence others positively or negatively by the way we live (see Matthew 23:2–28; see also Alma 39:3, 11).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 143–49.
- “The Last Week of the Savior’s Life,” 288 in this manual.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Matthew 21–23.

 *New Testament Video* presentation 7, “Justice and Mercy” (6:28), can be used in teaching Matthew 21 (see *New Testament Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).

Matthew 21:1–11 (see also Mark 11:1–11; Luke 19:29–40; John 12:12–19). When we view Jesus Christ in His true majesty and greatness, we can better understand the importance of praising Him as our Savior and Redeemer. (15–20 minutes)

Ask students to imagine that an admired and respected leader of their country walked into the room.

- What would you think?
- How would you feel?
- How would you act?
- What would you say?

Have them imagine the prophet walked into the room and answer the same questions. Now have them imagine that Jesus Christ walked into the room and answer the questions.

- How would your responses to the three people differ?
- Why would they differ?

Explain that today you will read about a people’s reaction to a visit from Jesus Christ.

Invite students to read Matthew 21:1–11 and list what the people did to praise Jesus as He entered Jerusalem. Read the following scriptures and list reasons why we should praise Jesus Christ:

- Helaman 14:12
- 1 Corinthians 15:21–22
- Mosiah 3:17

Ask:

- How can we praise Jesus even when He is not here physically? (Possible answers include singing hymns about Him, keeping our covenants to always remember Him, thanking Heavenly Father for Him, expressing gratitude for the Atonement when we pray.)
- Read 2 Nephi 2:10. According to this verse, what will we all experience someday?

Ask students to silently consider the following questions:

- Will that be a happy or a sad day for you?
- What will you think, say, and do, when that day comes for you?

Matthew 21:12–16 (see also Mark 11:15–19; Luke 19:45–48). Jesus holds us accountable for our wrongdoing. (5–10 minutes)

Invite students to read Matthew 21:12–16 and answer the following questions:

- What was happening in the temple?
- What did Jesus do to change the situation?
- Why was this not easy for one person to do?
- Who was not pleased over what Jesus did?
- How can this experience apply to us today?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 97:15–16 and ask:

- What do you feel a person must do in order to have a pure heart?
- What makes it difficult to keep ourselves this way all the time?
- What do we have that can help us keep worthy of the blessings available in the temple?

Matthew 21:18–22:46 (see also Mark 11:12–12:34; Luke 20:1–40). Jesus taught many important doctrines prior to His death. (45–50 minutes)

Invite students to pretend they found out they were going to die in one week. Ask the following questions:

- What would you do the last week of your life?
- Who would you spend your time with?

- What would you tell your family?
- How would you want people to remember you?
- How would you prepare to meet your Heavenly Father?

Explain that this was the situation for Jesus in Matthew 21–22. He knew He would die in a few days and only had a short time left to teach. Jesus taught many important doctrines during these days before His death.

Divide the class into nine groups and assign each a block of scripture from the accompanying chart. (If you have fewer groups than nine, give some of the groups more than one block.) Allow students five to ten minutes to study their blocks and prepare to do the following:

- Identify the principles of the gospel that Jesus emphasized in the scripture block. (*Note:* The chart includes only a few of the principles found in these scriptures. The students may find many more.)
- Read or summarize the verses in the block that would be helpful in understanding the principles.
- Explain how these principles apply to us today.

	Scripture Block	Jesus' Teaching
1	Matthew 21:18–22	All things are possible to those who ask God with faith.
2	Matthew 21:23–27	Jesus and John the Baptist acted with God's authority.
3	Matthew 21:28–32	Through repentance we can serve our Heavenly Father.
4	Matthew 21:33–46	Those who reject the prophets and Jesus Christ will be destroyed.
5	Matthew 22:1–14	The Lord will accept those who follow Him willingly and correctly.
6	Matthew 22:15–22	We should serve God and obey the law of the land.
7	Matthew 22:23–33	The Resurrection is real. Those who aren't sealed won't be married in the Resurrection (see also D&C 132:15–16).
8	Matthew 22:34–40	The great commandment is to love God. The second great commandment is to love others.
9	Matthew 22:41–46	Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Have each group report its findings. Encourage students to apply these principles in their lives.

Matthew 23:2–28 (see also Mark 12:38–40; Luke 20:45–47). **If we do not live up to the gospel standards we profess, we can influence others negatively.** (10–15 minutes)

Bring three nontransparent cups to class. Smear grease and dirt on the outside of the first cup and on the inside of the second, and leave the third cup clean. Show the class the cups (they should be able to see the outside only). Ask: Which of

the three cups would you not want to drink from? Invite a student to come to the front of the class and look inside the cups. Ask this student to identify which of the three cups she or he would rather not drink from.

- Which is the only safe cup to drink from?
- In what ways are people like these cups?

Read Matthew 23:2–4, 15, 23–28 and ask:

- What two groups did Jesus warn the people about? (see v. 2).
- What were they doing that Jesus condemned? (List answers on the board if desired.)
- What did Jesus call those who did these kinds of things? (see v. 23).
- Which of the cups in the object lesson were they most like? (see v. 25).
- These scriptures teach about one kind of hypocrisy. What might be another kind?

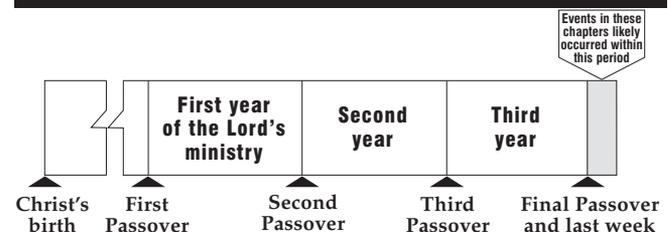
Share the following statement from President N. Eldon Tanner, a member of the First Presidency:

“Harry Emerson Fosdick observed that there are two kinds of hypocrisy: when we try to appear better than we are, and when we let ourselves appear worse than we are. We have been speaking of the kind of hypocrisy where people pretend to be more or better than they are. Too often, however, we see members of the Church who in their hearts know and believe, but through fear of public opinion fail to stand up and be counted. This kind of hypocrisy is as serious as the other” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1970, 52–53).

Read Matthew 23:15 and Alma 39:3, 11 and look for the effect hypocrites can have on others. Read Matthew 23:8–12 and look for the counsel Jesus gave that can help us avoid hypocrisy.

Matthew 24–25

The Life of Jesus Christ



Introduction

Just days before the Crucifixion, the disciples asked Jesus about His Second Coming (see Matthew 24:3). Within

Matthew 24 and 25 we find many explanations and prophecies about that time. The events of these chapters are of particular interest to us now because we are preparing the world for the Second Coming and because we live in a day when many of these prophecies are being fulfilled.

The Prophet Joseph Smith made a number of changes and additions to Matthew 24 in the Joseph Smith Translation. This chapter was reprinted in its entirety in the Pearl of Great Price as Joseph Smith—Matthew. The teaching suggestions for Matthew 24 will come from Joseph Smith—Matthew in the Pearl of Great Price.

Prayerfully study Matthew 24–25 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- A series of events will precede the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Studying about these events can help prepare us for the Second Coming (see Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:22–37; see also Matthew 24:1–35; D&C 29:14–21; 45:16–53, 63–75).
- While no one knows the exact time of the Second Coming, the righteous can know in a general way when the time is near (see Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:38–54; see also Matthew 24:32–51).
- We show our love for God by the way we treat His children (see Matthew 25:40; see also Mosiah 2:17).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 141, 151–57.
- “The Last Week of the Savior’s Life,” 288 in this manual.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Matthew 24–25.

 **Joseph Smith—Matthew (see also Matthew 23:39–24:51, Mark 13; Luke 12:37–48; 17:20–37; 21:5–36). It is better to study Matthew 24 from Joseph Smith—Matthew in the Pearl of Great Price.** (5 minutes)

Ask students to imagine that they are lost. After wandering aimlessly for a long time, they see another person. This person has two maps of the area. Both maps were accurate when they were made and would be of help to them now. One map is 200 years old. The other is a current map. Ask: Which map would you rather have? Why?

Invite students to read the heading for Joseph Smith—Matthew. (If students don’t know what the Joseph Smith Translation is, invite them to read “Joseph Smith Translation” in the Bible Dictionary, p. 717.) Ask:

- How are Matthew 24 and Joseph Smith—Matthew like the two maps described above?

- Which block of scripture is like which map?
- How old is the book of Matthew? (Nearly two thousand years.)
- How old is Joseph Smith—Matthew? (It was translated in 1831.)
- Which of these is most accurate?
- Which block of scripture would you rather study from?

 **Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:5–20 (see also Matthew 24:4–22; Mark 13:5–20; Luke 17:31; 21:8–24). When the wicked refuse to repent, they bring upon themselves the condemnation of the Lord.** (10–15 minutes)

Ask students what would result from doing the following:

- Putting your hand in a fire?
- Falling off a high mountain or building?
- Eating food when you are hungry?
- Watering and caring for a plant?

Point out that these things all have natural consequences.

Invite students to study Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:5–12.

- What are the natural consequences of people living wickedly?
- How do these verses apply to the way many people live today?
- Read verses 18–20. What consequences of living wickedly do these verses describe?
- Who was Jesus talking about in these verses?

Share Elder Marion G. Romney’s statement in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles* (pp. 151–52) to help students understand that this part of the scripture deals with the Jews in the forty-year period after Christ’s death.

- Read Alma 41:10. How does this verse relate to the question of the natural consequences of wickedness?
- Read Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:13–17. What did Jesus tell the righteous who lived in Jerusalem to do to avoid the natural consequences of the wickedness of their day?

 **Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:21–37 (see also Matthew 24:6–35; Mark 13:7–31; Luke 17:21–37; 21:9–32). A series of events will precede the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Studying about these events can help prepare us for the Second Coming.** (20–25 minutes)

Take from a magazine a picture of a famous person most of your students will know. Cut the picture into about seven or eight pieces. Stick one piece on the board and ask if anyone can tell who it is. Put up another piece, and then another until all the pieces are up or someone can guess who it is.

Read Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:1, 4 and have students look for what the disciples asked Jesus. Tell students that today they will look at another puzzle. The pieces of the puzzle will

be events prophesied to precede the Second Coming as found in Joseph Smith—Matthew. Reproduce the accompanying chart as a handout with the “Signs of the Second Coming” column left blank, and invite the students to use the scriptures to fill in the information about the signs.

Scripture	Signs of the Second Coming
JS—M 1:22	False Christs and prophets will do miracles to deceive the elect.
JS—M 1:23, 28	There will be wars and rumors of wars.
JS—M 1:26	Christ will come as the sun in the east. All the earth will know He has come.
JS—M 1:27	The righteous will be gathered.
JS—M 1:29	There will be wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes.
JS—M 1:30	Wickedness and hatred will abound.
JS—M 1:31	The gospel will be preached in all the world, and then the wicked will be destroyed.
JS—M 1:32	The “abomination of desolation” will be fulfilled a second time.
JS—M 1:33	The sun and moon will not shine, and the stars will fall.
JS—M 1:34–35	All the prophecies will be fulfilled.

When they finish, ask:

- Which of these have you already seen happen, at least in part?
- Read Doctrine and Covenants 97:21–22, 25. According to these verses, what can we do now to prepare for the calamities that precede the Second Coming of Jesus Christ?



Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:38–54 (see also Matthew 24:32–51; Mark 13:28–37; Luke 12:37–48; 17:26–37; 21:29–36). While no one knows the exact time of the Second Coming, the righteous can know in a general way when the time is near. (10–15 minutes)

Bring a clear, carbonated soft drink, some raisins, and a transparent glass to class. Pour the soft drink in the glass. Hold up a raisin and explain that when you drop the raisin in the soft drink, bubbles will eventually accumulate on the raisin until there are so many that it will rise to the top. Tell students that it will work but that it is hard to know how long it will take. Invite them to guess how long it will take for the raisin to rise. Drop the raisin in the soft drink and record how long it takes. (Note: Be sure the soft drink is fresh—if there is not enough carbonation, the raisin will not rise.)

Invite students to read Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:38–54, and ask:

- How is learning about the events that precede the Second Coming of Jesus Christ like dropping a raisin into a glass of soft drink? (see vv. 38–39).

- What do these verses say about the exact time of the Second Coming? (see v. 40).
- Why do you think the Lord doesn’t want us to know the exact time of His Coming? (see vv. 47–54).
- Why would it be important to know about the events that lead to the Second Coming?
- What commandment are we given in verse 46?
- Since we don’t know exactly when the Second Coming will be, how can we best prepare for it?

Matthew 25. Jesus taught much about His Second Coming through parables. (15–20 minutes)

Divide the class into three groups. Invite each group to study one of the following parables: the ten virgins (vv. 1–13), the talents (vv. 14–30), or the sheep and the goats (vv. 31–46). Give the groups about five minutes to study their parables looking for the following:

- What happens in the parable?
- How does the parable relate to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ?
- How does the parable apply to us today?
- How can we better prepare for the Second Coming as a result of knowing this parable?

As they study, share with the first and second groups the explanations for their parables found in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles* (see the commentaries for Matthew 25:1–13 and Matthew 25:14–30, p. 154). When the groups are ready, have them report their findings to the class.



Matthew 25:40 (Scripture Mastery). We show our love for God by the way we treat His children. (5–10 minutes)

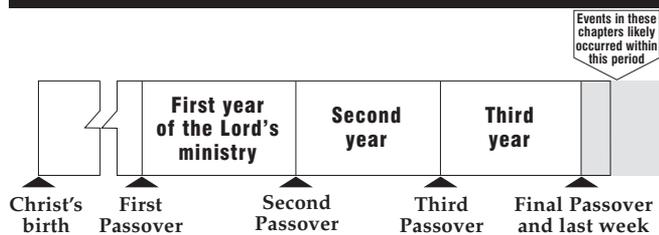
Ask students:

- What are the first and second great commandments? (Love God and love your neighbor; see Matthew 22:36–39.)
- What are some ways we can show our neighbors that we love them?
- What are some ways we can show God that we love Him?

Invite students to read Matthew 25:40 and look for what we could do to keep both the first and the second great commandments at the same time. Have students read and cross-reference Mosiah 2:17, and discuss how it relates to Matthew 25:40. Invite them to write on a piece of paper some ways they could better show love to their families, friends, leaders, and even strangers.

Matthew 26–28

The Life of Jesus Christ



Introduction

The final chapters of Matthew describe the last few days of the mortal life of Jesus Christ. Here are recorded such sacred events as the institution of the sacrament and Christ's Atonement, death, and Resurrection. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught the supreme importance of these when he said:

"The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 121).

These chapters contain the great doctrinal scriptures about the Atonement and Resurrection.

Prayerfully study Matthew 26–28 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- When we partake of the sacrament we promise to take upon us the name of Christ, to always remember Him and His atoning sacrifice, and to keep His commandments (see Matthew 26:26–28; see also 1 Corinthians 11:23–29).
- Jesus Christ suffered great agony to provide an Atonement for all mankind (see Matthew 26:36–46; 27:1–2, 11–50; see also Mosiah 3:7; Alma 7:11–13; D&C 19:16–19).
- With the example and blessings of the Lord, we can endure the difficult trials we face (see Matthew 26:46–27:35; see also Mosiah 23:21–24).
- Through the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, all mankind will also be resurrected (see Matthew 27:52–53; 28:1–10; see also 1 Corinthians 15:22; Helaman 14:15; 3 Nephi 23:11–12).
- Many are witnesses that Jesus Christ was resurrected and lives today (see Matthew 28:1–9, 16–20; see also 3 Nephi 11:15; D&C 76:22–23).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 131–32, 159–61, 172, 182–84, 191–94, 200–201.
- "The Last Week of the Savior's Life," 288 in this manual.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Matthew 26–28.

 *New Testament Video* presentation 9, "To This End Was I Born" (27:20), can be used in teaching Matthew 26–28 or as part of a harmonized lesson on the last week of the Savior's life (see *New Testament Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).

Matthew 26:1–16 (see also Mark 14:1–11; Luke 22:1–6). Once we come to learn who the Savior is and what He did for us, we cannot be neutral in our feelings for Him. (10–15 minutes)

Bring a slice of lemon to class. Hold it up and ask:

- Is lemon flavor mild or strong?
- Does anyone in the class like the flavor of raw lemon?
- Who doesn't like to eat raw lemons?
- Are there any who are neutral?
- Could you have an opinion on the flavor of lemons if you had never tasted one? Why?

Explain to students that there are few who have tasted a raw lemon who would be neutral. The flavor is so strong that most people either like it or dislike it. Ask: How would your responses be different if we were speaking of raisins instead of lemons?

Point out to students that it is also difficult to be neutral toward people with strong or powerful personalities. Have students read Matthew 26:1–16.

- How did the people in verses 1–5 feel about Jesus?
- How did the woman in verses 6–13 feel about Him?
- How did the man in verses 14–16 feel about Him?

Review the story of Isaac Behunnin in the teaching suggestion for Matthew 12:30 (p. 37) and ask if there is any neutral ground for us with regard to the Savior.

Matthew 26:26–29 (see also Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:19–20). The Savior instituted the sacrament to remind us that He sacrificed His life to provide the Atonement. (10–15 minutes)

Ask a student in the class who has recently been on vacation:

- Did you bring back a souvenir from the place you went? What was it?
- Why did you pick out that particular souvenir?

- What do you think of when you see the souvenir?
- How does it remind you of your vacation?

Invite students to read Matthew 26:26–29.

- Why did Jesus provide His disciples with the sacrament?
- What did Jesus do with the bread before giving it to His disciples?
- How does broken bread remind us of the Savior’s body?
- How does wine (or water) remind us of His blood?

Point out to students that when we eat or drink something, it becomes a part of our body.

Ask: How might partaking of the symbols of the Atonement help us apply the Atonement in our lives?

Share the following statement by Elder Spencer W. Kimball, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Every time we take the bread and water, there should be a reconsecration, a rededication. When we are not living the commandments, when we are in transgression, when we have angers and hatreds and bitterness, we should consider seriously if we should take the sacrament” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 225).

Encourage students to ponder the sacrifice of the Savior and their spiritual condition when they take the sacrament each week.

Matthew 26:30 (see also Mark 14:26). Music is an important part of the gospel. (5–10 minutes)

Ask the class:

- What role does music play in your lives?
- Raise your hand if you have listened to some kind of music in the last twenty-four hours.
- Have you ever learned something by putting it to music? (The alphabet, the books of the New Testament.)
- How can music also be valuable even if it has no words to it?
- What evidence is there that music is part of the Lord’s plan?

Have students use their Topical Guides to find scriptures that show the importance of music. (There are many references under “music” [p. 334] and “singing” [p. 476].) Have students read Matthew 26:30 and look for what Jesus did with His disciples just before going to the Garden of Gethsemane to atone for the sins of all mankind. If desired, share information from the “First Presidency Preface” in the hymnbook. Consider ending this discussion by singing one of the students’ favorite hymns.

Matthew 26:31–35 (see also Mark 14:27–31; Luke 22:31–34; John 13:36–38). Jesus prophesied Peter’s denial.

If you wish to teach these verses, see the teaching suggestion for Luke 22:31–38, 56–62.



Matthew 26:36–45 (see also Mark 14:32–42; Luke 22:40–46). Jesus Christ suffered great agony to provide an Atonement for all mankind.

(30–35 minutes)

Write *AT-ONE-MENT* on the board. If available, display the picture Jesus Praying in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36–45) (item no. 62175). Invite the class to consider the meaning of the Atonement by reading the following verses and answering the related questions:

Understanding the Atonement

Question	Scripture with the Answer
What was one result of the Fall of Adam?	Moses 5:4
What is the scriptural term for this condition?	Alma 42:9
In what spiritual condition must we be to dwell with God?	Moses 6:57
How many of us are unclean?	1 John 1:8
What is the mission of the Church?	Moroni 10:30, 32

After discussing these questions, write under *AT-ONE-MENT* the following question: *If we are cut off from God by our sins, how can we ever return to His presence?* Share the following experience of Stephen E. Robinson:

“One day . . . my daughter Sarah, who was seven years old, came in and said, ‘Dad, can I have a bike? I’m the only kid on the block who doesn’t have a bike.’

“Well, I didn’t have enough money to buy her a bike, so I stalled her and said, ‘Sure, Sarah.’ . . .

“I said, ‘You save all your pennies, and pretty soon you’ll have enough for a bike.’ And she went away.

“A couple of weeks later as I was sitting in the same chair, I was aware of Sarah doing something for her mother and getting paid. She went into the other room and I heard ‘clink, clink.’ I asked, ‘Sarah, what are you doing?’

“She came out and . . . said, ‘You promised me that if I saved all my pennies, pretty soon I’d have enough for a bike. And, Daddy, I’ve saved every single one of them.’

“She’s my daughter, and I love her. My heart melted. She was doing everything in her power to follow my instructions. I hadn’t actually lied to her. If she saved

all of her pennies she would eventually have enough for a bike, but by then she would want a car. But her needs weren't being met. Because I love her, I said, 'Let's go downtown and look at bikes.'

"We went to every store in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. Finally we found it. . . . She got up on that bike; she was thrilled. She then saw the price tag, reached down, and turned it over. When she saw how much it cost, her face fell and she started to cry. She said, 'Oh Dad, I'll never have enough for a bicycle.'

"So I said, 'Sarah, how much *do* you have?'

"She answered, 'Sixty-one cents.'

"I'll tell you what. You give me everything you've got and a hug and a kiss, and the bike is yours.' . . . She gave me a hug and a kiss. She gave me the sixty-one cents. Then I had to drive home very slowly because she wouldn't get off the bike. She rode home on the sidewalk, and as I drove along slowly beside her it occurred to me that this was a parable for the Atonement of Christ" ("Believing Christ: A Practical Approach to the Atonement," in *Brigham Young University 1989–90 Devotional and Fireside Speeches* [1990], 122–23).

Invite students to read 2 Nephi 25:23 and compare it to this story. Where does the "grace" come from in the scripture and the story? Refer to the word *AT-ONE-MENT* on the board. Explain that we can become "one" with God through the Atonement. Jesus began to fulfill the Atonement in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Read Matthew 26:36–45 and look for the circumstances surrounding Christ's suffering in Gethsemane. Cross-reference these verses with Doctrine and Covenants 19:16–19 and Mosiah 3:7. Have the students look in these scriptures to learn how difficult and painful the Atonement was. Read Alma 7:11–13 and ask:

- What else did Jesus suffer and take upon Him in addition to our sins?
- How does it make you feel to know Jesus did this for you and me?

Share your testimony of the Atonement, and invite a few students to do the same.

Matthew 26:46–27:35 (see also Mark 14:42–15:25; Luke 22:47–23:33; John 18:1–19:18). With the example and blessings of the Lord we can endure the difficult trials we face. (35–40 minutes)

Ask students what difficult trials they have endured. (Some may have experienced the death of family members, severe

illnesses, financial loss, lost friendship, or family or school challenges.) Ask a few to share their experiences.

Explain to students that in the hours between Gethsemane and His Crucifixion, the Savior endured terrible abuse. Invite students to take turns reverently reading verses from Matthew 26:46–27:33 and to reflect on the Lord's suffering. These verses are powerful and will hold the students' interest. As they read about Jesus, have them consider how He might have felt. Have them consider the meekness and restraint that the Lord showed in allowing wicked men to afflict Him when He had the power to stop them. You may wish to have students write on the board each of the trials as they read and highlight them in their scriptures. The accompanying chart is included for your reference.

Some of Jesus' Trials between Gethsemane and the Crucifixion

After Gethsemane, Jesus was physically weak and exhausted.	Matthew 26:36–46; Mosiah 3:7; D&C 19:16–19
He was betrayed by a disciple and close friend, Judas.	Matthew 26:45–50
Many, including disciples, forsook Him.	Matthew 26:55–56
People lied about Him.	Matthew 26:59–62
He was accused of blasphemy for telling the truth.	Matthew 26:63–65
He was sentenced to death without a cause.	Matthew 26:66
He was spit on, beaten, and mocked more than once.	Matthew 26:67–68; 27:29–30
A government leader condemned Jesus to death, though he knew He was innocent.	Matthew 27:11–26
Jesus was scourged (a brutal form of whipping that frequently killed the person).	Matthew 27:26
He was stripped of His clothing.	Matthew 27:28, 35
The soldiers pushed a crown of thorns onto His head.	Matthew 27:29

Ask students:

- How can our sufferings and trials give us a greater appreciation for what the Savior suffered?
- How can we show our love and gratitude for what He did for us? (see John 14:15).

Invite a student to recite the thirteenth article of faith.

- Which part of this article of faith applies to what we have just studied about the Savior? ("We have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things.")
- What kind of trials might you have to endure in the future?
- How can the Savior's example help us in our trials?



Matthew 27:35–54 (see also Mark 15:24–39; Luke 23:34–47; John 19:23–30). Jesus Christ suffered a terrible and painful death. (20–25 minutes)

Sing or read the words to one or more of the following hymns: “Upon the Cross of Calvary” (no. 184), “Behold the Great Redeemer Die” (no. 191), “There is a Green Hill Far Away” (no. 194). Ask:

- What is your favorite hymn about the Atonement?
- Why do you like it?

Ask students to take turns reading aloud verses from Matthew’s account of the Crucifixion (Matthew 27:35–54). Invite them to ask questions and make comments as they read. You may also wish to share Elder James E. Talmage’s description of the Crucifixion from *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles* (see the commentary for Matthew 27:35, p. 184).

If desired, sing another hymn on the Atonement. Then invite students to write on a piece of paper a letter to the Savior, describing how they feel about His suffering for us and how they can show their gratitude.



Matthew 27:52–53; 28:1–10 (see also Mark 16:1–14; Luke 24:1–12; John 20:1–18). Through the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, all mankind will also be resurrected. (25–30 minutes)

Ask students:

- How do you feel when you see a person with a disability, for example someone who is mentally retarded or missing an arm or leg or who is blind or deaf?
- How valuable would a cure for these ailments be?
- Have any of you lost a close friend or relative in death?
- Why is death such a difficult experience?

Tell the students that you know of a “cure” not only for these ailments but also for death itself. Invite students to read Alma

11:43–44 and find the remedy. Have them read Matthew 28:1–10 and 27:52–53 and answer the following questions. (If desired, give these to the students as a handout or write them on the board.)

- (Matthew 28:1) What day of the week was it?
- (Matthew 28:1) Who went to the sepulchre?
- (Matthew 28:2) Who appeared?
- (Matthew 28:2) How was the stone rolled away from the sepulchre?
- (Matthew 28:4) What happened to the soldiers?
- (Matthew 28:5–7) What did the angel say?
- (Matthew 28:8) Where did the women go?
- (Matthew 28:9–10) What happened to them on the way?
- (Matthew 27:52–53) What happened to some of the dead in Jerusalem after Christ was resurrected?

Use the following object lesson to help students better understand the Resurrection. Hold up one of your hands. Move your fingers and close them into a fist. Tell students that your hand could represent our spirit body. Put a glove on your hand and ask students:

- How can the glove represent our physical body? (Our spirit gains or “puts on” a body when we are born.)
- How can we represent death? (Remove the glove.)
- How can we represent the Resurrection? (Place the hand back in the glove.)
- What difference does it make to know that you will be resurrected and that after your resurrection you can never get sick or die?
- What difference does it make to know that you can live again with loved ones who have died?
- Who do you think will be the most excited for the Resurrection? Why?

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT MARK

Author: Numerous early documents identify Mark as the author of this Gospel, even though he is not identified as such within the book. The Prophet Joseph Smith entitled the book, “The Testimony of St Mark” (see “Title” footnote in the LDS Edition of the King James Bible). For more detailed information see the entry for Mark in the Bible Dictionary (p. 728).

Audience: Mark’s Gospel provides cultural and geographical explanations that would appeal to a gentile (non-Jewish) audience (see Bible Dictionary, “Gospels,” pp. 683–84).

Historical Background: Mark is usually thought to have been the first Gospel written and may have formed a basis for much of Matthew and Luke. The exact date it was written is unknown but “both early Christian tradition and internal features of Mark’s record point to an origin of his Gospel in Rome after Peter’s death (A.D. 64) and before the final fall of the Jerusalem Temple (A.D. 70)” (S. Kent Brown, “The Testimony of Mark,” in *Studies in Scripture: Volume Five, the Gospels*, ed. Kent P. Jackson and Robert L. Millet [1986], 67).

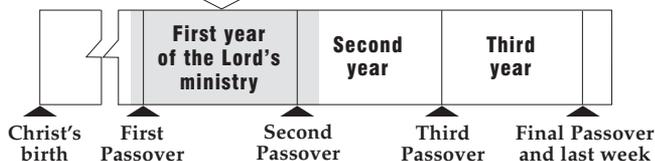
Unique Features: The Gospel of Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels. It is a fast-moving account that emphasizes what the Savior did more than what He said. Mark particularly highlights the Savior’s miracles. Over 90 percent of the material in Mark is also found in the other Gospels. Events and teachings found in Mark but not in the other Gospels include the parable of the seed growing secretly (see Mark 4:26–29), the fact that Jesus was a carpenter (see Mark 6:3), the healing of a blind man at Bethsaida (see Mark 8:22–26), and the doctrine that signs follow those who believe (see Mark 16:17–18).

Theme: Mark’s record testifies that Jesus Christ was the son of God and a being of miraculous power. Mark illustrates this idea by emphasizing the Savior’s actions.

Mark 1–3

The Life of Jesus Christ

Events in these chapters likely occurred within this period



Introduction

Unlike Matthew and Luke, Mark 1–3 does not contain any information about the birth or youth of Jesus. Mark’s account

begins with the ministry of Jesus Christ, including His baptism and the calling of His disciples and Apostles. Notice how quickly Mark introduces Jesus’ miracles.

Prayerfully study Mark 1–3 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Premortal spirits who followed Satan were cast down to earth and seek to possess the bodies of mortals (see Mark 1:23–26, 34; 3:11; see also Mark 5:1–13; D&C 29:36–37).
- Jesus Christ has power to heal us physically and cleanse us from sin (see Mark 1:23–45; 2:1–12).
- We should pray frequently to commune with God (see Mark 1:35; see also Mark 6:46).
- The Sabbath is a day to rest and glorify God (see Mark 2:23–28; 3:1–6; JST, Mark 2:27).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 43–45.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Mark 1–3.

Mark 1:1–23. Introducing the Gospel of Mark. (15–20 minutes)

To help prepare your students for their study of Mark, share with them any of the information from the introduction to the book of Mark that you feel would be helpful. For example, you could illustrate the compact nature of Mark’s Gospel by writing the following events on the board: *The birth of Jesus*, *His baptism by John the Baptist*, and *The calling of Simon Peter and Andrew*. Have your students find those events in the first four chapters of Matthew. Then have them begin reading in Mark 1 and compare how many verses it takes Mark to tell about these same events. (*Note:* Mark does not include an account of the birth of Jesus.)

To show Mark’s emphasis on the miracles of Jesus, tell students that Matthew does not tell of Jesus performing a miracle until Matthew 8:2–3. Have them continue reading in Mark 1 until they find the first miracle mentioned by Mark (see Mark 1:23–25). Point out to students that Mark emphasizes the actions and miracles of the Lord, while Matthew places more emphasis on His teachings. Explain that even though much of the material in Mark is also in the other Gospels, Mark does provide a unique perspective in his testimony of Jesus Christ.

Mark 1:23–2:12 (see also Matthew 8:2–17; 9:2–8; Luke 4:33–5:26). Jesus Christ has power to heal us both physically and spiritually. (35–45 minutes)

As students enter class, “disable” them with a physical disability. For example, put a blindfold over students’ eyes, put one of their arms in a sling, bind their legs together so they can’t walk, or bandage their mouths so they can’t talk. (Be sensitive to those who may have an actual disability. Ask any of your students who have disabilities beforehand what would be offensive or embarrassing to them. Note however that their answers to the questions in this lesson may be especially meaningful.)

After allowing students to experience their “disabilities” for five to ten minutes, ask:

- How did it feel to be physically “disabled”?
- What difficulties did you experience as a result of your “disability”?
- How might you feel if you had this disability your whole life?

Have the students write “Mark 1:23–2:12” at the top of a sheet of paper. Tell them that these verses contain accounts of people who were disabled in various ways. Have them read the verses and write the answers to the following questions about each afflicted person they read about:

- What disability afflicted this person?
- What miracle did Jesus perform to help the person?
- What, if anything, did the person do to aid in the miracle?

Ask:

- Do healings happen today? (Help students understand that Christ is able to heal physical disabilities today; see Mormon 9:15.)
- What blessing might be greater than having a physical disability healed?

Write the following statement by President Harold B. Lee on the board:

“The greatest miracles I see today are not necessarily the healing of sick bodies, but the greatest miracles I see are the healing of sick souls” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1973, 178; or *Ensign*, July 1973, 123).

Ask students what they think President Lee meant.

- Why would the healing of sick souls be greater than the healing of sick bodies?
- Do you believe the Savior has power to heal us from spiritual disabilities?

Reread Mark 2:5–12 and have students look for evidence of Jesus’ power to heal people from sin. Help students compare spiritual infirmities with physical disabilities by asking the following questions:

- What would it mean to be spiritually blind, deaf, or lame?

- How do spiritual weaknesses or sins “disable” us?
- If you had both a physical and spiritual disability, which one would you most want to have healed? Why?

Read Alma 7:11–13 and help students know and feel that the Savior has power to heal our physical and spiritual disabilities.

Mark 1:35 (see also Luke 4:42; 6:12). We should make time often to pray and commune with God. (15–20 minutes)

As a class, sing a hymn about prayer, such as “Sweet Hour of Prayer” (no. 142) or “Did You Think to Pray?” (no. 140). Ask students to explain the message of the hymn. Invite students to think to themselves whether they prayed this morning. Ask:

- Why do people choose to pray?
- What are some reasons people neglect to pray?

Invite one or two students who would like to share their testimony of prayer to do so.

Invite students to read Mark 1:35 and consider the following questions:

- How does the message of the hymn we sang apply to this verse?
- Why do you think Jesus prayed?
- What blessings could come from getting up “a great while before day” to pray?
- How does it help you when you pray in a “solitary place”?
- What other people in the scriptures do you know who sought a quiet place so they could pray and be alone with God?

Read the following statements or give them to students as a handout.

President Spencer W. Kimball, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve, wrote:

“Solitude is rich and profitable. When we pray alone with God, we shed all sham and pretense, all hypocrisy and arrogance. The Savior found his mountains and slipped away to pray. Paul, the great apostle, could not seem to get into the spirit of his new calling until he had found cleansing solitude down in Arabia. He went into solitude a worldly man and came out cleansed, prepared, regenerated. . . . Enos found his solitary place in the forest. Moriancumer went to the mountain top to ask the Lord to touch the stones to light his people’s way. And Nephi learned to build a ship through communication with his Lord on a mountain far from human ears. Joseph Smith found his solitude in the grove with only birds and trees and God to listen to his prayer. In solitude we, too, may pray with greater depth and fervor” (*Faith Precedes the Miracle* [1972], 209).

Bishop H. Burke Peterson, who was then a member of the Presiding Bishopric, said:

“As you feel the need to confide in the Lord or to improve the quality of your visits with him—to pray, if you please—may I suggest a process to follow: go where you can be alone, go where you can think, go where you can kneel, go where you can speak out loud to him. The bedroom, the bathroom, or the closet will do. Now, picture him in your mind’s eye. Think to whom you are speaking, control your thoughts—don’t let them wander, address him as your Father and your friend. Now tell him things you really feel to tell him—not trite phrases that have little meaning, but have a sincere, heartfelt conversation with him. Confide in him, ask him for forgiveness, plead with him, enjoy him, thank him, express your love to him, and then listen for his answers. Listening is an essential part of praying. Answers from the Lord come quietly—ever so quietly. In fact, few hear his answers audibly with their ears. We must be listening so carefully or we will never recognize them. Most answers from the Lord are felt in our heart as a warm comfortable expression, or they may come as thoughts to our mind. They come to those who are prepared and who are patient” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1973, 13; or *Ensign*, Jan. 1974, 19).

Encourage students to improve the quality of their prayers by seeking a time and place daily where they can be alone and commune with the Lord through prayer.



Mark 2:23–3:6 (see also Matthew 12:1–14; Luke 6:1–11). The Sabbath is a day to rest from our earthly labors and grow closer to God.

(35–45 minutes)

Before class, list on the board some popular teenage activities that are within Church standards, such as soccer, swimming, reading, basketball, dancing, working, studying, singing, shopping, eating, and sleeping. Review the list with the class and ask if the Lord approves of each of these activities.

Write the heading *Sabbath Guidelines* on another part of the board. Have students read Mark 2:23–3:5 looking for what the disciples did that led the Pharisees to accuse them of Sabbath-breaking. Ask: What did the Savior teach in these verses about the purposes of the Sabbath? (List responses on the board under *Sabbath Guidelines*.)

Tell students that Jewish tradition added so many restrictions to keeping the Sabbath day holy that instead of a day of rest it became a great burden. Jesus taught, “The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath” (Mark 2:27). In other words, the Lord established the Sabbath for our blessing.

Stress to students that the phrase “the sabbath was made for man” does not mean we can do anything we choose on the Sabbath. That would mean disregarding others of the Lord’s directives given in the scriptures (see Exodus 20:8–11; D&C 59:9–14) and through His modern prophets and apostles. Read the Joseph Smith Translation of Mark 2:26–27. Tell students that these verses give two additional purposes of the Sabbath: to rest and glorify God. (Add these to the “Sabbath Guidelines” column on the board.) Explain that since Jesus made the Sabbath day, He has authority over it.

Invite a student to read to the class the “Sabbath Day Observance” section in *For the Strength of Youth* ([pamphlet, 2001], pp. 32–33).

- What other guidelines are given in this pamphlet for the Sabbath?
- How can these guidelines help us gain spiritual strength, rest from our labors, and glorify God?

Add some of the guidelines from *For the Strength of Youth* to the “Sabbath Guidelines” column on the board. Refer students to the list of activities. Tell them that although all these activities are appropriate for six days of the week, some may not be appropriate for the Sabbath.

- Which of these activities would be appropriate for the Sabbath?
- What else could we do on the Sabbath to help glorify God?

Discuss with your students some of the blessings of keeping the Sabbath holy by reading any of the following statements you feel would be helpful.

President Gordon B. Hinckley said:

“As we move forward into a wonderful future, there are what some may regard as the lesser commandments but which are also of such tremendous importance.

“I mention the Sabbath day. The Sabbath of the Lord is becoming the play day of the people. It is a day of golf and football on television, of buying and selling in our stores and markets. Are we moving to [the mainstream] as some observers believe? In this I fear we are. . . .

“Our strength for the future, our resolution to grow the Church across the world, will be weakened if we violate the will of the Lord in this important matter. He has so very clearly spoken anciently and again in modern revelation. We cannot disregard with impunity that which He has said” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 93; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 69).

Elder James E. Faust, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, said:

“In this day of increasing access to and preoccupation with materialism, there is a sure protection for ourselves and our children against the plagues of our day. The key to that sure protection surprisingly can be found in Sabbath observance” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1991, 47; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 35).

Elder John H. Groberg, a member of the Seventy, said:

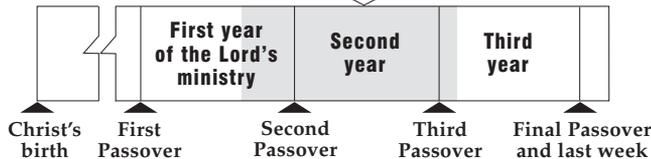
“There is power in keeping the Sabbath day holy—power to help others as well as ourselves. If we would have God’s blessings and protection as individuals, as families, as communities, and as nations, we must keep His Sabbath day holy” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1984, 101; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 81).

Conclude by bearing testimony of the blessings that have come to you from following this commandment.

Mark 4–6

The Life of Jesus Christ

Events in these chapters likely occurred within this period



Introduction

During His Galilean ministry Jesus performed many of His greatest miracles. These demonstrated His power over earthly elements, the forces of evil, sickness of body and spirit, and even death. As you study Mark 4–6, look for what the Savior taught about the power of faith and compassion. Look also for what these chapters teach about handling sorrow and rejection.

Consider the following principles and prayerfully study Mark 4–6 before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Those who live according to the gospel knowledge they receive are given more (see Mark 4:24–25; see also Luke 8:18).
- Jesus Christ created the earth, and all the elements obey Him (see Mark 4:37–41; 6:35–44, 47–52).

- Jesus Christ has great compassion for each of us, and His grace is sufficient for our shortcomings (see Mark 5:19; 6:34, 41–44; see also Mark 1:40–41).
- Those who have faith in Jesus Christ can be healed. If we do not have faith, we limit our ability to experience miracles in our lives (see Mark 5:34; 6:1–6; see also Ether 12:12; Moroni 7:37).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 75–76, 89.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Mark 4–6.

 *New Testament Video* presentation 5, “Thy Faith Hath Made Thee Whole” (16:42), can be used in teaching Mark 5 if you didn’t use it with Matthew 9 (see *New Testament Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).

Mark 4:1–25 (see also Matthew 13:1–23; Luke 8:4–18). Those who live according to the gospel knowledge they receive will be given more. (20–25 minutes)

Invite a student to do a few push-ups. Ask:

- What does that type of workout do for your muscles?
- How could the way knowledge of the gospel grows be compared to the way our muscles grow?

Read with your students the parable of the sower (Mark 4:2–9). Ask: What does the seed represent in this parable? (“The word”; see v. 15.) Have students read Mark 4:15–20 and look for the answers to the following:

- Who or what do the birds represent? (Satan; see vv. 4, 15.)
- The stony ground? (see vv. 16–17).
- The thorns? (see vv. 18–19).
- The good ground? (see v. 20).
- The fruit? (This could represent our knowledge of the gospel and the blessings and good works that come from applying that knowledge; see v. 20.)

Ask: What happens to people’s gospel knowledge and understanding after baptism if their soil is good and they remain active in the Church? Read Mark 4:24–25 with your students and ask them what these verses teach about those who allow the soil of their hearts to become hard or stony or thorny. Read Alma 12:9–11 and ask:

- What do these verses teach about gaining light and knowledge?
- What do they teach about losing light and knowledge?
- What happens to people’s understanding of the gospel when they become less active? Why?

- How is this loss of understanding like the different kinds of soil in the parable?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 76:5–10 with your students and ask:

- What do these verses tell us about what we can learn if we are obedient?
- What do these verses teach about *how* we can learn these great things?
- Can you give examples of this principle from your own life or the lives of others?

Invite students who would like to share their experiences to do so. (Caution them not to give specific names.)

Read the following insight from Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“Gospel light does not burst upon men in full noontday splendor, but . . . it arises in their hearts gradually, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little [see D&C 50:24]. Eventually the faithful, having continued to grow in light and truth, shall have all things revealed to them and shall know all things. (D. & C. 76:5–10; 93:26–28; 101:32–34; 121:26–29.) . . .

“No parable, no teaching, no mystery, no hidden thing, is to be kept from the knowledge of the faithful; eventually all things shall be revealed, and the righteous shall know them.” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:291).

Conclude by challenging students to seek gospel knowledge their entire lives.

Mark 4:35–41 (see also Matthew 8:18–27; Luke 8:22–25). Jesus can calm the storms in our life just as He calmed the storm on the Sea of Galilee. (10–15 minutes)



Show students the picture *Stilling the Storm* (Matthew 8:23–27) (see appendix, p. 304). Ask students to examine the expression on the face of each person in the picture. Read Mark 4:35–41 with the class and ask:

- Which verse did the artist specifically depict?
- If you could have the artist repaint the picture, what would you have him change? Why?

Ask students to think of “stormy” times when they have experienced trials. Explain that it may seem like Jesus is sleeping when things are at their worst. Yet, just as in the story, He will not leave us alone. Have a student read the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“Manifestly [this miracle] teaches that the Lord Jesus is ever near his friends and will preserve them in perilous circumstances, even if their safety calls for control of the elements.

“Also, the sea—a raging, restless sea—is a symbol of a sinful and wicked world. . . . When Christ calms the seas of life, peace enters the hearts of men.

“Further, there are those also who have likened the Church itself to a ship, steered and sailed by apostles and prophets through the waves of the world, which rage and toss, violently and with force, against the tempested bark, and yet never prevail. The divine ship never sinks; its faithful passengers never drown in the angry deep, because Christ sails his own ship. He may seem to be asleep on a bench with a pillow under his head, but he is there. And when in times of great peril he is aroused by the pleas of his servants, once again he rebukes the winds and the waters; he delivers those who have faith in his name; he speaks peace to troubled souls; his voice is heard again, ‘Peace, be still.’” (*Mortal Messiah*, 2:278).

Invite students to write or tell about a time when they felt the calming influence of the Savior. You may also wish to share a personal experience when you were “rescued” by the Savior during a “stormy” time in your life.

Sing or read the words to “Master the Tempest Is Raging” (*Hymns*, no. 105). Invite the students to reread the last verse and tell how it makes them feel.

Mark 5:21–43; 6:1–6 (see also Matthew 9:18–26; 13:54–58; Luke 8:41–56). Faith precedes the miracle. (25–35 minutes)

Ask students to name miracles performed today that are similar to those that occurred during the time of Christ. Read Moroni 7:37 with students and have them find what makes miracles possible. Tell them that today they are going to study two examples of miracles that came by faith and one example in which a lack of faith limited miracles.

Have your students take turns reading aloud verses in Mark 5:22–43. Discuss the following questions as you read:

- What did Jairus seek from Jesus?
- What did Jairus say that reveals how much faith he had in Jesus? (see v. 23).
- What did the woman say and do that tells us how much faith she had in Jesus? (see vv. 27–28).
- Why do you think Jesus felt something different from the touch of this woman than from all the other people who were crowded around Him?
- Why was the woman healed when other people had been unable to help her?
- What did Jesus say had helped heal the woman? (see v. 34).
- In the case of Jairus’s daughter, whose faith contributed to bringing her back to life?

Have students read Mark 6:1–6 looking for how these verses relate to the two stories in verses 22–43. Ask:

- What is the relationship between Jesus Christ’s power to heal and a person’s faith in Him? (see also Mormon 9:19–20).
- Why do you think there are so many people today who do not believe in miracles?

Invite students to consider how strong their faith is and what they can do to develop greater faith. Give them a copy of the following statement by Elder Merrill J. Bateman, a member of the Seventy, as a handout or write it on the board:

“Faith is both a principle and a process. It defines the path by which we build a relationship of trust with the Savior. In order for faith to develop, we must begin with a humble heart and contrite spirit, have a strong desire to know the Lord, and then be obedient to gospel principles. In return, the Savior rewards the obedient with spiritual confirmations of their actions (see Alma 32:16, 27–32). As faith grows, our vision of eternity expands, which increases our capacity to meet life’s challenges” (“Faith That Preserves and Strengthens,” in *Brigham Young University 1996–97 Speeches* [1997], 141).

Discuss the following questions with your students as they study this statement.

- How can we acquire faith?
- How does obedience affect faith?
- How does faith affect our ability to obey?
- What, then, can we do to increase our faith?

Consider concluding with your testimony that we can develop greater faith and that God still performs miracles today in response to our obedience and faith.

Mark 6:14–29 (see also Matthew 14:6–12; Luke 9:7–9). Keeping the commandments often takes great courage and sacrifice. (20–30 minutes)

Read the following true story to your class:

“Joseph F. Smith was 19 when he returned from his mission in Hawaii. As he traveled from California to his home in Utah, he was confronted one morning by a ‘wagonload of profane drunks . . . , shooting their guns, yelling wildly, and cursing the Mormons.’ One of the drunks, ‘waving a pistol,’ came toward him. Although Joseph ‘was terrified he felt it would be unwise and useless to run . . . , and so he advanced toward the gunman as if he found nothing out of the ordinary in his conduct. “Are you a ___ ___ Mormon?” the stranger demanded. Mustering all the composure he could, Joseph answered evenly while looking the man straight in the eye, “Yes, siree; dyed in the wool; true blue, through and through.” Almost stunned by this wholly unexpected response, the gunman stopped, dropped his hands to his sides, and, after looking at Joseph for a moment, said in a subdued tone, “Well, you are the ___ ___ pleasantest man I ever met! Shake. I am glad to see a fellow stand for his convictions.” So saying he turned and walked away’ [Francis M. Gibbons, *Joseph F. Smith: Patriarch and Preacher, Prophet of God* (1984), 43–44]” (M. Russell Ballard, in Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 51; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 37).

Ask: What qualities would be necessary to make the kind of decision young Joseph F. Smith made? Ask students if they have any family or friends who have kept the commandments under difficult circumstances, and invite them to share their stories.

Tell students that today they will learn about someone who kept the commandments when it required great courage and sacrifice. Read Mark 6:14–16 and ask:

- Who is “him” in verse 14? (Jesus.)
- Why did Herod think Jesus might be John the Baptist risen from the dead?
- What might Herod have been afraid of? (see the commentary for Matthew 14:1–2 in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, p. 81).

Read Mark 6:17–29 with your students, stopping as needed to allow students to discuss the following questions. Explain that Mark 6:14–16 describes what happened *after* the death of John the Baptist and that in verses 17–29 Mark reviews how and why John died.

- Why did Herod put John in prison?
- Why did it take courage for John to call Herod to repentance?

- What price did John pay?
- What characteristics mentioned in Mark 6:20 do you think helped John have the courage to keep the commandments? (see also JST, Mark 6:20).
- Why was it worth the sacrifice for John to keep the commandments?
- What are some ways young people today show courage and sacrifice in keeping the commandments? (Getting baptized, going on missions, keeping moral standards, keeping the Word of Wisdom, standing up for others who are being mistreated.)
- Why do you believe that keeping the commandments is vital?

Conclude by asking students to read the Bible Dictionary entry for John the Baptist (pp. 714–15). As they do, invite them to look for the one attribute or experience of John the Baptist that most impresses them. Encourage them to use John as a role model for their decisions.

Mark 6:34 (see also Matthew 14:14). The Savior has great love and compassion for everyone. (10–15 minutes)

Begin class by singing “I Feel My Savior’s Love” (*Children’s Songbook*, 74) or “I Stand All Amazed” (*Hymns*, no. 193). Ask students to express how the song makes them feel toward the Savior.

Write the following references on the board: Matthew 20:34; Mark 1:40–41; 5:19; 6:34; Luke 7:12–13. Have the class read them and look for the word that describes the Savior’s motivation to bless in each passage. Ask: How does this apply to us? Read 3 Nephi 17:5–7 and help students understand that the Savior has compassion and love for everyone. Everything He does is motivated by His love. Ask:

- Why does the Father sometimes seemingly withhold blessings, even though He loves us?
- How can withholding blessings be an act of love?

Read the following statement by Elder Neal A. Maxwell, who was then a member of the Seventy:

“The compassion of the divine Jesus for us is not the abstract compassion of a sinless individual who would never so suffer; rather, it is the compassion and empathy of One who has suffered exquisitely, though innocent, for all our sins” (*All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience* [1979], 35).

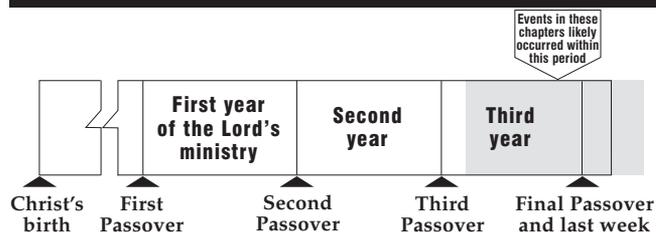
- How can the knowledge of the Savior’s compassion and love toward us encourage and bless our lives?
- How does that knowledge affect how we feel about Him and about what He asks us to do?

Have someone tell about a time she or he felt the compassion or love of the Savior. Invite students to look for opportunities

during the coming week where, like the Savior, they can show compassion toward someone else.

Mark 7–16

The Life of Jesus Christ



Introduction

Mark 7–16 covers approximately the last year of the Savior’s life, including His final ministries to Galilee, Perea, and Judea. Most of this block, however, deals with the momentous events of the Savior’s last week, including His Atonement, death, and Resurrection.

Prayerfully study Mark 7–16 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- We become impure by our evil thoughts and actions (see Mark 7:14–24).
- Fasting with prayer can increase our spirituality and faith (see Mark 9:14–29; see also Matthew 17:14–21; Luke 9:37–43).
- Those who are humble, obedient, and willing to serve others are considered greatest in the eyes of God (see Mark 9:33–37; see also Matthew 18:1–5; Luke 9:46–48; Mosiah 3:19).
- Jesus experienced hunger, thirst, fatigue, pain, and temptation, and so knows how to comfort and help us (see Mark 11:12; see also Mosiah 3:7; Alma 7:11–13).
- The house of the Lord is a sacred place and should be treated with reverence (see Mark 11:15–18; see also D&C 110:8).
- When we pray in faith, Heavenly Father will grant us the righteous desires of our hearts (see Mark 11:22–24; see also Matthew 21:21–22; James 1:5–7; 3 Nephi 18:20).
- We must learn to sacrifice earthly possessions in favor of heavenly blessings to become like Christ (see Mark 12:41–44; see also Luke 21:1–4; Moroni 7:6–8).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 96, 141–42, 148, 160, 192–94.
- “The Last Week of the Savior’s Life,” 288 in this manual.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Mark 7–16.



Mark 7:1–23 (see also Matthew 15:1–20). We become impure by our evil thoughts and actions.
(30–40 minutes)

Before class, make some mud in a bowl, bring a cup that is dirty from use, and write the word *defile* on the board. Ask students what the word *defile* means (to make unclean or impure). Invite a boy who holds the priesthood to come to the front of the class and put his hands in the mud. After he does, ask: Would dirty hands make him unworthy to hold the priesthood? Why or why not? Hand the dirty cup to one of the girls and ask: Would drinking from that cup make her unworthy to teach a Primary or Sunday School class?

Have students read Mark 7:1–15, and ask:

- What did the Pharisees accuse Jesus' disciples of?
- How did Jesus answer them?

Be sure students understand that Jesus was not saying that washing hands before eating was not important. He was saying that eating with unwashed hands does not make a person wicked or impure. Have students read footnote 15a and note the Joseph Smith Translation changes. See also the commentary for Matthew 15:2 in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles* (p. 96).

- What does the word *corban* mean? (see the commentary for Mark 7:11 in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, p. 96).
- How did the Pharisees use it to get around the law?
- What did Jesus teach concerning this matter? (see Mark 7:10–13).

Have students read Mark 7:17–23 and find what truly defiles a person. Then discuss the following questions:

- What kinds of thoughts and actions make people spiritually unclean? (List answers on the board.)
- Is it more important to be spiritually clean or physically clean? Why?
- Which kind of cleanliness do you think is easier to maintain? Why?

Read the following statement by Elder Spencer W. Kimball, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“It is not the soil of earth or the grease on a person’s hands that defile him; nor is it the . . . accumulated perspiration from honest toil, or the body odor resulting from heavy work. One may bathe hourly, perfume oneself often, have hair shampooed frequently, have fingernails manicured daily, and be a master at soft-spoken utterances, and still be as filthy as hell’s cesspools. What defiles is sin, and especially sexual sin” (*The Miracle of Forgiveness* [1969], 62).

Share also the following statement by Dallin H. Oaks, then president of Brigham Young University:

“The body has defenses to rid itself of unwholesome food. With a few fatal exceptions bad food will only make you sick but do no permanent harm. In contrast, a person who feasts upon filthy stories or pornographic or erotic pictures and literature records them in this marvelous retrieval system we call a brain. The brain won’t vomit back filth. Once recorded, it will always remain subject to recall, flashing its perverted images across your mind and drawing you away from the wholesome things in life” (“Things They’re Saying,” *New Era*, Feb. 1974, 18).

Read 1 Nephi 15:34. Share your own feelings with your students about becoming and remaining spiritually clean.



Mark 8:1–30 (see also Matthew 15:32–16:20). Jesus can heal both physical and spiritual blindness.
(30–40 minutes)

Before class, write in small letters on a piece of paper the proverb *There is none so blind as he who will not see*. Post the paper on the board and have a student in the back of the classroom attempt to read it. If you have a student who is nearsighted, have her or him try to read it without glasses. Ask students: What is the difference between someone who cannot see and someone who will not see?

Review with your students the story of the feeding of the four thousand (Mark 8:1–9), and then ask:

- What did the Pharisees do soon after Jesus miraculously fed the four thousand? (see vv. 11–12).
- What sort of blindness did the Pharisees have?
- What sort of blindness did the disciples show in the ship? (see vv. 13–21).
- Even though both showed spiritual blindness, who was more blind—the disciples or the Pharisees?

Have your students review verses 22–26 (see also the teaching suggestion for Mark 8:22–26 below). Ask: How might people suffer from different degrees of spiritual blindness? Read verses 27–30.

- What did Peter testify of?
- How is he a good example of one who could see spiritually?

Read verses 31–33 and discuss how even Peter didn't see everything clearly (see also the teaching suggestion for Matthew 16:15–19, pp. 42–43).

- What did Peter wish to prevent?
- What did he not understand or “see”?

Read verses 34–38 to your students. Share your testimony that the Savior can heal spiritual blindness just as He can heal physical blindness, but only if we have the desire to see.

Mark 8:22–26. The manner in which Jesus Christ performed His miracles can teach us valuable lessons. (10–15 minutes)

Have students review the miracles the Savior performed as recorded in Mark 6:54–56 and 7:31–37. Then have them read Mark 8:22–26, and ask:

- How was this healing different from the others?
- What lesson can we learn from the fact that this man was not completely healed at first?

Invite students to listen to the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie looking for how they can apply it in their lives:

“This miracle is unique; it is the only recorded instance in which Jesus healed a person by stages. It may be that our Lord followed this course to strengthen the weak but growing faith of the blind man. It would appear that the successive instances of physical contact with Jesus had the effect of adding hope, assurance, and faith to the sightless one. . . .

“Certainly the manner in which this healing took place teaches that men should seek the Lord's healing grace with all their strength and faith, though such is sufficient for a partial cure only, following the receipt of which, however, they may then gain the added assurance and faith to be made whole and well every whit. Men also are often healed of their spiritual maladies by degrees, step by step as they get their lives in harmony with the plans and purposes of Deity” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:379–80).

Mark 9:14–29 (see also Matthew 17:14–21; Luke 9:37–43). Fasting as a companion to prayer can increase our spirituality and faith. (20–25 minutes)

Invite your students to turn to “faith” in the Bible Dictionary (p. 669). Read the definition with them. Invite them to select four or five key ideas from the definition, and write them on the board.

Read Mark 9:14–29 and discuss some of the following questions:

- What elements vital to the development of faith are demonstrated in this story?
- What did the disciples lack at the time that made it so they could not cast out the “dumb spirit”? (see vv. 18, 28–29).
- What effect does fasting and prayer have on faith?
- What do you think the father meant by his statement in verse 24?

Elder Bruce R. McConkie said:

“By faith all things are possible; nothing is too hard for the Lord. No sickness is too severe, no disease too disabling, no plague too destructive to be cured by the power that is faith. Whether in life or in death nothing is withheld from those who abide the law of faith which entitles them to receive it. But in practice, even among the most righteous mortals, faith or power is enjoyed in varying degrees, and some maladies require the exercise of greater healing power than others” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:409).

Elder James E. Talmage said:

“Fasting, when practiced in prudence, and genuine prayer are conducive to the development of faith with its accompanying power for good. Individual application of this principle may be made with profit. Have you some besetting weakness, some sinful indulgence that you have vainly tried to overcome? Like the malignant demon that Christ rebuked in the boy, your sin may be of a kind that goeth out only through prayer and fasting” (*Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. [1916], 395).

Bear your testimony of how fasting and prayer increase faith. If time permits consider reading Alma 32:26–37 with your students and discussing what is taught there about increasing our faith.

Mark 9:33–37 (see also Matthew 18:1–5; Luke 9:46–48). Those who are humble, obedient, and willing to serve others are the greatest in the eyes of God. (25–35 minutes)

Put the following words on the board: *General Authority, stake president, bishop, teacher, librarian*. Ask students which of these positions most people consider the greatest. Why? Have them read Mark 9:33–35.

- How did Jesus answer the question of who is the greatest?
- What does it mean that the greatest should be the “servant of all”?

- Which of the positions listed on the board could involve being the servant of all? (Any of them could and all of them should.)
- How did Jesus demonstrate this principle in His life?



Show a picture of Jesus with the little children like the one shown here. Have students read Mark 9:36–37, and discuss some of the following questions.

- What do you think Jesus was teaching His disciples by taking the child in His arms?
- What does it mean to “receive” a child in Christ’s name? (see the Joseph Smith Translation changes in Mark 9:37 footnote *a*).
- Why do you think some people today refuse to serve those they think are not as important or as good as themselves?
- How did Jesus feel about serving others, especially children? (see Mark 10:13–14).

Read Matthew’s account of the same event in Matthew 18:1–6.

- What does the Matthew account say we must do besides be willing to receive little children?
- How might being converted and humbling ourselves as a little child make us better able to serve others? (see Mosiah 3:19).
- How could becoming as a little child help us become great in the kingdom of heaven?

Share the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“True greatness in the Lord’s earthly kingdom is measured, not by positions held, not by pre-eminence attained, not by honors bestowed by mortals, but by intrinsic merit and goodness. Those who become as little children and acquire the attributes of godliness for themselves, regardless of the capacity in which they may be called to serve, are the ‘greatest in the kingdom of heaven.’” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:415).

Mark 9:43–50 (see also Matthew 18:8–9). Are we really supposed to cut off a hand or a foot because of sin?
(20–25 minutes)

Ask students to look at the hand they write with and think of all the things they depend on that hand to do.

- How difficult would it be to get along without it?
- Is there anything worth losing your hand for?

Read Mark 9:43–48 with your students and discuss the following questions:

- If you had to lose a hand in this life in order to gain eternal life, would it be worth it?
- Would it be worth it if you had to lose a foot? an eye?
- Would it be worth it if it cost you your earthly life?
- Even though the kingdom of God is worth any sacrifice, do you think God really wants us to cut off our hand if we commit some sin with that hand?

Have students read the Joseph Smith Translation of Mark 9:40–48 in the Bible appendix.

- What additional meaning does the Joseph Smith Translation give to these verses in Mark?
- Who does our offending hand represent?
- Who does our offending foot represent?
- In verse 42, who might “he that is thy standard” refer to? (People you look up to, those who set an example for you.)
- Who does our offending eye represent?
- Who is appointed to “watch over thee to show thee light”?
- What happens to some people when family members they admire or Church leaders they look to for guidance fall into sin?

Read the Joseph Smith Translation of Mark 9:44–45 and ask:

- What do you think it means to “stand or fall” by yourself?
- In whom should we put our trust?

Share the following statement by President Heber C. Kimball, a member of the First Presidency, to help answer these questions:

“To meet the difficulties that are coming, it will be necessary for you to have a knowledge of the truth of this work for yourselves. The difficulties will be of such a character that the man or woman who does not possess this personal knowledge or witness will fall. If you have not got the testimony, live right and call upon the Lord and cease not till you obtain it. If you do not you will not stand. . . .

“The time will come when no man nor woman will be able to endure on borrowed light. Each will have to be guided by the light within himself. . . .

“If you don’t have it you will not stand; therefore seek for the testimony of Jesus and cleave to it, that when the trying time comes you may not stumble and fall” (in Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 3rd ed. [1967], 450).

Mark 10 (see also Matthew 19:16–30; 20:20–34; Luke 18:15–43). What we desire reveals what is in our heart and affects what we receive. (25–30 minutes)

Ask your students to imagine that they were granted a personal interview with the Savior and that they could ask for one blessing. Give them a minute to think about what they would ask for, but caution them not to tell anyone.

On the board write, *What is most important to _____?* Tell students that in a way some people have had that opportunity. Review the following scripture stories in Mark 10 with your students and write on the board what seemed most important to the people listed below:

- Verses 17–22: the rich young man
- Verses 25–30: Peter
- Verses 35–41: James and John
- Verses 46–52: Bartimaeus
- Verses 32–34: Jesus

Ask:

- What happened to each of these five people?
- Which desires are more eternally rewarding than others?
- What do these stories teach us about the effect our desires have on our lives? (see Alma 41:3–7).

Write the word *you* in the blank on the board and have students answer that question to themselves. Ask them to think about what might happen to them if their desires are good or if they are bad. Ask them to consider what might happen if their desires do not change. Ask: What can we do to make our desires more eternal and Christlike? (see 2 Nephi 31:20; Enos 1:1–6; Moroni 10:32–33).

Mark 11:12 (see also Matthew 21:18). Jesus experienced hunger, thirst, fatigue, pain, and temptation, and so knows how to comfort and help us. (15–20 minutes)

Bring to class some photographs from magazines or newspapers of human suffering (such as famine, loss of loved ones, flood, fire, or war). Ask students if any of them have ever experienced anything like what is depicted in these photographs (for example have they ever been very hungry or suffered a flood or fire). If it isn’t too personal or too difficult, invite them to tell what happened to them. Ask:

- How does it make you feel to see others suffer as much or more than you have?
- Would you feel the same if you had never suffered at all?
- Why do we tend to feel compassion for others if we have experienced some suffering ourselves?

Tell students that in chapter 11 Mark begins his record of the last week of the Savior’s life. Have them read Mark 11:12; John 19:28; Mosiah 3:7; Alma 7:11–13; and Doctrine and Covenants 19:15–19 and list the kinds of things Jesus suffered. Ask:

- What do these verses teach us about Jesus?
- Why did Jesus have to suffer more than we suffer?
- How would those sufferings make Him a better judge of our lives?

Have your students write on a piece of paper how it makes them feel to know that the Savior willingly suffered all these things for us. If you feel it is appropriate, invite some students to share what they wrote with the class.



Mark 11:12–14, 19–26 (see also Matthew 21:18–22). When we pray in faith, Heavenly Father will grant us that which is right and best for us.

(35–45 minutes)

Ask students to name all the miracles of Jesus they can think of, and quickly make a list of them on the board. Then have them read Mark 11:12–14, 19–20 looking for how the miracle Jesus performed there is different from all the others. Use the information in the commentary for Mark 11:12–14 in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles* (p. 142) to help your students understand this destructive miracle. Have students read Mark 11:21–24, and ask: What lesson did Jesus draw from the miracle of the cursing of the fig tree?

Tell the students: Suppose you had a friend who wanted you to help him develop the kind of faith Jesus described in these verses. What advice could you give him? To help your students answer this question, discuss the following as a class:

- How does one acquire faith in the first place? (Faith is a gift from God; see 1 Nephi 10:17; D&C 46:13–14.)
- What must we do to cultivate faith? (Be obedient and humble, seek diligently, and ask for the gift of faith; see John 7:17; 1 Nephi 10:18–19; Alma 32:21–27.)

Elder James E. Talmage said:

“Though within the reach of all who diligently strive to gain it, faith is nevertheless a divine gift. As is fitting for so priceless a pearl, it is given to those only who show by their sincerity that they are worthy of it, and who give promise of abiding by its dictates. . . . No compulsion is used in bringing men to a knowledge of God; yet, as fast as we open our hearts to the influences of righteousness, the faith that leads to life eternal will be given us of our Father” (*The Articles of Faith*, 107).

Ask: What must we do after faith has been given? (Continue to nourish our faith by study, prayer, and obedience; see Mark 9:23–24; Romans 10:17; 2 Nephi 31:20; Alma 32:28–37; Helaman 10:4–5.)

The Prophet Joseph Smith said:

“Faith comes by hearing the word of God, through the testimony of the servants of God; that testimony is always attended by the Spirit of prophecy and revelation” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 148).

Have students write their feelings about faith on a piece of paper. Invite some students to share what they wrote.

Mark 11:15–18 (see also Matthew 21:12–16; Luke 19:45–48). The house of the Lord is a sacred place and should be treated with reverence. (30–45 minutes)

Show students a picture of a temple, preferably the one closest to your area, and ask:

- Who of you has visited any of the Church’s temples?
- What was it like to walk around the temple grounds?
- How would you feel if there were booths on the temple grounds selling clothing, food, and souvenirs?
- What would merchandising do to the spirit and reverence of the temple?

Read Mark 11:15–17. Point out that this is the second time that Jesus cleansed the temple. Have them read about the first time in John 2:13–17 and compare it to the account in Mark. You may want to share with students this statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“Near the beginning of his public ministry, at the time of the Passover, Jesus gained general attention by driving from the temple those who made merchandise in his Father’s house. Now, during the last week of his mortal ministry, quoting what he himself as the Lord Jehovah had said through Isaiah (Isa. 56:7), ‘Mine house shall be called an house of prayer,’ he again exercised his divine prerogative to cleanse that which was both his and his Father’s” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:584–85; see also “Points to Ponder” in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, p. 143).

Ask: Why are respect and reverence important in all our sacred buildings? Share the following statement by Elder Boyd K. Packer:

“When we meet to learn the doctrines of the gospel, it should be in a spirit of reverence. It is about *reverence* and how it relates to *revelation* that I wish to speak.

“Inspiration comes more easily in peaceful settings. Such words as *quiet*, *still*, *peaceable*, *Comforter* abound in the scriptures: ‘Be *still*, and know that I am God’ (Psalm 46:10; italics added). And the promise, ‘You shall receive my Spirit, the Holy Ghost, even the Comforter, which shall teach you the *peaceable* things of the kingdom’ (D&C 36:2; italics added). . . .

“Irreverent conduct in our chapels is worthy of a reminder, if not reproof. Leaders should teach that reverence invites revelation” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1991, 27–28; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 21–22).

Have students read Matthew 21:12–16 and find what happened after Jesus cleansed the temple. Use the following statement from Elder James E. Talmage for help:

“His wrath of indignation was followed by the calmness of gentle ministry; there in the cleared courts of His house, blind and lame folk came limping and groping about Him, and He healed them. The anger of the chief priests and scribes was raging against Him; but it was impotent. They had decreed His death, and had made repeated efforts to take Him, and there He sat within the very area over which they claimed supreme jurisdiction, and they were afraid to touch Him because of the common people, . . . ‘for all the people were very attentive to hear him.’” (*Jesus the Christ*, 528–29).



Show students the accompanying picture (a full-sized version is included in the appendix, p. 305). Ask:

- What do these pictures have in common?
- How is cleansing the temple like healing the body of physical sicknesses?
- How is it like healing our spiritual sicknesses? (see 1 Corinthians 3:16–17; 6:19).

Read Moroni 10:32–33 with your students and encourage them to “come unto Christ” and ask Him to cleanse them just as He cleansed the temple in Jerusalem.

Mark 12:41–44 (see also Luke 21:1–4). To become like Christ, we must learn to sacrifice. (20–25 minutes)

Ask your students to imagine that it is their birthday and that two of their friends each give them a present. One gives them \$20 and the other gives them a present worth less than \$2.

- Which gift would impress you most?
- Would it make a difference if the person who gave you \$20 was so wealthy that \$20 was no sacrifice at all?
- Would it make a difference if the person who gave you the \$2 present was so poor that this person had to skip lunches and save for weeks to be able to afford it?
- Which friend really gave the most?

Read Mark 12:41–44. Point out that the coin called here a “mite” was the smallest piece of money in use at the time. Ask:

- How are these verses like the story of the two friends?
- Who did Jesus say gave the most, the “many that were rich” or the poor widow?

Share the following statement by Elder James E. Talmage:

“In the accounts kept by the recording angels, figured out according to the arithmetic of heaven, entries are made in terms of quality rather than of quantity, and values are determined on the basis of capability and intent. The rich gave much yet kept

back more; the widow’s gift was her all. It was not the smallness of her offering that made it especially acceptable, but the spirit of sacrifice and devout intent with which she gave. On the books of the heavenly accountants that widow’s contribution was entered as a munificent gift, surpassing in worth the largess of kings. ‘For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not’ [2 Corinthians 8:12]” (*Jesus the Christ*, 561–62).

Discuss with students how the message of the story of the widow’s mite could be applied to the gifts we give to the Lord today. To help your students understand the importance of sacrifice, discuss the following questions:

- The Lord could certainly accomplish His purposes without the money we give in offerings. Why does He require us to sacrifice to help build the kingdom?
- How does your sacrifice help the kingdom?
- What does your sacrifice do for you?
- What does sacrifice have to do with faith in the Lord?

Conclude with the following statement from *Lectures on Faith*, compiled under the direction of the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation; for, from the first existence of man, the faith necessary unto the enjoyment of life and salvation never could be obtained without the sacrifice of all earthly things. It was through this sacrifice, and this only, that God has ordained that men should enjoy eternal life” (*Lectures on Faith*, 69).

Mark 13 (see also Matthew 24; Luke 12:37–48; 17:20–37; 21:5–36). Jesus taught His disciples about the last days and His Second Coming. (5–10 minutes)

This part of Mark’s account is recorded in greater detail in Matthew 24 and especially in the Joseph Smith Translation version in the Pearl of Great Price (see Joseph Smith—Matthew). If you taught this material in Matthew, consider briefly reminding students of what they learned and going on to Mark 14.

Mark 14 (see also Matthew 26; Luke 22; John 18:1–27). Mark adds details to our understanding of Gethsemane, the arrest, and the trials. (25–35 minutes)

Mark provides a few details about Christ’s suffering prior to His Crucifixion that are not mentioned in the other Gospel accounts. Begin by briefly reviewing the story line of

Mark 14:10–31. Have students read the Joseph Smith Translation of Mark 14:36–38, and ask:

- What were the disciples thinking and feeling as they went to Gethsemane?
- What did the Savior do about their complaints and questions?
- Why do you think He took Peter, James, and John apart from the others and rebuked only them?
- What other experience did only Peter, James, and John have with the Savior that should have prepared them for this night? (see Matthew 17:1–13; Mark 9:2–13).

Mark 14:46–52 contains another unique detail and an opportunity for a little detective work. Read those verses with your students and tell them that only Mark mentions the young man who followed after Jesus was arrested. Mark does not tell us who the young man is, but the Joseph Smith Translation tells us that the young man was a disciple (see JST, Mark 14:51). Ask: Since the other disciples “all forsook him, and fled” (v. 50), but Mark knows of this event, who might that young man have been? (It is likely that it was Mark himself.)

Mark 14 also contains a clarification of what happened when Jesus was tried before Caiaphas. Have students compare Mark 14:55–64 with Matthew 26:59–66, and discuss the following questions:

- With all the false witnesses brought to testify against Jesus, why were the chief priests unable to find any “that could accuse him”? (see Matthew 26:60–61; Mark 14:57–59).
- How does that help us understand why the high priest demanded that Jesus testify against Himself?

Compare the Savior’s answer to the high priest in each account (see Matthew 26:64; Mark 14:62). How does Mark’s version help you better understand what Jesus testified about Himself? Because of Jesus’ testimony, the Jews accused Him of blasphemy, which is claiming for oneself godlike powers or attributes.

- Why do you think they did not even consider that Jesus was telling the truth?
- Why was Jesus the only person in the room who could *not* be guilty of blasphemy?

Mark 15 (see also Matthew 27:1–61; Luke 23; John 18:28–19:42). Mark’s account gives additional insight into Christ’s suffering at the hands of Pilate and on the cross. (50–65 minutes)

Have students read Mark 15:1–5, and ask:

- Where did the chief priests take Jesus next?
- Why did they take Jesus to Pilate if they had already found Him “to be guilty of death”? (Mark 14:64; see John 18:31).

Have students read also Isaiah 53:3–7 and find a prophecy of Isaiah that was fulfilled in Mark 15:1–5. Have them compare

Matthew 27:15–16 with Mark 15:6–7 and answer the following questions:

- What more do we learn in Mark about the kind of man Barabbas was?
- How do you suppose Jesus felt when the Jews desired that He be crucified and a murderer released in His place?
- Tell students that the name *Barabbas* means “son of a father.” What is ironic about the Jews’ choice of a prisoner by that name? (Jesus Christ was *the Son of the Father*.)
- Who was the most eager to have the Son of God killed, the Roman who did not believe in God or the Jewish priests who claimed to believe?
- Why do you think that was so?

Read Mark 15:15–33 with students, helping them find answers to the following questions as you read:

- What did the Roman soldiers do to Jesus? (see vv. 15–20).
- What might that tell us about them? (They were supportive of Pilate, they could be cruel, they didn’t know Jesus was the Son of God.)
- What did the chief priests and the other Jews do to Jesus while He hung on the cross? (see vv. 29–32).
- What might that tell us about them? (They looked beyond the mark, they let their understanding of the law get in the way of recognizing the Giver of the law.)
- Do you think the actions of the Romans or the Jews were the most disappointing to Jesus?
- Read Isaiah 53:9. Can you find a fulfillment of part of this prophecy of Isaiah in anything that happened in Mark 15? (see vv. 27–28).

Draw on the board a chart like “The Last Day of Christ’s Life” found in the appendix (p. 292) but without the labels. Have students search Mark 15:25–37 for the following details. Write the times and events on the chart as they find them.

- About what time was Jesus placed on the cross? (see v. 25).
- About what time did He allow His body to die? (see vv. 34–37).
- Tell students that the twelve hours of the day were counted from sunrise to sunset, or from about 6 A.M. on our clock to about 6 P.M. About how long did Jesus suffer on the cross?
- If you include Jesus’ sufferings in the Garden of Gethsemane, which began the evening before, and His trials, which took the rest of the night and early morning, how long had Jesus been suffering before He died?

Have students turn to the photograph of the Garden Tomb, number 14 in the photographs section of their Bibles. Read Matthew 27:57–61 and Isaiah 53:8–9 with your students and discuss how Jesus’ death and burial fulfilled prophecy. Have students compare Matthew 27:57–61 with Mark 15:42–47. Ask: What more do we learn from Mark about Joseph, Pilate, and the burial of Jesus?

Mark 16 (see also Matthew 28; Luke 24; John 20–21).
Jesus Christ rose from the dead and thus completed the atoning sacrifice for all mankind. (15–20 minutes)



Show or draw a cross and ask:

- Why do most churches consider this the symbol of Christianity?
- Why don't we?

Share with them the following statement by Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“I do not wish to give offense to any of my Christian brethren who use the cross on the steeples of their cathedrals and at the altars of their chapels. . . . But for us, the cross is the symbol of the dying Christ, while our message is a declaration of the living Christ” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1975, 136; or *Ensign*, May 1975, 92).

Read Mark 16:1–11 and ask:

- Why do you think the disciples found it so hard to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead?
- How does the fact that Jesus was the first person ever to be resurrected make their doubts more understandable?
- What difference would it make if Jesus had not been resurrected?
- Would you live any differently if you believed that this life was the only existence you would have? Why or why not?

To help answer these questions, read 2 Nephi 9:5–10 with your students. Share your testimony of the comfort that comes from knowing that death is not the end.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT LUKE

Author: Luke was a physician (see Colossians 4:14) and was called to be a “messenger of Jesus Christ” (JST, Luke 1:1). Luke was a Gentile (non-Jewish) by birth. His writings show he was well educated in Greek culture and language. Luke was not an eyewitness to the events of the Savior’s life but became well acquainted with the life and teachings of the Savior through those who were (see Luke 1:2–3). Luke was Paul’s companion at various times. He traveled with the Apostle during his second and third missionary journeys. When Paul was imprisoned at Rome for the second time, Luke remained even after all others deserted him (see 2 Timothy 4:11). Luke was also the author of the book of Acts, which is a companion volume to his Gospel. (See Bible Dictionary, “Luke,” p. 726.)

Audience: Luke wanted the Gentiles to come to the same knowledge of the truth that he had. His testimony was addressed to Theophilus (see Luke 1:3), who may have been a high-ranking Roman official. Luke presented information that would help every reader understand and believe the good news about the Redeemer.

Historical Background: Luke was written before Acts (see Acts 1:1), probably between A.D. 59–79.

Unique Features: Besides being the longest book in the New Testament, Luke adds the unique perspective of one who was not a Jew to the Gospel accounts of Jesus’ life.

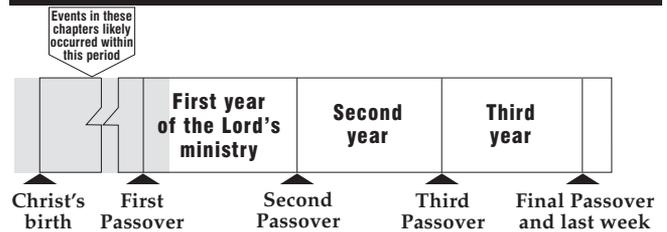
“Matthew presents Christ as King, Mark presents Him as Servant, John presents Him as the Son of God, and Luke presents Him as the Son of man, the human-divine [part mortal] One. . . . In agreement with his purpose, Luke narrates those events that demonstrate the humanity of Christ. The divine genealogy is traced to Adam. A detailed account of Christ’s mother and of His infancy and childhood is presented. The parables included by Luke have a human touch. Although Luke beautifully sets forth the humanity of the divine One he carefully shields His deity and kingship (1:32–35)” (Merrill F. Unger and others, *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, rev. ed. [1988], “Luke, Gospel of,” 788).

The Gospel of Luke includes much material not found in the other Gospels. This material often focuses on women, the poor, and the lower class. Luke’s testimony, therefore, provides a message of hope to all people through the life and atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This emphasis is also consistent with the book of Acts, which is primarily concerned with the mission to the Gentiles.

Theme: Luke 19:10 is a good summary of Luke’s theme that “the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” Luke’s testimony is that Jesus was the promised Messiah and is the Savior of all.

Luke 1–3

The Life of Jesus Christ



Introduction

“For generations, enlightened mankind anxiously sought the fulfillment of prophecies uttered by righteous men inspired of Almighty God. . . .

“Then came that night of nights when the angel of the Lord came upon shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock, with the pronouncement: ‘For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.’ (Luke 2:8–11.) . . .

“With the birth of the babe in Bethlehem, there emerged a great endowment—a power stronger than weapons, a wealth more lasting than the coins of Caesar. This child was to be the King of kings and Lord of lords, the Promised Messiah, even Jesus Christ the Son of God.

“Born in a stable, cradled in a manger, he came forth from heaven to live on earth as mortal man and to establish the kingdom of God” (Thomas S. Monson, in Conference Report, Oct. 1965, 141). The testimony of Luke opens with a detailed account of the events that surrounded Christ’s birth.

Prayerfully study Luke 1–3 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, Mary, and others were foreordained in the premortal life to fulfill certain missions on earth (see Luke 1:5–45, 67–79; see also Alma 7:9–10; 13:1–3; Abraham 3:22–23).
- The birth of a Savior was an essential part of the plan of salvation (see Luke 1:30–33, 46–55, 67–79; 2:10–11, 25–38; 3:2–6; JST, Luke 3:4–11; see also Mosiah 3:5–13; 5:8).
- Through revelation we can obtain a testimony of Jesus Christ and receive direction from God (see Luke 1:11–22, 26–33; 2:8–15, 25–38).
- Membership in the Church does not bring the full blessings of the gospel; we must faithfully keep our covenants in order to obtain those blessings (see Luke 3).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 21–25.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Luke 1–3.

Luke 1:1–2:20 (see also Matthew 1:18–24; John 1:1–5). Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, Mary, and many others were foreordained in the premortal life to fulfill certain missions on earth. (25–35 minutes)

Show students different kinds of announcements (for example wedding invitations, newspaper advertisements, and award notices). Ask: If you could receive any announcement today, what would you like it to be? Invite students to read Luke 1:5–17, 26–31 and look for the announcements Mary and Zacharias received. Ask: What clues do these verses give as to why they were the ones to receive these special announcements?

Share the following statements by Elder Bruce R. McConkie with the class:

“Our Lord’s mother, *Mary*, like Christ, was chosen and foreordained in pre-existence for the part she was destined to play in the great plan of salvation. Hers was the commission to provide a temporal body for the Lord Omnipotent, to nurture and cherish him in infancy and youth, and to aid him in preparing for that great mission which he alone could perform. Certainly she was one of the noblest and greatest of all the spirit offspring of the Father” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 471).

“Though many of the Jews in the meridian of time were in a state of direful and awful apostasy, such darkness of mind and spirit was not universal. It did not envelope the whole nation. Elizabeth and Zacharias were righteous saints. Both were lineal descendants of Aaron, and Zacharias held the office of priest in the Aaronic Priesthood” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:78).

Ask: What do we learn about Mary, Zacharias, and Elisabeth from these statements?

Point out to students that Zacharias’s wife, Elisabeth, was barren (infertile) and Mary was a virgin. Ask:

- How do these circumstances add to the significance of these births?
- Do you know of anyone who was born under seemingly miraculous circumstances?
- What thoughts or feelings have your parents shared with you about how sacred and special it is to bring a child into

the world? (Consider asking a parent to visit the class to share these thoughts and feelings.)

Read Luke 1:38–55, 67–79 as a class. Ask students to pay attention to the descriptions of peace, joy, and hope that Mary and Zacharias expressed. Then ask:

- How do you imagine you might feel when you become a parent?
- How might such feelings be more intense because these two children were to be Jesus and John the Baptist?
- What do these verses teach about the faith of Mary and Zacharias?
- What lessons can you learn from them to help your faith grow?

Have students recall Matthew’s and Mark’s accounts of these events, and ask: What is significantly different about Luke’s testimony? Read the information on “audience” and “unique features” in the introduction to the Gospel of Luke (p. 72). Ask: How does this information help you understand why Luke was the only Gospel writer to mention Mary’s and Zacharias’s experiences with an angel?

Display a picture or some figurines from a nativity scene, and invite students to listen as you read of Christ’s birth from Luke 2:1–20. Testify of the Savior and allow students who would like to share their testimonies to do so.

Luke 1:13. Prayers are not always answered immediately. Sometimes we must wait a long time to receive answers to our prayers. (10–15 minutes)

After the opening prayer, ask students:

- Does God hear every prayer?
- Does He answer every prayer?
- What should we do if an answer doesn’t come right away?

Read Luke 1:13. What does this verse teach about God? (He hears and answers prayers.) Review verses 5–12 and look for how long Zacharias and Elisabeth may have prayed before an answer came. What does that teach you about God answering prayers?

Share the following statement from Bishop H. Burke Peterson, then a member of the Presiding Bishopric:

“Heavenly Father listens to every prayer from his children. . . . No matter what we may have done wrong, he listens to us. . . .

“. . . Some [prayers] are answered immediately, but some do take longer, and that’s where we may become discouraged. . . .

“There are . . . times when you wonder if he is ever going to answer. About twenty-two years ago our fourth daughter was born. After she was born, the

doctor told my wife that she shouldn't have any more children. We talked about it, and she said, 'I feel that there is another child for us.' So we decided, of course, that we were going to have another baby.

"Well, a year went by, and the baby didn't come; and two years went by. Finally one of the girls said to me, 'Are you sure we're supposed to have another baby?' My wife had said that she knew we could have one, so we went and collectively asked her, 'Are you sure we're going to have a baby?' She said, 'Yes, but we haven't prayed long enough or hard enough.' So we prayed for another year, and still no baby came. Then we asked the question again: 'Are you sure you know what you're talking about?' 'Yes,' was her reply. So we prayed and prayed and prayed for one and two and three and four and five and six and seven and eight years! And then one day at the table she said, 'Guess what? We're going to have a baby.' Prayers, you see, are sometimes answered quickly, but other times you pray a long, long time before you get what you want. . . .

"May the Lord bless you to persevere in righteous purposes" ("Prayer—Try Again," *Ensign*, June 1981, 73–75).

Invite students to share how it makes them feel to know that God answers prayers.

Luke 1:13–17, 26–56; 3:1–22 (see also Matthew 3; 14:3–5; Mark 1:4–11; 6:17–20; John 1:1–36). Mary and John can serve as examples for us. (45–50 minutes)

Bring a mirror to class, and hold it in front of several students.

- What do you like about mirrors? What do you dislike?
- How concerned are you about the way you look? What do you do to try to change your looks?
- How important is your outward appearance compared to your personality and inner traits? (see also 1 Samuel 16:7).

Briefly discuss how famous people (such as television stars, fashion models, sports stars, or musicians) can affect our standards. Ask: What harm might result from having some of those people serve as your role models? Testify that some of the best role models are found in the scriptures, and as we follow their examples we can strengthen our spirits, not just improve our physical appearance or abilities. Two of the best role models we can follow are John the Baptist and Mary.

Read Luke 7:28 and look for how the Savior described John the Baptist. Share the following statement from Elder Bruce R. McConkie, and invite students to listen for reasons the Lord described John the way He did.

"Few prophets rank with *John the Baptist*. Among other things, his ministry was foretold by Lehi (1 Ne. 10:7–10), Nephi (1 Ne. 11:27; 2 Ne. 31:4–18), and Isaiah (Isa. 40:3); Gabriel came down from the courts of glory to announce John's coming birth (Luke 1:5–44); he was the last legal administrator, holding keys and authority under the Mosaic dispensation (D. & C. 84:26–28); his mission was to prepare the way before, baptize, and acclaim the divine Sonship of Christ (John 1); and in modern times, on the 15th of May, 1829, he returned to earth as a resurrected being to confer the Aaronic Priesthood upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. ([Joseph Smith—History 1:66–75]; D. & C. 13.)" (*Mormon Doctrine*, 393).

Tell students that John is a good example for those holding the Aaronic Priesthood. Read with them the prophecy concerning John in Luke 1:13–17.

- Which of John's qualities can you find that would be important for modern priesthood holders to possess? (He brought joy and gladness to others [v. 14], he was great in the sight of the Lord [v. 15], he helped prepare people to receive the Lord [v. 17].)
- Why would having these qualities be important?
- How do these qualities compare in importance to our outward appearance?

Ask the girls in your class: How would you feel if the Aaronic Priesthood holders of today had the characteristics John did? Have students silently read Luke 3:1–22 looking for other qualities or accomplishments of John that young men could emulate, and discuss these as a class.

Ask:

- What kind of woman do you believe Mary was?
- Read 1 Nephi 11:14–15. How concerned would you guess she was over her outward appearance?

Share the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie about Mary:

"As the Father chose the most noble and righteous of all his spirit sons to come into mortality as his Only Begotten in the flesh, so we may confidently conclude that he selected the most worthy and spiritually talented of all his spirit daughters to be the mortal mother of his Eternal Son" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:85).

Ask the girls in your class: Why would it be particularly helpful to have a female role model in the scriptures? Invite students to read Luke 1:26–56, and ask:

- Which attributes of Mary do you feel are worth emulating? (She was chaste [vv. 27, 35], the Lord was with her [v. 28],

she was a humble servant [v. 38], she magnified the Lord [vv. 46–47].)

- Which of those qualities would you most like to acquire?
- What could you do to develop those qualities?

Ask the boys: How would you feel if today’s young women had the attributes of Mary? Invite the girls to quote the Young Women Theme (see *Young Women Personal Progress: Standing as a Witness of God* [2001], p. 5). Ask: What qualities expressed in that theme do you think Mary had?

Tell students that the way John and Mary lived helped further the plan of salvation. They prepared the way for the birth and ministry of Jesus Christ. Their great acts were intended to increase the Savior’s glory, not their own. Testify that the way we live matters much more than our outer appearance. Refer to the mirror and encourage the boys to try to “reflect” what they have learned about John in their personal lives, and encourage the girls to reflect the attributes of Mary.



Luke 1–3 (see also Matthew 3; 14:3–5; Mark 1:4–11; 6:17–20; John 1:1–36). Everyone who gains a testimony of Jesus Christ should bear testimony of Him to others in word and deed. (35–40 minutes)

Ask students to recall and share experiences in which they felt the Spirit as someone bore testimony.

- What did the person testify of?
- In what ways did the testimony influence your life?

Have students consider what they think is most important to bear testimony of. Ask them to write their testimonies in a sentence or two on a piece of paper, and invite them to share what they wrote.

The first three chapters of Luke contain the testimonies of several people:

Mary	Luke 1:46–55
Zacharias	Luke 1:67–79
the angel in the fields	Luke 2:10–12
the heavenly host	Luke 2:13–14
the shepherds	Luke 2:20
Simeon	Luke 2:29–35
Anna	Luke 2:38
John the Baptist	Luke 3:4–6; JST, Luke 3:4–11
Heavenly Father	Luke 3:22

Invite students to review these testimonies and to consider what they have in common. Ask:

- Why is it significant that all of these testimonies focus on the Savior?
- How would having Jesus Christ as the foundation of your testimony bless your life?

- What is not appropriate to speak of when we stand to express ourselves in testimony meetings?

Share the following statement from Elder Henry B. Eyring, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, about what to avoid while sharing a testimony:

“Those who have prepared carefully for the fast and testimony meeting . . . won’t give sermons or exhortations or travel reports or try to entertain as they bear witness. Because they will have already expressed appreciation to people privately, they will have less need to do it publicly. Neither will they feel a need to use eloquent language nor to go on at length” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 43; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 32).

If you have time, invite students to reread the scriptures listed in the chart looking for what these people did to gain a testimony. (For example, the shepherds received their witness as they carried out their daily labor. Simeon followed the Spirit and was found in the temple. Anna fasted and prayed.) Encourage students to strive to live in such a way that they can gain or strengthen their testimonies.

Luke 2:40–52. Even when Jesus’ parents did not know where He was, He was always doing the will of His Father in Heaven. (35–40 minutes)

Ask your students if any of them have ever been lost. If so, ask them to describe their feelings when they realized they were lost. If not, have them imagine how it might feel to be lost. Ask them to imagine being a parent whose child is lost.

- How do you think a parent might feel?
- Do you think you would be more or less worried if your child were lost in your neighborhood or while you were on a trip far from home?

Have students read Luke 2:40–45 and look for who was lost.

- How do you imagine Mary and Joseph felt when they discovered Jesus was lost?
- Where would your own parents probably go looking for you if you were lost?
- What does the place where you can usually be found reveal about the type of person you are?
- Read Luke 2:46. Where did Joseph and Mary find Jesus?
- Read Doctrine and Covenants 109:12–13. According to these verses, why is the temple still a good place to “search for Jesus”?
- What does being found in the temple reveal about the type of person Jesus Christ was, even when He was just twelve years old?
- Read Doctrine and Covenants 101:22. How does this verse relate to this story?

Invite students to read Luke 2:43–51 and look for evidence of the Savior’s greatness when He was a child. Ask students to consider these questions:

- According to these verses, how good a son was Jesus?
- What evidence is there that His parents trusted Him?
- Read the Joseph Smith Translation of Luke 2:46. What do these verses add to our understanding of the Savior?
- What evidence is there that Jesus already knew who He was?

Read the following statement about Jesus by the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“When still a boy He had all the intelligence necessary to enable Him to rule and govern the kingdom of the Jews, and could reason with the wisest and most profound doctors of law and divinity, and make their theories and practice to appear like folly compared with the wisdom He possessed; but He was a boy only, and lacked physical strength even to defend His own person; and was subject to cold, to hunger and to death” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 392).

Encourage students to follow the example of Jesus by obeying Heavenly Father’s will, especially while in their youth. Discuss with students some ways that we can “be about [our] Father’s business” today.

Luke 3 (see also Matthew 1:1–16; 3; 14:3–5; Mark 1:4–11; 6:17–20; John 1:1–36). Church membership alone does not bring the full blessings of the gospel; we must faithfully keep our covenants in order to obtain those blessings. (10–15 minutes)

Ask students:

- How many of you have heard that you are a chosen generation and were selected to come forth in the last days?
- What do you believe that statement means?
- What responsibilities come because you are a part of this generation?

Read the following statement by President Joseph Fielding Smith:

“Now may I say to all those who forsake the world and join the Church, and to all the members of the Church, that Church membership alone will not assure us of the full blessings of the gospel or guarantee us an entrance into the celestial kingdom. After baptism we must keep the commandments and endure to the end” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1970, 7).

Help students see that while it is essential to belong to the Church, being “chosen” will not help us if we are not faithful and worthy. Help them understand that it isn’t enough to be active in the Church. We have to be “active in the gospel” as well.

Show students that Jesus was born through the lineage of Abraham by briefly reviewing His genealogy in Luke 3:23–38.

- Read Genesis 22:15–18. Why was it vital for Jesus to be a descendant of Abraham?
- Read Abraham 2:9–11. What blessings are available to those who are of the covenant lineage?

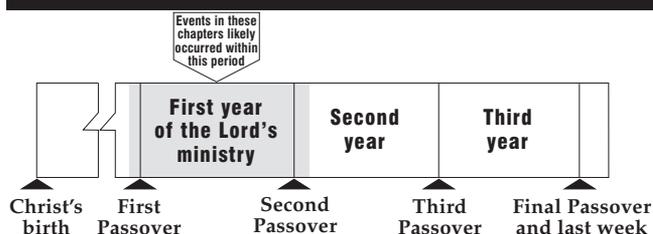
Teach students that the people of Jesus’ day misunderstood the Abrahamic covenant. They thought that because they were of the house of Israel they automatically received the blessings of Abraham.

- Read Luke 3:7–8. What do these verses teach about the misunderstanding of the Jews? (see also the commentary for Matthew 3:9 in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, p. 28).
- How can verse 8 be applied to members of the Church today?
- What does verse 9 add to our understanding of these verses? (If we do not bring forth good fruit through keeping our covenants, no matter what our lineage is, we will not receive the blessings of the gospel but will be cast out.)

Invite students to read Luke 3:10–22 and look for what we can do to be worthy of the responsibility of being a “chosen generation.”

Luke 4–6

The Life of Jesus Christ



Introduction

The beginning of Jesus Christ’s ministry is recorded in Luke 4–6. During this time the Savior called His Apostles, taught and healed throughout the region of Galilee, and exposed the people’s sins and false traditions. His boldness in eating with sinners, forgiving sin, and refusing to teach and heal in accordance with false traditions shocked many of the religious leaders of His day. In spite of this, many people recognized His divinity and power and became His disciples.

Prayerfully study Luke 4–6 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- We can avoid temptation by following Jesus' example and relying on the scriptures (see Luke 4:1–13; see also Alma 11:23; Helaman 15:7–8).
- We should sustain our Church leaders and follow their inspired counsel (see Luke 4:14–30; see also Hebrews 13:17; D&C 1:14, 38).
- Christ's disciples love Him and are willing to give up the things of the world to follow Him (see Luke 5:1–11; 6:27–45).
- Those who exercise faith, are humble, and come unto Christ can have their pain and suffering taken away (see Luke 5:12–13); be forgiven of their sins (see Luke 5:18–26); and be blessed when they are poor, hungry, or persecuted (see Luke 6:20–23).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 43, 45, 52–53.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Luke 4–6.

Luke 4:1–13 (see also Matthew 4:1–11; Mark 1:12–13). We can avoid temptation by following Jesus Christ's example and relying on the scriptures. (15–20 minutes)

Ask students: If you could have one wish to benefit the whole earth, what would it be? List responses on the board. If no one mentions it, hold up a paper with the words "Stop Satan from Tempting Us" and ask: How much help would this be to mankind? Read Abraham 3:24–25 and look for one reason the Lord allows Satan to tempt us.

- Read Luke 4:13. What does this verse teach us about temptation?
- Read 1 Nephi 22:26. What limits Satan's power?

Read the following statement by Elder James E. Faust:

"We need not become paralyzed with fear of Satan's power. He can have no power over us unless we permit it. He is really a coward, and if we stand firm, he will retreat. The Apostle James counseled: 'Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you' (James 4:7). He cannot know our thoughts unless we speak them. And Nephi states that 'he hath no power over the hearts' of people who are righteous (see 1 Nephi 22:26)" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1987, 43; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 35).

Invite students to relate examples of times their righteous thoughts or behavior helped limit Satan's power.

If you used the teaching suggestion for Matthew 4:1–11 (p. 25), remind students of the orange analogy and ask them what they remember from that lesson about dealing with temptation. Read Luke 4:1–13 and ask: What did Jesus do in these verses to resist temptation? Ask students to reflect on the following questions:

- Are you doing better now at resisting temptation than you were one month ago? one year ago?
- What gives you strength to resist temptation?
- What could you do to better resist temptation in the future?

Luke 4:14–32 (see also Matthew 4:12; Mark 1:14, 21–22; John 4:3). We should sustain our Church leaders and obey their counsel. (25–30 minutes)



Display the accompanying picture of Jesus Christ preaching in the synagogue in Nazareth (see appendix, p. 306). Without telling what the picture depicts, invite students to search the picture for clues about where the Savior was and what He was doing.

- From the picture, what do you think the people with Him were feeling?
- What do you like most about the picture?

Ask students to read Luke 4:16–21 and look for the verse depicted in the picture.

- In what city did these things happen? (see v. 16).
- What was the relationship between the Savior and these people?
- What is "the book of the prophet Esaias"?

Point out to students that "Esaias" is the Greek form of the name "Isaiah." Refer them to footnote 18a to learn what passage Christ was reading. Divide the following scripture references among the students and have them look for who fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy: Matthew 9:27–31; 11:5; Luke 5:18–24; Acts 10:38.

Explain that Isaiah's words were understood by the Jews to be Messianic, that they prophesied of a Savior who would come. Read Luke 4:22–24 and ask:

- How did the people respond to the Savior's declaration that He was the promised Messiah?
- Why do you think they rejected His testimony?
- Why might it be hard to accept a person you grew up with as a chosen leader?
- How could this apply to us today?

Display a picture of the current prophet. Invite the class to suggest characteristics of the prophet that are typical of other men, and list them on the board. Also create a list of characteristics that are unique to him and his calling. Tell students that the prophet is in many ways like other men. Ask:

- How does this make it difficult for some people to accept his words?
- Does the ease or difficulty of what the prophet asks make a difference in how we listen to him? Why?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 1:38 and ask students to consider how this verse applies to their local leaders (for example parents, bishop, stake president). Share the following statement by Elder James E. Faust:

"Members of the Church . . . those of enduring faith . . . willingly accept the supremacy of God and rely upon the scriptures and counsel of His servants, the leaders of the Church. These leaders of the Church are men with human frailties, and are imperfect in their wisdom and judgment. Perfection in men is not found on the earth. But almost without exception these leaders sincerely, humbly, and prayerfully render great and dedicated Christian service to the best of their ability. More important, they hold a divine warrant and commission through which great and eternal blessings come to those who sustain and follow them. They are God's servants" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1985, 8; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 8).

- Read Luke 4:25–32. What blessing did the people lose because of their reaction to the Savior's teaching? (The Savior left their midst.)
- Why were the people of Nazareth upset when the Savior compared them to Israel in the time of the widow of Sarepta and of Naaman the leper?

Review the story of the widow of Sarepta (Zarephath) in 1 Kings 17 and the story of Naaman the Leper in 2 Kings 5:1–14. Use the following explanation by Elder Bruce R. McConkie to help students understand why the Savior cited these stories:

"How aptly Jesus chose his illustrations! Both of these ancient prophets, dishonored by their own, conferred great blessings upon foreigners. So it was with the Nazarenes; others, not they, had seen his great works" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:162).

- In what ways do we stand in jeopardy of losing the Lord's blessings if we do not accept the Savior or His servants?
- Why won't our membership in the Lord's Church help us if we do not keep His commandments?

Remind students of the theme and unique characteristics of the Gospel of Luke (see page 72). Point out how this account, which is found only in Luke, is an important part of Luke's testimony that Jesus Christ is the Savior of all mankind.

Luke 5:1–6:49 (see also Matthew 4:18–22; 5–7; 10:2–4; Mark 1:16–20; 3:13–19). Jesus Christ's disciples love and follow Him and are willing to give up the things of the world. (10–15 minutes)

Ask students to think about someone they know who has served a mission or who is serving a mission now. Ask:

- Why did these missionaries have to sacrifice in order to serve the Lord?
- How difficult do you think those sacrifices were?

Ask students to compare Luke 5:1–11 with Luke 5:27–28.

- What do the people in these two passages have in common?
- What do they have in common with the missionaries you know?
- In what ways does being a disciple of Jesus Christ sometimes mean making sacrifices?
- What have you given up to be a follower of Jesus Christ?
- How is "forsaking" things of the world in order to follow the Lord a blessing?

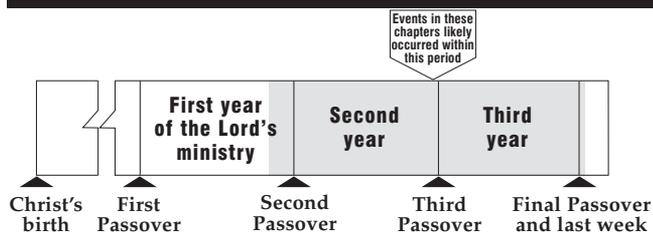
Display a picture of Jesus Christ and discuss what it might have been like to be one of His students. Read Luke 6:17–19 and ask:

- Why did the people want to touch Him?
- How is this similar to 3 Nephi 11:12–16?

Ask students to consider how strong their desire is to be in the Savior's presence. Give them several minutes to silently read Luke 6:20–49 and to ponder which of His teachings in these verses would be most important to them as they strive to be His disciples. Allow students to share their testimonies.

Luke 7–9

The Life of Jesus Christ



Introduction

Luke 7–9 testifies of the Savior’s love and compassion. He tenderly and mercifully healed the sick, raised children from the dead, forgave repentant sinners, calmed storms, cast out devils, fed thousands of hungry souls with food and with the words of salvation, and tutored and prepared His Apostles. These events led Luke to record that the people “were all amazed at the mighty power of God” (Luke 9:43). The words of the hymn “I Stand All Amazed” seem appropriate when considering these miracles:

*I stand all amazed at the love Jesus offers me,
Confused at the grace that so fully he proffers me. . . .
I marvel that he would descend from his throne divine
To rescue a soul so rebellious and proud as mine,
That he should extend his great love unto such as I,
Sufficient to own, to redeem, and to justify. . . .
Oh, it is wonderful, wonderful to me!
(Hymns, no. 193).*

As you read these chapters look for how these miracles help you better understand and appreciate the Savior’s love.

Prayerfully study Luke 7–9 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Jesus Christ has power to heal the sick, raise the dead, control the elements, and forgive sinners (see Luke 7:1–18, 36–50; 8:22–36, 41–56; 9:37–42). He can confer His priesthood power upon others (see Luke 9:1–2).
- When we repent, we develop a deep love and gratitude for our Savior (see Luke 7:36–50; see also Alma 36:20–21).
- Our testimonies grow as we nourish them through faith, sacrifice, patience, obedience, and resisting temptation (see Luke 8:4–18).
- Those who “lose themselves” by sacrificing personal desires and following God will obtain eternal life (see Luke 9:1–6, 23–27, 57–62; JST, Luke 9:24–25; see also Luke 17:31–33).

- The righteous whom God chooses can receive an outpouring of heavenly manifestations (see Luke 9:28–36; see also 1 Nephi 11:1–11; Moses 1:1–6; Joseph Smith—History 1:14–17).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 75–76, 192.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Luke 7–9.

Luke 7:1–17 (see also Matthew 8:5–13). Through faith, compassion, and service we can help others come to Christ. (25–30 minutes)

Briefly review with students the Book of Mormon account of the Anti-Nephi-Lehies (see Alma 23–25). Tell students these were people of great faith who were brought to Jesus Christ by a group of missionaries who loved and served them. Invite students to read Alma 27:4, and ask: According to this verse, what phrase describes how the Anti-Nephi-Lehies treated Ammon and his missionary companions? Have students read Alma 26:11–14, 26–29 looking for what these missionaries did to earn the description of “angels sent from God.”

Write the words *faith*, *compassion*, and *service* on the board. Ask: Do you believe these missionaries possessed these three attributes? Why? Ask students to tell of someone who has been a powerful influence in their lives whom they might think of as an “angel.”

- How has this person changed your life or someone else’s life?
- How did this person show faith, compassion, or service?
- In what way did that play a part in this person’s influence on you?

Invite students to read Luke 7:1–17 and look for other people who were brought unto Jesus Christ. Ask:

- What miracles occurred in the lives of the centurion’s servant and the widow’s son?
- What evidences of faith, compassion, and service do you see in these accounts?
- What feelings did you have toward the Savior as you read these stories?

Testify of the Savior’s love and that only through His power and their faith could these miracles have occurred.

- What miracles occurred in the lives of the centurion and the widow?
- How were these miracles different from those of the servant or the son?
- If you were the centurion or the widow, how would these miracles have affected your life?

Consider reading to the class the following statements on compassion, service, and faith or giving them as a handout:

Compassion and Service

Compassion is a “sympathetic consciousness of others’ distress together with a desire to alleviate it” (*Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th ed. [1993], “compassion,” 234). Compassion motivates us to give service to the poor and needy. When we follow Jesus’ example and serve those who suffer, they receive relief and blessings. But those who serve also receive blessings of joy, happiness, fulfillment, and even forgiveness (see Mosiah 4:26). If we are to be like Jesus, the service we give others must be motivated by the pure love of Christ. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve taught:

“Even the most extreme acts of service—such as giving all of our goods to feed the poor—profit us nothing unless our service is motivated by the pure love of Christ” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1984, 16; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 14).

Elder Thomas S. Monson taught:

“In the New Testament of our Lord, perhaps we have no more moving account of ‘mother blessed’ than the tender regard of the Master for the grieving widow at Nain. . . .

“What power, what tenderness, what compassion did our Master and exemplar thus demonstrate. We, too, can bless if we will but follow his noble example. Opportunities are everywhere. Needed are eyes to see the pitiable plight, ears to hear the silent pleadings of a broken heart. Yes, and a soul filled with compassion that we might communicate not only eye to eye or voice to ear, but in the majestic style of the Savior, even heart to heart” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1973, 29; or *Ensign*, Jan. 1974, 31).

Faith

Faith is a principle of power. Jesus Christ can do all things for those who exercise faith in Him. Elder John K. Carmack, a member of the Seventy, explained:

“Although faith often includes positive thinking, it is much, much more than that. Faith taps into divine sources and is a manifestation of unity and partnership with the Lord. Even the ideas and words formulated by faith come by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and the power to accomplish the words formed by faith comes from God. . . .

“... Faith is not an exclusive tool of the priesthood. The Roman centurion held no priesthood, but through faith he asked the Lord to heal his servant. He added that he was not worthy to have Jesus come to his home, although he was a man whose authority

others obeyed. He said, ‘But speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed’ (Matthew 8:8). Jesus marveled at his faith. ‘I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel’ (8:10). . . .

“... We can learn much about faith . . . from our friends of other faiths such as the Roman centurion, and especially from our children. No matter how we learn to use the power of faith, we need to have it to accomplish the awesome tasks assigned to us” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1993, 55–56; or *Ensign*, May 1993, 42–43).

Invite students to give examples of people they know today who, like the centurion’s servant and widow’s son, need miracles in their lives. Ask:

- What blessings are available through faith and the power of the priesthood to those whose spirits are in need of healing?
- What are some ways we can help alleviate the suffering of others?

Encourage students to become “angels” in others’ lives by helping them come to Christ. Ask them to look carefully for those who are in need and then to render service and compassion and exercise faith in their behalf. Encourage the students to write their “angel experiences” in their journals, and invite them, if they choose, to share them with the class as they happen during the remainder of the year.

Luke 7:1–10; 8:26–56 (see also Matthew 8:5–13, 28–34; 9:18–26; Mark 5). We should come unto Christ and help others do so also. (40–45 minutes)

Write the following proverb on the board: *Failing to plan is like planning to fail.* Ask students:

- Do you think this statement is true? Why or why not?
- How can writing plans or goals help us accomplish things in our lives?

Ask students to write one sentence that describes their mission or goal in life, and invite them to share what they wrote. Read the following mission statement of the Church, and ask students to consider how well their mission matches the Church’s:

“Yes, brothers and sisters, the mission of the Church is glorious—to invite all of us to *come unto Christ* through proclaiming the gospel, perfecting our lives, and redeeming our dead. As we come unto Christ, we bless our own lives, those of our families, and our Father in Heaven’s children, both living and dead” (Ezra Taft Benson, in Conference Report, Apr. 1988, 98; italics added; or *Ensign*, May 1988, 85).

- What blessings are given to those who come unto Christ? (see Moroni 10:30–34).
- How might you help your family come unto the Savior?
- How might you help your friends come unto Christ?

Invite students to read the following three accounts: Luke 7:1–10; 8:43–48; and 8:41–42, 49–56, looking for the answers to the following questions:

- What helped each person in these verses come to the Savior?
- What evidence is there that the people in these verses had great faith in the Savior?
- What blessings do those who came unto Christ receive?
- What most impressed you about each story?

When they are through, discuss the questions and the students' feelings about these miracles of the Savior. Remind students that though trials often cause us to turn to the Lord, it is great faith that brings about Christ's miracles. Testify that Christ's power to heal and bless is available to us today.

Conclude by contrasting these stories with the account of the legion of devils. Explain that while Jesus would have us come unto Him, Satan seeks to destroy us or take us away from Jesus. Have students read Luke 8:26–40.

- How was this man's life different after the Savior came and cast out the devils?
- How could you apply this story to your life?

Read the following quote from President Ezra Taft Benson:

"We must put God in the forefront of everything else in our lives. He must come first. . . .

"When we put God first, all other things fall into their proper place or drop out of our lives. Our love of the Lord will govern the claims for our affection, the demands on our time, the interests we pursue, and the order of our priorities" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1988, 3; or *Ensign*, May 1988, 4).

Ask: How will we be blessed if we follow President Benson's counsel?

Luke 7:17–35 (see also Matthew 11:2–19). John the Baptist was a great prophet and the forerunner for Jesus Christ. He stressed that people should worship the Savior, not him. (20–25 minutes)

Tell the students: Imagine you are at the funeral of the recently deceased prophet and President of the Church. During the service a nonmember acquaintance whispers to you, "Isn't it tragic that the leader of your church has passed away?" Ask students how they would respond. After discussing some of their answers, ask them why the following would be an appropriate response: "Yes it was tragic, but isn't it wonderful that He rose again after the third day!"

Tell students that it is important for us to remember that Jesus is the leader of His Church. Those who are called to serve in the Church should never take glory or honor away from Jesus Christ. The Savior set the example by showing us how to give appropriate glory and honor. Have students read Moses 4:1–2 and look for how Satan's desire for glory was different from that of the Son.

Invite students to read Luke 7:17–23. Tell them that this account refers to the time when John was imprisoned (see Matthew 11:2). Ask some of the following questions:

- Whom did John send his disciples to see?
- From these verses, what seems to be the reason John wanted them to go to Jesus?
- What effect did Jesus' miracles have on John's disciples?

Read the commentary for Matthew 11:2, 3 in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles* (p. 65) and ask:

- How does this help you understand John's motive in sending the disciples?
- How do you feel about John, knowing that he wanted his followers to become disciples of Jesus Christ?
- What can we learn from John's example?

Tell students that the Savior praised John and testified of his mission in Luke 7:24–30. Ask students to read those verses and look for what else impresses them about John. Read the Prophet Joseph Smith's statement about why John was such a great prophet (see the teaching suggestion for Matthew 11:1–19, p. 35).

Point out that in spite of the greatness of John and Jesus, many of the people still rejected them. Have students read Luke 7:31–35. Elder Bruce R. McConkie paraphrased the Savior's message to the people in these verses this way:

"You are like fickle children playing games; when you hold a mock wedding, your playmates refuse to dance; when you change the game to a funeral procession, your playmates refuse to mourn. In like manner you are only playing at religion. As cross and capricious children you reject John because he came with the strictness of the Nazarites, and ye reject me because I display the warm human demeanor that makes for pleasant social [interaction]" (in *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:263).

 **Luke 7:36–50. When we recognize our dependence on the Savior, repent of our sins, and receive forgiveness, we will be filled with peace and love.** (45–50 minutes)

Discuss with students what debt is, and then ask some of the following questions:

- What do many people go into debt for? (Answers might include houses, school, cars.)

- How would you feel if the person to whom you were most indebted released you from that debt?
- How would your feelings be different if the person released you from a large debt instead of a small one?

Invite students to read Romans 3:23, and ask:

- What does this verse teach about debt?
- Why do we need Jesus Christ to be our “creditor” or Savior?
- How much debt do you think Christ has the power to forgive?

Read and discuss the following statement by Elder Boyd K. Packer:

“When your desire is firm and you are willing to pay the ‘uttermost farthing’ [see Matthew 5:25–26], the law of restitution is suspended. Your obligation is transferred to the Lord. He will settle your accounts.

“I repeat, save for the exception of the very few who defect to perdition, there is no habit, no addiction, no rebellion, no transgression, no apostasy, no crime exempted from the promise of complete forgiveness. That is the promise of the atonement of Christ” (in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1995, 23; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 20).

Read Luke 7:36–50 with your students and discuss the following questions as you read:

- What debts were owed by the people in the parable? (see vv. 41–42).
- How were the woman’s feelings toward the Savior different from Simon’s?
- What do you think made these two people treat Jesus so differently?
- How were both of them dependent on the Savior?
- What blessing did the woman gain because she recognized her dependence on the Savior? (see v. 47).
- What does this incident teach about Jesus Christ’s power to cleanse people from sin?

Invite students to think about how their lives are like those of the people in this story and how the Savior’s words to the woman can be a source of hope for each of us. Read the following statements or give copies to students as a handout. Discuss them as a class.

Elder Ronald E. Poelman, a member of the Seventy, taught:

“The beginning and completion of repentance leading to forgiveness is faith in Jesus Christ, who is the ‘author and the finisher of [our] faith’ (Moroni 6:4). Our faith in him as Savior and Redeemer engenders in us godly sorrow for our transgressions, a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and a sense of personal accountability. There follows a change in attitude and a turning toward God” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 114; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 85).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, commenting on the woman in Luke 7:36–50, wrote:

“All this was the work and worship of a devout and faithful woman who had been a sinner but who was now cleansed; who was now free from the crushing burden of many offenses; who now walked in a newness of life because of him whose feet she now kissed and upon whom she now bestowed all the reverent and awe-inspired love that her whole soul had power to possess.

“This we must know if we are to envision what really transpired on this inspiring occasion in the home of Simon the Pharisee. Here is a woman who once was a sinner but now is clean. Jesus is not going to forgive her sins—he has already done so; it happened when she believed and was baptized in his name; it happened when she repented with full purpose of heart and pledged her life and every breath she thereafter drew to the Cause of Righteousness. We are dealing with a convert who has come to pour out, in the spirit of thanksgiving and rejoicing, the gratitude of her soul to him who has freed her, freed her in times past, from the chains of bondage and hell.

“None of this is known to Simon. He is in his sins, being unbaptized; and like Nicodemus, the master in Israel who knew not that men can be born again, Simon is, in his present state, spiritually incapable of conceiving that a woman whose soul once was scarlet is now as white as snow” (*Mortal Messiah*, 2:200–201).

Teach students that we can obtain forgiveness for our sins, no matter how bad they are, if we will follow this woman’s example and sincerely repent. Testify that the process of repentance makes us feel an appreciation and love for Jesus.

- What did this woman do that showed her gratitude for Jesus Christ’s Atonement?
- What can we do to show our love for Him?

Conclude by singing “I Stand All Amazed” (*Hymns*, no. 193). Ask students to share their feelings about the Savior’s Atonement and to describe how they felt as they sang the hymn.

Note: Make sure students do not conclude that it would be profitable to sin so that they could come to love the Savior more (see Romans 6:1–2). Students must understand the importance of developing a love for Jesus Christ by keeping His commandments and avoiding sin. Encourage students to avoid sin but to have confidence that we can be completely forgiven when we do sin if we repent.

Luke 8–9 (see also Matthew 8–10, 12–14, 16–18; Mark 4–6, 8–9). A review game can be fun and informative. (45–50 minutes)

Luke 8–9 contains stories you may have taught in Matthew and Mark. Use this activity to review the material while maintaining the continuity of Luke’s testimony.

Arrange desks or chairs in a large circle or row. At each seat, tape a thought-provoking question with a scripture reference from Luke 8–9 that helps answer it. Number the questions, and give each student a piece of paper with corresponding numbers and enough space to write answers to each question. Create questions that are challenging enough to require students to use reason, but clearly identify the reference where the answer can be found so students do not spend too much time looking. Use questions such as these:

1. Read Luke 8:1–3. What do you think the phrase “which ministered unto him of their substance” means?
2. What does the seed represent in the parable of the sower? (see Luke 8:11). What are some ways that you could plant that seed in your life?
3. Read Luke 8:22–25. According to these verses, what emotions did the disciples feel that probably disappointed the Savior?

Give students one minute to answer the question that is taped to the seat where they are sitting. Then give a signal for all students to move to the next seat and spend a minute on the question there. Continue until the students have had a chance to respond to all the questions. Then correct their answers as a class, taking the time to explain those questions and answers that are most important to your students or those that they may have found most challenging.

Luke 9:1–6, 10 (see also Matthew 10:1, 5–42; Mark 6:7–13, 30). When we are given assignments, we are responsible to report what we have done. (10–15 minutes)

Have students think of the most important assignment or job they have ever had, and then ask them some of the following questions:

- Who gave you the assignment?
- Why do you think you were chosen to receive the assignment?
- How well did you fulfill your obligation?
- How can you tell whether the person cared how well you filled it?

Read Luke 9:2–5 and ask:

- What assignment did Jesus give His Apostles?
- How important was this assignment?
- Do you think Jesus was interested in how well they fulfilled their assignment? Why?

Ask students to read Luke 9:10 and look for what the Apostles did when they finished their assignment.

Teach students that we have an important obligation to report how well we filled our assignments to those who gave them to us. Ask:

- How does the Lord give us assignments or stewardships? (Through Church leaders, sacred covenants, the scriptures, personal revelation.)
- How do we report on these assignments to the Lord?
- To whom else do we report regarding the fulfillment of our Church callings?
- How do we report our assignments in our families?

Read Revelation 20:12 and ask:

- Before whom will we stand as we make our final report of our life upon this earth?
- What would you like to be able to report at that moment?

Luke 9:46–56. Jesus invites us to be tolerant of others. (15–20 minutes)

Bring several different musical selections to class. Play each selection and invite students to pick their favorite. Discuss how people, like musical selections, are all different. Read 4 Nephi 1:17 and ask: What does this verse teach about how we should feel towards those of different nationalities, religions, or backgrounds?

Write the word *tolerant* on the board and discuss what it means. Invite students to tell the class about someone who is especially tolerant and kind to those who are different. Ask:

- What impresses you about this person?
- How can we avoid being intolerant?

Invite students to read Luke 9:49–56.

- What might those who are tolerant of others think of the man who was casting out devils in Christ’s name or of the Samaritans?
- How did the Apostles view the man who was casting out devils?
- How did they view the Samaritans?

Ask students to read the verses again and look for the Savior’s attitude towards the man casting out devils and the Samaritans. Ask: Do you think the Savior was pleased with the attitude of His disciples? Why or why not?

Invite students to think about their attitudes toward people of other religions or those who seem to be sinners. Ask the students to write down what they think the Savior might say if He were to talk to them about their attitude. Read the following statements or give them to the students as a handout.

President Gordon B. Hinckley taught:

“I plead with our people everywhere to live with respect and appreciation for those not of our faith. There is so great a need for civility and mutual respect among those of differing beliefs and philosophies. We must not be partisans of any doctrine of ethnic superiority. We live in a world of diversity. We can and must be respectful toward those with whose teachings we may not agree. We must be willing to defend the rights of others who may become the victims of bigotry.

“I call attention to these striking words of Joseph Smith spoken in 1843:

“If it has been demonstrated that I have been willing to die for a “Mormon,” I am bold to declare before Heaven that I am just as ready to die in defending the rights of a Presbyterian, a Baptist, or a good man of any other denomination; for the same principle which would trample upon the rights of the Latter-day Saints would trample upon the rights of the Roman Catholics, or of any other denomination’ (*History of the Church*, 5:498)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 94–95; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 71).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote:

“Though inharmonious with the true Spirit of Christ, this offer of James and John is neither so harsh or vindictive, nor so scripturally unrealistic, as it might seem. They knew that the God of Israel—the same Jesus in whose presence they then stood—had sent fire from heaven at Elijah’s word to consume the enemies of that ancient prophet. (2 Kings 1.) They knew also that the same merciful God would destroy the wicked by fire at his Second Coming. (Mal. 4:1.) What they had yet to learn was that for their dispensation, under the conditions which then existed (and they are comparable today), the gospel message was to go forth with charity, patience, forbearance, and long-suffering. However, their offer to compensate for the rebuff suffered by their Master was a manifestation of rather majestic faith. Who but those thoroughly converted to the righteousness and ultimate triumph of their cause would expect Deity to send fire from heaven to defend and vindicate them?

“Even devout and good men are sometimes swayed by the influence and spirit of Satan rather than by the Spirit of the Lord. Though they were unaware of

its source, James and John were here influenced in their proposal by a spirit from beneath rather than a Spirit from above” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:440).

Encourage your students to develop greater tolerance for others.

Luke 9:57–62. Sacrifice is an important principle of the gospel. We must be willing to make any sacrifice necessary to follow Christ with all our hearts. (15–20 minutes)

Read the following true story as told by President Gordon B. Hinckley, then a member of the First Presidency:

“In 1856 more than a thousand of our people, some of them perhaps your forebears, found themselves in serious trouble while crossing the plains to [the Salt Lake Valley]. Because of a series of unfortunate circumstances, they were late in getting started. They ran into snow and bitter cold in the highlands of Wyoming. Their situation was desperate, with deaths occurring every day.

“President Young learned of their condition as the October general conference was about to begin. He immediately called for teams, wagons, drivers, and supplies to leave to rescue the bereft Saints. When the first rescue team reached the Martin Company, there were too few wagons to carry the suffering people. The rescuers had to insist that the carts keep moving.

“When they reached the Sweetwater River on November 3, chunks of ice were floating in the freezing water. After all these people had been through, and in their weakened condition, that river seemed impossible to cross. It looked like stepping into death itself to move into the freezing stream. Men who once had been strong sat on the frozen ground and wept, as did the women and children. Many simply could not face that ordeal.

“And now I quote from the record: “Three eighteen-year-old boys belonging to the relief party came to the rescue, and to the astonishment of all who saw, carried nearly every member of the illfated handcart company across the snowbound stream. The strain was so terrible, and the exposure so great, that in later years all the boys died from the effects of it. When President Brigham Young heard of this heroic act, he wept like a child, and later declared publicly, “that act alone will ensure C. Allen Huntington, George W. Grant, and David P. Kimball an everlasting salvation in the Celestial Kingdom of God, worlds without end.”” (Solomon F. Kimball, *Improvement Era*, Feb. 1914, p. 288.)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1981, 59–60; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 42).

Ask:

- What do you think of the sacrifice of those three teenage boys?
- What might have motivated them to save those Saints?
- What do you imagine the Saints felt like before their rescuers arrived?
- What about after they had been saved? How do you think they felt towards their rescuers?
- If being saved physically is important, how much more important would it be to be saved spiritually and return to our Father in Heaven in the celestial kingdom?

Ask students to read Luke 9:23–25 as well as the Joseph Smith Translation of Luke 9:24–25 in the appendix. How important do these verses make “being saved” sound?

Write the phrase *Some Requirements for Being Saved* on the board. Ask students to read Luke 9:26, 57–62 and look for what these verses teach about Jesus’ expectations of His followers. List what students discover on the board and discuss their findings. Ask: How would meeting these requirements help us gain salvation?

If desired, share the following commentary on Luke 9:57–62 by President Marion G. Romney, who was a member of the First Presidency:

“Jesus was not looking for, or calling, men to do lip service only. He wanted them to realize that following him meant effort and sacrifice. Luke tells us of an occasion when ‘there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,

“‘If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

“‘And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

“‘So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.’ (Luke 14:25–27, 33.)

“In these seemingly harsh statements, Jesus was not specifying ‘literal hatred toward one’s family . . . as a condition of discipleship.’ He was emphasizing ‘the preeminence of duty toward God over personal’ or worldly demands of those who would be his disciples. (James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976, p. 453.)” (in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1978, 54; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 38).

Tell students that sometimes our excuses can get in the way of our doing that which would help us to be saved spiritually. Ask:

- What are some of your favorite excuses when you don’t fulfill your duties (for example, “I woke up late,” or “I lost my homework”)?
- What excuses did the three men give Jesus in Luke 9:57–61?
- Read verse 62. How did Jesus respond to these excuses?
- What do you think Jesus was trying to teach?

Elder Howard W. Hunter, when a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, explained:

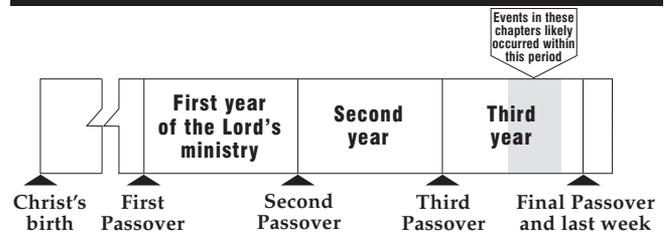
“To dig a straight furrow, the plowman needs to keep his eyes on a fixed point ahead of him. That keeps him on a true course. If, however, he happens to look back to see where he has been, his chances of straying are increased. The results are crooked and irregular furrows. We invite those of you who are new members to fix your attention on your new goal and never look back on your earlier problems or transgressions except as a reminder of your growth and your worth and your blessings from God. If our energies are focused not behind us but ahead of us—on eternal life and the joy of salvation—we assuredly will obtain it” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 19; or *Ensign*, May 1987, 17).

- What are some popular excuses in our day for not following Jesus?
- How can excuses get in the way of our discipleship?

Read the words to “Come Follow Me” (*Hymns*, no. 116), and ask students to think about how they can become better disciples of Jesus Christ beginning today.

Luke 10–13

The Life of Jesus Christ



Introduction

Elder Hans B. Ringger of the Seventy testified: “The foundation and guiding light for all our decisions is the

gospel of Jesus Christ and His message to the world. The teachings of Christ must be embedded in our desire to choose the right and in our wish to find happiness. His righteous life must be reflected in our own actions” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1990, 31; or *Ensign*, May 1990, 25).

In Luke 10–13 the Lord taught people that their lives should reflect righteousness. He helped them see how important it was that their hearts be clean, their motives pure, and their service sincere. The Lord summarized this doctrine in these famous words: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself” (Luke 10:27).

Prayerfully study Luke 10–13 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- If we reject the gospel message or the Lord’s servants, we will incur God’s judgment (see Luke 10:8–16; see also D&C 84:74).
- As our blessings increase, our righteousness should also increase. Our condemnation will be great if we turn away from God after receiving His blessings (see Luke 12:15–21, 42–48; see also D&C 82:3–10).
- We are commanded to love and serve those in need, regardless of their race, religion, tribe, or social class (see Luke 10:25–37).
- We should take advantage of important spiritual opportunities and not be distracted by things of lesser value (see Luke 10:38–42; see also D&C 66:10).
- Jesus Christ knows the secret acts and thoughts of all people, and He condemns hypocrisy (see Luke 11:37–54; 12:54–57; 13:14–16; see also 2 Nephi 26:29–31).
- Righteousness is measured by our motives and actions, not by position or status in the Church (see Luke 10:25–37; 11:28, 42–48).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 113–15, 117.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Luke 10–13.

Luke 10:1–37 (see also Matthew 11:20–26). We should love and serve those in need. (40–45 minutes)

Do one of the following to set up a discussion of the daily opportunities to serve others:

- Ask students to tell about the last time they noticed someone in need of service and what they did to help.
- Invite students to share how others have served them recently.

- Create a situation to give students the opportunity to serve someone. Observe what happens, and discuss the results as a class. (For example, have a student drop his or her books and papers on the ground and try to pick them up.)

Ask:

- How often do you see someone in need of service?
- How do you feel when you see others in need?
- How do you decide when to help others?

Invite students to share an example of a time when someone went out of his or her way to help them. Ask: How did this make you feel?

Have students read Luke 10:1–9 looking for the service the seventy rendered. Ask:

- Why is missionary work an important service?
- Read verses 17–20. According to these verses, what blessings came to the seventy as a result of their service?
- Read verses 25–27. Which of the two great commandments have to do with service?
- Read verse 28. What feelings come to those who serve?
- Why do you think service is such an important principle of the gospel?

The Savior identified whom we should serve when He gave the parable of the good Samaritan. Read Luke 10:30–33, and then share the following comments by President N. Eldon Tanner, who was a member of the First Presidency:

“Let us examine what really took place here.

“First, the Samaritan ‘had compassion.’ He had the urge to help, for he felt sympathetic to the wounded man’s problem. This kindly affection is brought forth in the heart of anyone who has been touched by the Spirit of the Lord. These empathetic feelings should be felt by each of us toward one another. Indeed, the Savior said that covenant Israel should be known and distinguished by the love they show one for the other. (See John 13:35.)”

Read Luke 10:34, and then continue with President Tanner’s commentary, pausing as desired to discuss the students’ insights and feelings:

“Second, the Samaritan ‘went to him.’ He did not wait to be approached by the one in need, but rather perceived the need and stepped forth without being asked to do so. In that great hymn ‘A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief’ (*Hymns*, no. 153), so loved by the Prophet Joseph, we sense that the high reward promised by the Savior came not just because acts of kindness were performed, but also because they were done spontaneously, consistently, and selflessly.

“Third, the Samaritan ‘bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine.’ He provided medical attention and refreshed the sufferer’s thirst. This immediate relief may well have saved the man’s life.

“Fourth, the Samaritan ‘set him on his own beast’—that is, he provided transportation and ‘brought him to an inn,’ a place of rest and care. By providing this appropriate accommodation he ensured the proper conditions for healing to take place.

“Fifth, the Samaritan ‘took care of him.’ Notice that during the critical stages of healing, the Samaritan did not turn the care of the wounded man over to others, but sacrificed of his own time and energy to perform this healing service *himself*. In a time when it is so easy to leave things to someone else, it is important to have so powerful an example as this good Samaritan.”

Read Luke 10:35 then continue with President Tanner’s commentary:

“Sixth, the Samaritan ‘on the morrow . . . took out two pence, and gave them to the host.’ He took of his own money, not someone else’s, and paid for the services he could not render himself. He thus consecrated of his means for the care of the poor and the needy.

“Seventh, the Samaritan, needing to continue earning his own living, told the innkeeper to ‘take care of him.’ In this way he enlisted *others* . . . to help and to continue the care.

“Eighth, the Samaritan then promised that ‘whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.’ Here the ultimate in compassion is shown! He puts no limit on the extent to which he will help. And, perhaps even more significant, he does not drop it there and forget it, but commits himself to return and ensure that all that could be done has been done” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1977, 119–20; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, 91–92).

Finish by reading Luke 10:36–37. Invite students to read “Samaritans” in the Bible Dictionary (p. 768). Ask:

- How did the Jews feel toward the Samaritans?
- How does knowing that add to the power of this parable?

Discuss with students what they could do to be “good Samaritans.” Read the following statement from Bishop H. David Burton, Presiding Bishop of the Church:

“Good Samaritanism is contagious. Providing in the Lord’s way humbles the rich, exalts the poor, and sanctifies both (see D&C 104:15–18). The giver helps those in need by sharing what he has received. . . . As the receiver rises to his full potential, he then is able to reach out to help others.

“Good Samaritanism starts in the home as parents teach children by example and precept. . . . May we be generous with our time and liberal in our contributions for the care of those who suffer. May we commit to the principles of Good Samaritanism and be ever mindful of the need to ‘go, and do thou likewise.’” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 106, 108; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 76).

Conclude by singing “A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief” (*Hymns*, no. 29). Encourage students to always look for opportunities to serve others.

Luke 10:38–42. We should take advantage of important spiritual opportunities and not allow ourselves to be distracted by things of lesser value. (10–15 minutes)

Ask students to imagine the Savior coming to their home for a short visit.

- How would you prepare for Him?
- What would you most like to do or say during His visit?
- What would you most want to change before He arrived?

Ask students to read Luke 10:38–42 and compare what Martha and Mary did.

- What was “that good part” that Mary chose?
- What can we learn from what Jesus said to Martha?

Read the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks and testify of its truthfulness:

“This scripture reminds every Martha, male and female, that we should not be so occupied with what is routine and temporal that we fail to cherish those opportunities that are unique and spiritual” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1985, 76; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 61).

Read the following from Elder James E. Talmage:

“There was no reproof of Martha’s desire to provide well; nor any sanction of possible neglect on Mary’s part. We must suppose that Mary had been a willing helper before the Master’s arrival; but now that He had come, she chose to remain with Him. Had she been culpably neglectful of her duty, Jesus would not have commended her course. He desired not well-served meals and material comforts only, but the company of the sisters, and above all their receptive attention to what He had to say. He had more to give them than they could possibly provide for Him. Jesus loved the two sisters and their brother as well. Both these women were devoted to Jesus, and each expressed herself in her own way. Martha was of a practical turn, concerned in material service; she was by nature hospitable and self-denying. Mary, contemplative and more spiritually inclined, showed her devotion through the service of companionship and appreciation” (*Jesus the Christ*, 433).

Encourage students to live in such a way that the Savior’s Spirit can be with them daily, and to find time each day for prayer, scripture study, and quiet pondering.

Luke 11:1–13 (see also Matthew 6:5–15; 7:7–12). Christ teaches us how to pray. (15–20 minutes)

Immediately after the opening prayer, ask:

- Why do we have an opening prayer?
- Why do we need the things that were prayed for?
- What should we pray for? What should we not pray for?
- Read Luke 11:1. Why is the phrase “teach us to pray” important?
- Read verses 2–4. What did the Savior say was important to pray for?

Consider asking the following questions:

- What do we ask for that is similar to praying for “daily bread”?
- How often should we pray for forgiveness?
- Why is praying to be delivered from temptation vital in the society in which we live?
- Are there any other elements of prayer you have been taught that are not recorded in these verses?

Ask students to silently read the parables in Luke 11:5–13 (paying attention to the Joseph Smith Translation changes in the footnotes). When they finish, ask them to write down the most important thing they learned as well as one question they have about prayer. Have them hand in what they wrote. Read some of their responses, and answer any of their questions you feel need a response. Encourage students to look to the Lord

for answers about how to keep their prayers appropriate and how to make them more meaningful. Share the following from Elder L. Edward Brown, a member of the Seventy:

“My beloved brothers and sisters and friends, I bear earnest and solemn witness to you that the Lord does communicate with us as individuals. Never, never fall victim to the heinous thought that He does not care for you, that He does not know you. That is a satanic lie, one designed to destroy you” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 109; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 78).

Luke 11:37–54 (see also Matthew 23:1–36; Mark 12:38–40). We should understand and avoid hypocrisy. (20–25 minutes)

Bring two beautifully wrapped boxes to class. Put something clean and beautiful inside one of the boxes (like a fresh flower) and something filthy in the other (like rotten food). Invite a student to choose one of the gifts, and give the other to another student. After they open the gifts, ask:

- Which is more important, the outside or what is inside?
- What was deceptive about the filthy gift?
- How are some people like this?
- Read Luke 12:1. What word in this verse best describes the filthy gift? (Hypocrisy.)
- What is the definition of “hypocrite”? (see Bible Dictionary, “hypocrite,” pp. 705–6).
- How is a hypocrite different from a person who tries to do right but makes mistakes because of weaknesses?

Give each of your students a slip of paper containing one of the following three scripture references (leave off the accompanying interpretation):

- Luke 11:37–39, 46. A hypocrite finds fault with others and doesn’t repent.
- Luke 11:42–44. A hypocrite seeks to have the praise of the world rather than to serve God.
- Luke 11:53–54; 12:54–57; 13:14–16. A hypocrite twists the commandments to find fault with those who are doing good.

Invite the students to read their assigned verses, consider what they mean, and discuss what they teach about hypocrisy. Write the three interpretations on the board, and have students match their verses with the correct interpretation.

Ask students some of the following questions:

- How does the Savior feel about hypocrisy?
- Read the Joseph Smith Translation of Luke 11:52. What important insight does this verse add to our understanding of hypocrisy?
- What can we do not to be hypocritical in the way we live?

Invite students to silently read Alma 5:15–21, and ask:

- How could remembering these questions help you not be hypocritical?
- What blessings come to those who are not hypocrites?

Luke 12–13 (see also Matthew 5:25–26; 6:19–34; 16:1–12; 23:37–39; 24:40–51; Mark 8:10–21; 13:32–37). True discipleship requires a willingness to school our feelings so that our personal desires are the same as the Savior's desires for us. (15–20 minutes)

Read the following statements or give them to the students as a handout. Discuss as a class why these four standards are required for discipleship.

Some Characteristics of True Discipleship

The Savior's teachings in Luke 12 can be categorized into things we must do and things we must avoid doing to become true disciples of Jesus Christ. The following are some characteristics of true discipleship:

1. Avoid hypocrisy (see Luke 12:1–3). Hypocrisy is pretending to do or believe one thing when in reality you do or believe something else (see also 1 Corinthians 5:7–8; Bible Dictionary, "hypocrisy," pp. 705–6).
2. Place faith in God rather than man (see Luke 12:4–9). The powers of man are limited, while God has all power. We should therefore have faith in the watchful care of our Heavenly Father, because He sees all things (see v. 7; JST, Luke 10:9–12).
3. Do not covet the treasures of the earth (see Luke 12:13–34). Jesus taught that disciples should avoid covetousness. The parable in verses 16–20 illustrates this point. Elder James E. Talmage said of the rich man in this parable:

"His plans for the proper care of his fruits and goods were not of themselves evil, though he might have considered better ways of distributing his surplus, as for the relief of the needy. His sin was two-fold; first, he regarded his great store chiefly as the means of securing personal ease and sensuous indulgence; secondly, in his material prosperity he failed to acknowledge God, and even counted the years as his own. In the hour of his selfish jubilation he was smitten" (*Jesus the Christ*, 439).
4. Prepare for the Lord's Second Coming (see Luke 12:35–59; JST, Luke 12:41–57). Those who are wise watch for the Savior's return.

Divide students into seven groups. Assign each group one of the following references:

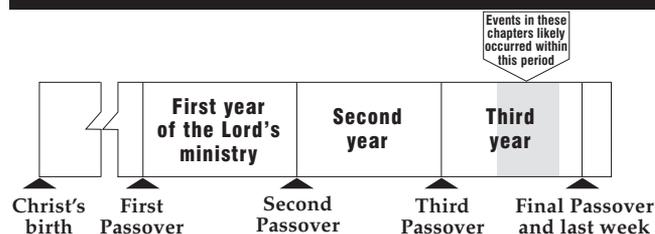
- Luke 12:1–12
- Luke 12:13–21
- Luke 12:22–31
- Luke 12:32–40
- Luke 12:41–48
- Luke 13:1–9
- Luke 13:24–35

Have the groups look for the answers to the following questions in their assigned references. When they have finished, have each of the groups present their answers to the class.

- What do these verses teach about being a disciple of Jesus?
- Why might it be difficult for us to follow this teaching?
- Who do you know who sets a good example of following these teachings?
- What blessings do you believe come to disciples who practice these teachings?

Luke 14–15

The Life of Jesus Christ



Introduction

Disciples of Christ willingly school their feelings to the point that their desires are the same as the Lord's. The Savior's followers put the kingdom of God first and reject the enticements of the fallen world. Nevertheless, we all fall short through sin or neglect and suffer a measure of separation from God.

Sometimes those who stray from the Lord are neglected by others. In the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son, the Savior taught that rather than forgetting those who are lost, we must do all in our power to rescue and forgive them (see Luke 15:3–32). Rather than murmuring like the Pharisees did when Jesus received sinners and ate with them (see Luke 15:2), we should be engaged in God's work to "bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39; see also D&C 4; 15:6; 18:10, 13–16). As you read Luke 14–15 notice how that which was lost was found because someone cared enough to respond.

Prayerfully study Luke 14–15 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- It is better to choose humility than to be compelled to be humble because of our circumstances (see Luke 14:7–11; see also Alma 32:13–16).
- Disciples of Christ willingly obey His commandments and make sacrifices (see Luke 14:25–33).

- People may be spiritually lost for different reasons. Some wander off gradually (see Luke 15:4), some are lost because of neglect (see Luke 15:8), and some choose to disobey (see Luke 15:11–13).
- When we help others repent, we feel joy and the heavens rejoice (see Luke 15:4–10, 20–24, 32; see also 2 Nephi 26:23–28; D&C 18:10–13).
- We should not be jealous of blessings received by others (see Luke 15:25–32).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 123–24, 126–27.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Luke 14–15.

Luke 14. It is better to choose humility than to be compelled to be humble because of our circumstances.

(20–25 minutes)

Ask students:

- Which of the following would you most like to have front-row seats for: the championship game of your favorite sport, a concert featuring your favorite band, a professional symphony performance, an awards night for famous movie stars, or a royal wedding?
- What is most appealing to you about the thought of attending that event?
- What benefits might you receive from attending?

Invite students to read Luke 14:1, and ask:

- What is the setting?
- What do you think the atmosphere was like?
- What do you think the other guests thought and felt?
- If you had also been there as a guest, how might you have benefitted from these teachings of the Savior?
- Where can we have a similar experience today?

Tell students significant blessings come to those who obey the teachings of Jesus Christ. Read Luke 14:1–6 and look for the first teaching given.

- How did healing the man with dropsy emphasize this point? (*Note:* Dropsy is a disease that causes body parts to swell.)
- What does this teach us about appropriate activities for the Sabbath?

Ask students to study Luke 14:7–11.

- What did the Savior say about those who wanted to take the most honorable seats?
- What are some modern “seats” or places where people try to be seen?

- What does verse 11 teach us about humility?

Point out to students that in these verses Jesus was applying an ancient proverb Solomon gave to the people of his day (see Proverbs 25:6–7). Christ taught how life is like a wedding feast during which decisions must be made. While in the proverb the proper choice was the “lowest room,” in life the proper choice is to be humble. In verse 11, Jesus summarized the whole purpose of mortality as a test to see if people will flee from pride and serve Him humbly. Have a student read the following quote by President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“People ask me frequently what is my favorite verse of scripture. I have many and this is one of them, ‘Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers’ (D&C 112:10). What a promise to those who walk without arrogance, to those who walk without conceit, to those who walk without egotism, to those who walk humbly. ‘Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers.’ What a solid and wonderful promise that is” (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [1997], 265).

Invite students to read Luke 14:12–24, and discuss the following questions:

- In what ways is the “great supper” in this parable like the gospel?
- What distracts some people from “feasting with the Lord”?
- What are some typical excuses you hear from people who don’t want to accept gospel teachings?
- How do you feel about the Savior’s challenge that we gather the poor, maimed, halt, and blind?
- Who are these people, and where do we find them?

Have a student read the accompanying interpretation by Elder James E. Talmage:

“The covenant people, Israel, were the specially invited guests. They had been bidden long enough aforetime, and by their own profession as the Lord’s own had agreed to be partakers of the feast. When all was ready, on the appointed day, they were severally summoned by the Messenger who had been sent by the Father; He was even then in their midst. But the cares of riches, the allurements of material things, and the pleasures of social and domestic life had engrossed them; and they prayed to be excused or irreverently declared they could not or would not come. Then the gladsome invitation was to be carried to the Gentiles, who were looked upon as spiritually poor, maimed, halt, and blind. And later, even the pagans beyond the walls, strangers in the gates of the holy city, would be bidden to the supper. These, surprised at the unexpected

summons, would hesitate, until by gentle urging and effective assurance that they were really included among the bidden guests, they would feel themselves constrained or compelled to come. The possibility of some of the discourteous ones arriving later, after they had attended to their more absorbing affairs, is indicated in the Lord's closing words: 'For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.'" (*Jesus the Christ*, 452).

Point out to students that one group came when they were invited, but another group didn't come until they were compelled (see v. 23). Read Alma 32:13–16 and ask: Why is it better to come when you are invited rather than when you are "compelled"?

Luke 14:25–33. Disciples of Christ willingly obey His commandments and make sacrifices. (15–20 minutes)

Bring a few items with price tags to class. Ask:

- Who determines the cost of things?
- What makes some items more costly than others?

Write *The Price of Discipleship* on the board. Invite students to read Luke 14:25–35, and ask:

- What are the costs of being a disciple of Jesus Christ?
- Why is the cost of discipleship so high?
- Why is it important for you to consider now what it will cost to follow the Savior throughout your life? Why?
- What does the Savior recommend in Luke 14:28–32 concerning the cost of discipleship?

Tell students that true discipleship places the kingdom of God before all else. As Elder John Taylor, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, expressed it, "The kingdom of God or nothing" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 6:21). Read the following statement by Neal A. Maxwell, who was then Church Commissioner of Education:

"There is a special sense of urgency infusing itself into many Church members everywhere that says, quietly, but insistently—this is the time for us to choose! It is not just that God will insist that we choose for our own sake, but that those who depend upon us, or use us as a reference point, need and deserve to know which way we are going. It is no good posing as a lifeguard if one is a non-swimmer. It is no good being a guide if one leaves his post and wanders with the multitude in search of another way, 'for there is none other way,' especially at a time when there is a sharper and sharper divergence in the way of the world and the straight and narrow

way. The disciple must not only stand in 'holy places' but on holy issues and 'not be moved.'

"In short, the events of our time and spiritual decay in the world have produced for us the equivalent situation faced by many of the disciples who followed Jesus. They followed him until he began to preach the 'hard sayings'—the doctrines that really demand not only belief, but performance; doctrines which would distinguish them from their contemporary society. The Lord wants us to put some distance—behaviorally—between ourselves and the world, not because we love mankind less, but precisely because we do love men. It is for the world's sake that we must sanctify ourselves. When Jesus' followers faced their moment of truth, John records, 'From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him,' Jesus turned to the remainder and queried them, 'Will ye also go away?' (John 6:66–67.)" (*A Time to Choose* [1972], 39–40).

Share with the students your own commitment to the gospel as a disciple of Jesus Christ.



Luke 15 (see also Matthew 18:12–14). When we help others repent, we feel joy and the heavens rejoice. (45–50 minutes)

Invite several students to share experiences of having lost something that was valuable to them.

- How hard did you try to find what was lost?
- What kinds of feelings do you have when you lose something valuable?
- Have you or a member of your family ever been lost?
- How are the feelings you might feel for a lost person different from your feelings for lost things?
- Read Doctrine and Covenants 18:10–16. What do these verses say about being lost?
- Which is worse, to be lost physically or spiritually? Why?

Have students read Luke 15:1–3, and ask:

- To what groups of people did Jesus teach these parables?
- In what ways could each be considered "lost"?

Encourage students to remember who is being taught as they study the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son. Ask:

- Do you know anyone who might be considered "spiritually lost"?
- What are some of the reasons people reject the gospel?

Invite students to give an example of how a Latter-day Saint can become spiritually lost without leaving the Church.

Read Luke 15:4, 8, 11–13 and look for the different reasons each of the things in these parables was lost. Read the following statement by President David O. McKay, then a member of the First Presidency, to the class or give it to them as a handout:

“How did [the lamb in the parable of the lost sheep] get lost? He was not rebellious. If you follow the comparison, the lamb was seeking its livelihood in a perfectly legitimate manner, but either stupidly, perhaps unconsciously, it followed the enticement of the field, the prospect of better grass until it got out beyond the fold and was lost.

“So we have those in the Church, young men and young women, who wander away from the fold in perfectly legitimate ways. They are seeking success, success in business, success in their professions, and before long they become disinterested in Church and finally disconnected from the fold; they have lost track of what true success is, perhaps stupidly, perhaps unconsciously, in some cases, perhaps willingly. They are blind to what constitutes true success. . . .

“In [the case of the parable of the lost coin] the thing lost was not in itself responsible. The one who had been trusted with that coin had, through carelessness or neglect, mislaid it or dropped it. There is a difference . . . which I think applies to us tonight. Our charge is not only coins, but living souls of children, youth, and adults. . . . Someone may be wandering because of the careless remark of a girl of her age in [the young women’s program], . . . and the president . . . lets her go, fails to follow her next Tuesday night and invite her to come. Another may be lost because of the . . . indifference of the Sunday School teacher who is satisfied with the fifteen people there that morning, instead of thinking of the fifteen who are wandering because of neglect. . . .

“The third parable is the prodigal son, the ‘younger son,’ we are told, so he was immature in his judgment. He was irking under the restraint, and he rather resented the father’s careful guiding eye. He evidently longed for so-called freedom, wanted, so to speak, to try his wings. So he said, ‘Father, give me my portion, and I will go.’ The father gave him his portion, and out the lad went.

“Here is a case of volition, here is choice, deliberate choice. Here is, in a way, rebellion against authority. And what did he do? He spent his means in riotous living, he wasted his portion with harlots. That is the way they are lost.

“Youth who start out to indulge their appetites and passions are on the downward road to apostasy as

sure as the sun rises in the east. I do not confine it to youth; any man or woman who starts out on that road of intemperance, of dissolute living will separate himself or herself from the fold as inevitably as darkness follows the day. . . .

“In such cases there is little we can do but warn and plead until the recreant, as the prodigal son, at last ‘comes to himself.’” (David O. McKay, in Conference Report, Apr. 1945, 120–23).

Ask: What reasons does President McKay give in this statement for people becoming lost? Invite students to share examples of how people are lost today for the same reasons.

Regardless of the reason someone strays, Elder James E. Talmage taught:

“Joy . . . abounds in heaven over the recovery of a soul once numbered among the lost, whether that soul be best symbolized by a sheep that had wandered afar, a coin that had dropped out of sight through the custodian’s neglect, or a son who would deliberately sever himself from home and heaven. There is no justification for the inference that a repentant sinner is to be given precedence over a righteous soul who had resisted sin. . . . Unqualifiedly offensive as is sin, the sinner is yet precious in the Father’s eyes, because of the possibility of his repentance and return to righteousness. The loss of a soul is a very real and a very great loss to God. He is pained and grieved thereby, for it is His will that not one should perish” (*Jesus the Christ*, 461).

Ask: How does the Lord want us to feel toward those who are lost? Invite students to read the rest of Luke 15 on their own and mark or write down all of the words and phrases they can find that show the concern, actions, and attitudes of those who lose something. When they are through, discuss what they discovered. Ask: What can we do to help those in our school, ward, or family who are spiritually lost?

Invite students to think about how they felt when they found something they had lost. Read again Luke 15:5–7, 9–10, 20–27, 32 and ask: What attitude in these verses impresses you most? Invite some students to share their experiences surrounding the return of a friend or family member to the gospel. Testify of the joy that is felt in missionary work.

Refer to verses 28–30 and point out that sometimes we may have feelings similar to those of the prodigal son’s brother. Ask:

- Have you ever heard anyone express those feelings?
- What would you say to someone who felt jealous of those who repent and receive great blessings?

Read the following insight by Elder Bruce D. Porter, a member of the Seventy:

“The parable of the prodigal son is a parable of us all. It reminds us that we are, in some measure, prodigal sons and daughters of our Father in Heaven. For, as the Apostle Paul wrote, ‘all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God’ (Romans 3:23).

“Like the errant son of the Savior’s parable, we have come to ‘a far country’ (Luke 15:13) separated from our premortal home. Like the prodigal, we share in a divine inheritance, but by our sins we squander a portion thereof and experience a ‘mighty famine’ (v. 14) of spirit. Like him, we learn through painful experience that worldly pleasures and pursuits are of no more worth than the husks of corn that swine eat. We yearn to be reconciled with our Father and return to His home. . . .

“In the parable of the prodigal son, only the eldest son remains true to his father; in his own words, ‘Neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment’ (Luke 15:29). Similarly, in the plan of salvation the Firstborn of the Father is sinless and without spot. Yet there is a vital difference. In the parable, the eldest son is jealous of the attention paid to the returning prodigal. In the plan of salvation, however, the Eldest Son *makes possible* the return of the prodigals.

“The Father sends Him forth to redeem His sons and daughters from bondage. The Eldest is filled with compassion. ‘I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them’ (Ezekiel 37:23). He journeys the long distance to find and bring home the prodigal ones. And there He finds us weary, hungry, and downtrodden. He feeds us and gives us drink. He lives among us and shares our burdens. Then, in a final act of supreme love, the Eldest Son takes of His own wealth and, one by one, He ransoms us. In order to pay the fulness of our debt, He is compelled to sacrifice His own fortune, yea, all that He has, every whit.

“There are those who refuse the proffered ransom. Chained by pride, they prefer bondage to repentance. But those who accept of His offering and forsake their errant ways receive healing at His hands and liberty as His gift. These He leads back to the Father with songs of everlasting joy” (in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1995, 16; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 15).

You could bear your testimony to the students that we must lovingly accept those who repent and come to the gospel fold.

Ask a student to sing “Dear to the Heart of the Shepherd” (*Hymns*, no. 221), or sing it as a class. Invite students to pay

attention to the words and to ponder how Jesus wants us to act toward those who stray, regardless of their reasons.

Give the students the following questions as a handout. Encourage them to consider these questions over the next week as they study their scriptures. In a future class, invite them to share the inspiration that may come from pondering the questions, studying, and praying.

What Is Your Responsibility As a Disciple of Christ to Help Your Brothers and Sisters?

The Lost Sheep (those who stray)

- Do you have friends who are straying from the Church?
- What could you be doing to help keep them in the fold?

The Lost Coin (those who are neglected)

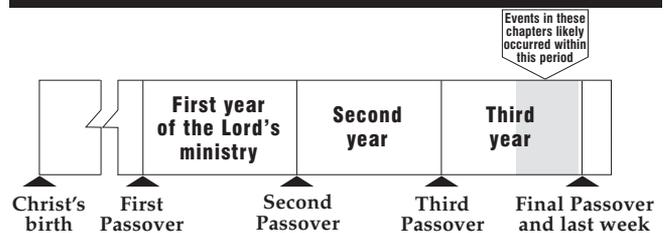
- Are there members of the Church who need your attention or could profit from your consideration?
- What can you do to befriend people at church meetings and on other occasions?
- Do you give more than casual time and effort to your church assignments and the people you are called to lead and serve?

The Prodigal Son (those who willfully disobey the commandments)

- How quick are you to befriend sinners returning to the fold?
- Do you find it easy to gossip about them, or do you have a sincere love for them?

Luke 16–18

The Life of Jesus Christ



Introduction

The Savior taught that we become true disciples in God’s kingdom by consecrating our lives to the will of Heavenly Father. As you study Luke 16–18, consider the commitments the Savior requires of His followers and how they apply to us.

Prayerfully study Luke 16–18 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The Lord has given us all our possessions and abilities. If we serve Him, the Lord will give us greater blessings, but if not He will take away what we have (see Luke 16:1–15; 18:18–30; see also Luke 19:12–27; 2 Nephi 28:30).
- After death everyone enters the spirit world, where the wicked are in hell (spirit prison) and the righteous are in paradise (see Luke 16:19–31; see also Alma 34:32–34; 40:11–14).
- Those not convinced of the truth by a prophet’s words will not be convinced by a miracle (see Luke 16:27–31).
- We should express gratitude for the blessings we receive (see Luke 17:11–19; see also Alma 7:23; D&C 59:7, 21).
- Those who persist in humble prayer receive the Lord’s blessings (see Luke 18:1–8; see also Alma 34:17–27).
- A willingness to sacrifice all we have for God’s kingdom helps bring us to Christ (see Luke 18:18–30; see also Omni 1:26; Moroni 10:32–33).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 124–25, 129–30.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Luke 16–18.

Luke 16:1–15. The Lord has given us all our possessions and abilities, and we must use them to do His work.
(35–40 minutes)

Invite a student who has developed a talent to share it with the class. This could be done as part of the devotional. Ask students to think about the following questions:

- Which of your hobbies, interests, or activities do you spend the most time on?
- How many total hours do you think you have spent on it during your life?

Invite several students to share their answers. Ask:

- Why do you spend so much time on this talent or hobby?
- What kinds of blessings have you received as a result of dedicating so much time to it?
- Has it helped you draw closer to God in any way?
- Are there ways it has drawn you away from God?

Invite students to read Luke 16:1–7, and ask:

- What did the steward in this parable spend his time doing when he learned he might lose his position?
- Even though the steward was unjust, how did the rich man speak to him in verse 8?
- What do you think the unjust steward did that was worthy of this praise?
- In what ways could the “children of this world” be considered wiser than the “children of light”?

Read the commentary for Luke 16:8 in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles* (p. 124). Read Luke 16:10–12 and ask: What does this parable teach about God’s feelings toward those who are faithful in completing their tasks? Testify of the value of devoting effort toward a worthwhile goal and of how God is able to use the services of those who can be trusted to further His work.

While God is interested in our commitment, there are some goals that should receive greater attention than others. Read Luke 16:13–14 and Matthew 22:35–38 and ask:

- Where should our devotions be centered?
- How did the Pharisees respond to the Savior’s teaching?
- Read Luke 16:15. What reasons does this verse give for their attitude?

Ask students to read Luke 16:19–25 and look for what this parable teaches about devoting our time and efforts toward the things of God rather than the riches of the world.

- How does this lesson apply in your life?
- What implications does this lesson have for the activities and interests to which you devote your time?

Encourage students to review their activities. Ask them to consider how they could use their talents to help build the kingdom of God and serve others. Read Luke 16:13, and cross-reference it to Alma 39:12–14. According to these verses, what is the value of wealth and possessions after we die? Testify that if we serve God instead of mammon (worldliness), our reward will be eternal.

Note: Do not imply to students that time spent at hobbies, developing talents, being involved in leisure activities, and so forth is always time wasted. Students need a righteous balance in their lives.

Luke 16:19–31. After death everyone enters the spirit world, where the wicked are in hell (spirit prison) and the righteous are in paradise. Jesus Christ’s Atonement bridges the gulf between spirit prison and paradise.
(20–25 minutes)

Divide your classroom in two by separating the chairs or marking off two areas with tape or string. Invite the girls to sit in one section and the boys to sit in the other. Discuss how we sometimes classify or group people based on common characteristics.

- What are some other characteristics that we could use to group members of the class? (Age, height, hair color, hobbies or interests.)
- What kinds of groups exist in your school?
- Who decides which groups you fit into?

Tell students that the scriptures often classify people into two groups: the wicked and the righteous. Briefly discuss these two groups and ask:

- To which group do you most want to belong? Why?
- Who decides who is classified as righteous?
- In what ways do the wicked separate themselves from the righteous?

Invite students to read the parable in Luke 16:19–31.

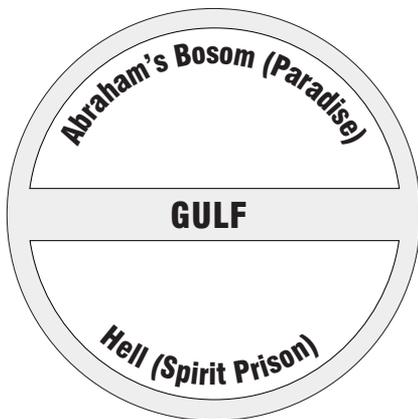
- What symbols did Jesus use to teach about wickedness and righteousness?
- What important doctrine is taught in verses 22–26 regarding the wicked and the righteous after they die? (They are in separate places in the spirit world.)

Read Luke 16:26–31 and ask:

- What did the rich man want Lazarus to do for him?
- Why do you think he wanted his family to hear the gospel?
- What details of this parable show that the rich man finally understood that our actions in this life affect what happens to us in the next life?

Ask: What does “Abraham’s bosom” in verse 22 refer to? Read Alma 40:11–12 with students to show that when the righteous die they are received into paradise. Ask: What does “hell” in verse 23 refer to? Read Alma 40:13–14 to show that the unrighteous are cast into outer darkness, which in these verses is another name for spirit prison (see 1 Peter 3:19).

Draw on the board the following diagram:



- Read Luke 16:26. Is there any way to bridge the gulf between paradise and spirit prison?
- Read 1 Peter 3:18–19. What did Christ do for the spirits in prison?

Draw the following diagram beside the first, and explain that Christ’s Atonement bridges the gap between paradise and spirit prison.



Read to students Doctrine and Covenants 138:29–30, 57–59. Testify that because of Christ’s Atonement, everyone is given an opportunity to hear the gospel message. Explain that those who don’t receive the chance on earth will have the opportunity to hear the gospel in the spirit world and receive the ordinances of salvation by proxy so they can join the righteous in paradise. Read Alma 34:32–34 and ask:

- What group will not be able to repent and hear the gospel in the next life?
- If the Atonement bridges the gap between the wicked and the righteous in the spirit world, can it bridge the gap between them during mortality? How?

Invite students to share experiences in which they witnessed someone change and join with those who were trying to be righteous.

Luke 17:1–10. Obeying the commandments and serving others helps us increase our faith and accomplish difficult tasks. (15–20 minutes)

Ask a student to demonstrate a talent she or he has never practiced. (For example, ask someone who doesn’t play the piano to play it for the devotional, or ask someone who cannot juggle to try to juggle for the class.) Ask:

- How difficult is this task?
- Does it seem impossible to you?
- Why can some people do the task well while others can’t?

As with physical abilities, developing spiritual capacities can be demanding and difficult. Ask students to read Luke 17:1–4.

- According to these verses, what did the Savior require of His Apostles?
- Why can that be such a hard principle to live?
- Read verse 5. What were the Apostles convinced they needed in order to obey the Savior’s counsel?

Consider asking some of the following questions:

- What does verse 6 teach us about the power of faith?
- What challenges do some people face that might compare in difficulty to moving a sycamine tree?
- How can the power of faith help you overcome challenges?

Explain to students that the Savior taught the Apostles a parable to help them understand how to increase their faith. Just as when we practice we develop skills and talents, when we obey the principles the Savior taught, we can increase our faith. Read the parable of the unprofitable servant in Luke 17:7–9 and ask:

- What did the servant do in the parable?
- How can service and obedience increase our faith?

Invite students to consider the times in their lives when they have been obedient or when they have given service. Ask: What happened to your faith during those times? Testify that as we exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we will find our spiritual weaknesses becoming our strengths (see Ether 12:27). Point out that as we grow stronger, the glory for our accomplishments should go to Jesus Christ. Read Luke 17:10 and ask: How is the title “unprofitable servant” appropriate for what we have been discussing?

Luke 17:11–19. It is important to express gratitude for the blessings we receive. (25–30 minutes)

Ask students to consider which of the following best describes their use of thank-you notes: (a) I write them the day I receive a gift, (b) I usually procrastinate writing them, (c) I feel guilty but usually do nothing, or (d) I don’t feel the need to write them. Discuss their answers. Ask:

- How does it feel when someone else expresses gratitude to you?
- What are some of the kindest gestures of thanks you have received?

Read Luke 17:11–14 and ask:

- What is leprosy? (The word *leprosy* in the Bible probably describes a number of skin diseases that may or may not include modern leprosy; see also Bible Dictionary, “leprosy,” p. 724.)
- Why would it have been difficult to be a leper? (Besides having to endure the symptoms of their disease, lepers were considered ritually unclean under the law of Moses. They had to live away from others, wear special clothing, and shout a warning to all that they were unclean so that no one would accidentally touch them. See Leviticus 13:44–46.)

- Think of yourselves in the place of the lepers in verses 13–14. What would you feel if this happened to you? (Discuss with students the greatness of Christ’s mercy.)
- Read verses 15–19. How important is it to show gratitude to the Lord for our blessings?

Read the following from President David O. McKay:

“Gratitude is deeper than thanks. Thankfulness is the beginning of gratitude. Gratitude is the completion of thankfulness. Thankfulness may consist merely of words. Gratitude is shown in acts” (“The Meaning of Thanksgiving,” *Improvement Era*, Nov. 1964, 914).

Ask:

- What does this teaching add to your understanding of the Savior’s experience with the lepers?
- Do you think it is possible that the nine lepers felt thankfulness but didn’t show it? Why?
- What evidence is there that the one leper felt gratitude?
- Why do you think it is significant that the leper who showed gratitude was a Samaritan? (Samaritans were considered unworthy by many Jews, but the Lord accepts righteous gifts of all His children.)
- Read Doctrine and Covenants 59:7, 21. What did the Savior teach in these verses about ingratitude?
- All the lepers were “cleansed” (v. 14), but what special blessing came to the grateful one in verse 19? (He was made “whole.” Explain to students that the word *whole* in this verse comes from a Greek word that can also be translated “saved.”)
- What does the fact that the grateful leper was made whole teach about the relationship between faith and gratitude?



Ask students to think about times when the Savior’s power healed or blessed them.

- How is His influence in your life similar to His influence on these lepers?
- In what ways are we like the nine lepers?

Read to the class this statement by Elder Spencer W. Kimball, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Ingratitude is a distressing sin which kindles the Lord’s anger. (See D&C 59:21.) . . .

“When the Savior healed the ten lepers and only one thanked him, he pointed out the nine ingrates as a lesson to all when he said, ‘Were there not ten cleansed?’ (Luke 17:17.) Adults as well as the youth are often guilty, being disobedient and unthankful to their Heavenly Father who gives them all. Many fail to show their gratitude through service, through family prayers, through the payment of their tithes, and in numerous other ways God has a right to expect” (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 58–59).

Encourage students to prayerfully consider whether they show God enough gratitude. Encourage them to offer a prayer sometime in which they only express gratitude without asking for any blessings.

We should express gratitude not only to the Savior but to all those who bless and help us. Ask each student to spend several minutes writing a “gratitude note” to a family member, friend, or classmate. Encourage the students to pay attention to the feelings they have as they write their notes and when they deliver them. Conclude class by singing “Because I Have Been Given Much” (*Hymns*, no. 219) and telling students of the joy that comes from expressing gratitude.

Luke 17:20–37; 18:1–14 (see also Matthew 24:17–41; Mark 13:15–16, 21). Because we do not know the exact time of the Second Coming, we should be prepared for it throughout our lives. (20–25 minutes)

Before class set a hidden alarm clock or other alarm to go off several minutes after you begin teaching. (If an alarm is not available, ask a student to ring a bell or make some other noise several minutes into the lesson.) Begin class as usual, without making any reference to the alarm. Get students to talk about current events in their school, community, ward, or branch by asking questions such as these:

- What important events are happening in the news?
- What interesting plans do you have for the week?
- Are there any exciting announcements or information you would like to tell others?

When the alarm sounds, stop all discussion immediately. Tell students that the alarm represents the Second Coming, and ask them to imagine what life would be like if the Second Coming happened right now. Read Luke 17:34–37 and the

Joseph Smith Translation of Luke 17:36–40 and look for what these passages teach about the suddenness of the Second Coming. Ask questions such as these:

- Why won’t everyone be ready for the Second Coming?
- What kinds of things will people be doing when it happens?
- Who do you think will be most surprised? Why?

Read Luke 17:20–25, and then share with students the following explanation by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“Prophecies foretelling the events incident to the first and second comings of the Messiah were confused in the minds of the Jews. They falsely assumed that at his first coming he would come with an outward display of power which would overthrow and destroy all earthly kingdoms. Accordingly, basing their inquiry on a false premise, and with some apparent sarcasm, they demand an answer to this mocking question: ‘If thou art the promised Messiah, as you have repeatedly claimed to be, when will thy power be manifest, when will the Roman yoke be broken, when will the kingdom of God actually come?’” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:539).

Read Luke 17:26–33 and ask:

- What do we know about the time of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ?
- What is the Savior telling us in these verses? (We must always be prepared because He will come suddenly.)
- Why is the message to prepare more helpful or important than a message revealing the exact time of the Second Coming?

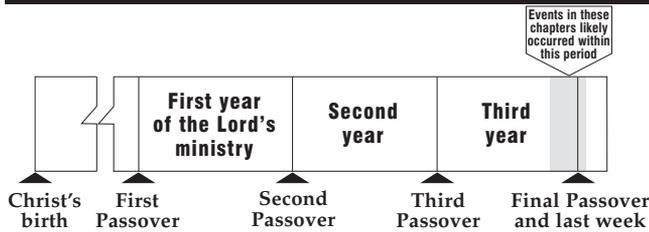
The Savior used the following accounts to teach about His Second Coming. Give a brief overview of each, and then divide the class into four groups and assign each group one of the accompanying blocks of scripture:

- Noah (Luke 17:26–27; see also Genesis 6:11–21; 7:11–24)
- Lot (Luke 17:28–32; see also Genesis 19:1–26)
- The parable of the unjust judge (Luke 18:1–8)
- The parable of the Pharisee and the publican (Luke 18:9–14)

Have them read the passages and look for how each one teaches about preparing for the Second Coming. Invite each group to share with the class what they discover.

Luke 19–21

The Life of Jesus Christ



Introduction

As you read Luke 19–21, ponder the excitement associated with Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem during the final week of His mortal life. Elder Bruce R. McConkie reflected on this scene with these words:

“Behold, O Jerusalem, the Holy City, for ‘thy King cometh unto thee.’ He cometh from Bethany on the east, where but yesterday he sat at meat with Lazarus, whom he raised from death; where in the house of Simon the leper, his beloved Mary anointed his royal head and poured costly spikenard on his kingly feet—all in token of his burial, which is to be later this week.

“Hail him as your King; heed his words, for ‘he is just, and having salvation.’ Accept him as the Just One, your Deliverer—from death, hell, the devil, and endless torment. Know that all who believe in him shall be saved; he is your Savior; salvation comes by him; he is the resurrection and the life, as he said” (*Mortal Messiah*, 3:338).

Prayerfully study Luke 19–21 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Jesus Christ will save those who earnestly seek and follow Him (see Luke 19:1–10).
- The Lord will return to the earth again and reward those who do His work (see Luke 19:11–27; see also 2 Nephi 28:30; D&C 60:2–3, 13).
- We should worship and praise Jesus Christ, who is our Lord and King (see Luke 19:28–40).
- Jesus prophesied concerning His death and the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple (see Luke 19:41–48; 20:9–19; 21:5–24).
- At the Second Coming, the Lord will destroy the wicked and spare the righteous (see Luke 21:25–36; see also Luke 17:26–37; D&C 38:30; Moses 8:20–30).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 131, 139–41.
- “The Last Week of the Savior’s Life,” 288 in this manual.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Luke 19–21.

Luke 19:1–10. Jesus Christ will save those who earnestly seek Him. (25–30 minutes)

Before class, place a picture of Jesus Christ on a top shelf or a tall piece of furniture in the classroom. Position the picture so no one can see it without climbing on a desk or chair. When class begins write on the board: *Did you see the picture?* Describe the picture, tell students that it is within the room, and ask them to try to find it.

After someone finds the picture, invite students to read Luke 19:1–10. Ask: How is the account of Zacchaeus like looking for the picture of Jesus? Discuss the similarities they find.

Tell students that the Gospel writers included several examples of people earnestly seeking the Savior. Have them read some of the following examples: Matthew 2:1–2; 5:1; 8:1–2; Mark 1:35–37; 5:24–28; Luke 2:15–16; 7:1–4. Ask:

- Why do you believe people were so anxious to be near Jesus?
- What are some other scriptural examples of people who sought to be near the Master?
- What do these examples have in common?
- What blessings did Jesus Christ offer those who came to Him?
- What blessings have people received in our day by making similar sacrifices?
- What actions in our lives show we are seeking the Savior today?

Remind students that Zacchaeus was short and needed to climb a tree in order to see Jesus.

- What other efforts did Zacchaeus make in order to be prepared to meet the Savior? (see v. 8).
- What blessing did he receive because of his efforts? (see vv. 9–10).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 93:1 and ask students to name five requirements that will enable us to come unto Christ.

- Which of these things did Zacchaeus do?
- Are you capable of doing these same things?
- What can keep us from coming to the Savior?

Read John 17:3 and ask: According to this scripture, why is it so important to seek Jesus Christ? Testify that all can come to the Savior, and encourage students to make the effort to first seek Him and then do what is required to come unto Him.

Luke 19:11–27 (see also Matthew 25:14–20). The Lord will return to the earth and reward those who do His work.

(25–30 minutes)

Ask students to silently work on an assignment while you leave the room. Wait several minutes, and then return and discuss how easy or difficult it is to complete an assignment while unsupervised. (You may want to give a reading or writing assignment from Luke 18:15–41. Those incidents were treated in the teaching suggestions for Matthew 19:16–26 and Mark 10 and are not covered again, so a review might be helpful.)

Ask questions like the following:

- How much work did you get done while I was out of the room?
- What distracted you or made it difficult?
- How would you feel if this assignment were graded?
- How could you compare this experience to our test during mortality?

Invite students to read Luke 19:12–15 and compare it to the unsupervised assignment. Ask: Who or what do you think the following parts of the parable could represent?

- the nobleman
- the servants
- the pounds
- the citizens
- the nobleman's return

Share Elder Bruce R. McConkie's interpretation of this parable:

"Christ is the nobleman; the far off country is heaven; the kingdom there to be given him is 'all power . . . in heaven and in earth' [Matthew 28:18]; and his promised return is the glorious Second Coming, when the literal and visible kingdom shall be set up on earth. The ten servants are the members of the Church to whom he has given physical, mental, and spiritual capacities (pounds) to be used in his service. Those designated as 'citizens' are the other people in the world, those who are subject to him because he is the God of the whole earth, but who have not accepted his gospel and come into his fold as servants. The servants are commanded to labor in the vineyard on their Lord's errand until he returns. . . .

"When the nobleman returns to judge the world, he will reward his servants in accordance with their works. All shall not receive the same status in the mansions which are prepared; there are degrees of glory. Some will rule ten cities, others five, and those who were slothful shall be disinherited entirely.

"Unused faculties are lost; rightly used abilities can be increased until perfection is attained. 'Unto every servant who is diligent shall be given great reward; and from him who is slothful shall be taken away even the light, abilities, and faculties which he had.'" (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary 1:572–73).

While on earth, away from God's presence, we each handle our responsibilities in different ways. Read Luke 19:16–27 and ask:

- What do these verses teach about how we should fulfill our duties?
- What rewards did the nobleman give those servants who were profitable?
- How do those rewards compare with the work done by the servants?

Have students read 2 Nephi 28:30 and Doctrine and Covenants 60:2–3, and ask: What do these passages teach about what God expects of those who serve Him? Read Luke 19:11 and ask: What misconception did the people have about the Messiah's first coming? Share with students the commentary for Luke 19:11–28 in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles* (p. 131).

- In what ways could this parable help the people in Christ's time who thought His first coming would be in glory?
- What misconceptions do people have today about Christ's Second Coming?
- How could the truths taught in this parable help correct those false ideas?
- What can we do to fulfill God's expectations and become faithful servants?

Testify that rather than being overly concerned about when Christ will come again, we should concentrate on being wise servants and keeping the covenants and commandments we have received from Him.



Luke 19:28–48 (see also Matthew 21:1–16; Mark 11:1–18; John 12:12–19). We should worship and praise Jesus Christ, who is our Lord and King.

(35–40 minutes)

Display as many pictures of Jesus Christ as you can around the classroom. Sing "How Great Thou Art" (*Hymns*, no. 86) for the devotional. Ask students to look at the pictures and think about the Savior while they sing.

Teach students that one week before He was crucified, Jesus triumphantly rode into Jerusalem, and the people glorified Him as their King and Savior. Show the picture *Triumphal Entry* (Matthew 21:1–11) (item no. 62173). Read Luke 19:28–40 and think about what it might have felt like to be there that day.

- Where would you like to have been standing?
- What would you have said or done as He passed by?

Give each student a copy of the “Triumphal Entry” chart from the appendix as a handout (p. 287). Explain that each detail of the triumphal entry adds a beautiful witness to the divinity of Jesus Christ and His role as King of Kings. Ask several students to read the quotes in the “Significance” column, and then discuss them as a class.

- What made this event so important?
- In what ways is this event similar to what you know about Christ’s Second Coming?

Within one week of the triumphal entry, many of the people of Jerusalem would seek to have Jesus crucified. Read Luke 19:41–44 and ask:

- How did the Savior react toward Jerusalem and its people?
- Why do you think He reacted in this manner?
- What does this teach you about His love for others?

Conclude class by giving students the opportunity to honor the Savior. Consider the following ideas:

- Invite those students who would like to share their testimony of Jesus Christ with the class to do so.
- Invite students to select one of the pictures of the Savior that is displayed. Have them tell the class why they like it and how they feel about Jesus when they look at it.
- Ask students to select their favorite hymns about Jesus Christ, and sing some of the ones they select.

Luke 20–21 (see also Matthew 21–24; Mark 11–13). During the final week of the Savior’s mortal ministry He taught daily in the temple. (10–15 minutes)

Write the phrase *House of the Lord* on the board. Ask:

- Where can that phrase be found? (The words “Holiness to the Lord—the House of the Lord” appear on modern temples.)
- Why do you think each temple is considered a house of the Lord?

Spend a few moments discussing what your students like about some of the temples.

Remind students that by the time of the events recorded in Luke 19, the Savior had entered the last week of His mortal ministry. Read Luke 19:45–48 and ask students to look for where the Savior spent much of His time during that week.

- How could being in the temple bless and prepare the Savior for what He would face at week’s end?
- What do these verses teach about how His time in the temple blessed others?
- How did the Savior show His reverence for the temple? (He drove out the moneychangers.)

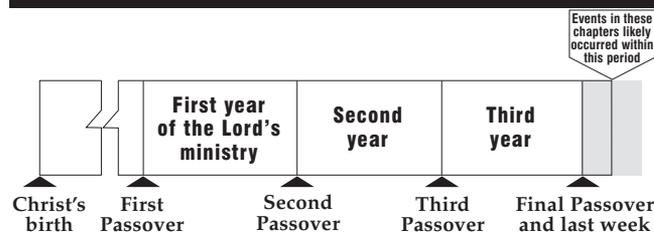
If desired, have students turn to the photograph of the Temple of Herod, number 9 in the photographs section of their Bibles, and remind them that it too was a house of the Lord. Ask: If you knew you only had one week to live, where would you want to spend that week?

Tell students that many of the parables, stories, and doctrines Jesus Christ taught during His last week are recorded in Luke 20–21. Remind them that they studied many of these accounts in the books of Matthew and Mark (see the teaching suggestions for Matthew 21:18–22:46, pp. 49–50; Joseph Smith—Matthew, pp. 51–52; and Mark 12:41–44, p. 69). Tell students that before you study about the Atonement, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the book of Luke (Luke 22–24), you would like them to briefly read some of the Savior’s last teachings from Luke 20–21.

Invite students to take ten minutes and choose at random several verses from Luke 20–21. Ask them to read these teachings while imagining what it might have been like to hear the Savior give them in the temple. Invite students to share with the class what they learned or felt. Ask them to tell why they think the teaching was important enough to be given during the Savior’s last week.

Luke 22–24

The Life of Jesus Christ



Introduction

Commenting on the Atonement and Resurrection, President Gordon B. Hinckley said:

“There is nothing more universal than death, and nothing brighter with hope and faith than the assurance of immortality. The abject sorrow that comes with death, the bereavement that follows the passing of a loved one are mitigated only by the certainty of the resurrection of the Son of God that first Easter morning. . . .

“Contemplating the wonder of the Atonement wrought in behalf of all mankind, the Prophet Joseph Smith declared in words descriptive and beautiful:

“Let the mountains shout for joy, and all ye valleys cry aloud; and all ye seas and dry lands tell the wonders of your Eternal King! And ye rivers, and brooks, and rills, flow down with gladness. Let the woods and all the trees of the field praise the Lord; and ye solid rocks weep for joy! And let the sun, moon, and the morning stars sing together, and let all the sons of God shout for joy! And let the eternal creations declare his name forever and ever! And again I say, how glorious is the voice we hear from heaven, proclaiming in our ears, glory, and salvation, and honor, and immortality, and eternal life; kingdoms, principalities, and powers! (D&C 128:23)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 91–92; or *Ensign*, May 1996, 67).

Luke 22–24 recounts the final days of Christ’s life as He willingly fulfilled the Atonement, and gives testimonies of some who witnessed the resurrected Lord. They provide a glimpse of the joy that comes to those who understand the glorious message of the Resurrection.

Prayerfully study Luke 22–24 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- We partake of the sacrament to remember Jesus Christ’s body and blood, which He sacrificed for us, and to witness to Him that we will keep His commandments (see Luke 22:17–20; see also 3 Nephi 18:1–12; D&C 20:77, 79).
- As we become converted to Christ, we must strengthen others (see Luke 22:32; see also Mosiah 27:32–37; D&C 81:5).
- Although Peter denied knowing the Savior, he never denied His divinity. Peter set an example for us by repenting, becoming a man of great spiritual strength, and blessing the lives of many people (see Luke 22:34, 54–62; see also Acts 4:1–33).
- Jesus submitted to Heavenly Father’s will. He willingly suffered pain, afflictions, and death to fulfill His role in the plan of salvation (see Luke 22:39–44, 63–71; 23:13–24, 33–46).
- The Lord communicates with His children in many different ways, including personal appearances (see Luke 24:13–16, 33–52), visitations of angels (see v. 23), a burning in our hearts (see v. 32), enlightenment and joy (see vv. 32, 41), the scriptures (see vv. 32, 44–45), and feelings of peace (see v. 36; see also D&C 6:23).
- Jesus Christ was the first person to be resurrected (see Luke 24).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 159, 172–75, 183–84, 193–96, 199–200.
- “The Last Week of the Savior’s Life,” 288 in this manual.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Luke 22–24.



New Testament Video presentation 8, “The Sacrament” (12:13), can be used in teaching Luke 22:1–20 (see *New Testament Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).

Luke 22:1–30, 39–53 (see also Matthew 26:1–5, 14–54; Mark 14:1–2, 10–49; John 13:2, 18–30; 18:2–11). Judas sought an opportunity to betray Jesus. (15–20 minutes)

Write the word *betray* on the board and ask:

- What do you think this word means?
- What are some of its synonyms? (Deceive, beguile, ensnare, trap, sell out, desert, be a traitor, break faith.)
- Have you ever been betrayed? If so, how did you feel?
- How did it affect you emotionally, mentally, and spiritually?
- Why do some people betray others?

Place thirty coins in a cloth bag. Give the bag to a student and ask him or her to read Luke 22:1–3. Then have the student pass the bag to another, and have the second student read verses 4–6. Continue doing this until the class has finished reading Luke 22:1–30, 39–53. Discuss the story as they read, using questions such as these:

- Who betrayed Jesus?
- What does a bag of thirty coins have to do with the story? (see Matthew 26:15).
- What did the Savior do during this time of betrayal that impresses you most?
- How did His actions show His love toward His enemies and Judas?
- How could His example help at times when others hurt or betray you?

In your discussion, use any of the following explanations that you find useful:

- Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote:

“Judas took the initiative. He sought out the chief priests; he chose to betray his Lord; he asked for the money. It was a wilful, deliberate, premeditated act” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:702).

- As prophesied by Zechariah, Judas betrayed the Savior for thirty pieces of silver (see Zechariah 11:12; Matthew 26:15). This amount was recognized as the price of a slave in the law of Moses (see Exodus 21:32) and shows the low regard that Judas and the chief priests had for Jesus.
- Luke’s account reads, “Then entered Satan into Judas” (Luke 22:3). Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote:

“Satan can have no power over human souls unless it is given to him by them. People are subject to him only when they hearken to his enticements. In other words, Judas was an evil traitor because of personal wickedness, because he preferred to live after the manner of the world, because he ‘loved Satan more than God.’ He truly had become ‘carnal, sensual, and devilish’ by choice [see Moses 5:12–13]” (*Mortal Messiah*, 4:15).

Point out that when we disobey the Savior or disregard His teachings, we betray Him in some measure. Ask students to review Luke 22:2–3, 5, and then ask:

- What do you think motivated these people to betray the Savior? (Pride, fear of losing power, Satan, money.)
- How do these same temptations cause some people to disregard the Savior and His teachings today?

Encourage students to resist temptation and follow the teachings of the Savior.

Luke 22:7–20 (see also Matthew 26:17–20, 26–29; Mark 14:12–17, 22–25). We partake of the sacrament to remember Jesus Christ’s body and blood, which He sacrificed for us. (25–30 minutes)

Bring a keepsake that is precious to you to class. Show it to students and explain how it serves as a reminder of something important in your life. Ask:

- Do you have any keepsakes you treasure?
- Where do you keep them?
- How long have you had them?
- How often do you look at them?
- Which is more important to you, the keepsake or the event it represents? Why?

Explain that in the Church there are emblems or symbols that can help us remember our covenants and strengthen our resolve to keep them. Invite students to read Luke 22:7–16, and ask:

- What significant event is taking place in these verses?
- How would this Passover be different from all the others before it?

Invite students to ponder how important the Atonement is in their lives. Read the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“Nearly a millennium and a half after Jehovah gave the Passover to Israel, he himself, tabernacled among men, was preparing to celebrate the feast, to fulfil the law given to Moses, to become the Paschal Lamb, a lamb without spot and blemish whose shed blood would offer to all men spiritual freedom and deliverance from the bondage of sin.

“Arrangements for this final Passover of our Lord’s ministry, a Passover to be known ever after to the Church as the Last Supper, were made by Peter and John as directed by the seeric vision of Jesus. The Supper itself must have been in the home of a disciple, for the two apostles had but to mention the Master’s desires and the upper room was made available.

“This was the final approved Passover. Following the sacrifice of Christ as a Paschal Lamb this old ordinance was to cease and other symbols (those shown forth in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper) were to find approved usage among the Lord’s people. Now the only proper celebration of the Passover is in the spiritual sense of which Paul speaks: ‘For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.’ (1 Cor. 5:7–8.)” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:704–5).

Read Luke 22:17–20.

- What emblems did the Savior introduce to the Apostles?
- What did Jesus say was His purpose in giving these emblems?

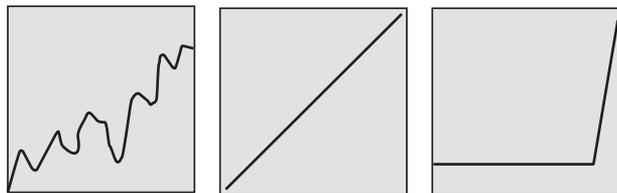
Display a piece of bread and a cup of grape juice or water. Ask: Why are these appropriate emblems to help us remember the Atonement? Ask students to read the sacrament prayers from Doctrine and Covenants 20:77, 79.

- What promises do we make when we partake of the sacrament? (Write those named in the sacrament prayers on the board.)
- Which is more important: the bread and water or what they represent? Why?

Invite students to share how they focus their thoughts on the Savior during the sacrament. Ask: What things could we do during that time to help us better remember our covenants? (Possible answers include reading the sacramental prayers from the scriptures, recommitting to keep our covenants, thinking about the words of the sacrament hymn, and praying for forgiveness.) Testify that the power of the Atonement in our lives is increased as we worthily partake of the sacrament.

Luke 22:31–38, 55–62 (see also Matthew 26:31–35, 69–75; Mark 14:27–31, 66–72; John 13:36–38; 18:15–18, 25–27).
As we become converted in our hearts, we should help strengthen others. (20–25 minutes)

Draw the following three lines on the board:



Ask students:

- Which of these three lines is a better representation of your spiritual growth or your commitment to the gospel over your lifetime? (You may consider asking students to draw a line they feel best represents their personal spiritual development.)
- What seems to affect your commitment to the gospel at different times during your life?
- Why do you think your spiritual growth doesn't always match your physical growth?

Read Luke 22:33.

- How strong or committed does Peter seem in this verse?
- Do you think he still had potential to grow spiritually? Why or why not?
- Read verses 31–32. What did the Savior know about Peter's commitment to the gospel that Peter didn't know?
- In what ways do you think the Savior's warning and admonition in verses 31–32 apply to us?

Ask the students to read the following references and look for insights into the depth of Peter's conversion at different stages of his life.

- Luke 22:34–38
- Luke 22:54–62
- Acts 2:14, 37–40
- Acts 3:1–7

Ask:

- What evidence do you see in these references that Peter became spiritually strong during his lifetime?
- What do you think helped him become stronger?

Read the following from Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

"Conversion is more—far more—than merely changing one's belief from that which is false to that which is true; it is more than the acceptance of the verity of gospel truths, than the acquirement of a testimony. To convert is to change from one status to another, and gospel conversion consists in the transformation of man from his fallen and carnal state to a state of saintliness.

"A convert is one who has put off the natural man, yielded to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and become 'a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord.' Such a person has become 'as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.' (Mosiah 3:19.) He has become a new creature of the Holy Ghost: the old creature has been converted or changed into a new one. He has been born again: where once he was spiritually dead, he has been regenerated to a state of spiritual life. (Mosiah 27:24–29.) In real conversion, which is essential to salvation (Matt. 18:3), the convert not only changes his beliefs, casting off the false traditions of the past and accepting the beauties of revealed religion, but he changes his whole way of life, and the nature and structure of his very being is quickened and changed by the power of the Holy Ghost.

"Peter is the classic example of how the power of conversion works on receptive souls. During our Lord's mortal ministry, Peter had a testimony, born of the Spirit, of the divinity of Christ and of the great plan of salvation which was in Christ. 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,' he said, as the Holy Ghost gave him utterance. (Matt. 16:13–19.) When others fell away, Peter stood forth with the apostolic assurance, 'We believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.' (John 6:69.) Peter knew, and his knowledge came by revelation.

"But Peter was not converted, because he had not become a new creature of the Holy Ghost. Rather, long after Peter had gained a testimony, and on the very night Jesus was arrested, he said to Peter: 'When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.' (Luke 22:32.) Immediately thereafter, and regardless of his testimony, Peter denied that he knew Christ. (Luke 22:54–62.) After the crucifixion, Peter went fishing, only to be called back to the ministry by the risen Lord. (John 21:1–17.) Finally on the day of Pentecost the promised spiritual endowment was received; Peter and all the faithful disciples became new creatures of the Holy Ghost; they were truly converted; and their subsequent achievements manifest the fixity of their conversions. (Acts 3; 4.)" (*Mormon Doctrine*, 162–63).

Ask:

- What do we learn from this passage about Peter?
- What does this passage teach us about conversion?
- Reread Luke 22:32. How well did Peter live up to Jesus' charge?

(You may also wish to read parts of, or refer students to, "Peter, My Brother" by Elder Spencer W. Kimball; see *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, pp. 488–93).

Testify to your students of their potential to grow spiritually throughout their lives. Remind them that we, like Peter, should strengthen those around us as we grow closer to the Lord.

Luke 22:39–46 (see also Matthew 26:36–46; Mark 14:32–41). Jesus Christ submitted to Heavenly Father's will. He willingly suffered pain, afflictions, and death to fulfill His role in the plan of salvation. (30–35 minutes)

Ask students to think of a time when they were so tired, sore, or weak that they did not feel like saying their prayers, going to church, fasting, or serving others.

- How did you overcome those physical desires in order to keep God's commandments?
- How difficult was it for you?
- What emotional obstacles can you think of that keep us from doing what is right? (Possible answers include fear of sharing the gospel, anger, and unwillingness to forgive others.)

Read Abraham 3:24–25 and look for what these verses say about the purpose of earth life. Ask:

- What does the word *prove* mean? (To test.)
- What is the test?
- Why do you think it is important that we be tested?
- How does this test help fill the purpose of the plan of salvation?

Even when life is difficult or painful, we can receive strength to do God's will by following the Savior's example. Ask students to read Luke 22:39–46, and ask:

- What was God's will for Jesus Christ (what did He want the Savior to do)?
- What do these verses teach about the physical difficulty of the Savior's choice to follow Heavenly Father's will? (see v. 44).
- What spiritual burdens did the Savior carry at this time? (see also Alma 7:11–13).
- What assistance did Heavenly Father send Jesus at this most difficult time? (see Luke 22:43).
- In what ways can Heavenly Father send you assistance at difficult times to help you keep His commandments?
- How does 1 Nephi 3:7 support this idea?

To help students appreciate the Atonement, read and discuss the following passages: John 10:17–18; 2 Nephi 9:7; Mosiah 3:7; Alma 34:10–14; Doctrine and Covenants 19:15–20; 122:7–8.

Tell students that the Savior sacrificed in this way because of His love for the Father and for each of us. As our love for Heavenly Father deepens, we, like the Savior, will be better able to endure physical and emotional pain and do the Father's will. Share all or whatever part of the following quotes you feel will help your students gain a greater appreciation for the Savior's sacrifice.

President Joseph Fielding Smith, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, testified:

"Here we have the Son of God carrying the burden of my transgressions and your transgressions and the transgressions of every soul that receives the gospel of Jesus Christ. . . . He carried the burden—our burden. I added something to it; so did you. So did everybody else. He took it upon himself to pay the price that I might escape—that you might escape—the punishment on the conditions that we will receive his gospel and be true and faithful in it" ("Fall—Atonement—Resurrection—Sacrament" [address to religious educators, 14 Jan. 1961], in *Change to Religious Educators*, 2nd ed. [1982], 127).

Elder James E. Talmage testified:

"Christ's agony in the garden is unfathomable by the finite mind, both as to intensity and cause. The thought that He suffered through fear of death is untenable. Death to Him was preliminary to resurrection and triumphal return to the Father from whom He had come, and to a state of glory even beyond what He had before possessed; and, moreover, it was within His power to lay down His life voluntarily. He struggled and groaned under a burden such as no other being who has lived on earth might even conceive as possible. It was not physical pain, nor mental anguish alone, that caused Him to suffer such torture as to produce an extrusion of blood from every pore; but a spiritual agony of soul such as only God was capable of experiencing. No other man, however great his powers of physical or mental endurance, could have suffered so; for his human organism would have succumbed, and syncope would have produced unconsciousness and welcome oblivion. In that hour of anguish Christ met and overcame all the horrors that Satan, 'the prince of this world' could inflict. The frightful struggle incident to the temptations immediately following the Lord's baptism was surpassed and overshadowed by this supreme contest with the powers of evil" (*Jesus the Christ*, 613).

President John Taylor explained:

“Jesus had to take away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. . . . And as He in His own person bore the sins of all, and atoned for them by the sacrifice of Himself, so there came upon Him the weight and agony of ages and generations, the indescribable agony consequent upon this great sacrificial atonement wherein He bore the sins of the world, and suffered in His own person the consequences of an eternal law of God broken by man. Hence His profound grief, His indescribable anguish, His overpowering torture, all experienced in the submission to the eternal fiat of Jehovah and the requirements of an inexorable law.

“The suffering of the Son of God was not simply the suffering of personal death; for in assuming the position that He did in making an atonement for the sins of the world He bore the weight, the responsibility, and the burden of the sins of all men, which, to us, is incomprehensible. . . .

“Groaning beneath this concentrated load, this intense, incomprehensible pressure, this terrible exaction of Divine justice, from which feeble humanity shrank, and through the agony thus experienced sweating great drops of blood, He was led to exclaim, ‘Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.’ He had wrestled with the superincumbent load in the wilderness, He had struggled against the powers of darkness that had been let loose upon him there; placed below all things, His mind surcharged with agony and pain, lonely and apparently helpless and forsaken, in his agony the blood oozed from His pores” (*Mediation and Atonement* [1882], 149–50).



Luke 22:41–23:25 (see also Matthew 26:36–27:26; Mark 14:32–15:15; John 18:1–19:16). Even though He was rejected, betrayed, mocked, and scorned, Jesus Christ willingly suffered and atoned for the sins of all mankind. (40–45 minutes)

Display a picture of Jesus Christ. Invite students to read Isaiah 53:3–10 looking for words and phrases that describe how the Savior was treated by many, and list these on the board. Point out to students that Christ’s life was one of total service, love, forgiveness, blessing, and healing. Ask: Given all He did for us, why do you think so many people turned against Him and abused Him so badly? To help answer this question, read 2 Nephi 2:11, 27 and Mosiah 3:19, and ask students to come up with their own ideas. Also share the following statement by President Brigham Young:

“Wicked men, Satan, and all the powers of hell and hate are at war with every holy principle that God wishes to place in the possession of his children” (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [1941], 348–49).

Ask students to read Luke 22:39–42 and Luke 23:20–25 and look for the word *will* in those verses. Ask students to compare the will of Jesus Christ to the will or desires of the people. Help your students appreciate that Jesus loved all people and chose to atone for everyone’s sins, even though many hated Him and many would never accept the full blessings of the Atonement. Ask:

- What are some of your righteous desires?
- What kinds of people seem to oppose your righteous desires?
- How do you overcome that opposition?

Testify that we can learn how to overcome opposition by following the example of Jesus Christ. Invite students to silently read Luke 22:41–23:25. Ask half the class to look for examples of how Jesus suffered, and ask the other half to look for how Jesus showed love and compassion toward the people. Have them share their discoveries with the class, and discuss how we can better follow the Savior’s example.

Read Alma 42:14–15. Point out how we, like the people who rejected Jesus Christ, also at times hurt Him by choosing sin. Point out that, because of His love for each of us, He atoned for our sins so that we could be reclaimed. Ask: How does that affect how you feel toward our Savior?

Luke 23:13–56 (see also Matthew 27:15–61; Mark 15:6–47; John 18:39–19:42). The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ was part of the Father’s plan of happiness. (20–25 minutes)

This is an excellent time to allow students to study, ponder, and feel the significance of the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Consider playing sacred music and decorating the room in a special way. As the students arrive, assign each of them one of the following people: Barabbas, Simon the Cyrenian, a daughter of Jerusalem, the malefactor on Jesus’ right hand, the malefactor on Jesus’ left hand, a person watching, a ruler, a Roman soldier, the centurion, an acquaintance of Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea, a woman who prepared the body of Jesus for burial.

Invite students to silently read Luke 23:13–56 and visualize the events from the perspective of the person they were assigned. Tell them to read carefully, concentrate on the message, and ponder its significance. When they finish, discuss their experience, using questions such as these:

- What perspective were you assigned to consider?
- What did you learn from reading the story from this person’s perspective?

- What feelings did you have about the Savior?
- Which person would you most like to have been that day? Why?

Conclude by singing “I Stand All Amazed” (*Hymns*, no. 193) and allowing any students who wish to share their testimony to do so.

Luke 24:13–35 (see also Mark 16:12–13). The Lord communicates with His children in many different ways.
(40–45 minutes)

Blindfold several students. Display an unfamiliar picture of the Savior, and invite the other students to describe the picture to those with blindfolds. Ask the blindfolded students:

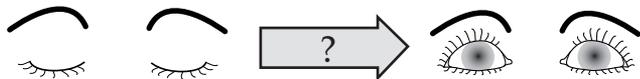
- How well can you see the picture in your mind?
- What frustrations do you feel from not being able to use your eyes?

Have an unblindfolded student read Luke 24:1–16 out loud, emphasizing verses 13–16. Ask:

- What do you think “their eyes were holden” means? (v. 16; they were kept from recognizing Him.)
- How does the experience of these two men compare to that of the students with blindfolds?

Invite the students with blindfolds to take them off and read Luke 24:31. Ask:

- What eventually happened to the eyes of these two men?
- Do you think this refers to their physical or spiritual eyes? Why?
- Why is it important for all people to have their “eyes opened” so they can “see” Jesus Christ?



Draw the accompanying diagram on the board and ask:

- How can people’s spiritual eyes be opened?
- In what ways does Heavenly Father communicate truth and understanding to His children?

Tell students that Luke 24 lists some of the ways the Lord communicates with His children. Have students read verses 13–35 looking for some of the different ways, and list their findings on the board. These might include personal appearances (see vv. 13–16, 33–52), visitations of angels (see v. 23), a burning in our hearts (see v. 32), enlightenment and joy (see vv. 32, 41), the scriptures (see vv. 32, 44–45), and feelings of peace (see v. 36; see also D&C 6:23). Ask:

- Which of these ways has Heavenly Father used to communicate with you?
- How have those experiences helped open your spiritual eyes?

 **Luke 24:36–48 (Scripture Mastery, Luke 24:36–39; see also Mark 16:14; John 20:19–23). Jesus Christ was the first person to be resurrected.**
(20–25 minutes)

Ask students: What do you think is the most glorious message ever given? After discussing some of their answers, teach them that “the resurrection of Jesus is the most glorious of all messages to mankind” (Bible Dictionary, “resurrection,” 761). Invite them to read the material listed under “resurrection” in the Bible Dictionary to help determine why it is such a glorious doctrine. Ask:

- When are some times that you think about the Resurrection?
- What about the Resurrection is most appealing to you?
- What questions do you have about the Resurrection?

Ask students to read Luke 24:36–48 and look for what these verses teach about resurrected beings, including what resurrected beings are like and what they can do. Testify that Jesus Christ lives and that because of Him each of us will be resurrected. Read 2 Nephi 2:8 and 3 Nephi 11:12–15, and consider singing “I Know That My Redeemer Lives” (*Hymns*, no. 136).

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT JOHN

Author: The Gospel of John is an intimate testimony of Jesus Christ written by one of His most trusted and beloved servants and disciples. John, like Matthew, was one of the Lord’s original Twelve Apostles and so was a special witness to the acts and teachings in his Gospel. John and James were sons of Zebedee and, like Simon Peter, were fishermen who left all when Jesus called them (see Mark 1:19–20; Luke 5:10–11). Jesus referred to the brothers as the Sons of Thunder (see Mark 3:17). John and James were two of the Apostles Jesus appointed “to take the keys of presidency. *Peter, James, and John acted as the First Presidency of the Church in their day*” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 3:152). These three were with the Lord at the raising of Jairus’s daughter, at the Transfiguration, and in Gethsemane. In his testimony, John refers to himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (John 21:20; see also John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7). The Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants refer to John’s role as a revelator and a restorer of the priesthood in the latter days (see 1 Nephi 14:18–27; Ether 4:16; D&C 7; 27:12; 77; see also Bible Dictionary, “John,” p. 715).

Audience: Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote, “The gospel of John is the account for the Saints; it is pre-eminently the gospel for the Church, for those who understand the scriptures and their symbolisms and who are concerned with spiritual and eternal things” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 336).

Historical Background: Few agree as to when the Gospel of John was written. As one Latter-day Saint educator wrote, “Attractive arguments can be put forth for a [late first century] dating of John, but they are not sufficiently strong or decisive to rule out the possibility of an early date, perhaps even as early as A.D. 35 to 45” (C. Wilford Griggs, “The Testimony of John,” in *Studies in Scripture: Volume Five, the Gospels*, 111). Some believe John wrote his Gospel at Ephesus some time after the destruction of Jerusalem.

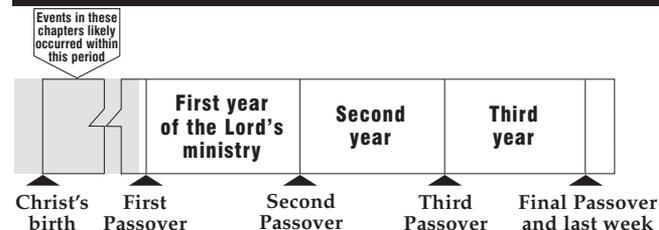
Unique Features: Of the four Gospels, John has the most unique material, being about 92 percent exclusive (see Bible Dictionary, “Gospels,” p. 683). The chart below summarizes some of the differences between John’s book and the other Gospels.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke	John
Focus on Jesus’ ministry around Galilee.	Focuses on Jesus’ ministry around Judea.
Emphasize Jesus as the Son of David (the Messiah).	Emphasizes Jesus as the Son of God.
Accent the establishment of the Church and its priesthood.	Accents truths for Church members.
Emphasize chronological events.	Emphasizes the spiritual message of events.
Jesus’ sayings generally short.	More often includes long discourses of Jesus.

Theme: John declared that his purpose in recording his testimony was “that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:31).

John 1

The Life of Jesus Christ



Introduction

John began his testimony in a different manner than other Gospel writers. Rather than starting with Jesus’ genealogy, Annunciation, and birth, John focused on the premortal Christ as the “Word of God” and divine Creator. John 1 summarizes many of the themes developed in the rest of the book. It testifies of Jesus Christ’s divinity and His central role in our Heavenly Father’s plan.

Prayerfully study John 1 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Jesus Christ, under the direction of Heavenly Father, created this and other worlds (see John 1:1–3; see also Colossians 1:16–17; Hebrews 1:1–3; Moses 1:33).
- Although Jesus Christ was a member of the Godhead before His mortal birth, He did not receive all power and glory as a young child but grew grace for grace until He received a fulness (see John 1:14; see also D&C 93:12–16).
- Just as Jesus received grace for grace, so we can grow and progress spiritually until we receive all that the Father has (see John 1:1–17; see also D&C 93:1–22).
- Jesus Christ and His gospel are the light and life of the world (see John 1:1–4; JST, John 1:1–4).
- Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God offered as a sacrifice for the sins of the world (see John 1:29, 32–34, 36, 41, 49).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 15–17, 29.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for John 1.



John 1:1–3. Jesus Christ was a member of the Godhead before He came to earth. (15–20 minutes)

Take a baseball (or other ball of a popular sport in your area) to class. Ask:

- How much is this ball worth?
- How would the value of the ball change if it were signed by members of a world championship team?
- How might knowing the history of something increase our appreciation of its value?
- Could this principle be true of people as well as objects?

Have students read John 1:1–3 looking for who is described.

Ask: How does knowing this history increase our understanding of His importance?

Give students the following true-false test to help them understand the Lord's premortal greatness.

1. Jesus created this earth.
2. Jesus created worlds without number.
3. Jesus was the firstborn spirit of our Father in Heaven.
4. Jesus was a God before He was born on this earth.
5. Jesus was the one who established the covenant with Abraham.
6. Jesus was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
7. Jesus appeared to Moses in the burning bush.
8. Jesus helped the children of Israel escape from Egypt and parted the Red Sea.
9. Jesus gave the Ten Commandments to Moses.
10. Jesus is Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament.

Correct the quizzes with the class (all the statements are true) and discuss any questions they have. Share the following quotation from Elder James E. Talmage:

“We claim scriptural authority for the assertion that Jesus Christ was and is God the Creator, the God who revealed Himself to Adam, Enoch, and all the antediluvial patriarchs and prophets down to Noah; the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the God of Israel as a united people, and the God of Ephraim and Judah after the disruption of the Hebrew nation; the God who made Himself known to the prophets from Moses to Malachi; the God of the Old Testament record; and the God of the Nephites. We affirm that Jesus Christ was and is Jehovah, the Eternal One” (*Jesus the Christ*, 32).

Ask students: Why do you think the Creator of the world would choose to come into mortality as a baby born in a humble manger? Have students read 1 Nephi 11:14–22 and share their feelings about God's love as shown in the birth of Jesus Christ.

John 1–3. The Lord's titles teach us about His life and mission. (25–30 minutes)

Bring a loaf of bread, a lightbulb, a glass of water, and a rock to class. Ask: How are each of these objects symbolic of the life of Christ? (You could use John 4:10–15; 6:48; 8:12; Jeremiah 2:13; and Helaman 5:12 to show how these objects can symbolize Christ.)

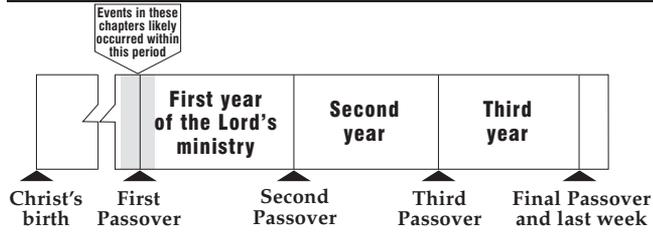
Have students read John 1:1–3, 14; the Joseph Smith Translation of John 1:1–3, 14; and Doctrine and Covenants 93:8–10, looking for why John calls Jesus Christ “the Word.” (Possible answers include that Jesus is the “messenger of salvation” [D&C 93:8], that He personifies the gospel, that He carries out the word of the Father, and that He created the earth under the direction, or word, of the Father.) Have students look quickly through the first three chapters of the Gospel of John searching for titles for Jesus Christ, and write them on the board. (The following list is included for your convenience and is not comprehensive.)

- The Light (John 1:4–9)
- The Son (John 1:18, 34, 49)
- That Prophet (John 1:21; see also Deuteronomy 18:15)
- The Lord (John 1:23)
- The Lamb (John 1:29, 36)
- The Master or Rabbi (John 1:38, 49)
- The Messiah or Christ (John 1:41)
- Teacher (John 3:2)
- The Bridegroom (John 3:29)

Encourage students to watch for titles of Jesus as they study the New Testament and consider what each one teaches about the life and mission of the Savior.

John 2–3

The Life of Jesus Christ



Introduction

John chapters 2–3 mark the end of Jesus' years of preparation and the beginning of His public ministry. At a wedding feast in Cana of Galilee, Jesus performed His first public miracle by turning water into wine. Afterwards He traveled with His family and disciples to Capernaum and then proceeded south to Jerusalem for Passover. There He cast "the changers of money" out of the temple, charging them with making "my Father's house an house of merchandise" (John 2:14–16). Soon thereafter, Nicodemus, a noted Pharisee and leader among the Jews, sought an audience with the Savior. Of all the truths Jesus taught during His ministry, it is interesting to ponder what He said in one of His first interviews.

Prayerfully study John 2–3 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Through His example, Christ showed that we should honor and obey our earthly parents in righteousness (see John 2:1–11; JST, John 2:4; see also Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16; John 19:26–27).
- Temples are houses of the Lord which no unclean thing should enter. Our bodies are like temples, and we should not defile them with unworthy thoughts, words, or actions (see John 2:13–22; see also 1 Corinthians 6:19–20).
- All accountable individuals who desire to enter the celestial kingdom must be baptized and receive the Holy Ghost. We must be spiritually born of God, changed from our fallen state to a state of righteousness, in order to inherit God's kingdom (see John 3:1–8; see also Mosiah 27:24–26; D&C 76:50–53).
- Types and symbols from the Old Testament teach of Jesus Christ and the plan of redemption (see John 3:14–15; see also Numbers 21:4–9; 2 Nephi 11:4; Helaman 8:13–15; Moses 6:62–63).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 29, 37–41.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for John 2–3.

John 2:1–11. Through His example, Christ showed that we should honor and obey our earthly parents in righteousness. (10–15 minutes)

Ask students:

- What names do you use to refer to your parents?
- What are ways of referring to your parents respectfully?
- How would you feel if you heard others refer to their parents disrespectfully?

Have students read John 2:3–4 looking for how respectful Jesus Christ was of His mother. Refer them to the Joseph Smith Translation change in footnote 4*a* and ask: How does this change affect our understanding of how respectful Jesus was to His mother? Read the statement by Elder James E. Talmage in the commentary for John 2:4 in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles* (p. 29, right column). Help students understand that Jesus Christ set an example by never referring to His mother disrespectfully. Encourage students to do the same.

(*Note:* Avoid speculation as to whose marriage took place at this time. Also, this is not an appropriate block for a lesson on the Word of Wisdom. The miracle of turning the water to wine occurred in the first century A.D., while the Word of Wisdom was not given by the Lord until 1833.)



John 2:12–25. Events in the life and ministry of the Savior played an essential role in the plan of salvation. (25–30 minutes)

Write the accompanying chart on the board, but leave off the scripture references.

Jesus' Words and Actions:

1. Revealed to His listeners that He was the Messiah (see Luke 2:46–50).
2. Taught and trained His Apostles and disciples (see John 1:40–51).
3. Increased His fame (see John 2:1–11).
4. Brought increased hatred, which led to His Crucifixion (see John 2:13–21).

Give the students the scripture references in random order. Have them read the references looking for how each shows Jesus preparing for the Atonement. With your students, match the references to the four events and add them to the chart.

Discuss how these events led the Savior to the Garden of Gethsemane, the cross, the tomb, and His Resurrection. Stress to students that Jesus came to earth to accomplish the Atonement, and that all the events of His life led to this event.

Point out that Jesus' entire life was dedicated to accomplishing the will of Heavenly Father (see John 5:30).

Ask:

- What was the purpose for our coming to the earth?
- What could you be doing now that would help you accomplish that purpose?
- What can we do to accomplish our life's mission? (Repent of our sins, study the scriptures, live the commandments, learn to listen to the Spirit.)

Encourage students to live their lives in such a way that they can appreciate and qualify for the blessings of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.



John 3:5 (Scripture Mastery). We must be spiritually born of God, changed from our fallen state to a state of righteousness. (25 minutes)

Hold up a picture of a newborn baby and ask:

- Why do we get so excited over newborn babies?
- What are the characteristics we commonly attribute to newborns? (Purity, innocence, humility, dependence, love, freshness from God's presence.)
- Have you ever wished you could have those same qualities again?
- What advantages are there to starting over?

Have students read John 3:3–7, and ask:

- According to these verses, how does Jesus say we can begin anew?
- Why do you think the Lord uses the phrase "born again" to describe baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost?

Explain that when the Savior used the phrases "born again" and "born of the Spirit," He was comparing baptism and spiritual rebirth to physical birth (see also Hebrews 12:9; Moses 6:59–60). If it would be helpful, draw this chart on the board and discuss it with the class. Ask students if they can add to the list.

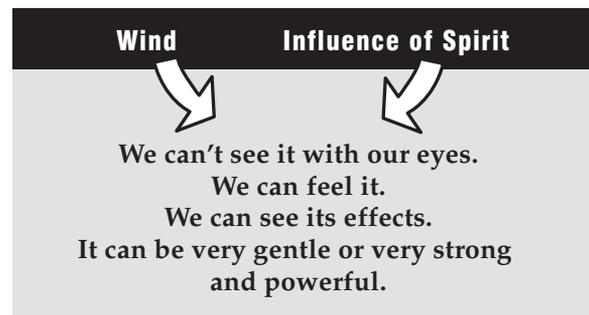
Physical Birth	Spiritual Birth
Our mortal life begins.	We begin a new life in Christ.
We inherit physical and mental traits and material things from our parents.	Christ becomes our Father and we receive a spiritual inheritance from Him.
In many cultures we receive our father's name.	We receive the name of Christ.
We can become like our parents.	We begin our progression towards becoming like our Father in Heaven.

Invite students to read and cross-reference Alma 5:14 and Mosiah 5:2 and look for changes that accompany being born again. If any of your students would feel comfortable doing so, invite them to testify of changes that happened in their lives at the time of their baptism or conversion.

Testify to your students that we all need to be born of the Spirit. Express to them the significance of your own baptism and the value of the gift of the Holy Ghost in your life.

John 3:8–13. We must be born of the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God. (25–30 minutes)

Have students observe or reflect on the effects of a breeze on a windy day. Have students read John 3:8 looking for how the wind compares to being born of the Spirit. Ask: How did Jesus say they are alike? If desired, use the accompanying diagram to help your discussion:



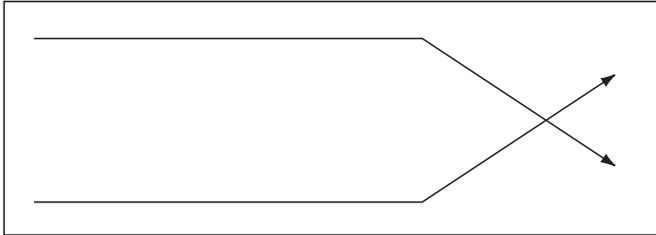
Have students read John 3:9–10, and ask:

- Why was Nicodemus rebuked for not understanding the things Jesus taught? (He was one of the leaders and teachers of the people and should have understood these truths.)
- In what ways might we sometimes be guilty of misunderstanding the effects of the Holy Ghost?
- What are some of the ways in which people receive their testimonies by the power of the Holy Ghost?
- Why do people react differently to the Spirit?
- Have you ever been frustrated when you did not feel the Holy Ghost in the same way as others?
- How do you react when your prayers are not answered in the way you expected?

Testify that although the effects of the Spirit can be as hard to describe as the wind, they are real. We can all be born of the Spirit if we follow the Lord’s example.

John 3:28–30 (see also Matthew 3:11–15; Mark 1:7–8; Luke 3:15–16). John the Baptist’s humility and understanding of who he was helped him focus on his mission of testifying of the Savior. (25–30 minutes)

Draw the following diagram on the board.



Have students read John 3:28–30, and ask: According to these verses, what could these two lines represent? (The line that rises represents the Savior’s renown among men; the line that falls represents John the Baptist’s.)

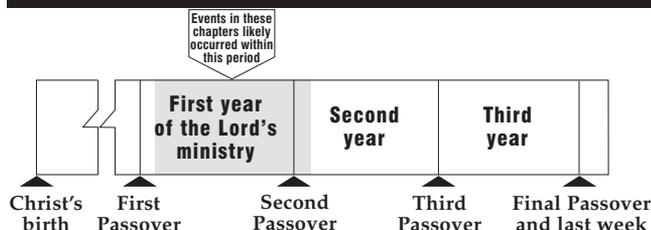
Ask students to read John 1:19–36; 5:33–36; 10:41, and ask:

- What examples of John the Baptist’s humility do we see in these scriptures?
- What evidence can you give that John knew who he was?
- How did John’s humility help him fill his role as forerunner of the Messiah?
- What can we learn from the example of John the Baptist that can help us in our lives?

Testify to the truth that salvation is only in Jesus Christ. Explain that John the Baptist understood this. He had a valuable role as forerunner of the Messiah, but he humbled himself before the Lord. We need to do the same.

John 4–5

The Life of Jesus Christ



Introduction

Have you ever been so thirsty you would willingly give all that you have for some cool, thirst-quenching water? In the

land where Jesus walked, water was scarce and precious, and wars have been fought to secure it. Prophets used the imagery of water to suggest the source of eternal life (see Isaiah 8:6; 12:3; 44:3; 55:1; Jeremiah 2:13; Zechariah 14:8). Jesus opened His public ministry by miraculously changing water to wine (see John 2:1–11). He taught Nicodemus that we must be born of water (see John 3:1–7). He taught the woman of Samaria that He offered “living water” that would lead to “everlasting life” (John 4:10, 14; see vv. 5–14). The sick man near the pool of Bethesda discovered that healing was not in the actual pool of water but in the Savior (see John 5:1–15). John 4–5 reveals from what source those who thirst for truth and righteousness can be filled.

Prayerfully study John 4–5 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Loving Christ and keeping His commandments is like drinking living water—it refreshes and sustains us and leads us to eternal life (see John 4:5–14; see also John 7:37–38; 1 Nephi 11:25; D&C 63:23).
- Sharing the gospel with others, even when it seems difficult, will bring us joy and help us obtain eternal life (see John 4:6–10, 31–40).
- The Judgment and Resurrection are brought to pass through the power of Jesus Christ (see John 5:21–29).
- Those who died without hearing the gospel will have a chance to receive it in the spirit world (see John 5:25–28; see also 1 Peter 3:18–21; 4:6; D&C 138:25–37).
- Christ’s respect for and obedience to the law of witnesses testify of His divinity (see John 5:30–47; see also Deuteronomy 17:6; 2 Corinthians 13:1).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 38, 51–52, 109.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for John 4–5.

John 4–5. Knowing the places where Jesus walked can help us remember His life. (20–25 minutes)

Ask students:

- What are some places that have special meaning in your lives?
- Why do some places evoke such strong memories?

Explain that the same thing could be said for Jesus' mortal ministry. Have the students locate the following places on Bible maps 11 and 12:

- The River Jordan
- Jerusalem
- Cana
- Sychar
- Capernaum
- Pool of Bethesda

Have students scan the following references looking for the significant events that occurred in each of these places:

- John 1:19, 23–28
- John 2:1–11
- John 2:13, 23–3:8
- John 4:1–21
- John 4:46–50
- John 5:1–9

After discussing the places and events briefly, explain that knowing the geography of Jesus' mortal ministry can help us remember His life.

John 4:5–30, 39–42. Christ will nourish us spiritually if we love Him and keep His commandments. (15–20 minutes)

Bring a glass and a clear pitcher of ice water to class. Hold it up and invite someone to take a drink. Ask: What is the value of water in our lives? (It helps sustain life, it refreshes and cools, it quenches thirst.)

Have students read John 4:5–30, 39–42 looking for words or details related to water and thirst, and invite them to share their findings. (Answers might include “sixth hour” [noon—hot time of day; v. 6], “well” [v. 6], “drink” [v. 7], “living water” [v. 10], “nothing to draw [up the water] with” [v. 11], “thirst” [vv. 13–14], “springing up” [v. 14], “waterpot” [v. 28].)

Ask:

- Why didn't the woman immediately understand the Savior's symbolism? (Christ was speaking of spiritual things, while the woman was thinking of earthly things.)
- How do you think the woman felt when Jesus identified her sins? (see vv. 17–18).
- How could the living water Jesus offered affect the woman's life?
- What did she need to do to partake of this living water?
- What does Christ offer us that is like water? (Truth, resurrection, forgiveness for our sins if we repent, His Spirit.)

Explain to the students that water is life, especially to people in an arid climate like Palestine's. Without water, plants, animals, and people die. Point out that those who live in sin

or who do not have the gospel are like hot, thirsty land without water. They need the living water of the gospel to restore their spiritual life.

John 5:25, 27–30. Those who died without hearing the gospel will have a chance to receive it in the spirit world. (20–25 minutes)

Ask students:

- Have any of you ever had a loved one pass away?
- Would any of you mind sharing how you felt at the time of this loss? (*Note:* Be careful not to intrude on sensitive feelings.)
- How might the pain of losing a loved one be different if you knew the person had never known of Jesus Christ or His gospel?

Have students read John 5:25–30.

- How might these verses help comfort someone who has lost a loved one, especially one who did not know the gospel?
- How can the dead be judged fairly if they never had a chance to hear or receive the gospel?
- What does verse 25 promise to the dead? (They shall hear the voice of the Son of God.)
- What does it mean to “hear the voice of the Son of God”?

You may want to cross-reference this phrase to Doctrine and Covenants 1:37–38. Point out that when we listen to God's servants, it is the same as listening to Him.

Have students quietly read Doctrine and Covenants 138:1–19, 29–31, 57. When they finish, ask: How could this revelation bring peace to someone who has lost a loved one?

Have the students create a scripture chain by cross-referencing the first scripture on the following list to the second, the second to the third, and so on to the end, and then cross-referencing the last scripture to the first.

- John 5:25–30
- Isaiah 24:22
- Isaiah 25:8
- Isaiah 42:7
- Isaiah 61:1
- 1 Peter 3:18–21
- 1 Peter 4:6
- Doctrine and Covenants 138:1–19, 29–31, 57
- Moses 7:37–39

Close with the question: What does it tell us about our Heavenly Father to know that He provides a way for all to hear and understand the gospel?

John 5:31–40. Jesus respected and obeyed the law of witnesses. (20–25 minutes)

Prior to class put an unshelled nut in a paper bag. Tell the students you have in the bag something that has never been seen before by the human eye. Invite a student the class trusts to look in the bag and tell whether what you said is true. (If the student is not sure, whisper that the inside of the nut has never been seen by the human eye.) Ask the class if they believe the student. Invite another student to come forward and look in the bag. Have this student affirm the testimony of the first. Ask the class how many believe now. Show the class the nut and explain how the inside has never been seen by the human eye. Ask: Does it help to have more than one witness to confirm a testimony?

(Note: If you used the teaching suggestion for Matthew 16:1–4 [pp. 41–42], which includes a similar object lesson, you could do something like the following instead. Arrange in advance for a student to report some surprising piece of news to the class. This might be something you learned from a news broadcast that the students wouldn't have had a chance to hear, or perhaps something unusual that happened to the student that he or she hasn't told others. Arrange for a second student to confirm the story.)

Have a student read Deuteronomy 19:15. Explain that the law of witnesses is ancient and is spoken of in several passages in the scriptures (see Matthew 18:16; 2 Corinthians 13:1; Ether 5:4; D&C 6:28). Write the following chart on the board to identify the witnesses Jesus cites in John 5:31–40, leaving the "Witness" column blank.

Scripture Reference	Witness
John 4:25–26	Jesus Himself
John 5:33–35	John the Baptist
John 5:36	Jesus' works
John 5:37	The Father
John 5:39	The scriptures

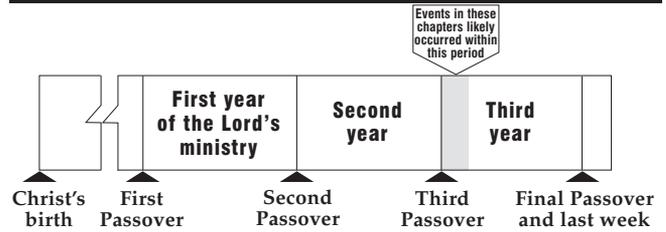
Choose a student to read the first scripture in the "Scripture Reference" column aloud and name the witness mentioned. Write the answer in the "Witness" column, and then pick another student to read the next reference until the chart is done. Ask:

- When the Savior said to search the scriptures, to what was He referring? (The Old Testament.)
- Why did He want the people to study the Old Testament? (Old Testament prophets prophesied of the coming of the Savior; see Jacob 4:4–5.)
- What other witnesses of Jesus' divinity can you think of? (Possible answers include parents, living prophets, the Holy Ghost, the Light of Christ.)

Close by sharing your testimony of Jesus Christ's divinity.

John 6

The Life of Jesus Christ



Introduction

Consider the following sequence of events: a multitude follows a prophet to a solitary place, Jehovah supplies bread in a miraculous way to feed them, the prophet goes alone into a mountain, the Lord saves His disciples in the course of a miraculous sea crossing, the people murmur and debate among themselves and criticize the prophet, and the prophet delivers a discourse explaining the meaning of these events. This sequence describes the Exodus of Israel from Egypt. It also summarizes the events in John 6. The Gospel of John shows Jesus at the head of a new Exodus, leading His disciples out of the bondage of the world, through the trials of mortality, and on to eternal life.

Prayerfully study John 6 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The Lord can provide for all of our needs (see John 6:5–21; see also Philippians 4:19).
- Jesus Christ has power over the elements (see John 6:5–21; see also Jacob 4:8–9).
- Just as food and water sustain us in mortality, Christ offers us living bread and water to sustain us eternally (see John 6:35–58; see also John 4:10–14; 7:37–39).
- We must resist the temptation to be offended by the Savior's teachings and commandments, for He is "Christ, the Son of the living God" (see John 6:60–71).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 90–93.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for John 6.



John 6. John 6 reflects the same pattern as the Exodus and the plan of salvation. (35–45 minutes)

Read the following statements or write them on the board.

Elder Boyd K. Packer said:

“The plan is worthy of repetition over and over again. Then the purpose of life, the reality of the Redeemer, and the reason for the commandments will stay with them” (*The Great Plan of Happiness* [address to religious educators at a symposium on the Doctrine and Covenants/Church history, Brigham Young University, 10 Aug. 1993], 3).

President Ezra Taft Benson asked:

“Are we using the messages and the method of teaching found in the . . . scriptures of the Restoration to teach this great plan of the Eternal God?” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 106; or *Ensign*, May 1987, 84).

Ask students:

- Why is it so important to learn and review the plan of salvation?
- What are some principles you have learned in your past studies of the plan of salvation that are important to you?
- Do you agree that learning something repeatedly helps us remember it?
- What do you think might be the best way to teach the plan of salvation?
- What methods do the scriptures use to teach the plan?

Explain that although the scriptures often teach the plan of salvation directly, they also teach it indirectly through the use of symbols, or “types” and “shadows” (see Mosiah 3:15; Moses 6:63).

Have students quickly read the following scriptures: Isaiah 11:11, 15–16; Jeremiah 16:12–15; Acts 3:22–23; Romans 9:17; 1 Corinthians 10:1–6; 1 Nephi 4:1–4; 3 Nephi 20:23. Ask: Why do you think so many different prophets have referred to the ancient Exodus?

The following events of the Exodus are in historical order. Write them on the board in random order and ask the students to put them in the correct order.

1. The Israelite multitude followed a prophet into the wilderness.
2. They crossed the Red Sea in a miraculous way.
3. The multitude murmured (repeatedly).
4. The Lord fed the people with manna from heaven.
5. The prophet went into a mountain to receive the law.
6. Many of the Israelites rebelled against God.

7. Israel, led by Joshua, finally entered the promised land.

Tell students that John 6 has many parallels to the Exodus. The accompanying chart lists a number of them. Make a transparency or handout from the version of the chart in the appendix, which leaves the “New Exodus” column blank (see p. 293), and fill it in as a class.

Exodus of Israel from Egypt	A New Exodus (John 6)
God led the children of Israel through the wilderness by the Red Sea (see Exodus 13:18).	A multitude followed Jesus across the Sea of Galilee (see John 6:1–2).
Moses “came to the mountain of God” (Exodus 3:1; see also v. 12; 19:1–3).	Jesus went into a mountain (see John 6:3, 15).
Jehovah multiplied signs and wonders (see Exodus 7:3; see also Exodus 7–11).	Many people followed Jesus because of signs (see John 6:2, 26, 30).
The Lord instituted the Feast of the Passover (see Exodus 12).	It was the time of the Passover (see John 6:4).
God gave Israel manna or “bread from heaven” (Exodus 16:4; see vv. 3–35; Deuteronomy 8:3).	Jesus fed the multitude with five loaves and two fishes (see John 6:5–14). He said, “I am the bread which came down from heaven” (v. 41; see vv. 31–58).
The Lord told the people to gather only what they needed each day so nothing was wasted (see Exodus 16:16–30).	Jesus told the disciples to gather the fragments so that nothing was lost (see John 6:12).
The Lord promised to raise up a Prophet like Moses (see Deuteronomy 18:15–18).	The multitude recognized that Jesus was “that prophet” (John 6:14).
The Lord saved the Israelites by parting the Red Sea; they walked through on dry ground (see Exodus 14). The account emphasizes darkness and wind (see vv. 20–21).	Jesus walked across the Sea of Galilee and saved the disciples from the storm (see John 6:16–21). This account also emphasizes darkness and wind (see vv. 17–18).
Israel murmured against the Lord (see Exodus 15:24; 16:8; 17:3; Numbers 11:4–6).	The multitude murmured against the Lord (see John 6:43, 61, 66).
Prophets testified concerning the significance of the Exodus (see Exodus 14:31–15:21; Numbers 20:12; Deuteronomy 4:33, 35; 6; 26:5–9; Isaiah 51:9–16; 52:1–6; 1 Nephi 17; 2 Nephi 25:20; see also D&C 136:22).	Peter testified that Jesus has the “words of eternal life” (John 6:68; see vv. 66–69).

Ask: Why do you think John 6 includes so many allusions to events of the Exodus? (Possibly this was a way of making the Jews more open to Jesus’ message, and also of helping them understand the meaning of their history.) Divide the students into three groups and assign each to read one of the following passages looking for events in John 6 that parallel the Exodus and for how we might apply these passages of scripture to ourselves.

- John 6:1–14 (The multitude followed Jesus to a place of solitude where Jesus fed them miraculously. As we follow the Savior and His prophets, we receive spiritual nourishment.)

- John 6:15–21 (The Savior walked on the sea to save His disciples. When we are beset by problems, Jesus Christ is the only true source of peace. He will help us in our journey to the eternal promised land.)
- John 6:22–71 (Christ’s discourse on the bread of life gave meaning to the events. Christ’s words guide us and help us understand the meaning of mortality.)

Have each group share their findings with the class.

Have a student read aloud 2 Nephi 11:4 and Moses 6:63. According to these verses, which things testify of Christ? Discuss how these verses relate to the Exodus pattern in John 6. Encourage students to be more aware of types and shadows that testify of Jesus Christ as they study the scriptures.

John 6:5–14 (see also Matthew 14:14–21; Mark 6:34–44; Luke 9:11–17). Jesus Christ served because He loved Heavenly Father and all mankind. Our motives are pure when our love for God and our fellowman influences us to keep the commandments. (15–20 minutes)

Relate the following example: Mary awoke late one morning and hurriedly dressed for school. Her bed was left unmade and her room looked as if a tornado had hit it. When she returned in the afternoon, she found her bed made and her room tidy. On her bed was a note: “Dear Mary, You returned so late last evening from your date that I know you must be exhausted. I have cleaned your room and made your bed. I hope you had a good day. Love, Mother.” Ask:

- How would you feel if you were Mary?
- Why would a mother do something like this?

Write *Motivation* on the board and ask the students to define it. Ask:

- What are some reasons people do the things they do? (Discuss their responses.)
- Read John 6:5–14. Why do you think Jesus miraculously fed the five thousand people?
- Read John 6:22–26. According to Jesus’ word, why did the multitude go in search of Jesus? (Discuss how Jesus’ motives differed from the crowd’s.)
- Read John 6:38. According to this verse, what motivated Jesus?

Tell the students that Jesus Christ is motivated by His love for Heavenly Father as well as for His spirit brothers and sisters, whereas the crowd was motivated by their desire to get more food and to see signs. Explain that people are often motivated by different things. For example, most of us attend church, but perhaps for different reasons. Ask: What do you think are some reasons people attend church? Write the responses on the board and have the students rank them according to which they feel are the purer motives.

Ask students to consider whether their own motives for doing good ever differ from Christ’s motives. Ask:

- What can we each do to improve our motives?

- What benefits come to someone with pure motives?

Testify that the purer our motives, the more we will follow and become like Christ.



John 6:32–51. Jesus Christ is the Bread of Life. (15–20 minutes)

Bring a fresh loaf of bread to class. Break off a piece for the students to see and smell. Ask: How can Jesus be compared to bread? List responses on the board. (Possible answers include that both offer nourishment and satisfy hunger; both give us life; both are blessings from Heavenly Father; Christ was born in Bethlehem, which means “house of bread.”)

Have students read John 6:32–51 looking for how Jesus compared Himself to manna or “bread from heaven.” Ask:

- What are the benefits of this “bread of life”?
- What would be the consequences of rejecting this bread?
- How does spiritual malnutrition compare with physical malnutrition?
- Read John 6:32–35, 44–51. According to these verses, how do we eat the bread of life?
- Why does Jesus promise that if we come to Him and believe on Him we will never hunger nor thirst again? (see v. 35).
- What does it mean to you to come to Christ?

Have students read the Joseph Smith Translation of John 6:44 to show that one comes to Jesus Christ by doing the Father’s will. Read the following by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“We come now to the crowning teaching of the sermon on the bread of life, which is, that men are saved by eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of God. . . .

“The bread of life, of life eternal, living bread, the bread which came down from heaven—such is the language he uses to describe himself; and since his body is one of flesh and blood, to eat the heavensent bread, men must eat his flesh, the flesh he ‘will give for the life of the world,’ the flesh to be broken in his infinite and eternal atoning sacrifice. Knowing what Jesus’ words meant but being wholly unable to understand how they applied to salvation and to the works they must do to gain eternal life, the Jews ‘strove among themselves.’ . . .

“To eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God is, first, to accept him in the most literal and full sense, with no reservation whatever, as the personal offspring in the flesh of the Eternal Father; and, secondly, it is to keep the commandments of the Son by accepting his gospel, joining his Church, and enduring in obedience and righteousness unto the end. Those who by this course eat his flesh and drink his blood shall have eternal life, meaning exaltation in the highest heaven of

the celestial world. Speaking of ancient Israel, for instance, Paul says: *They 'did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.'* (1 Cor. 10:3–4.)" (*Mortal Messiah*, 2:377–79).

Ask:

- How can we remember our covenants to come unto Christ?
- Why do we have the sacrament every week?

Explain that we partake of the bread of life by accepting Jesus as the Christ, joining His Church, keeping His commandments, and enduring in righteousness to the end. If we do this we will never hunger or thirst for spiritual nourishment. However, we need to be continually reminded of our covenants by eating the bread and drinking the water of the sacrament. Read Doctrine and Covenants 20:77 and ask:

- What do we promise the Father we are willing to do when we take the sacrament?
- What promise does God give us in return?

Read and discuss the following statement by Elder Melvin J. Ballard:

"I am a witness that there is a spirit attending the administration of the sacrament that warms the soul from head to foot; you feel the wounds of the spirit being healed, and the load being lifted. Comfort and happiness come to the soul that is worthy and truly desirous of partaking of this spiritual food" (in *Melvin J. Ballard . . . Crusader for Righteousness* [1966], 133).

Sing "While of These Emblems We Partake" (*Hymns*, no. 174). Encourage the students to always remember what the sacrament represents when they take it each week.

John 6:60–71. We must resist being offended by the Savior's teachings and commandments. (20–25 minutes)

Bring a screen or sieve to class and use it to sift some gravel. Or mix some small pebbles or grains of wheat with some flour and use a flour sifter to separate the flour from the large objects. Have students read John 6:66, and ask:

- How was the Savior's sermon on the bread of life like this sifting process?
- Why do you think so many of Jesus' followers left Him at this point?
- Do you think people who leave the Church or become less active today are more likely to do so because they lack understanding or because they lack the desire to live the gospel?

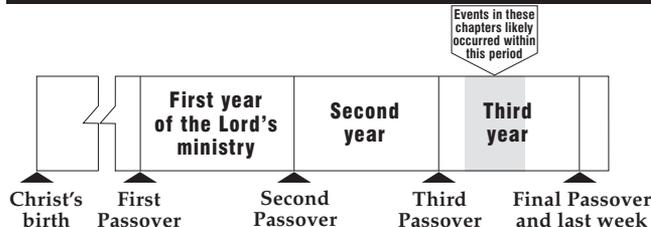
- What do some people find hard about living the gospel today?
- What can we do to ensure that we overcome such difficulties and stay true to our covenants?

Have students read John 6:67–69 looking for how Peter responded to the Savior's question, "Will ye also go away?" Testify that Peter was able to answer the way he did because he had a testimony by revelation (see Matthew 16:16–17). Explain that we can only answer the Savior's question with the strength of Peter's conviction if we have our own testimony. Such a testimony can only come by revelation, and such a revelation can only come from obedience and prayer. Ask students to ponder, the next time they are in a difficult situation, how they would answer if the Lord were to ask them, "Will ye also go away?"

Have the class sing "Lord, I Would Follow Thee" (*Hymns*, no. 220). Testify that one of the main purposes of mortality is to be tested. Read Abraham 3:25 and explain that facing challenges is the way we show the Lord that we will do all that He commands us.

John 7–8

The Life of Jesus Christ



Introduction

John 7–8 takes place in the autumn of the third year of the Lord's ministry. Like His countrymen, Jesus was planning to attend the Feast of the Tabernacles in Jerusalem. Some of His brethren felt that the festival presented an opportunity for Jesus to make a public declaration of His divine mission (see John 7:4). Jesus rejected the suggestion and delayed His departure for a few days, traveling secretly because the Jewish leaders sought His life (see vv. 8–13). "When the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51). He would teach in Judea and Perea again before the crowning events of Gethsemane and Golgotha but would not return to His beloved Galilee until after His Resurrection.

Prayerfully study John 7–8 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- We learn the truthfulness of Jesus' teachings by living them (see John 7:14–17).
- Testimonies of Jesus Christ should be based on the witness of the Spirit (see John 7:24–53; see also Jacob 4:8–11, 14–16).
- Rather than self-righteously condemning sinners, we should lovingly encourage them to give up their sins (see John 8:1–11; see also Matthew 7:1–5; D&C 58:43).
- As we seek and follow the truth, we become free from the bondage of sin and error (see John 8:21–24, 31–36).
- To be saved, we must accept and follow Jesus Christ and His living prophets (see John 8:33–39; see also Matthew 23:29–31; John 9:28–29).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 107–10.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for John 7–8.

John 7:1–9. The love and trust others feel toward us often grow when we live the gospel consistently.

(10–15 minutes)

Ask students if they have ever been doubted when telling the truth to those they love. Ask: How did you feel?

Divide the class into two groups. Have one group read John 7:1–9 and summarize it for the class. Have the other group read and summarize Joseph Smith—History 1:48–50. Ask students to contrast the feelings Jesus and Joseph Smith may have had because of the ways their families responded to their testimonies. Read the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“A testimony of the divinity of Christ and of the saving power of his gospel is not bestowed automatically because of family relationship. It comes only by personal obedience to those eternal laws upon which its receipt is [predicated]. In nearly all ages there have been prophets and righteous men whose sons and daughters have forsaken the faith of their fathers and have chosen to walk after the manner of the world.

“Frequent special reference is made to the sons of Joseph and Mary as the ‘brethren’ of Jesus, though in fact they were his half-brothers. (Matt. 12:46; 13:55; John 2:12; Acts 1:14; 1 Cor. 9:5.) Though they were reared in the same household and came under the

benign influence of Joseph and Mary, though they were aware of the teachings, ministry, and miracles of Jesus himself, yet these his close relatives had not so far accepted him as the Messiah. However, all of them, apparently, were converted later (Acts 1:14); one of them, identified by Paul as ‘James the Lord’s brother’ (Gal. 1:19), was to minister in the holy apostleship; and yet another, Judas, who calls himself, ‘Jude, the . . . brother of James’ (Jude 1), wrote the epistle of Jude” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:437).

Ask: How do you think Jesus ultimately won the trust and belief of His half brothers?

Point out that young people sometimes complain that their parents or other adults do not trust them. Ask: How can we win the trust of those we love? Encourage students to show the same integrity and commitment to the gospel in their lives as Jesus Christ did in His life.



John 7:17 (Scripture Mastery). We can learn the truthfulness of Jesus' teachings by living them.

(20–25 minutes)

Invite the students to imagine that a friend approached them and asked how she could know if the law of tithing was really a commandment of God. Ask: How would you answer such a question? Have students read John 7:17 to find the answer (see also Alma 32:26–42 and 1 John 2:3–6).

Read the following from Elder Loren C. Dunn, a member of the Seventy. Ask students to watch for specific ways John 7:17 applies.

“I am reminded of two young men who came in to see me some months ago. They had been recommended by their priesthood leaders. From the moment they stepped into the office, they began in a very sincere way questioning certain doctrines and teachings and procedures of the Church. . . .

“I asked them finally if their questions perhaps represented the symptoms of their problem and not the cause. Wasn’t their real question whether or not this church is true? Whether or not it is actually the Church of Jesus Christ? And whether or not it is led by divine revelation? The young men agreed that perhaps if they were sure of the answers to these questions, they could take care of the other questions that seemed to arise in their hearts. . . .

“I asked them if they would be interested in a three-month experiment. They said they would try but

were not anxious to commit themselves until they found out what I had in mind.

“During the next three months will you attend all your church meetings and listen carefully to what is being said. . . .

“ . . . Will you reinstitute in your personal life prayer, night and morning. . . .’

“I asked them if . . . they would refrain from drinking, smoking, and drugs. . . .

“I asked them if . . . they would resolve to keep themselves morally clean and in harmony with the principles of virtue which the Savior taught. They said they would. And then I suggested they establish a schedule, on their own, during the next three months to read the Book of Mormon from cover to cover—a few pages each day, with a prayer at each reading that the Lord would bless them to know if the book is true and actually from him. They agreed.

“ . . . I added, ‘If things go properly, you’ll notice some by-products, such as a growing awareness and concern for your fellowman and greater appreciation and consideration for other people.’ They accepted the challenge and left” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1971, 106–7; or *Ensign*, June 1971, 81–82).

Discuss how the principles in John 7:17 can be applied to our own lives. Encourage students to privately identify where their own testimony is lacking and try the same three-month experiment to build it.

John 8:1–11. Rather than self-righteously condemning sinners, we should set an example by trying to overcome our own faults. (20–25 minutes)

Place a large stone before the class with the words “the first stone” written on it. Have students read John 8:1–11 looking for how a stone like this fits into the story. Ask:

- What did the Lord say about casting the first stone?
- What do you think the Lord was trying to teach in these verses?
- Why is self-righteousness such a dangerous sin?
- How can we avoid self-righteousness?
- How could seeing a stone like this on your dresser every morning help?

Give all the students small stones and encourage them to display them in their rooms. (Leave the large stone in a visible place in the classroom for a week or so as a reminder of this lesson.) Encourage students to avoid the sin of judging others and instead to be an example by constantly striving to overcome their own sins.

Tell students that refraining from being judgmental and critical of others is not the same as embracing sin. Read the following from Elder Spencer W. Kimball, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Although [God] loves the sinner, he ‘cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance.’ (D&C 1:31.) As sinners we will better appreciate his love and kindness if similar abhorrence for sin impels us to transform our lives through repentance” (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 59).

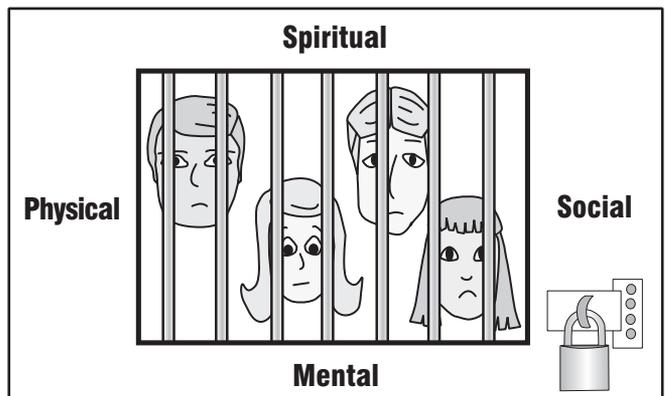
Elder Russell M. Nelson, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, added:

“I have been impressed to speak on the subject of tolerance—a virtue much needed in our turbulent world. But in discussing this topic, we must recognize at the outset that there is a difference between *tolerance* and *tolerate*. Your gracious tolerance for an individual does not grant him or her license to do wrong, nor does your tolerance obligate you to tolerate his or her misdeed. That distinction is fundamental to an understanding of this vital virtue” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1994, 90; or *Ensign*, May 1994, 69).

Have students reread verse 11 looking for how Jesus felt about the woman and her sins. Discuss any questions they might have concerning the need to love their neighbor while hating sin. Ask for suggestions from the class on how to do this, and write their suggestions on the board. Testify that Jesus Christ is our example. He ate with, socialized with, and loved sinners, but He always made clear His abhorrence of sin.

 **John 8:31–32. As we seek and follow the truth, we become free from the bondage of sin and error.** (20–25 minutes)

Have students read and contrast John 8:31–32 with John 8:34. Draw the following illustration on the board:



Ask students:

- How does sin affect us physically, spiritually, socially, and mentally? (List responses on the board.)

- How can the truth make us free in each of these four areas?

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, expanding on the phrase “the truth shall make you free,” wrote:

“Free from the damning power of false doctrine; free from the bondage of appetite and lust; free from the shackles of sin; free from every evil and corrupt influence and from every restraining and curtailng power; free to go on to the unlimited freedom enjoyed in its fulness only by exalted beings”
(*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:456–57).

Ask the students if any of them study music. (*Note:* If you used the teaching suggestion for Luke 17:1–10 [p. 95], you might want to pick a different talent for this object lesson.) If any of them do, ask: How does practicing a piece of music limit your freedom? (One answer is that practicing can take much time and might not leave enough for other things we’d like to do.) Invite a student with little musical background to play on an instrument a difficult piece you have selected. Ask students:

- How does gaining a knowledge of music and practicing a piece give a person freedom?
- How does lack of knowledge and expertise limit freedom?

To further illustrate this point, play a recording of the selection or arrange for an accomplished student to perform it for the class. Allow the music to play long enough for the students to feel the beauty of the composition. Ask:

- How do you feel when you listen to someone who has so much freedom to play music?
- How is this like gaining knowledge of and living the gospel? (Discuss their answers.)

Explain that knowledge is power if we live according to that knowledge. Not knowing the truth limits our freedom to live the gospel. Sin and ignorance bind us and keep us from becoming what we could be, while obedience to the truth gives us freedom. Ask: What are some examples of how the truth brings us freedom?

John 8:33–59. Jesus Christ plainly testified of His divinity. (20–25 minutes)

Tell the students that in John 7–8 the Savior repeatedly bore witness of His divinity. Divide your class into four groups. Have each group read one of the following scripture blocks: John 7:14–31; John 7:32–53; John 8:12–32; John 8:33–59. Have them note each time the Savior declared who He was, and then invite them to report their findings to the class. Ask: Why do you think Jesus became more open in bearing testimony of Himself as He neared the end of His ministry? Have students read John 8:58 and cross-reference it to Exodus 3:14. Ask students:

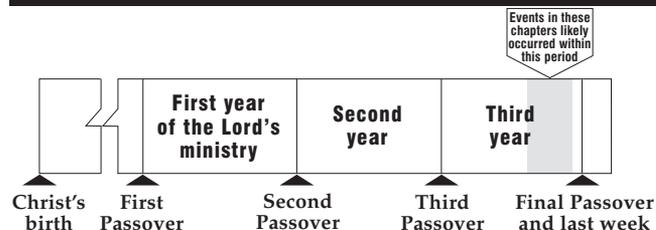
- What is the significance of Jesus’ declaration in John 8:58?

- Why would the Jews pick up stones to kill Him?
- How does knowing that Jesus is Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament, affect our understanding of Him?

Testify that Jesus Christ is Jehovah, the God of Moses, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

John 9–10

The Life of Jesus Christ



Introduction

Jesus said, “For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind” (John 9:39). One of the paradoxes of the scriptures is that a man born blind came to see that Jesus was the Son of God, while the teachers of the Jews, with all their knowledge of the law of Moses, were blind to Him (see John 9). Jesus said a good shepherd “goeth before” his sheep, “and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice” (John 10:4). How ironic that those claiming to be guardians of the word of God shut their ears to the True Shepherd. John 9–10 helps us understand what we must do to hear the voice of Jesus Christ.

Prayerfully study John 9–10 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Jesus Christ is the Light of the World. If we follow Him, we will be filled with light (see John 9:5; see also John 12:36, 46; Moroni 7:16–19; D&C 50:24; 88:6–13, 67).
- Illness and tragedy are a necessary part of life, not necessarily evidence of sin. They provide the opportunity to exercise faith and to recognize the power of God in our lives (see John 9:1–7, 30–38; see also John 11:1–4, 17–45).
- Testimonies may begin small and grow with proper care and nourishment (see John 9:11, 17, 35–38; see also Alma 32:27–28, 41–42).
- By following Jesus Christ we become His sheep, for He is the Good Shepherd who loves and cares for us (see John 10:1–15, 26–28; see also Mosiah 26:21–28).
- Jesus Christ had other sheep besides those who were with Him in Jerusalem. These He visited after His Resurrection (see John 10:16; see also 3 Nephi 15:11–16:3).

- Jesus Christ had power over death and could have lived forever, but He chose to suffer and die to free us from physical and spiritual death (see John 10:17–18; see also John 11:11–15, 23–26, 39–46; Luke 23:46; 2 Nephi 2:8–9).
- Jesus, who before His mortal life was Jehovah, became the Only Begotten Son of the Father in the flesh (see John 10:22–42).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 108–10, 118–20.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for John 9–10.

John 9:1–5. Illness and tragedy are a necessary part of life’s experiences, not necessarily evidence of sin. (15–20 minutes)

Ask students why they think some people are born with disabilities. (*Note:* Be sensitive to those in your class who might have disabilities.) Responses may include:

- Because this world is fallen and imperfect.
- As a test for the person with the disability.
- As a test for others.
- So that God can show His power in our lives.

Ask students to read John 9:1–5.

- According to these verses, why do some people have disabilities in mortality?
- What reasons did the disciples suggest to explain why the man was born blind?
- What did Jesus say was the reason this man was blind? (Point out to students that this reason may not apply to every disability.)

Share the following three statements with students. Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, wrote:

“This is a doctrine . . . which reminds us mortals that we do not have all of the data. There are many times when we must withhold judgment and trust God lest we misread, as did Jesus’ disciples when they inquired about the man blind from birth and Jesus gave the immortal reply: ‘Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him’ (see John 9:1–3)” (*But for a Small Moment* [1986], 94).

Earlier Elder Maxwell, then a member of the Seventy, wrote:

“There are clearly special cases of individuals with special limitations in life, which we cannot now fathom. Like him who was ‘blind from birth,’ some come to bring glory to God. (John 9:1–2.) We must be exceedingly careful about imputing either wrong causes or wrong rewards to all such. They are in the Lord’s hands and he loves them perfectly. Some of those who have required much waiting upon in this life may be waited upon in the next world—but for the highest of reasons” (*Things As They Really Are* [1978], 26).

Elder Boyd K. Packer said:

“There has always been in all of humanity a sprinkling of those who are described in the scriptures as the blind, the halt, the lame, the deaf, the withered, the dumb, the impotent folk. We refer to them as having learning or communication disorders, as the hearing or visually impaired, as those with motor or orthopedic limitations. We speak of intellectual or emotional impairment, of retardation, and mental illness. Some suffer from a combination of these, and all of them cannot function without some help. . . .

“ . . . It is natural for parents with handicapped children to ask themselves, ‘What did we do wrong?’ The idea that *all* suffering is somehow the direct result of sin has been taught since ancient times. It is false doctrine. That notion was even accepted by some of the early disciples until the Lord corrected them [see John 9:1–3]. . . .

“There is little room for feelings of guilt in connection with handicaps. Some handicaps may result from carelessness or abuse, and some through addiction of parents. But most of them do not. Afflictions come to the innocent.

“The very purpose for which the world was created, and man introduced to live upon it, requires that the laws of nature operate in cold disregard for human feelings. We must work out our salvation without expecting the laws of nature to be exempted for us. Natural law is, on rare occasions, suspended in a miracle. But mostly our handicapped, like the lame man at the pool of Bethesda, wait endlessly for the moving of the water. . . .

“If healing does not come in mortal life, it will come thereafter. Just as the gorgeous monarch butterfly emerges from a chrysalis, so will spirits emerge

[see D&C 138:17; Alma 40:23; 2 Nephi 9:13; 1 Corinthians 15:19]. . . .

“If our view is limited to mortal life, some things become unbearable because they seem so unfair and so permanent. There are doctrines which, if understood, will bring a perspective toward and a composure regarding problems which otherwise have no satisfactory explanation” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1991, 6–8; or *Ensign*, May 1991, 7–9).

Have students read 1 Samuel 16:7. Ask: Why is it important not to speculate unduly about physical disabilities? Explain that Heavenly Father’s plan is fair and just, and that we cannot always understand reasons for suffering because of our limited mortal perspective. Encourage the students to be more sensitive to others’ disabilities and suffering.

John 9:6–33. The account of the blind man coming to see that Jesus was the Son of God illustrates that testimonies grow with proper care and nourishment. (30–35 minutes)

Ask students if they know anyone who is a convert to the Church. Invite one of them to relate that person’s conversion story. Ask: Why don’t converts understand the entire gospel of Jesus Christ all at once?

Give students a copy of the chart entitled “A Man Born Blind” from the appendix as a handout (p. 286). Have them read the statement from the scriptures in the left column and mark in one of the last three columns who made the statement. Have them look for which individuals grew spiritually and which ones did not.

Ask students why they believe some people grow spiritually and others do not. Have students read and mark the following references: Moroni 7:16–19; Doctrine and Covenants 42:61; 50:23–25; 88:6–13, 67; 93:26–27. Discuss with the class the principles of spiritual growth that are found in these passages. Ask:

- How might the principles in these passages apply to the man born blind?
- Have you noticed any of these principles functioning in your own life?

Allow any students who would like to share examples with the class to do so. Encourage students to apply the same principles that the man born blind applied—accept and live the truth they are blessed with, and go on to greater knowledge and truth.



John 10:1–5. By following Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, we become His sheep. (25–30 minutes)

Play a recording of several familiar voices and ask students to identify the voices. (Or blindfold several members of the class and have them try to identify the voices of different class members.) Some will recognize familiar voices more quickly than others. Ask students:

- Why could some recognize the voices more quickly than others?
- How does knowing a person affect how easily we recognize a voice?

Explain that it is much the same in recognizing the voice of the Lord. Emphasize that often the “voice” of the Lord is not an audible voice but a “still small voice, which whispereth through and pierceth all things” (D&C 85:6; see also 1 Kings 19:11–12; 1 Nephi 17:45).

Have students read John 10:1–5, and ask: Whose voice do we need to become most familiar with during our mortal life?

Explain that how well we know the Lord makes a difference in how well we hear and follow His voice. Have students read John 21:15–17, and ask:

- Who did Jesus appoint to be a “shepherd” during His absence?
- What was it that Jesus wanted this shepherd to do?

Play a recording of the voice of the President of the Church and have the students identify the voice. Read Doctrine and Covenants 1:37–38 and ask:

- How might the living prophet’s voice also be considered the voice of the Shepherd?
- Who else might be considered shepherds of the Lord’s sheep today?
- What qualities would it take to be a good shepherd?

Have students read Ezekiel 34:1–5 looking for the importance of taking care of the Lord’s sheep.

Testify to the importance of knowing and hearkening to the voice of the Shepherd as well as striving to be the kind of shepherd that He is.



John 10:1–28 (Scripture Mastery, John 10:16). Jesus is the True Shepherd of Israel. (20–25 minutes)

Display a picture of Jesus as a shepherd or of a shepherd leading his sheep. Invite students to review John 10:1–28 and find ways Jesus Christ is a shepherd. (He knows the names of His sheep, He leads His sheep and they follow Him, He is willing to lay down His life for His sheep, He protects them, He brings all of His sheep together.)

Elder John R. Lasater, a member of the Seventy, related an experience he had that illustrates how well the Good Shepherd knows His sheep:

“Some years ago, it was my privilege to visit the country of Morocco as part of an official United States government delegation. As part of that visit, we were invited to travel some distance into the desert to visit some ruins. Five large black limousines moved across the beautiful Moroccan countryside at considerable speed. I was riding in the third limousine, which had lagged some distance behind the second. As we topped the brow of a hill, we noticed that the limousine in front of us had pulled off to the side of the road. As we drew nearer, I sensed that an accident had occurred and suggested to my driver that we stop. The scene before us has remained with me for these many years.

“An old shepherd, in the long, flowing robes of the Savior’s day, was standing near the limousine in conversation with the driver. Nearby, I noted a small flock of sheep numbering not more than fifteen or twenty. An accident had occurred. The king’s vehicle had struck and injured one of the sheep belonging to the old shepherd. The driver of the vehicle was explaining to him the law of the land. Because the king’s vehicle had injured one of the sheep belonging to the old shepherd, he was now entitled to one hundred times its value at maturity. However, under the same law, the injured sheep must be slain and the meat divided among the people. My interpreter hastily added, ‘But the old shepherd will not accept the money. They never do.’

“Startled, I asked him why. And he added, ‘Because of the love he has for each of his sheep.’ It was then that I noticed the old shepherd reach down, lift the injured lamb in his arms, and place it in a large pouch on the front of his robe. He kept stroking its head, repeating the same word over and over again. When I asked the meaning of the word, I was informed, ‘Oh, he is calling it by name. All of his sheep have a name, for he is their shepherd, and the good shepherds know each one of their sheep by name.’

“It was as my driver predicted. The money was refused, and the old shepherd with his small flock of sheep, with the injured one tucked safely in the pouch on his robe, disappeared into the beautiful deserts of Morocco” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1988, 86–87; or *Ensign*, May 1988, 74).

Read John 10:16 and ask: What other sheep did Jesus have besides the people in the Jerusalem area? Read 3 Nephi 15:21; 16:1–3; 17:4 and have students cross-reference these verses with John 10:16. Ask:

- With so many sheep in different places, how does the Shepherd know each one individually? (see John 10:14; see also Luke 12:6–7; D&C 76:24; Moses 1:37–39).
- What evidence have you seen in your life that the Lord knows you personally?

Testify that God knows and loves each of us individually.



John 10:9, 11, 14, 36. The “I am” statements in the Gospel of John testify that Jesus was the God of the Old Testament. (20–25 minutes)

Ask: If you were speaking at a gathering of important people, how would you like to be introduced? Why?

Have students read Exodus 3:13–14. Ask:

- Why do you think the Lord responded in this way to Moses?
- What is the significance of the phrase “I AM THAT I AM”?

Consider using the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie to help answer this question:

“Christ is the *Great I AM*, the *I AM*, the *I AM THAT I AM*, meaning that he is the Eternal One, the One ‘who is from all eternity to all eternity’ (D. & C. 39:1; Ex. 3:14), the God who is ‘from everlasting to everlasting’ (Ps. 90:2), whose course is one eternal round and who never varies or changes. (1 Ne. 10:17–20.) ‘From eternity to eternity he is the same, and his years never fail’ (D. & C. 76:4), for he is the *I AM*. When he said to the Jews, for instance, ‘Before Abraham was, I am’ (John 8:58), it was the same as saying, ‘Before Abraham, was *I AM*, the Everlasting God, he “whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”’ (Mic. 5:2.)” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 340).

Divide the class into groups and assign each one or more of the “I am” statements from the following chart. Have each group read the accompanying scriptures looking for how Jesus fulfilled each statement. Have them report to the class, and discuss their findings. (Possible answers are included with the chart.)

“I Am” Statement	Fulfillment
“I am the bread of life” (John 6:35; see vv. 47–51).	Jesus Christ gave Himself for us in the Atonement, and He feeds us spiritually. Because of Him we will be resurrected, and if we obey Him we will have eternal life.
“I am the light of the world” (John 8:12).	Jesus Christ is the source of all truth. If we follow His words and example, we will not stumble in the darkness of the world.
“I am the door of the sheep” (John 10:7; see vv. 8–10).	Jesus Christ protects us like a shepherd at the door of a sheep enclosure. Also no one can enter His kingdom or become part of His fold except through Him.
“I am the good shepherd” (John 10:11; see vv. 12–15).	Jesus Christ leads us. He gave His life for us in the Atonement. He knows each of us individually.
“I am the Son of God” (John 10:36).	Jesus is the Firstborn of the Father’s spirit children (see D&C 93:21) and His Only Begotten Son in the flesh (see John 1:14). Only through Jesus Christ, the literal Son of God, can mankind receive eternal life (see John 20:31).
“I am the resurrection, and the life” (John 11:25).	Through Jesus Christ’s Atonement we can overcome spiritual death. He also gives us the gift of the Resurrection.
“I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).	Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father and the source of all truth. He gives us the Resurrection and offers us eternal life.
“I am the true vine” (John 15:1; see v. 5).	We depend on Jesus Christ for life. Only by following His teachings will we be able to bear fruit.

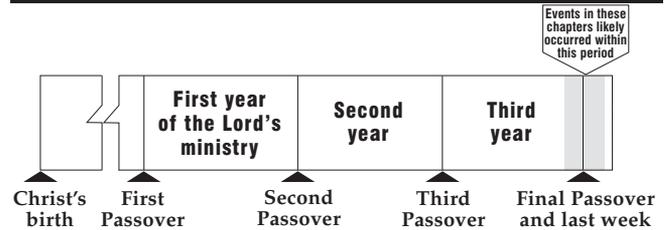
Ask students:

- What do you think the phrase “I am” meant to Jesus’ listeners?
- Read John 8:58. Who was Jesus saying He was?
- How did the Jews respond? (see v. 59).
- What difference does it make to know that Jesus is Jehovah, the Great I AM, the God of the Old Testament?

Emphasize to the students that Jesus is God the Son, a divine being, and not merely a great person. Help them understand that there is a continuity between the Old and New Testaments and that that continuity is through Jesus Christ and His gospel.

John 11–12

The Life of Jesus Christ



Introduction

John states that there are “many other signs” that Jesus did “which are not written in this book,” but that “these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ” (John 20:30–31). Much of John’s narrative is organized around seven miracles or “signs”: changing water to wine at Cana (John 2:1–11), healing a nobleman’s son (John 4:46–54), healing the lame man at Bethesda (John 5:1–9), multiplying bread and fish (John 6:1–14), walking on water (John 6:15–21), healing a man born blind (John 9:1–7), and raising Lazarus (John 11:38–44). Each of these signs relates symbolically to Jesus’ role as Savior of mankind. For example His turning water to wine prefigures the blood shed for us in the Atonement, and His healing the man at the pool of Bethesda reminds us that Christ is the source of living water (see also John 4:10–14). The raising of Lazarus shows the Lord’s power over death and prefigures His Resurrection. Just before performing this miracle, Jesus taught, “I am the resurrection, and the life” (John 11:25). After the account of Lazarus, John turns to the final week of Jesus’ life, which began with Mary anointing Jesus’ feet as a token of His burial (see John 12:1–9; see also JST, John 12:7).

Prayerfully study John 11–12 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Jesus Christ has power over death (see John 11:11–15, 23–26, 39–46).
- Jesus knows our infirmities and understands our emotions (see John 11:33–36).
- The purposes of God will be fulfilled even if the participants are unwilling (see John 11:47–54).
- Our highest priority should be to love God (see John 12:1–11).
- Jesus Christ is the prophesied and long-awaited King (see John 12:12–15; see also Matthew 21:4–9; Mark 11:7–10; Luke 19:35–38).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 125–26, 132, 141–42.
- “The Last Week of the Savior’s Life,” 288 in this manual.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for John 11–12.

John 11:1–17. Jesus Christ has power over death.

(20–25 minutes)

Ask students:

- How would you feel if you were deathly ill in a distant town, and when your parents learned about your illness they waited two days before they came?
- Read John 11:1–6. Why didn’t Jesus go immediately to Bethany when He received word that Lazarus was ill?
- Read John 11:4, 11, 15. According to these verses, why did Jesus permit Lazarus to die?
- Read John 11:39–40. Why did Jesus wait so long to perform this miracle, when He knew what He was going to do all along?

For insights on this question, see the commentary for John 11:1–46 in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles* (pp. 125–26). In addition, Elder Bruce R. McConkie gives two reasons:

“Why this studied buildup, this centering of attention upon one of the mightiest miracles of his ministry? Two reasons in particular stand out. (1) As our Lord neared the climax of his mortal ministry, he was again bearing testimony, in a way that could not be refuted, of his Messiahship, of his divine Sonship, of the fact that he was in very deed the literal Son of God; and (2) He was setting the stage, so as to dramatize for all time, one of his greatest teachings: That he was the resurrection and the life, that immortality and eternal life came by him, and that those who believed and obeyed his words should never die spiritually” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:530–31).

Ask: How would the attention on this miracle affect unbelievers? (It would leave them without excuse for rejecting Jesus as the Son of God.)

Read the following statement by Elder James E. Talmage:

“No question as to the actual death of Lazarus could be raised, for his demise had been witnessed, his body had been prepared and buried in the usual way, and he had lain in the grave four days. At the tomb, when he was called forth, there were many witnesses, some of them prominent Jews, many of whom were unfriendly to Jesus and who would have readily denied the miracle had they been able. God was glorified and the divinity of the Son of Man was vindicated in the result” (*Jesus the Christ*, 496).

Hold up a chicken egg and ask:

- Which came first, the chicken or the egg? (Explain that this question has been long debated and not conclusively answered.)
- In spiritual matters, what comes first, signs or faith?
- Why might unbelievers who witnessed the raising of Lazarus continue to disbelieve after such a sign?
- What signs support a belief in Jesus Christ today?

Read and discuss Doctrine and Covenants 63:9–12 to help students understand that signs do not produce faith but are the result of faith. Ask: What qualities does a person need to develop to acquire faith?

Bear testimony of the signs around us that, if viewed through the eyes of faith, will build us spiritually.

John 11. The raising of Lazarus was a type of Jesus’ death and Resurrection. (30–35 minutes)

Have students imagine that they have traveled back in time five hundred years. Ask:

- How would you explain to a person of that time how an electric lightbulb works? (Have one or two students try.)
- Would it be easier to demonstrate if you had taken a battery-operated flashlight along with you?
- Would it be easier for people to understand the doctrine of the Resurrection if they saw Lazarus being brought back to life?

Point out to students that Lazarus was not resurrected but brought back to mortality. However, this miracle does show that Jesus has power over death. Have students read John 11:21–26, and ask:

- What principle was Jesus trying to communicate to Martha? (see vv. 25–26).
- What could Jesus do to illustrate His power over death?
- How is the raising of Lazarus like the Resurrection of Jesus Christ?

- How is it different? (Lazarus would suffer death again. A resurrected body does not.)

Consider reading the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“By faith the dead are sometimes raised, meaning that the spirit is called back to inhabit again the mortal body. (3 Ne. 7:19; 19:4; 4 Ne. 5; 1 Kings 17:17–23; Matt. 9:18–26; Mark 5:21–43; Luke 7:11–17, 22; 8:41–56; John 11:1–46; Acts 9:36–43; 20:9–12.) Such persons pass through the natural or temporal death twice. In due course, also, all men will be raised from the dead and live in an immortal state. (Alma 11:41; 12:8.)” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 185–86).

Explain to students that the raising of Lazarus serves as a type of the Resurrection of Christ. (If you did not use the teaching suggestion for John 6 [p. 114], you might want to review with students that “types” are symbols that occur throughout the scriptures to teach us about the Savior. Read and discuss with students Mosiah 3:15 and Moses 6:63.) Give the accompanying chart to students as a handout, leaving the “Similarities” column blank. Have them read the scriptures in the other columns and fill in the blanks. When they have finished, discuss their findings.

John 11	Final Week	Similarities
John 11:2	John 12:3; 13:5	Reference to washing of feet.
John 11:4	John 13:31	Glorification of the Son of God.
John 11:16; JST, John 11:16	John 20:24–29	Thomas’s concern about the death of Jesus.
John 11:25	John 14:6, 19	Jesus’ testimony that He is “the resurrection, and the life.”
John 11:33	John 12:27–28	Reference to Jesus feeling “troubled.”
John 11:34	John 20:2	Concern for where the body was laid.
John 11:36	John 14:21–23	Focus on the love of Christ.
John 11:38–39	John 19:41; 20:1	Stone removed from the sepulchre.
John 11:44	John 20:5–7	Description of burial clothes, with emphasis on the “napkin” or cloth covering the face.
John 11:49–50	John 18:13–14	Reference to Caiaphas’s prophecy of Christ’s Atonement.

Close by singing “I Know That My Redeemer Lives” (*Hymns*, no. 136).

John 12:1–11. Our highest priority should be to love God. (20–25 minutes)

Bring to class one of the most cherished gifts that you have received. Explain the importance and meaning of this gift. Ask students:

- What was the best gift you ever gave to someone you loved?
- What makes this gift better than others you have given?

Explain that a gift’s value often cannot be equated with money. Ask: What makes a gift most valuable? (The thought and love that goes into the gift; the extent to which the gift honors another or helps satisfy a need.)

Have students read John 12:1–9 looking for the value of Mary’s offering. Read the following statement by Elder James E. Talmage:

“To anoint the head of a guest with ordinary oil was to do him honor; to anoint his feet also was to show unusual and signal regard; but the anointing of head and feet with spikenard, and in such abundance, was an act of reverential homage rarely rendered even to kings. Mary’s act was an expression of adoration; it was the fragrant outwelling of a heart overflowing with worship and affection” (*Jesus the Christ*, 512).

Discuss the worth of Mary’s action.

- Why did Judas Iscariot not value Mary’s offering as much as Mary did?
- What do we learn about Mary from this incident?
- What do we learn about Judas?
- How did Jesus react to Mary’s gift?
- In your opinion, what was the worth of Mary’s gift?

Invite students to think about their gift again. Ask:

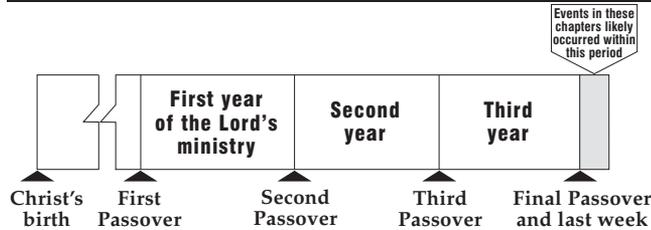
- How do we decide what a gift is worth?
- How is the worth the world puts on gifts different from the worth the Lord puts on gifts?
- What gifts that we give to the Lord might be misunderstood and underestimated by others?
- What gifts does the Lord offer us that many in the world misunderstand?
- Why does the Church spend so much in time, energy, and resources on building temples?
- Why can’t the worth of the work we do in temples be expressed in money?
- What kind of thought, sacrifice, and love go into building and worshiping in temples?

- What is the greatest gift God offers us? (see D&C 14:7).
- What are the most valuable gifts we can offer our Savior in return?

Encourage students to be more aware of the true value of gifts they give and receive.

John 13–17

The Life of Jesus Christ



Introduction

John 13–17 takes place in the upper chamber of a disciple’s home after the Last Supper. They record the words and acts of the Savior as He prepared His disciples for His betrayal and Crucifixion. He performed the ordinance of washing His disciples’ feet. He named Judas as His betrayer. In an extended discourse containing some of the most powerful teachings of His ministry, He taught His disciples about loving one another, the two Comforters, the allegory of the vine and the branches, the persecutions to come, and our need to rely on the Holy Ghost. Then He offered one of the greatest of all recorded prayers in behalf of His Apostles and disciples. We would do well to feast often upon the words in these chapters.

Prayerfully study John 13–17 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Jesus showed us how to humbly serve each other (see John 13:3–17; see also Matthew 20:26–27).
- We show our love for Christ by loving others as He loves us (see John 13:34–35; 15:12–14, 17), by keeping His commandments (see John 14:15, 21, 23–24), and by rejoicing in His return to the Father (see John 14:28).
- Jesus Christ and Heavenly Father are two separate and distinct beings but are one in purpose. Jesus taught that we can be one with Them in this same way (see John 14:5–11; 15:1, 16; 16:15, 27; 17:1–11, 15–26; see also D&C 130:22).

- The First Comforter is the Holy Ghost, who gives comfort and peace, teaches, testifies, helps us remember the Lord’s teachings, and reproves sinners (see John 14:16–17, 26–27; 15:26; 16:7–14).
- The Second Comforter is Jesus Christ, who will one day reveal Himself to those who love and serve Him (see John 14:18–23; see also D&C 88:67–68; 93:1; 130:3).
- The Savior is the True Vine and we are the branches. We receive nourishment from Him, and without Him we can do nothing (see John 15:1–11, 16; see also Philippians 4:13; Alma 26:12).
- Jesus Christ was with Heavenly Father in the premortal life. He came to earth to do the Father’s will, and when He finished His mission He returned to the Father, receiving a fulness of glory (see John 16:16, 27–33; 17:1–5; see also John 1:1–3; Acts 7:55–56).
- Jesus Christ is our intercessor and advocate with Heavenly Father (see John 17; see also 1 John 2:1; 2 Nephi 2:9–10; Mosiah 15:7–9; D&C 62:1).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 160–72.
- “The Last Week of the Savior’s Life,” 288 in this manual.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for John 13–17.



John 13:1–17. Jesus is our example of how to humbly serve each other. (25–30 minutes)

Show pictures of various noted community and world leaders. Ask students:

- Why are these people leaders? (Keep the discussion focused on principles of leadership rather than on politics or individual political figures.)
- If these people did not hold positions of power or authority, would you still consider them to be leaders? Why or why not?
- What are the differences between the way the world and the Church view leadership? (Discuss their answers.)

Hold up a picture of the Savior and ask why they would consider Jesus to be a leader. Write *Christlike leadership* on the board along with the following references: *Mark 10:42–44; Luke 22:24–30; John 13:1–17*. Read these passages as a class, and then ask:

- What did Christ teach in these passages about leadership?
- Why do you think the Savior washed His disciples' feet?

Remind students that the Savior washed even Judas's feet, though He knew Judas would shortly betray Him (see Matthew 26:21–25; John 13:23–30). Ask: What does that teach you about the Savior's view of service and leadership?

President David O. McKay, commenting on Jesus' washing the feet of the disciples, said:

"What an example of service to those great servants, followers of the Christ! He that is greatest among you, let him be least. So we sense the obligation to be of greater service to the membership of the Church, to devote our lives to the advancement of the kingdom of God on earth" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1951, 159).

Ask students:

- What does President McKay suggest we could do to serve better?
- What can we do to apply the Savior's example in our lives?
- What are some examples of service you have given recently as an individual, a family, or a member of the Church?
- Why should we consider ourselves either leaders or potential leaders?

Invite students to write on a piece of paper what they could do to serve others better. Invite a few students who would like to share what they have written with the class to do so. Encourage students to fulfill their potential and become Christlike leaders.

John 13:34–35; 15:8–13. We show our love for Christ by loving others as He loves us. (30–35 minutes)

Before class, prepare a display of various gifts that are expressions of love (for example a wedding ring, flowers, a heart-shaped box of candy). Put it where the students will see it when they enter the classroom. In the middle of the display, include the picture Jesus Praying in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36–45) (item no. 80612) or a similar picture. Ask questions like these:

- How do you show love for your friends, family, and neighbors?
- How does the world teach that we can show love?
- What are some examples where the Savior taught about love?

Explain that Jesus taught His disciples much about love during His final hours with them. The King James Version of the Bible uses forms of the word *love* thirty-four times in John 13–17.

Have students use the Topical Guide to locate a scripture telling us what the two "great" commandments are. Have a student read Matthew 22:36–40. Explain that during Jesus' final hours with His Apostles in mortality He stressed again the importance of these commandments.

- Read John 13:34–35; 15:12, 17. According to these verses, why did the Lord put so much emphasis on love?
- Read John 14:15, 21, 23. How do we best show our love for God?
- Read John 15:9–10. How did Jesus set the example?

Have students read silently John 15:13 and ponder its meaning. Ask: What do the scriptures teach that the Savior expects of us? Explain that the Greek word that is translated "lay down" in the King James Version can also mean to "set aside." Jesus Christ set aside His mortal life to bring about our eternal life. Not only did He suffer and die for us as an expression of His love, He also lived His life for us and for Heavenly Father. He often expressed that He did the will of the Father and not His own will. Ask: Why does the Lord expect His followers to set aside their own desires to obey Him and serve others? Have students reread John 15:12.

- How can we grow in our love for others?
- How can we better demonstrate our love for others?

Encourage students to pray to have more love and to show it better through service and self-sacrifice. You could close with the hymn "Love One Another" (*Hymns*, no. 308).



John 14:15–27 (Scripture Mastery, John 14:15). We show our love for Christ by keeping His commandments. (15–20 minutes)

Write on the board, *If you loved me, you would ____*. Ask students how the following people might fill in the blank: a mother, a sister, a friend, and Jesus. Have a student read John 14:15, and ask:

- How would Jesus like us to express our love for Him?
- Why is obedience an expression of love?
- What does a person's disobedience suggest?

Discuss how our actions often express our feelings more accurately than our words.

Have students read John 14:16–27 looking for the promises Jesus gave to those who love Him, and write these on the board. Ask: What other blessings from Heavenly Father might be an expression of His love for us?

Give students paper and invite them to write their testimonies of or feelings for the Savior and what they will do to show greater love for Him. Encourage them to read their letters from time to time.

John 14:15–26; 16:7–14. The First Comforter is the Holy Ghost, who gives comfort and peace, teaches, testifies, reminds us of the Lord’s teachings, and reproves sinners. The Second Comforter is Jesus Christ, who will one day reveal Himself to those who love and serve Him. (25–30 minutes)

Ask students: What was your most frightening experience as a little child? Have a few students share their experiences, and ask them: Was there anything that comforted you or brought you peace after this experience?

Have students read John 14:15–26 looking for the promises of comfort the Savior gave His disciples. Ask:

- Why did the disciples need comfort?
- When do we need a special comforter such as the Holy Ghost?
- Who qualifies to receive the Holy Ghost?

Explain that the Holy Ghost is sometimes referred to as the First Comforter. Have students read John 14:18–21, 23.

- According to these verses, who could be called the Second Comforter? (Christ.)
- Who receives the promise of the Second Comforter? (Those who keep the Lord’s commandments and love Him; see vv. 21, 23.)

Read Doctrine and Covenants 93:1, and explain that the Second Comforter is available to all Saints, but that the blessing comes after we prove ourselves faithful at all costs. Use all or parts of the following statements to help you teach about the two Comforters.

Referring to John 14:15–26, Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote:

“These statements about the two Comforters climax and crown the teachings of the Son of God. We have no record of anything he ever said which can so completely withdraw the curtain of eternity and open to the faithful a vision of the glories of God. Based on love, born of obedience, Jesus promises the saints that they can have, here and now in this life, the following:

“(1) The gift and constant companionship of the Holy Ghost; the comfort and peace which it is the function of that Holy Spirit to bestow; the revelation and the sanctifying power which alone will prepare men for the companionship of gods and angels hereafter;

“(2) Personal visitations from the Second Comforter, the Lord Jesus Christ himself, the resurrected and perfected being who dwells with his Father in the mansions on high; and

“(3) God the Father . . . shall visit man in person, take up his abode with him, as it were, and reveal to him all the hidden mysteries of his kingdom” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:735).

The Prophet Joseph Smith spoke of the two Comforters this way:

“There are two Comforters spoken of. One is the Holy Ghost, the same as given on the day of Pentecost, and that all Saints receive after faith, repentance, and baptism. This first Comforter or Holy Ghost has no other effect than pure intelligence. It is more powerful in expanding the mind, enlightening the understanding, and storing the intellect with present knowledge. . . .

“The other Comforter spoken of is a subject of great interest, and perhaps understood by few of this generation. After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized for the remission of his sins and receives the Holy Ghost, (by the laying on of hands), which is the first Comforter, then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, Son, thou shalt be exalted. When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve Him at all hazards, then the man will find his calling and his election made sure, then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter, which the Lord hath promised the Saints, as is recorded in the testimony of St. John, in the 14th chapter, from the 12th to the 27th verses.

“Note the 16, 17, 18, 21, 23 verses. . . .

“Now what is this other Comforter? It is no more nor less than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; and this is the sum and substance of the whole matter; that when any man obtains this last Comforter, he will have the personage of Jesus Christ to attend him, or appear unto him from time to time, and even He will manifest the Father unto him, and they will take up their abode with him, and the visions of the heavens will be opened unto him, and the Lord will teach him face to face, and he may have a perfect knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God; and this is the state and place the ancient Saints arrived at when they had such glorious visions—Isaiah, Ezekiel, John upon the Isle of Patmos, St. Paul in the three heavens, and all the Saints who held communion with the general assembly and Church of the Firstborn” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 149–51).

Remind students that we should make ourselves ready for the Second Comforter but that Christ will reveal Himself “in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will” (D&C 88:68). We should focus on receiving and heeding the First Comforter, because that is available to each of us now.

Ask students to read John 14:26 and John 16:7–14 looking for the helps available through the gift of the Holy Ghost. List these on the board and discuss them.

Ask: Do we ever need to feel alone or abandoned in our quest for happiness and eternal life? Bear testimony of the peace, joy, and comfort that come from the Holy Ghost.

John 15:1–8. The Savior is the True Vine, and we are the branches. We receive nourishment from Him, and without Him we can do nothing. (15–20 minutes)

Bring an electrical appliance and a plant to class. Turn on the appliance without plugging it into an electrical outlet. Ask: Why doesn't it seem to work? Point to an individual branch or leaf on the plant. Ask students some of the following questions:

- What enables the leaf or branch to live?
- What will happen if you break it off?
- In what ways are the leaf and the electrical appliance similar? (Both need a source of power to accomplish their purpose.)
- How are we like the appliance and the plant? (Help students see that they need a divine source of power and nourishment to realize their potential.)

Have students read John 15:1–8. Ask them to identify the meaning of the following symbols from this parable:

- The grapevine (v. 1)
- The husbandman (v. 1)
- The branches (v. 2)
- The fruit (v. 2)
- The withered branches (v. 6)

Ask:

- What lessons can we learn from this comparison?
- In what ways are we dependent on God?

You may choose to read the following statement by Elder John Taylor:

“As a Saint you say, ‘I think I understand my duty, and I am doing very well.’ That may be so. You see the little twig; it is green; it flourishes and is the very picture of life. It bears its part and proportion in the tree, and is connected with the stem, branches, and root. But could the tree live without it? Yes, it could. It need not boast itself and get uplifted and say, ‘How green I am! and how I flourish! and what a healthy position I am in! How well I am doing! and I am in my proper place and am doing right.’ But could you do without the root? No: you bear your proper part and position in the tree. Just so with this people. When they are doing their part—when they are magnifying

their calling, living their religion, and walking in obedience to the Spirit of the Lord, they have a portion of his Spirit given to them to profit withal. And while they are humble, faithful, diligent, and observe the laws and commandments of God, they stand in their proper position on the tree: they are flourishing; the buds, blossoms, leaves, and everything about them are all right, and they form a part and parcel of the tree” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 6:108).

Have students read and ponder King Benjamin's exhortation on gratitude in Mosiah 2:19–25. Invite students to share their thoughts and feelings on this message.



John 17. Jesus Christ is our intercessor and advocate with Heavenly Father. (45–50 minutes)

Arrange the classroom like a courtroom, with props such as flags, a gavel, and a Bible for swearing in. Select four students to play the role of judge, prosecuting attorney, defense attorney, and defendant. Tell the prosecutor to find as many things wrong with the defendant as possible through aggressive questioning, for example, “Have you ever lied?” “Have you ever cheated?” “Have you ever broken a law?” Tell the defense attorney to plead the case for the defendant. For example, if the defendant admits to a mistake or error, the defense attorney should point out extenuating circumstances or explain that the defendant has repented. Tell the defendant (and make sure the class understands) that this is a role play and the answers need not be true but that they should reflect how the student feels a typical person might respond. Allow the role players about five minutes to practice away from the rest of the class, and then have them present the role play.

Write *Advocate* on the board and ask the students to define the term. (An advocate is like a lawyer who pleads a case or cause.) Have a student read 1 John 2:1 to the class, and then have a second student read Doctrine and Covenants 62:1. Ask: How is Jesus Christ our advocate with Heavenly Father?

Write the word *Intercession* on the board and ask for a definition. (To intercede means to reconcile, mediate, or plead for.) Have a different student read 2 Nephi 2:9–10, and then have a fourth read Mosiah 15:7–9. Ask: In what ways does Jesus intercede with the Father in our behalf?

Remind the students of the role play and ask:

- Who do you think the defense attorney might represent?
- Who might the prosecutor represent? (Explain that one of Satan's names is “the accuser”; see Revelation 12:9–10.)
- Who might the defendant represent? (Any of us.)

Point out that, like the fictitious defendant, all of us sin and make mistakes in our lives. Our repentance and obedience allow the Savior, who is without sin and who atoned for us, to be our advocate with the Father and to intercede on our behalf.

Read the commentary for John 17:1 in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles* (pp. 171–72). Ask students to explain why John 17 is referred to as the intercessory prayer.

Have students read John chapter 17 looking for evidence of the Lord acting as an intercessor on behalf of His disciples. Discuss what they find. Ask: How do you feel knowing that Jesus Christ is our advocate and intercessor? Close with the following statement by President J. Reuben Clark Jr., who was a member of the First Presidency:

“I believe that our Heavenly Father wants to save every one of his children. I do not think he intends to shut any of us off. . . .
 “. . . I believe that in his justice and mercy he will give us the maximum reward for our acts, give us all that he can give, and in the reverse, I believe that he will impose upon us the minimum penalty which it is possible for him to impose” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1953, 84).

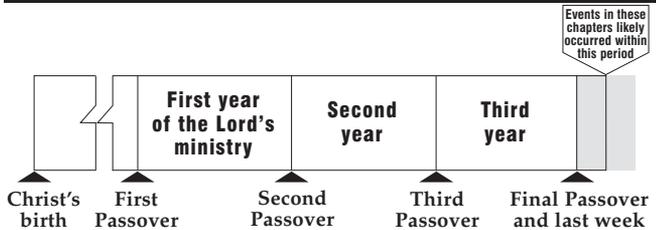
 **John 17:3 (Scripture Mastery).** “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” (10–15 minutes)

Read John 17:3 and ask: What do you think is the difference between knowing Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and knowing about them? Read 1 John 4:7–8; Mosiah 5:13; and Doctrine and Covenants 132:21–24 and discuss how we can come to know the Father and the Son better.

Help students memorize John 17:3 by writing the scripture on the board and having students recite it. After a few recitations, erase a couple of key words and have them recite it again. Continue in this way until students are able to recite the entire scripture without any helps on the board.

John 18–21

The Life of Jesus Christ



Introduction

The final chapters of John provide us an opportunity to ponder the betrayal of Jesus by Judas and the ignominy of the Savior's trials. Look for indications of Jewish feelings about

Roman rule, and consider how the Jewish leaders were able to persuade Pilate to authorize the execution of Jesus though he knew He was innocent of any crime. After experiencing ridicule, an illegal hearing, and abuse at the hands of Herod and Pilate, Jesus was led away to be crucified at Calvary, where those who passed by Him reviled Him by saying, “If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross” (see Mark 15:30). His body was laid in a garden tomb, which was sealed shut, but it would not long remain there. As you read, ponder the relief and joy of Mary Magdalene and the disciples as they realized that the Lord Jesus Christ had risen from the dead and would live forevermore.

Prayerfully study John 18–21 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Jesus Christ allowed His enemies to arrest, beat, and crucify Him so that all mankind might have the opportunity to be saved (see John 18:1–14, 19–24, 36–37; 19:1–7, 17–18, 30; see also 2 Nephi 2:6–9).
- By His suffering and death, the Savior completed all that the Father gave Him to do (see John 18:11–14, 28–40; 19:28–30; see also JST, Matthew 27:50; John 4:34; Mosiah 15:5–7).
- Understanding who we are and the purposes of this life can give us confidence and courage to endure difficulties (see John 18:1–13; see also Alma 14:9–13).
- Prophets testify of the Resurrection so we may believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God (see John 20; see also Alma 33:12–22).
- A belief in Christ's Resurrection may come from evidence such as the empty tomb, from seeing the resurrected Christ, or from hearing the testimony of others. Believing without seeing is more pleasing to the Lord than believing after seeing (see John 20:8, 14–16, 18–20, 24–29; see also Alma 32:16–18).
- Great blessings come to those who put the Lord's work first in their lives (see John 21:1–6, 15–17).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 181–87, 192–93, 200–205.
- “The Last Week of the Savior's Life,” 288 in this manual.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for John 18–21.

 *New Testament Video* presentation 10, “Feed My Sheep” (13:04), can be used in teaching John 21 (see *New Testament Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).



John 18–19. Jesus Christ suffered and died so that all mankind might be saved. Our love and appreciation for Him increase as we learn more about His sacrifice for us. (35–40 minutes)

Ask students to think of something that they have strong feelings for (for example a principle of the gospel, their family, the Church, a job, or their testimony). Ask:

- How have you felt when others have ridiculed or mocked something special in your life? Why?
- Why do you think some people ridicule what we have come to prize?
- What other kinds of adversities do we experience in life?

Have students read Hebrews 2:18 and footnote 18*a* looking for who has experienced all life's difficulties and can comfort us. Explain that we can learn much about enduring trials from the life of the Savior.

Write the following questions and references on the board. Divide the class into four groups and assign each a question. Have the groups use the scripture references to find the answers. Encourage them to look at cross-references as needed. When they finish, have a student from each group read their question and share their answer.

1. How does Jesus know what it is like to be misrepresented, misunderstood, or betrayed? (see John 18:1–13, 19–24).
2. How does Jesus know about feeling forsaken or alone? (see John 18:15–18, 25–27; 19:25–30).
3. How does Jesus know about being the victim of injustice and legal persecution? (see John 18:28–40; 19:8–15).
4. How does Jesus know about disease and physical suffering? (see John 19:1–7, 16–24).

Point out to students that we cannot teach Jesus about suffering because He knows already. Invite a student to read the following statement by Elder Neal A. Maxwell:

“Indeed, we cannot teach Him anything! But we can listen to Him. We can love Him, we can honor Him, we can worship Him! We can keep His commandments, and we can feast upon His scriptures! Yes, we who are so forgetful and even rebellious are never forgotten by Him! We are His ‘work’ and His ‘glory,’ and He is *never* distracted! (See Moses 1:39.)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1981, 10; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 9).

- Read John 19:38–42. How did Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus show respect and reverence for the Lord?
- Read Matthew 27:59–60. What do these verses tell us about Joseph of Arimathea's devotion to the Savior?

- How can we show our devotion to Jesus Christ?

Conclude by singing or reading “There Is a Green Hill Far Away” (*Hymns*, no. 194).

John 18:1–13. Understanding who we are and the purposes of life can give us courage to endure difficulties. (30–35 minutes)

Before class, tape a mirror in the bottom of a shoe box and replace the lid. Tell students that they are going to learn about a mystery person today. Explain that in the box is a clue to the identity of this person. Invite a student to look into the box and discover the clue. Have the student tell the class who the mystery person is. Ask:

- How do you know that it is you?
- Do you know who you *really* are?

Write on the board the following statement by President Thomas S. Monson:

“We must ever remember who we are and what God expects us to become” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1994, 67; or *Ensign*, May 1994, 50).

Ask students:

- Who are we really?
- What does God expect us to become?
- How can believing that we are literally the sons and daughters of God help us have courage as we face the trials of life?

Review the story of Jesus' betrayal in John 18:1–9. Have students read verses 10–13, and ask:

- What did Jesus say in these verses that shows He knew who He was and what Heavenly Father wanted Him to do?
- What evidence is there in these verses that Jesus had courage to face this serious trial?

Have a student read the following statement by Elder Russell M. Nelson:

“As you continue to face many challenging choices in life, remember, there is great protection when you know who you are, why you are here, and where you are going” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1990, 97; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 75).

On the left side of the board write *Jesus Christ (John 18:19–24, 28–37)*. On the right side write *Peter (John 18:15–18, 25–27)*. Assign half the class to study the references after Jesus' name, and the other half to study the ones after Peter's. Ask the first group:

- What evidence did you find in these verses that Jesus knew who He was?
- How do you think He found strength in that knowledge?

Ask the other group similar questions about Peter. Ask some or all of the following questions as part of a class discussion:

- How did Jesus Christ's response to His accusers show He knew who He was?
- Why was Jesus born?
- Why did Peter lie about his association with the Savior?
- How does Peter's experience indicate he may not have known who he really was?
- What does Luke 22:60–62 tell us about how Peter felt after he denied the Savior three times?
- How do you feel when you know you have fallen short of your potential?
- How can remembering who we are help us avoid falling short?

Conclude by reading the following statement by Elder M. Russell Ballard or giving it to students as a handout:

"By focusing on and living the principles of Heavenly Father's plan for our eternal happiness, we can separate ourselves from the wickedness of the world. If we are anchored to the correct understanding of who we are, why we are here on this earth, and where we can go after this mortal life, Satan cannot threaten our happiness through any form of temptation. If we are determined to live by Heavenly Father's plan, we will use our God-given moral agency to make decisions based on revealed truth, not on the opinions of others or on the current thinking of the world" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 30–31; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 24).

John 20:1–23 (see also Matthew 28:1–10; Mark 16:2–14; Luke 24:1–12, 36–49). Prophets testify of the Resurrection so that we may believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. (20–25 minutes)

Write *Job 14:14* on the board. Ask students to read the scripture and answer the question posed by Job. Ask:

- How can we be sure that we will live again?
- What evidence do we have that Jesus Christ broke the bands of death and was resurrected?

Explain that John recorded evidence of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and that we can learn by studying his witness.

Write the following heading on the board: *John's testimony of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*. Review with students the story in John 20:1–10, looking for evidence of the Resurrection.

Consider asking questions like the following:

- What three people visited the tomb in which Jesus had been buried?
- What did they find in the tomb?
- What is significant about the tomb being empty?
- Is an empty tomb conclusive evidence that Jesus Christ was resurrected? Why or why not?

Under the heading on the board write *The tomb was empty*. Review with students John 20:11–18, looking for more evidence of the Resurrection. Ask questions like the following:

- Who was at Jesus' tomb now?
- Who did Mary think was the gardener?
- What was Mary's testimony in verse 18?
- What evidence does this add to the empty tomb concerning the Resurrection?

To the list on the board add *Mary testified that she saw the Lord*. Review with students the story in John 20:19–23 looking for still more evidence, and ask questions like these:

- Who was gathered in a room "for fear of the Jews"?
- When Jesus appeared, what evidence did He give them that it was He? (He showed them His wounds and may have allowed them to feel the wounds also; see John 20:25; 3 Nephi 11:14–15.)

Write *Disciples saw and might have touched the wounds in Jesus' hands and side*. Ask:

- How do these evidences combine to testify of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ?
- How can John's testimony help to strengthen our own?

Invite a student to read the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley, then a member of the First Presidency:

"Of all the victories in human history, none is so great, none so universal in its effect, none so everlasting in its consequences as the victory of the crucified Lord, who came forth in the Resurrection that first Easter morning" ("*The Son of God*," *Ensign*, Dec. 1992, 2).

John 20:24–31. Believing in Jesus Christ without seeing Him is more pleasing to the Lord than believing after seeing. (15–20 minutes)

Show the class a world map. Point to a country that your students have not visited. Ask them if they know for a fact that this country exists. Use the following questions in a discussion:

- How do you know this country exists?
- How does this relate to the phrase “seeing is believing”?
- Why is it important at times to depend on the word of others who have seen?

Invite students to read John 20:24–25 and look for Thomas’s attitude concerning the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Compare this attitude with John’s in John 20:8. Ask: Why do you think Thomas didn’t depend on the word of his brethren? Be careful not to deride Thomas for doubting. Point out to students that there had never been a resurrection since the world was created. Ask: How might this fact have influenced Thomas’s willingness to believe?

Read John 20:25–29, asking the following questions as you read:

- What was Thomas’s response after he saw and felt the wounds in the Savior’s hands and side?
- What important truth did the resurrected Lord teach Thomas?
- What principle of the gospel do we develop when we believe without seeing?
- Read John 20:30–31. According to these verses, why did John record these events?

Sing or read the words to “He Is Risen” (*Hymns*, no. 199). Ask students:

- What blessings does the Resurrection give us?
- What condition would we be facing at death if Jesus Christ had not broken the bands of death? (see 2 Nephi 9:8–9).
- How do you feel about the promise of the Resurrection?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 76:22–24 and testify that people in our day have seen the resurrected Christ. Encourage students to believe the testimonies of these people that Jesus Christ was resurrected and lives today.

John 21:1–6, 15–17. Great blessings come to those who put the Lord’s work first in their lives. (20–25 minutes)

Write the following statement by Elder Marvin J. Ashton, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, on the board, but leave a blank space in place of the word *time*: “We love that to which we give *time*, whether it be the gospel, God, or gold” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1981, 31; or *Ensign*, May 1981, 24).

Invite students to suggest a word that best completes the

sentence. When one of them suggests the word *time*, write it in the space and ask: Why do you think this statement is true?

Have students read John 21:2–6 looking for how Peter and the disciples decided to spend their time. Ask questions like the following:

- How successful were they at fishing through the night?
- What lesson do you think the Savior was trying to teach them by having them throw the net over the other side of the boat?
- Read Luke 5:4–11. How did Peter, James, and John respond the last time the Savior did this? (They left all and followed Jesus.)
- What can we do to show our love for Jesus Christ and His gospel?

Read John 21:15–17.

- What do you think the Savior meant when He said “feed my lambs” and “feed my sheep”?
- Who are the lambs or sheep?

Have a student read the following statement by Elder Robert D. Hales:

“Feeding the lambs could well be missionary labors working with newly baptized members, who must be nurtured and given caring warmth and fellowship in the family of Saints. Feeding the sheep could well refer to the mature members of the Church, some active and some less active, who need to be cared for and brought back to the flock” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 114; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 83).

President Gordon B. Hinckley further stated:

“With the ever increasing number of converts, we must make an increasingly substantial effort to assist them as they find their way. Every one of them needs three things: a friend, a responsibility, and nurturing with ‘the good word of God’ (Moroni 6:4). It is our duty and opportunity to provide these things” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 66; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 47).

Discuss with students how they can more effectively spend their time and show their love for the Lord by helping to feed His sheep.

John 21:18–24. The Lord may require different sacrifices from one person than from another. (15–20 minutes)

Draw a cross on the board. Invite students to read Matthew 16:24.

- According to this verse, what must we do to be saved?
- What does it mean to take up one's cross?

List responses to one side of the cross on the board. Read the Joseph Smith Translation of Matthew 16:26 (see footnote 24*d*) and ask:

- What does this verse add to our understanding of what it means to take up our cross?
- Read John 21:18–19. What did it mean to Peter to take up his cross? (He would follow Jesus in death.)

Write this answer on the other side of the cross on the board. Explain that in Peter's case, the request to "take up his cross, and follow me" was more literal than it is for most of us. According to tradition, Peter was crucified in Rome, upside down at his own request because he did not consider himself worthy to meet death in the same manner as the Lord.

Tell students that John 21:20–24 gives another example of what it means to follow the Lord. Explain that the Prophet Joseph Smith received a more complete account of that event by revelation. Have students read Doctrine and Covenants 7. Ask questions like the following:

- What was John's desire?
- How did it compare to Peter's?
- What was good about each of the requests?
- What change needed to happen to John in order for him to receive his request? (His body needed to be changed to allow him to remain that long on the earth.)
- What can we learn from these two different examples of following the Savior?

Testify that there are different ways we can "give our lives" to the Lord. Some give their lives through dying for the gospel cause. Others give their lives by living the principles of the gospel each day. Encourage students to take up their cross and follow the Lord.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Author: Luke is the author of the Acts of the Apostles (see the introduction to the book of Luke, p. 72). He wrote the Acts as a sequel to his Gospel (see Luke 1:1–4; Acts 1:1). In the Gospel of Luke he testified of the birth, life, death, and Resurrection of the Savior. The book of Acts adds the account of the Lord’s Apostles declaring this gospel message throughout the world (see Acts 1:1–8; see also Bible Dictionary, “Acts of the Apostles,” pp. 603–4; “Luke,” p. 726).

Audience: Luke wrote to a man named Theophilus, who may have been a Roman official (see the commentary for Acts 1:1 in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, p. 243). Though Acts, like the book of Luke, seems to be addressed to a single individual, all who carefully read Luke’s writings will increase their understanding of the gospel.

Historical Background: The events described in Acts occurred over a period of about thirty years as the Church grew and expanded into areas of the world ruled by Rome. The book focuses mainly on the ministries of Peter and Paul. Luke served many years as a companion to Paul, so most of Acts deals with Paul’s missionary journeys. Acts concludes about A.D. 62 with an account of Paul’s preaching at Rome while under house arrest (see “Date and Place of Writing” in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, p. 242).

Unique Features: See “The Significance of the Acts of the Apostles” in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles* (pp. 242–43).

Theme: Acts 1:8 could serve as an outline for the entire book of Acts, which gives accounts of apostolic missionary work in Jerusalem (chapters 1–7), Judea and Samaria (chapters 8–9), and “unto the uttermost part of the earth” (chapters 10–28).



The Apostles were to take up their ministry only after they had been “endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49), or in other words endowed with the Holy Ghost. President Ezra Taft Benson, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said:

“If there is one message I have repeated to my brethren of the Twelve it is that it’s the Spirit that counts. It is the Spirit that

matters. I do not know how often I have said this, but I never tire of saying it—it is the Spirit that matters most” (address delivered at mission presidents’ seminar, 3 Apr. 1985, in *Missionary Guide: Training for Missionaries* [1988], 73).

Acts 1–2

Introduction

For a period of forty days, the resurrected Christ visited His disciples and spoke with them of “the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3). The first chapters of Acts help us understand the power that came into the lives of the early Church leaders as a result of Christ’s ministry and the operation of the Holy Spirit. These chapters begin to unfold the story of how the Apostles preached the gospel and organized the Church in Jerusalem while the Lord prepared messengers to preach to an ever-widening audience.

Prayerfully study Acts 1–2 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Many people in the early Church were witnesses of the resurrected Lord (see Acts 1:1–3; see also 1 Corinthians 15:5–8).
- The gospel will be preached “unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8) through the power of the Spirit (see Acts 1:4–8; 2:14–47; see also Mormon 9:22; D&C 1:4).
- At the Second Coming, Jesus will return to earth in the same manner that He was taken up (see Acts 1:9–11; see also D&C 45:44–52).
- Apostles are ordained witnesses of the divinity of Jesus Christ. Vacancies in the Quorum of the Twelve are filled as directed by the Lord (see Acts 1:15–26; see also Acts 4:33).
- The gift of tongues is a gift of the Spirit that assists missionary work (see Acts 2:1–12; see also D&C 46:24–26).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 188–89, 226–44.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Acts 1–2.

Acts 1–10. By studying the life of the Apostle Peter, we can see how the Lord directed the affairs of the Church through him. (20–25 minutes)

Some students remember Peter as the one who denied knowing the Savior three times, and they often forget the many great things he did. This teaching suggestion is designed to help overcome any negative impressions by highlighting Peter’s bold and remarkable devotion to the Lord as recorded in the book of Acts.

Ask students:

- When you think of the Apostle Peter, what is the first event that comes to mind? (Write responses on the board.)
- How do these events affect how you feel about Peter?

Testify of Peter’s greatness, and encourage the students to learn more about Peter during the lesson.

Tell students that because of the death of Judas Iscariot it was necessary to fill the vacancy in the Quorum of the Twelve. Invite students to read Acts 1:13–16 and look for who directed the selection of a new Apostle. Ask: What can we learn about Peter’s position from this account?

Have a student read the following quotation from Elder James E. Faust:

“A powerful precedent comes down through the ages to sustain the succession of authority. After the crucifixion of the Savior, Peter, as the senior apostle, became president of the Church. Since the restoration of priesthood keys to Joseph Smith, this practice has been followed in the successions to that office” (*Reach Up for the Light* [1990], 22).

Give students a copy of the chart entitled “Events in the Life of Peter” from the appendix as a handout (p. 294). Have them fill it out, and then correct it as a class. (The answers are 1–G, 2–D, 3–I, 4–B, 5–E, 6–J, 7–A, 8–F, 9–H, 10–C.)

Invite students to summarize what they have learned about Peter that has increased their appreciation for him. Conclude by sharing the following statement by Neal A. Maxwell, later a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Under the influence of Christ’s teachings, Peter developed from an obscure fisherman to be the president of the Church. Once uncertain and even somewhat fearful, he became virtually fearless” (“... A More Excellent Way”: *Essays on Leadership for Latter-day Saints* [1973], 38).

Acts 1:1–3. Many people in the early Church were witnesses of the resurrected Lord. (20–25 minutes)

Give the following chart to students as a handout or write it on the board, leaving the “Witnesses” column blank.

References	Witnesses
Mark 16:9–10; John 20:11–14	Mary Magdalene, near the sepulchre
Matthew 28:1, 9	Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, somewhere between the sepulchre and Jerusalem
Mark 16:12; Luke 24:13–15	Two disciples on the road to Emmaus
Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5	Peter, in or near Jerusalem
Luke 24:36; John 20:19	Ten of the Apostles at Jerusalem
Mark 16:14; John 20:26	The eleven Apostles at Jerusalem
John 21	The Apostles at the Sea of Tiberias, Galilee
Matthew 28:16–17	The Apostles on a mountain in Galilee
1 Corinthians 15:6	Five hundred brethren at once, probably in Galilee
1 Corinthians 15:7	James
Mark 16:19; Luke 24:50–51	The eleven Apostles, near Bethany

Ask students to imagine that they have a friend who has a hard time believing in the Resurrection of Jesus. Have students read Acts 1:1–3 looking for whom the Lord appeared to after His Resurrection. Ask: What might the “many infallible proofs” refer to?

Have students fill in the blanks on the chart. Explain that this evidence for the Resurrection is compelling because of the number and reputation of the witnesses. Ask:

- How might you use these scriptures to help your friend begin to believe in the Resurrection?
- What effect might it have on your own testimony?

Consider singing or reading “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today” (*Hymns*, no. 200). Remind students that Jesus Christ’s Atonement allows each of us to be resurrected. Ask: What difference might it make in the way you live each day to know that you will be resurrected?

Acts 1:4–8; 2:1–21. The gospel will be preached “unto the uttermost part of the earth” through the power of the Spirit. (25–30 minutes)

Hold up a lamp (or other source of light) and ask students to notice its appearance. Turn on the lamp. Ask:

- How does the unlit lamp compare to people without the Holy Ghost?
- How is the lighted lamp like people with the gift of the Holy Ghost?

Read Acts 1:4–8 with your students and ask:

- What were the Apostles to wait for before they began preaching the gospel?
- Why would the Lord tell the Apostles to wait until they received the Holy Ghost?
- Read Doctrine and Covenants 42:14. Why can’t we teach or minister properly without first receiving the Holy Ghost?

Read 2 Nephi 33:1 and have a student explain what this verse says about preaching the gospel with power. Share President Ezra Taft Benson’s statement from the “Theme” section of the introduction to Acts (p. 135).

Remind students that the Savior instructed the Apostles to wait in Jerusalem until they were endowed with the Holy Ghost. Read Acts 2:1–13 and ask:

- What evidence can you find in these verses that the Apostles followed the Savior’s instructions?
- How was the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost described by those unfamiliar with the Holy Ghost?

Point out that Acts 2:14–36 contains Peter’s first public discourse of which we have a record. Have students read verses 22–24, 32. Ask:

- Why would the Holy Ghost inspire Peter to declare this message?
- Why is there no message that is more important than this one?

Have students read Acts 2:37–47 looking for key words and phrases that show that the power of the Holy Ghost assisted the Apostles in their ministry. List their findings on the board. Consider asking the following questions:

- What can we learn from this important event in the early Church?
- Whose lives were blessed by the influence of the Holy Ghost?
- In what ways can we be blessed by the power of the Spirit today?
- What can we do now to have the Holy Ghost as we talk to other people about the Church?



Acts 1:15–26. Apostles are ordained witnesses of the divinity of Jesus Christ. Vacancies are filled in the Quorum of the Twelve as directed by the Lord.

(40–45 minutes)

Play a videocassette from a recent general conference that shows the sustaining of the General Authorities (or display a picture of the current General Authorities). Ask students to share their understanding of how new Apostles are selected. Explain that the New Testament gives an example of how this was done anciently.

Have students read Acts 1:15–20, and ask:

- What vacancy did the apostasy and death of Judas bring about?
- Read verses 21–22. What qualifications did Peter set for the individual who was chosen to be the new Apostle? (He needed to have “companied” with the Apostles and also to have been a witness of the resurrected Lord).
- Could a man living today fill both these requirements?

Explain that the modern Apostles might not have accompanied the ancient Apostles but that each of them has a special witness. Read the following quotation by Elder Harold B. Lee:

“Some years ago . . . two missionaries came to me with what seemed to be a very difficult question, to them. A young Methodist minister had laughed at them when they had said that apostles were necessary today in order for the true church to be upon the earth. And they said the minister said: ‘Do you realize that when they met to choose one to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Judas, that they said it had to be one who companied with them and had been a witness of all things pertaining to the mission and resurrection of the Lord? How can you say you have apostles, if that be the measure of an apostle?’

“And so these young men said, ‘What shall we answer?’ I said to them: ‘Go back and ask your minister friend two questions. First, how did the Apostle Paul gain what was necessary to be called an apostle? He didn’t know the Lord; had no personal acquaintance. He hadn’t accompanied the apostles. He hadn’t been a witness of the ministry, nor the resurrection of the Lord. How did he gain his testimony sufficient to be an apostle? Now the second question you ask him: How does he know that all who are today apostles have not likewise received that witness?’

“I bear witness to you that those who hold the apostolic calling may, and do, know of the reality of the mission of the Lord” (“Born of the Spirit,” address to seminary and institute faculty at Brigham Young University, 26 June 1962, 13).

Invite students to read Acts 1:23–26 and look for who was selected to be the new Apostle. Discuss the following questions:

- How was Matthias chosen?
- What key to the process is revealed in verse 24?
- Why is that important?

Have a student read the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“Here again is set forth a significant and unique feature established by the Lord in the governance of His church. The right to nominate rests with the superior officer or officers at whatever the level. But that nomination must be sustained—that is, accepted and confirmed—by the membership of the Church. The procedure is peculiar to the Lord’s church. There is no seeking for office, no jockeying for position, no campaigning to promote one’s virtues. . . . Under the Lord’s plan, those who have responsibility to select officers are governed by one overriding question: ‘Whom would the Lord have?’ There is quiet and thoughtful deliberation. And there is much of prayer to receive the confirmation of the Holy Spirit that the choice is correct” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1994, 73; or *Ensign*, May 1994, 53).

Ask: What is the most critical consideration in choosing and ordaining a new Apostle? Read Doctrine and Covenants 107:23 and tell students that ancient and modern Apostles are special witnesses of Jesus Christ.

Bring several conference editions of the *Ensign* to class. Divide your class into small groups and give each a copy of the *Ensign*. Ask students to scan the talks of the Brethren looking for testimonies of Jesus Christ. After a few minutes, have them share what they found. Ask: What is our role in sustaining the Apostles?

Acts 3–5

Introduction

In Acts 3–5 the Apostles are shown directing the affairs of the Church in Jerusalem by the power of the Holy Ghost. Peter, the senior Apostle, with John beside him, healed the sick and lame, preached the gospel, boldly confronted Jewish religious leaders, wrought many signs and wonders among the people, and testified of the divinity of Jesus Christ. Elder Spencer W. Kimball, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, described Peter, “this great church president,” as a man of “great faith, bold leadership, unwavering testimony, unparalleled courage, and almost limitless understanding” (*Peter, My Brother*, Brigham

Young University Speeches of the Year [13 July 1971], 1; or *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 488).

Prayerfully study Acts 3–5 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Healings can occur through faith and priesthood power (see Acts 3:1–16; see also James 5:14–15; Alma 15:8).
- Successful missionaries must be bold and courageous in the face of opposition (see Acts 4:13–21, 31; 5:17–33, 40–42).
- Saints have a responsibility for each other’s welfare (see Acts 4:32–37; see also Acts 2:44–45; Mosiah 18:8, 21; 4 Nephi 1:2–3; Moses 7:18).
- Lying to Church leaders is the same as lying to the Lord (see Acts 5:1–11; see also Jacob 7:9–19).
- Truth will eventually prevail over error (see Acts 5:34–39; see also Daniel 2:34–35).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 244–45.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Acts 3–5.

Acts 3:1–16. Healings occur through faith and priesthood power. (25–30 minutes)

Make a likeness of a one million dollar check. Show the “check” to your class and ask:

- Which would you rather have, one million dollars or your eyesight? Why?
- Would you rather have one million dollars or your ability to walk? Why?
- Read Acts 3:1–11. What did Peter offer the lame man that was more valuable than money?
- Read verses 12–16. What makes healings like this one possible?

Share with the class accounts of healings that came through faith and priesthood power, or ask students if they would like to share any such accounts.

Explain that healings such as these can serve as types for spiritual healing. Just as the Lord has power to heal our physical illnesses and even disabilities, He can offer us forgiveness and strength to overcome our weaknesses and society’s ills. Reread Acts 3:2–8, and ask questions such as these:

- Who holds Peter’s position in the Church today? (The prophet.)

- If we compare Peter’s healing the lame man to spiritual healing, who does the man represent?
- What do the words “fastening his eyes upon him” in verse 4 imply? (The man was important to Peter.)
- How have the prophets of our time “fastened their eyes” on the youth? (One example is the *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet.)
- What does the word *heed* mean in verse 5? (The man paid attention to Peter and John.)
- How does that apply to spiritual healing? (We must listen to and obey the current prophet and other priesthood leaders.)
- What can we learn from Peter’s taking the man by the hand and lifting him up?

Have a student read the following quotation by President Harold B. Lee:

“Now in my mind’s eye I can picture [the lame] man, what was in his mind. ‘Doesn’t this man know that I have never walked? He commands me to walk.’ But the biblical record doesn’t end there. Peter just didn’t content himself by commanding the man to walk, but he ‘took him by the right hand, and lifted him up.’ (Acts 3:7.)

“Will you see that picture now of that noble soul, that chiefest of the apostles, perhaps with his arms around the shoulders of this man, and saying, ‘Now, my good man, have courage, I will take a few steps with you. Let’s walk together, and I assure you that you can walk, because you have received a blessing by the power and authority that God has given us as men, his servants.’ Then the man leaped with joy.

“You cannot lift another soul until you are standing on higher ground than he is. You must be sure, if you would rescue the man, that you yourself are setting the example of what you would have him be. You cannot light a fire in another soul unless it is burning in your own soul” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1973, 178; or *Ensign*, July 1973, 123).



Acts 4:32–37. Saints have a responsibility for each other’s welfare. (25–30 minutes)

Begin class by asking students questions about the first two chapters of Acts (you will need to prepare fifteen to twenty questions in advance). As students give correct answers, give them rewards, such as pieces of candy. Continue until some students have several rewards and others have few or none. Ask:

- Do we measure our success more by how much material wealth we have, or by how much *more* we have than someone else?

- How does society encourage this behavior?

Have students read Acts 2:44–45; 4:32–37, and ask: What did the members of the Church do with their material wealth in Peter’s day? Read Doctrine and Covenants 78:5–6.

- Why is it important for Latter-day Saints to help each other in material ways?
- What does it mean to have “all things common”?
- What do we call this law today? (The law of consecration.)
- What can we do to help others materially? (Answers might include paying tithes and offerings, participating in service projects, helping others find work, giving or aiding humanitarian service.)

Refer to the rewards given out at the beginning of class. Ask students: Would you like to put all your rewards together and distribute them more equally? Why or why not? Discuss issues that arise during this exercise. Have a student read the following quotation from President Ezra Taft Benson:

“Everything we have belongs to the Lord; and, therefore, the Lord may call upon us for any and all of our property, because it belongs to Him. . . .

“ . . . The law of consecration is a law for an inheritance in the celestial kingdom. God, the Eternal Father, his Son Jesus Christ, and all holy beings abide by this law. It is an eternal law. It is a revelation by God to his Church in this dispensation. Though not in full operation today, it will be mandatory for all Saints to live the law in its fulness to receive celestial inheritance. You young people today abide a portion of this higher law as you tithe, pay a generous fast offering, go on missions, and make other contributions of money, service, and time” (“A Vision and a Hope for the Youth of Zion,” in 1977 *Devotional Speeches of the Year* [1978], 74–75).

- What current Church programs embody the principles of consecration?
- How does the Church’s welfare program allow us to live a portion of the law of consecration?

Invite each student to think of someone whose life she or he can make happier through service and to come up with a plan to help that person. Tell them you won’t be asking for details of their plans or the people they are helping, but that in a day or two you will ask them in a general way how they are doing.

Acts 5:1–11. Lying to Church leaders is the same as lying to the Lord. (10–15 minutes)

Have students take turns reading aloud Acts 5:1–11 one verse at a time. Ask: What lessons can we learn from this story? (We cannot lie to God; the consequences of lying may come immediately after the lie; we always suffer the consequences

of our actions.) Have a student read the following statement by Elder Gordon B. Hinckley:

“In our time those found in dishonesty do not die as did Ananias and Sapphira, but something within them dies. Conscience chokes, character withers, self-respect vanishes, integrity dies” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1976, 91; or *Ensign*, May 1976, 61).

Ask: According to this quotation, what are some of the consequences of lying? Invite students to share accounts of people they know who learned the value of total honesty with the Lord, Church leaders, or others.

Acts 5:34–39. Truth will eventually prevail over error. (10–15 minutes)

Pass out to students copies of recent newspapers or news magazines. Have them browse them, looking for how prevalent sin and error are in the world. Ask: How do you think people must feel about life if they believe that these conditions will always prevail in the world?

Have students read Acts 5:34–39, and ask:

- What did Gamaliel believe about the contest between right and wrong?
- How can this knowledge help us have hope in a world filled with sin and error?

President Hugh B. Brown taught:

“You may be sure that ultimately righteousness will triumph. Truth will prevail. The Church has been organized and set up. It is the kingdom of God, and it will never be thrown down” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1961, 87).

Acts 6–7

Introduction

As Church membership increased, the Apostles called a group of seven men to assist them and to administer certain temporal needs of the Saints in Jerusalem. Stephen, one of these seven, was described as “full of faith and power” and as one who “did great wonders and miracles among the people” (Acts 6:8). Some of the Jews accused Stephen of blasphemy for teaching that Christ “shall change the customs which Moses delivered us” (v. 14). Stephen defended himself before the council by reminding them that true prophets had always been rejected by Israel. He testified that “as your fathers did,

so do ye” (Acts 7:51) and said they had rejected the Son of God. Stephen saw a vision and testified of seeing God the Father and Jesus at His right hand. This so enraged the people that they stoned him, and Stephen became one of the early Church’s first martyrs.

As you read Acts 6–7 look for the qualities early Church leaders possessed that qualified them for the ministry. Also notice how Stephen used Israel’s history to teach Jewish leaders about Jesus Christ.

Prayerfully study Acts 6–7 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Church leaders use the principle of delegation to meet the needs of the people and accomplish the work of the Lord (see Acts 6:1–7; D&C 107:23, 33–35).
- People who serve in the Church should be honest, spiritual, and wise (see Acts 6:3; D&C 4:5–6).
- The faithful enjoy God’s blessings in life and in death (see Acts 6:5–7:60).
- The righteous have been persecuted throughout history, but blessings will come to those who endure (see Acts 6:9–15; 7:22–36, 51–60).
- The wicked take the truth to be hard (see Acts 7:54; see also 1 Nephi 16:1–2).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 245–46.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Acts 6–7.

Acts 6–12. Heavenly Father directs His work through His prophets. (30–35 minutes)

Arrange for someone (perhaps a parent or priesthood leader) to come at the beginning of class and make an announcement about an upcoming event. Have the person give the correct date, time, place, and other information. Then have a second person enter and make the same announcement but with different details. Next have a third person enter and announce the same event with still different details.

Ask: Which announcement do you believe? Why? Tell students that the first individual gave the correct information. Ask:

- How can this situation lead to confusion?
- When it comes to the gospel, who can best counsel us?
- How can listening to other sources affect us?

Discuss the difficulties that come from listening to messages from the wrong source.

In Acts 6–12 we see the Lord directing Peter, the President of the Church, to take the gospel to the Gentiles, a change that many of the early Saints had not expected. Explain that changes such as this must come through the living prophet, and that the members of the Church should have full confidence in the prophet's words.

Divide your class into three groups. Assign one group to study Acts 6, one to study Acts 10, and one to study Acts 11, looking for direction that the Lord gave the Saints through His Apostles. Have them report their findings. (These might include the appointment of seven men to take care of the widows, Peter's vision to take the gospel to the Gentiles, and his recounting of that vision to the Church.)

Assure students that the Lord still speaks to His Church today through His prophet and apostles, and that we can have full confidence in their words. Consider sharing an excerpt from one of your favorite conference talks. Encourage students to go home and study the most recent conference edition of the *Ensign* looking for what the prophet and apostles have said to them.

Give students copies of the following quotations as a handout, and read them together.

President Harold B. Lee said:

"If you want to know what the Lord would have the Saints know and to have his guidance and direction for the next six months, get a copy of the proceedings of this conference, and you will have the latest word of the Lord as far as the Saints are concerned" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1973, 168; or *Ensign*, Jan. 1974, 128).

President Ezra Taft Benson said:

"For the next six months, your conference edition of the *Ensign* should stand next to your standard works and be referred to frequently. As my dear friend and brother Harold B. Lee said, we should let these conference addresses 'be the guide to [our] walk and talk during the next six months. These are the important matters the Lord sees fit to reveal to this people in this day' (in Conference Report, Apr. 1946, 68)" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1988, 97; or *Ensign*, May 1988, 84).

Acts 6:1–6. Church leaders need worthy members to help minister to the needs of others. (15–20 minutes)

Invite a student to hold some items for you. Give the student objects such as a pencil, a book, a roll of tape, a stapler, and so forth until the student either has to drop something or set something down.

Show students a picture of the current prophet or of one of the Apostles. Discuss the great responsibilities these Church leaders are called to carry. Ask:

- Who are the General Authorities responsible to?
- What might happen if they ignored their calling?
- How does this relate to the object lesson?

Read Acts 6:1–6 looking for the specific problem the early Church leaders faced.

- How did the Church leaders solve this problem?
- Who was called to assist the Apostles in caring for the widows? (As students find the names of the seven men, list them on the board.)

Have a student read the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

"The work assigned them fell within the realm of those temporal matters normally handled by the Aaronic Priesthood, thus leaving the apostles free to handle the more difficult matters of their Melchizedek ministry" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 2:65).

Ask:

- What similar challenges do we face today?
- How do Aaronic Priesthood holders help in caring for widows?
- How does it lighten the load of Church leaders if Aaronic Priesthood holders faithfully perform their duties?

Invite a student to read Acts 6:3 again, and ask:

- What qualities did the Apostles look for in selecting the seven men?
- How do these same qualities help qualify us to serve in the Church today?

Read Acts 6:7–8 and look for evidence that these calls were inspired. Ask: In what ways can priesthood holders bless the widows and the entire Church?

Acts 6:5–7:60. The faithful enjoy God's blessings in life and in death. (20–25 minutes)

Have students imagine that they were forewarned that they were going to die. Ask: If you could write the eulogy for your own funeral, what would you say? To help your discussion, consider asking questions like these:

- How would you like to be remembered?
- What impact would living the gospel faithfully have on how you are remembered?

Invite students to read Acts 6:5–8 and look for what kind of individual Stephen was. Ask: If you had seen some of the wonders and miracles performed by Stephen, what would you think of him?

Have students read Acts 6:9–15. Ask:

- Why were some not pleased with Stephen’s work?
- What evidence can you give that God blessed Stephen during his difficult mission?
- What did the people do to get Stephen charged and brought before the council?

Acts 7 is a discourse by Stephen during his own defense before Jewish leaders. Tell students that Stephen recounted some of Israel’s history, showing how Israel rejected Moses and the prophets. Have students read Acts 7:51–53, and ask: What three accusations did Stephen make against the Jewish leaders? (They were stiff-necked and resisted the influence of the Holy Ghost; they rejected and slew the Just One, Jesus Christ; they received the law of Moses but didn’t live it.)

Invite students to read Acts 7:54–60, and ask:

- How did the Jewish leaders react to these accusations?
- How did God sustain Stephen as he bore his testimony?
- What does this vision imply about Stephen’s worthiness?
- What evidence can you give that Stephen remained faithful until the end?
- If you were to write the eulogy for Stephen’s funeral, what would you say?



Acts 7:55–56 (Scripture Mastery). The Godhead consists of three separate and distinct beings.
(10–15 minutes)

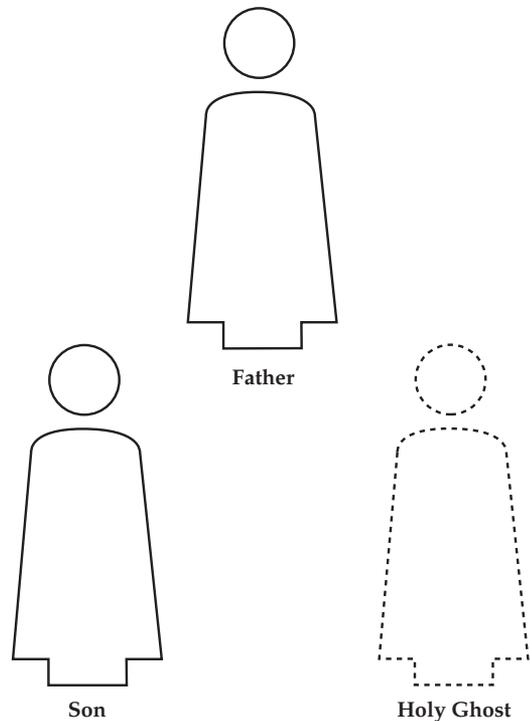
Ask: How might people of the world describe the Godhead? Have a student read the following quotation by Elder Dallin H. Oaks:

“Many Christians reject the idea of a tangible, personal God and a Godhead of three separate beings. They believe that God is a spirit and that the Godhead is only one God. In our view these concepts are evidence of the falling away we call the Great Apostasy.

“We maintain that the concepts identified by such nonscriptural terms as ‘the incomprehensible mystery of God’ and ‘the mystery of the Holy Trinity’ are attributable to the ideas of Greek philosophy. These philosophical concepts transformed Christianity in the first few centuries following the deaths of the Apostles. . . .

“The consequences persist in the various creeds of Christianity, which declare a Godhead of only one being and which describe that single being or God as ‘incomprehensible’ and ‘without body, parts, or passions.’” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 112–13; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 84–85).

Read Acts 7:55–56. Draw a diagram on the board similar to the following:



Read Doctrine and Covenants 130:22 with the class and explain that Latter-day Saints believe that each member of the Godhead has a separate body. Give students a few minutes to find and share other scriptures that indicate that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are three separate individuals (see the teaching suggestion for Matthew 3:16–17, p. 24). Ask:

- How does it make you feel to know that we can pray to our Father in Heaven, whose children we are, and who hears and answers prayers?
- How does knowing that Jesus is an individual help us follow His example?
- Why do many parents keep journals and write letters to their children? (One answer is that they love their children and want them to know them.)
- Why do you think Heavenly Father has revealed His nature to His children? (see John 17:3).

Have a student read the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks:

“In common with the rest of Christianity, we believe in a Godhead of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. However, we testify that these three members of the Godhead are three separate and distinct beings. We also testify that God the Father is not just a spirit but is a glorified person with a tangible body, as is his resurrected Son, Jesus Christ” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 112; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 84).

Acts 8–9

Introduction

In Acts 8–9 we see the beginning of the worldwide mission of the early Christian Church. Before this time missionaries preached the gospel primarily to the Jews in Jerusalem and Judea. Now Philip, one of the seven men chosen to assist the Apostles, preached to non-Israelites in Samaria and in Gaza (see Bible map 11). As you study chapter 8 look for the first principles and ordinances of the gospel being taught and applied.

These chapters also recount the conversion of Saul, one of the greatest missionaries who ever lived. Saul, whom the Lord raised up “to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15), was the same who was renamed Paul and who wrote most of the Epistles in the New Testament. Notice how his zeal for persecuting the Saints changed, after his conversion, to zeal for spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Prayerfully study Acts 8–9 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The Lord allows His people to be tried in order to accomplish His purposes (see Acts 8:1–4).
- The Lord directs the work of the Church (see Acts 8:5–40).
- God has a work for each of us to do in His kingdom (see Acts 9:1–22).
- Following Christ requires making sacrifices (see Acts 9:16; see also 2 Corinthians 11:23–33).
- Men who worthily hold the priesthood of God share Jesus Christ’s power (see Acts 9:32–43).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 246–49, 256–61.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Acts 8–9.

Acts 8:1–4. The Lord allows His people to be tried to accomplish His purposes. (30–35 minutes)

Come to class with one of your arms bandaged. Ask students to imagine that you suffered a painful injury and won’t be able to use your arm and hand for several weeks. Ask:

- What are some ill effects that could result from this type of injury?
- What good might result? (Possible answers include learning to write with the other hand, gaining more empathy for people who suffer physically, meeting a doctor or nurse who is interested in the gospel.)

Have a student read Acts 8:1–4 and look for what trials Church members were experiencing. Ask: What good came from this difficult situation? (Those who were scattered abroad preached in the places they went.)

Explain that Philip was one of those who preached the gospel as a result of being scattered from Jerusalem. Have students quickly read through Acts 8:5–13, 26–40 looking for evidence that Philip’s experience outside of Jerusalem was successful. Read Acts 1:8 and ask: How did this scattering help the Church fill a commandment given by the resurrected Lord?

Tell a personal experience in which a trial or difficulty you experienced turned out in some way to be a blessing. (Or use a scriptural example, such as Nephi’s broken bow experience in 1 Nephi 16:18–32.) Encourage students not to be discouraged when bad things happen to them but to look for the good things that might come from these experiences. Ask if any of them have experienced something like this that they would like to share with the class.

Acts 9:1–22. The Lord has a work for each of us to do in His kingdom. (20–25 minutes)

Tell students to pretend that in a few minutes someone will come to class who can answer any question they ask about the Church, but that they can ask only two questions. Discuss what questions they would ask.

Have students read Acts 9:1–6 looking for the questions Saul asked the Lord when the Lord appeared to him.

- Why were Paul’s questions so crucial to him?
- Why are these same questions important for each of us?

Point out that we must each gain a testimony of Jesus Christ for ourselves. Regarding Paul's second question, read the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"There is no more crucial question that a man should be constantly asking than that which Paul asked: 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' [Acts 9:6.] There is no more essential answer than that which he received: to go to those who are authorized by the Lord to give directions" (*God, Family, Country: Our Three Great Loyalties* [1974], 162).

Ask: What should you do once you have received an answer from the Lord? Read Acts 9:7–22, and consider asking the following questions:

- What happened to Saul as a result of this vision?
- What evidence is there that Saul was obedient to the answer he received?
- What did the Lord tell Ananias about Saul that prepared him to meet this persecutor of the Church?
- How was Saul blessed for heeding the answer to the Lord's question?
- What blessings can come to us for doing as Saul did?

Ask students:

- How does the Lord answer our questions today? (Answers might include the scriptures, the Holy Ghost, prayer, parents, priesthood leaders, patriarchal blessings.)
- What would happen if we chose to ignore the answers the Lord gave us?
- Why is keeping the commandments so vital as we seek to learn what the Lord wants us to do?

Acts 9:16. Disciples of Christ must be willing to sacrifice. (15–20 minutes)

Show students two or three pictures of people who make important contributions to society (for example, a medical doctor, a mother, a teacher). For each picture, ask: What sacrifices did this person likely make to become successful? Ask: How do their sacrifices bless others?

Have students read Acts 9:16 and 2 Corinthians 11:23–28 looking for what Saul (Paul) suffered for the cause of Christ. Tell students that following Christ requires us to be willing to sacrifice all things and that disciples are frequently called on to suffer many things. Ask: Why did Paul make these sacrifices?

President Brigham Young said of the Prophet Joseph Smith:

"Joseph could not have been perfected, though he had lived a thousand years, if he had received no persecution. If he had lived a thousand years, and led this people, and preached the Gospel without persecution, he would not have been perfected as well as he was at the age of thirty-nine years" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, 351).

Ask:

- How did persecution, suffering, and sacrifice affect the Prophet Joseph Smith?
- How can we successfully deal with suffering and sacrifice when it comes?
- How can our sacrifices benefit others?

Have students read Romans 8:35–39 looking for what enabled Paul to make great sacrifices. Ask:

- What are some different ways the "love of Christ" is manifest?
- How did this help Paul?
- How can it help us?

Acts 9:32–43. Peter had Christ's power, and we have this same power in the Church today. (15–20 minutes)

Have students close their Bibles. On your signal, have them open them and find an account of the priesthood being used to bless someone's life. As students find accounts, have them share the references with those who haven't found one yet. When everyone in the class has a reference, select a few students to share what they have found.

Divide the class in two. Have one group read and compare Acts 9:32–35 with Mark 2:1–12. Have the other group compare Acts 9:36–43 with Luke 7:11–17. Use some or all of the following questions to help your discussion:

- Who performed the miracles in the accounts found in Mark and Luke?
- Who performed them in the accounts in Acts?
- From whom did Peter receive his priesthood power?
- Who restored this power to the earth in our day? (Peter, James, and John; see D&C 128:20).

Ask if any students would like to share an experience in which they were blessed by the power of the priesthood. If no one volunteers, consider sharing such an experience from your own life. Testify that Christ's priesthood authority or power is with us in the Church today.

Acts 10–12

 *New Testament Video* presentation 11, “Long-Promised Day” (8:52), can be used in teaching Acts 10 (see *New Testament Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).

 **Acts 10. God reveals His word through His prophets.** (25–30 minutes)

Introduction

Jesus told His Apostles, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). The book of Acts shows the Apostles fulfilling this divine assignment. Foreign Jews and proselytes (gentile converts to Judaism) heard the gospel preached in their own language on the day of Pentecost (see Acts 2:1–12). Nicolas, one of the seven called to care for the widows, was a proselyte from Antioch (see Acts 6:5). Philip baptized many in Samaria and a man from Ethiopia (see Acts 8:6–7, 12, 26–40). Ananias prophesied that Saul would preach Christ “before the Gentiles” (Acts 9:15). The Lord gave Peter a vision showing him that “God is no respecter of persons” but that “he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:34–35), regardless of nationality. The Church rejoiced in this revelation, saying, “Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life” (Acts 11:18). These developments launched Paul’s great missionary work among the Gentiles.

As you study Acts 10–12, notice the significance of the conversion of Cornelius, and ponder in what sense God is no respecter of persons.

Prayerfully study Acts 10–12 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- God reveals His word through His prophets (see Acts 10:9–16; 11:1–9; see also Official Declaration 1; Official Declaration 2).
- Heavenly Father is an impartial God; He offers salvation to everyone (see Acts 10:34; see also 2 Nephi 26:33; D&C 1:35).
- Apostles are special witnesses of Jesus Christ (see Acts 10:36–43; see also Acts 4:33; D&C 107:23).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 250–55.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Acts 10–12.

Show students a picture of the Savior and a picture of the present prophet. Explain that Jesus directs His Church through revelation today just as He did in the times of the ancient Apostles.

As an example of how the Lord directs His work through revelation to prophets, have students read Matthew 10:5–6, and ask:

- What does this scripture say about missionary work?
- Can the Lord give different instructions regarding missionary work at different times? Why?
- Read Acts 10:44–48. How did missionary work change at this time? (Gentiles were baptized.)
- How would this change affect the mission of the Church?

Read with students Acts 10:1–35 looking for how this change was communicated. Ask:

- How did the Lord prepare Cornelius, a Gentile, to receive the gospel?
- How did the Lord prepare Peter?
- What impact did the revelation to Peter have on the Church?

Point out that this revelation can be compared to Official Declaration 2 in the Doctrine and Covenants. Just as Peter’s revelation instructed the early Church to take the gospel to the Gentiles, this modern revelation through President Spencer W. Kimball is allowing the modern Church to expand missionary work and the blessings of the temple throughout the world.

Share the following statement by Elder Harold B. Lee:

“When there is to be anything different from that which the Lord has told us already, he will give it to his prophet. . . . I have said, ‘Do you suppose that while the Lord has his prophet on the earth he is going to take some round-about means of revealing things to his children? That is what he has a prophet for, and when he has something to give to this Church, he will give it to the President’” (“The Place of the Living Prophet, Seer, and Revelator,” address to religious educators, 8 July 1964, in *Charge to Religious Educators*, 2nd ed. [1982], 109).



Acts 10. Heavenly Father is not a partial God; He offers salvation to everyone. (10–15 minutes)

Ask your students to imagine that it is the end of the term and that you are going to give them their grade. Ask the two tallest students in class to stand, and tell them they get the highest grade. Have the next three tallest students stand and tell them they get the second highest grade. Tell the rest of the class they get an average grade.

Ask: Is this grading system fair or unfair? Why? Point out that in order to be fair, grades need to be related to what they measure, and all students should have a chance to earn a high grade. If only tall students can get the highest grade then we would say that the teacher is partial.

Review with students the story of Cornelius in Acts 10. Ask a student to read aloud Acts 10:34–35. Ask: What does it mean that God is no respecter of persons? Explain that receiving blessings from Heavenly Father does not depend on our race, tribe, culture, or economic status. Everyone can receive blessings from Heavenly Father by obeying His commandments.

Have students read 2 Nephi 26:33 and Doctrine and Covenants 130:20–21, and ask: How do these verses relate to the idea that Heavenly Father is not a partial God? Read John 3:16–17 and testify that Jesus Christ suffered for all, and that all who come to Him in obedience can receive salvation in the kingdom of God.

Acts 13–14

Introduction

Acts 13–14 contains an account of Paul’s first missionary journey to the Gentiles. Paul’s companion was Barnabas, although John Mark also accompanied them during the beginning of the mission. This mission led to the establishment of branches of the Church in areas far removed from Jerusalem. Paul entered cities where there were no members and where most had not even heard of Jesus Christ. When he left, however, there were thriving branches of the Church (see Bible map 13). In these chapters we see Paul’s eagerness to preach the gospel to all men, regardless of their station or background. He usually preached first to the Jews, many of whom rejected his message, and then to the Gentiles. As you read, notice the qualities that made Paul such a great missionary.

Prayerfully study Acts 13–14 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Opposition often accompanies the growth of the Church (see Acts 13:6–12, 50; 14:1–7, 19–20).
- Some people embrace the word of God when they hear it, while others reject it (see Acts 13:43–52).
- We may have to endure tribulation to enter the kingdom of God (see Acts 14:22; see also Matthew 10:22; D&C 121:7–8).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 262–64.
- “The Missions of the Apostle Paul,” 296 in this manual.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Acts 13–14.

Acts 13–14. Paul is an example we can follow when we do missionary work. (20–25 minutes)

Invite those students who have a brother, sister, or other relative on a mission to raise their hands. Ask them to relate examples of challenges that missionaries sometimes encounter. Ask: How do these challenges affect the missionary’s ability to share the gospel with others?

Ask students to turn to Bible map 13 and trace the course of Paul’s first missionary journey. Help students understand the difficulties encountered by Paul on his first missionary journey by discussing some or all of the following questions:

- According to the map, approximately how far did Paul travel?
- Considering the time and the paths indicated on the map, what modes of travel might Paul have used?
- What difficulties would these circumstances present to a missionary living then?
- What modes of travel do missionaries use today?
- What difficulties do these create for present-day missionaries?

Tell students that we can learn how to become good missionaries through Paul’s example. Divide your class into two groups. Assign one group to study Acts 13 and the other Acts 14, looking for answers to the following questions:

- How was missionary work in Paul’s day similar to missionary work in our day?
- What can we learn from Paul’s example to help us be better missionaries?

Discuss each group's findings and list key points on the board. Encourage students to prepare to serve the Lord by following Paul's example.

Acts 13:6–12, 49–14:7, 19–27. Opposition always accompanies the growth of the Church. (20–25 minutes)

Write the following statement on the board:

"Every time you kick 'Mormonism' you kick it upstairs; you never kick it downstairs. The Lord Almighty so orders it" (Brigham Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young*, 351).

Ask:

- What do you think this statement means?
- Why do you think there always seems to be opposition to the growth of the Church?

Divide your class into three groups. Assign each group one of the following scripture blocks: Acts 13:6–12; 13:49–14:7; 14:19–27. Have them look for answers to these questions:

- What is the source of the opposition mentioned in these verses?
- How does the Lord support those who preach His gospel?
- Why does the Lord support them?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 35:13–14 with your class and look for the promises the Lord gives those who faithfully declare His gospel. Ask: How do these promises apply to missionaries? Point out that missionaries do not always overcome opposition but sometimes have to walk away from it (see Acts 13:49–52). Invite students to share examples of how a missionary they know overcame or endured opposition with the help of the Lord.

Acts 13:6–8, 43–50; 14:4, 19–20. Some people embrace the word of God when they hear it, while others reject and fight against it. (15–20 minutes)

Ask students: As people are taught the gospel, why do you think some accept the message while others don't?

Tell students that Paul and his companions taught the gospel to many people. Some accepted it as true, while others rejected it. Have students read Acts 13:6–8, 43, 45, 48, 50; 14:4, 19–20 looking for key words or phrases that reveal people's acceptance or rejection of the gospel. Have the students share their findings.

Divide the class in two. Have one group read John 7:17; 14:15; Hebrews 11:24–26; and Doctrine and Covenants 93:36–39 looking for why some accept the gospel. Have the other

group read Mark 7:9 and 1 Nephi 2:11–12; 16:2–3 looking for why some reject the gospel. Discuss what they find.

Read Mosiah 3:19 and ask: According to this verse, what are some characteristics of people who understand and obey truth? Encourage students to seek these traits.

Acts 15

Introduction

Acts 15 gives an account of an important Church council held in Jerusalem about A.D. 50, just before Paul's second missionary journey. Church leaders attending the conference included Peter, James, Paul, Barnabas, and Titus. Many Gentiles had been baptized after hearing Paul and Barnabas preach. Some Jewish members of the Church in Jerusalem became concerned because the new male converts had not been circumcised. Church leaders convened the council at Jerusalem to consider whether or not gentile converts to the Church should be required to obey the law of Moses. As you study Acts, notice how cultural and emotional factors often influence the behavior of people, sometimes running contrary to the teachings of Church leaders.

Prayerfully study Acts 15 and consider the following principle before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The Lord guides His Church by revealing His will to His prophets (see Acts 15:6–29; see also Amos 3:7; D&C 21:4–5).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 264–65.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Acts 15.



Acts 15. The Lord guides His Church by revealing His will to His prophets. (20–25 minutes)

Ask a student to read or recite the ninth article of faith. Explain that when Heavenly Father reveals something for the entire Church, He reveals it through the prophet. Ask: Can you think of any recent revelations the Lord has given to the Church through the prophet? (Answers might include

Official Declaration 2 [1978], “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” [1995], and the decision to build small temples [1997].)

Have students turn to Acts 15. Explain that this chapter illustrates how in the ancient Church, just as in the modern Church, the Lord revealed His will to Church leaders. These leaders in turn taught the people and helped them understand and obey.

Read Acts 15:1–6 with your class and ask:

- What issue did this Church council deal with? (Whether circumcision was necessary for salvation. If desired, refer to the commentary for Acts 15:1 in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, p. 264.)
- Why was it difficult for Jewish Christians to give up certain requirements of the law of Moses?
- What difficulties might old traditions present to members of the Church today?

Have students read Acts 15:7–21 looking for the roles played in the council by Peter, Barnabas, Paul, and James. Ask:

- What is significant about Peter’s testimony in the council?
- Whose will was it that the gospel be preached to the Gentiles?
- What evidence did Peter give that the Gentiles were accepted by God through faith without circumcision?

Read Acts 15:22–35 with the class and consider asking questions like the following:

- Why was circumcision such a critical issue in the Church at this time?
- How did the leaders tell the members that circumcision was no longer required?
- How do modern Church leaders communicate decisions and counsel to members of the Church?
- What is our obligation regarding the counsel and direction of Church leaders?
- What can we do if we don’t understand something our leaders ask us to do?
- What should we do if we don’t agree with something our Church leaders ask us to do? (For additional help with this answer, see *The Teachings of the Living Prophets* [religion 333 student manual, 1982], chapters 8–11; and Dallin H. Oaks, “Criticism,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1987, pp. 68–73.)

Conclude by assuring students that the Lord’s prophet will never lead us astray (see “Excerpts from Three Addresses by President Wilford Woodruff Regarding the Manifesto,” following Official Declaration 1 in the Doctrine and

Covenants). Tell students that we should always prayerfully follow the counsel of the living prophet and sustain him in every way.

Acts 16–18

Introduction

Once the decision was made not to require gentile converts to keep the law of Moses, Paul set out on a second missionary journey to the gentile nations (see Bible map 13). This time Silas was his companion. Acts 16–18 focuses primarily on the people, places, and events that Paul encountered. This mission ends in Acts 18:22, and the account of Paul’s third missionary journey begins in verse 23. Notice the teaching methods that made Paul a successful missionary.

Prayerfully study Acts 16–18 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Missionaries should be considerate of the culture of the people they teach (see Acts 16:1–3; see also Acts 21:16–26; Articles of Faith 1:11).
- Opportunities to teach the gospel often come at unexpected times (see Acts 16:9–33).
- We should teach the gospel from the scriptures by the power of the Spirit (see Acts 17:2, 22–31; 18:4, 19; see also Acts 19:8; D&C 42:12–14).
- We are all children of our Heavenly Father, and He decides when and where we are born on earth (see Acts 17:24–28).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 229, 265–71, 280–81.
- “The Missions of the Apostle Paul,” 296 in this manual.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Acts 16–18.

Acts 16:1–18:22. During Paul’s second missionary journey, he revisited old branches of the Church and founded new ones. (5 minutes)

Have students turn to Bible map 13 and trace the course of the Apostle Paul’s second missionary journey. Ask:

- According to the map, approximately how far did Paul travel?
- How does that compare to his first missionary journey? (It is nearly twice as far.)

Tell students that this journey gave Paul an opportunity to revisit branches of the Church he had founded during his first missionary journey and also to establish several new branches in areas not yet touched by the gospel message.

Acts 16:1–3. Missionaries should be considerate of the culture of the people they teach. (10–15 minutes)

Ask students: What are some examples of customs or manners in other cultures that are different from ours? (Answers might include table manners, dating customs, laws.) Explain that to keep from offending people, missionaries need to be sensitive to differences between their own culture and the cultures of the places they are called to teach the gospel. Have students read Acts 16:1–3, and ask:

- Who is the missionary described in verse 1 as “he”? (Paul; see Acts 15:40.)
- Who did Paul choose to serve as his companion? (Timothy.)
- What Jewish rite had not been performed in Timothy’s case? (He had not been circumcised, perhaps because his father was Greek.)
- What did Paul do in this case? Why? (He circumcised Timothy to make him more acceptable to the Jews they would be teaching.)
- How do we know Paul did this for cultural, not religious, reasons? (see Acts 15:1–11).

Go around the room asking students to name places where a brother, sister, or friend is currently serving as a missionary. Invite them to study the culture of this place. Tell them that in a few days you would like them to tell the class about aspects of the culture in that place that they think would be important for a missionary to understand.

Acts 16:9–33. Opportunities to teach the gospel often come at unexpected times. We should be prepared at all times to share the gospel. (15–20 minutes)

Tell an experience (or have a student tell one) where you unexpectedly had an opportunity to share the gospel. Discuss what might have happened if you had not been prepared. Ask: Who can be witnesses of the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Explain to students that we should be “witnesses of God at all times and in all things” (Mosiah 18:9).

Have students read Acts 16:9–15 looking for the circumstances that allowed Paul to preach the gospel and to baptize, and ask:

- What made these circumstances unexpected?
- What evidence can you give that Paul was prepared?

Have students silently read verses 16–33 looking for answers to the same questions. Then ask:

- What can we learn from Paul’s experiences?
- What can you do now to prepare yourselves to share the gospel, whether as a full-time missionary or a member?

Have a student read the following quotation from Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“I often greet young priesthood bearers of the Church as we meet them throughout the world with the question, ‘Future missionary?’ Their faces usually brighten with a positive reply. Then I encourage them to start today preparing for that great experience.

“What preparation is necessary for this exciting service? First and most important is that the Lord expects it of us. He expects us to be involved in building His kingdom. Our prophets have continually reminded us that every able, worthy young man is expected to serve a full-time mission.

“Your preparation must have you ready to sit in front of your bishop and certify to him of your personal worthiness to be a full-time missionary. You will be much more comfortable with the interview with your bishop if he is already your friend” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1991, 52; or *Ensign*, May 1991, 39).

Acts 17:1–18:8. We should teach the principles of the gospel from the scriptures by the power of the Spirit. (20–25 minutes)

Write on the board: *The Prophet Joseph Smith said, “No man can preach the Gospel without ____ ____ ____.”* Invite students to fill in the missing words. Explain that several answers could make the statement true but that you are looking for one in particular. Write their suggestions on the board beneath the sentence and ask why each makes the sentence true. When they give the correct words, write them in the blanks, and have a student read the entire quote as follows:

“All are to preach the Gospel, by the power and influence of the Holy Ghost; and no man can preach the Gospel without the Holy Ghost” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 112).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 42:6–7, 12–13 and ask:

- According to these verses, what should missionaries teach?
- According to verses 13–14, how should gospel principles from the scriptures be taught?

Explain that Paul is a good example of following this divine pattern for teaching the gospel. Have students read what happened in Thessalonica (see Acts 17:1–4), Berea (see Acts 17:10–12), Athens (see Acts 17:16–18, 32–34), and Corinth (see Acts 18:1–8). (It might be helpful to quickly locate the cities on Bible map 13.) As the students read, have them look for the answers to these questions:

- In what settings did Paul teach the gospel?
- How did Paul teach? (He taught from the scriptures.)
- What evidence is there that he taught by the power of the Holy Ghost?
- What are the results of teaching the gospel by the power of the Spirit?
- What can we learn from Paul’s example?

Consider inviting a returned missionary to class to share how applying this principle helped bring converts into the Church.

Acts 17:22–28. We are all children of our Heavenly Father, and He decides when and where we are born on earth. (15–20 minutes)

During his second missionary journey, Paul taught the intellectuals at Athens a most important doctrine. Draw on the board a representation of an altar with the words “To the Unknown God.” Ask:

- What difficulties might we experience trying to worship an unknown god?
- How would worshipping an unknown god affect our understanding of the gospel?
- How would worshipping an unknown god affect our faith?

Invite students to read Acts 17:22–23, and ask:

- Why would Paul say they “ignorantly” worshiped this unknown god?
- If God were unknown, how would we know how to worship Him?
- What did Paul say he would do for them?

Give the following questions to students as a handout or write them on the board. Have them study Acts 17:24–29 and answer the questions.

1. Who made the earth and “all things therein”? (see v. 24).
2. What did Paul declare about God’s need for worship? (see vv. 24–25).
3. What does the true God give each of us? (see v. 25).
4. How are all the nations of the earth “one blood”? (see v. 26; see also 2 Nephi 2:19–20).
5. What two things did God determine before we were born? (see v. 26).
6. If we were to seek God, why would we be able to find Him? (see v. 27).
7. What is our relationship with God? (see vv. 28–29).
8. How does knowing these principles help us worship God more appropriately?

Have a student read the commentary for Acts 17:26 in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles* (p. 266). Discuss the blessings that come into our lives as a result of being children of our Father in Heaven. Ask: What responsibilities do we have as we come to know who we are?

Acts 18:23–28. Paul spent more time and covered more miles on his third missionary journey than on either of his previous missionary journeys. (5 minutes)

Have students turn to Bible map 13 and trace the course of the Apostle Paul’s third missionary journey. Ask:

- According to the map, approximately how far did Paul travel?
- How does this compare with his other missionary journeys?

Point out to students that not only did he travel farther but he also spent more time (about four years) than on any of his previous missionary journeys.

Acts 19–20

Introduction

Paul’s third missionary journey is a testimony to his character and his dedication to the cause of Christ. Acts chapter 19 contains several accounts of Paul in Ephesus. While there he taught and baptized, healed the sick, dealt with Jewish exorcists, and narrowly escaped mob violence at the hands of worshippers of Diana. All of these experiences bear witness to

the power of the Holy Ghost as it worked through Paul. Chapter 20 shows him raising a young man from the dead in Troas and counseling Church elders in Miletus. To these leaders of the branch in Ephesus he cited a teaching of Jesus not found in any other passage of scripture: “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

Prayerfully study Acts 19–20 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Healings occur through priesthood authority and the power of faith (see Acts 19:11–20; 20:7–12).
- Paul foresaw the apostasy of the Church Jesus established (see Acts 20:28–32).
- Jesus taught that it is more blessed to give than to receive (see Acts 20:33–35).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 280–81.
- “The Missions of the Apostle Paul,” 296 in this manual.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas or use some of your own as you prepare lessons for Acts 19–20.

Acts 19:11–16; 20:7–12. Healings occur through priesthood authority and the power of faith. (20–25 minutes)

Ask your students:

- What evidence can you give that miracles really happen?
- What do you think brings miracles about?

Recount the following story from the history of the modern Church. When the Saints were driven from Missouri, they camped along the banks of the Mississippi River, where they were stricken with severe illnesses. One day the Prophet Joseph Smith rose from his own sickbed, assembled several of the brethren, and proceeded to heal as many people as he could lay his hands on. Have a student read the following, written by President Joseph Fielding Smith:

“In this manner the Prophet and the brethren passed from house to house, healing the sick and recalling them from the mouth of the tomb. It was on this occasion that a man, not a member of the Church, seeing the mighty miracles which were performed, begged the Prophet to go with him and heal two of his

children who were very sick. The Prophet could not go, but said he would send some one to heal them. Taking from his pocket a silk handkerchief he handed it to Elder Wilford Woodruff and requested him to go and heal the children. He told Elder Woodruff to wipe the faces of the children with the handkerchief, and they should be healed. This he did and they were healed” (*Essentials in Church History*, 27th ed. [1974], 224).

Consider discussing the following questions:

- By what power did Joseph Smith heal?
- How would you react if you were asked to do the same thing as Wilford Woodruff?
- Do objects or articles of clothing have miraculous power?
- What part did the handkerchief play in bringing about this miracle?

Ask students to read Acts 19:11–12 looking for similarities to what happened in the Prophet Joseph Smith’s day. Read the following explanation by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“Healings come by the power of faith; there is no healing virtue or power in any item of clothing or other object, whether owned by Paul or Jesus or anyone. But rites and objects may be used to help increase faith” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 2:169).

If desired, point out other objects that have been used in this way in the scriptures: spittle and clay (see John 9:6–7), Jesus’ clothing (see Matthew 9:20–22), and the shadow of Peter (see Acts 5:15–16).

Explain that faith in the Lord is essential for healing to occur. Have students read Acts 19:13–16 looking for another important element. Ask:

- What did the sons of Sceva think one had to do to cast out evil spirits?
- Why did just using the name of Jesus fail?
- Why did the evil spirit recognize Jesus and Paul but not these men?
- Why is it vital to have priesthood authority to heal in Jesus’ name? (see D&C 63:60–62).

Read with students Acts 20:7–12. Testify that healings occur through priesthood authority and the power of faith.



Acts 20:29–30. Paul foresaw the apostasy of the Church Jesus Christ established. (30–35 minutes)

Turn off the lights in your classroom. Hold up an object that is dark blue and an object that is black. Ask students if they can tell what color the objects are. Explain that just as it is difficult to distinguish colors in the dark, it is also difficult to discern spiritual truth when the light of revelation goes out. Paul and other early Apostles predicted such a spiritual darkness.

Have a student read Acts 20:28–30, and ask:

- What did Paul say would happen to the Church after he was gone?
- Who are the “grievous wolves” and the men “speaking perverse things”?
- How are people who teach false doctrine like wolves?
- How can false doctrines destroy the Savior’s flock (the Church)?

Write the word *Apostasy* on the board. Tell students that “apostasy” means abandoning one’s religious beliefs or departing from the truth. This is the word we use today to describe what happened in the early Church. Paul spoke about the Apostasy many times in his writings.

Have students mark Acts 20:28–30 and write the following cross-references next to those verses:

1 Corinthians 11:18; Galatians 1:6–8; 2 Thessalonians 2:1–3; 1 Timothy 1:5–7; 4:1–3; 2 Timothy 3:1–7; Titus 1:10–16.

Read each of these references with your students and have them look for the causes and characteristics of the Apostasy or “falling away.”

Explain that with the death of the Apostles and the acceptance of false doctrines, the ancient Church departed from the truth. This was not just an apostasy of members *from* the Church but an apostasy *of* the Church. Because of this apostasy, within a relatively short time of its establishment by Christ, the true Church was withdrawn and could no longer be found on the earth. In the sixteenth century religious reformers in Europe tried to correct the damage done by the Apostasy. This movement was known as the Reformation. But only a Restoration could bring back the truths and authority that had been lost. Joseph Smith was the prophet through whom Heavenly Father began this Restoration.

Explain that some of the same influences that led to the apostasy *of* the ancient Church cause some people to apostatize *from* the Church today. Have students read the following statements by President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“As surely as this is the work of the Lord, there will be opposition. There will be those, perhaps not a few, who with the sophistry of beguiling words and clever design will spread doubt and seek to undermine the foundation on which this cause is established. They will have their brief day in the sun. They may have for a brief season the plaudits of the doubters and the skeptics and the critics. But they will fade and be forgotten as have their kind in the past” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1994, 76; or *Ensign*, May 1994, 60).

“There is a tendency on the part of some to become indifferent. There are those who drift off, seeking the enticements of the world, forsaking the cause of the Lord. I see others who think it is all right to lower their standards, perhaps in small ways. In this very process they lose the cutting edge of enthusiasm for this work. For instance, they think the violation of the Sabbath is a thing of unimportance. They neglect their meetings. They become critical. They engage in backbiting. Before long they have drifted from the Church.

“The Prophet Joseph once declared, ‘Where doubt is, there faith has no power’ (*Lectures on Faith* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985], p. 46).

“I invite any who may have so drifted to come back to the strong and solid moorings of the Church. This is the work of the Almighty. Whether we as individuals go forward will depend on us. But the Church will never fail to move forward” (in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1995, 95; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 72).

Discuss with students some of the causes of individual apostasy. Ask: What can we do to avoid and prevent it?

Acts 21–23

Introduction

The account of Paul’s third missionary journey to the Gentiles ends with Acts 21:16. During the roughly ten years of his three journeys Paul traveled many thousands of miles and boldly testified of Jesus “before the Gentiles . . . and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15). Acts 21:17–23:35 records events that transpired between the end of these missions and his appearance before Felix, the Roman governor at Caesarea. They include Paul’s telling of his conversion and of other occasions when the Lord spoke to him. They end with Paul under arrest in Herod’s judgment hall in

Caesarea awaiting a hearing before Felix. Notice Paul's boldness as a missionary and his ability to seize every opportunity to teach the gospel, no matter how difficult the circumstances.

Prayerfully study Acts 21–23 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Missionaries can proclaim the gospel more effectively when they are well prepared (see Acts 21–28; see also D&C 4; 11:21–22).
- Following the promptings of the Holy Ghost, even when facing the opposition of the world, results in guidance, protection, and comfort (see Acts 21:4–15; 31–40; 22:1–23; 23:11, 16–22).
- Coming unto Christ requires a complete and steadfast commitment to Him and His gospel (see Acts 21:10–14; see also Omni 1:26).
- We need to be patient and understanding with new converts as they learn the gospel (see Acts 21:20–25; see also Acts 15:6–35).
- Sometimes the Lord helps us through the actions of other people (see Acts 23:11–31).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 280–82, 339–41.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Acts 21–23.



New Testament Video presentation 12, “Paul—A Chosen Vessel” (11:34), can be used in teaching Acts 21–28 (see *New Testament Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).



Acts 21–28. The Lord prepared Paul to bear witness of Him throughout the world. (20–30 minutes)

Ask students to consider the training athletes undergo to become competitive at a world-class level. Discuss their step-by-step preparation, from learning the basics of their sport through the years of practice, coaching, relearning, strength training, competing, and improving until they become the best they can be at their sport.

- How is a missionary like a finely tuned athlete?
- What step-by-step preparations are necessary for missionary training?

Explain that Paul did not become the Lord's Apostle and missionary to the Gentiles all at once. The Lord prepared him from the time he was a child.

- Read Acts 9:6. What did the Lord tell Saul to do?
- Read Acts 9:15–16. What did the Lord tell Ananias about His purpose in calling Saul to the ministry?

Write the following questions on the board:

1. What was Paul's occupation? (see Acts 18:3).
2. What languages could Paul speak? (see Acts 21:37–40).
3. Where was Paul born? (see Acts 21:39).
4. Who was Paul's teacher? (see Acts 22:3).
5. What was Paul's citizenship? (see Acts 22:25–29).
6. What was Paul's religious training? (see Acts 26:4–5).

Have the students find the answers, and write them on the board. Then discuss how each of these things helped prepare Paul to be an Apostle and missionary. Explain that we too must prepare for our callings in the Church. Discuss the following questions:

- How might we discover what the Lord would have us do?
- Who can help us prepare to fulfill our responsibilities?
- What kinds of preparation are the same for many of us?
- What kinds of preparation might be different for each of us?
- How might formal education help in our preparations?
- Are we ever fully prepared for Church callings? Why or why not?
- How can we help others discover and prepare for their future in the Church?

Read and discuss the following statement by Elder Neal A. Maxwell:

“God does not begin by asking us about our ability, but only about our availability, and if we then prove our dependability, he will increase our capability!” (“It's Service, Not Status, That Counts,” *Ensign*, July 1975, 7).

Acts 21:1–17. If we follow the promptings of the Holy Ghost, we will be guided, protected, and comforted. (25–30 minutes)

Share an experience in which you received guidance from the Holy Ghost. Invite students to share similar experiences they may have had. (Caution them not to share anything too sacred or personal.) Ask: Why is it sometimes difficult to follow the promptings of the Spirit?

Have students read Acts 20:22–25, and ask: What consequences did Paul know would come if he followed the Spirit’s direction to go to Jerusalem?

Ask students to imagine receiving a mission call knowing that if they went they would never be able to return to their family or friends. Ask:

- Why would it be difficult to accept such a call?
- In what ways would your faith be tested?
- How is that similar to what Paul faced?
- Read Acts 20:36–38. How did Paul react to his call?

Invite students to read Acts 21:1–17. Discuss some or all of the following questions:

- How did Paul’s friends react to his decision to go to Jerusalem? (see vv. 4, 10–12).
- Why do friends sometimes try to keep you from doing something you feel you should do?
- When this happens, how do you react?
- How did Paul respond to his friends? (see v. 13).
- What does that show about Paul’s testimony?
- In what ways could we follow his example?
- How did Paul’s friends react to his commitment? (see v. 14).
- Have you ever had an experience in which a friend’s standing up for truth helped you follow the Lord? (Invite any who wish to share such experiences to do so.)

Read to students the following statement by William Law, an eighteenth century English clergyman:

“If you have not chosen the Kingdom of God, it will make in the end no difference what you have chosen instead” (in Neal A. Maxwell, *The Smallest Part* [1973], 1).

Testify of the importance of following the Lord in spite of any opposition we receive from other people.

Acts 21:16–26. We need to be patient and understanding with new converts as they learn the gospel.

(20–25 minutes)

Show students a map of the world and discuss questions like the following:

- How does the culture differ in other parts of the world? (Indicate one or two specific countries.)
- About how many people join the Church each year? (see the annual statistical report from the most recent May *Ensign*).
- What are the religious backgrounds of some of these new converts?

Ask students:

- What challenges might a person from another religion face when joining the Church? (Point out that there are many concepts, doctrines, beliefs, and practices that new converts need to abandon in order to fully embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ.)
- What teachings or practices of the Church do you think new converts might have the hardest time adjusting to? Why?

Have students read Acts 21:16–20, and ask:

- Where did Paul’s missionary journey lead him?
- How did the Jewish members of the Church in Jerusalem feel about the law of Moses?

Read verses 21–26 and ask:

- What did Paul do out of respect for the feelings of Jewish converts in his day?
- How might their feelings be similar to the feelings of new members of the Church today?
- What can we learn from Paul’s example?

Ask a student to read the following quotation from President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“Unfortunately, people can’t seem to be tolerant and respectful of the views of others in so many cases. We must cultivate . . . an attitude of tolerance and respect for the beliefs and rights of others. We must cultivate an increased spirit of civility among people in their expressions one to another, and toward the beliefs and practices of others. We can disagree with people without being disagreeable. We can disagree without raising our voices and becoming angry and vindictive in our ways. We must learn to do so. We . . . must practice a greater spirit of Christ in our lives, of love one for another, and extend that to all people regardless of whom they worship or how they worship, so long as they do not infringe upon the rights of others” (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, 666–67).

Ask: How do you feel about this statement? Invite students to think of an individual in their ward, stake, or school who recently joined the Church or is just becoming active. Ask: What could you do to show tolerance and charity toward this individual? List answers on the board, and encourage students to follow Paul’s example of respecting the feelings of new converts.

Acts 23:11–31. Sometimes the Lord accomplishes His will for us through the actions of other people. (20–25 minutes)

Invite the class to pretend that you are a student who wants to get better grades in school. Ask: Who can help me get

better grades? (Answers might include parents, teachers, tutors, friends.)

Tell students that certain people helped Paul accomplish something that Heavenly Father had in mind for him. Have students take turns reading verses from Acts 23:11–31. As they read, pause to discuss questions like the following:

- What did the Lord desire Paul to do? (see v. 11).
- What plans were made to prevent Paul from doing the Lord’s will? (see vv. 12–15).
- Who helped make it possible for Paul to accomplish the Lord’s will? (see vv. 16–18, 23).

Help the students understand that other people sometimes help us accomplish what the Lord wants us to do. You might use questions such as these:

- How do other people help us prepare for missions?
- How do other people help us enjoy the scriptures?
- How do other people help us give service?

Point out that sometimes the Lord even enlists other people to help Him answer our prayers. For example, when we pray for help in understanding a gospel principle, He might prompt a teacher to discuss that principle in a lesson. Invite students to share examples from their own lives where this has happened to them.

Remind students that the Lord may also use them to help other people accomplish what the Lord wants them to do. Encourage students to be prepared to help whenever the Lord calls.

Acts 24–26

Introduction

Paul was imprisoned in Caesarea. While there he made a brave and straightforward defense before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, which eventually led him to a trial before Caesar in Rome. There he would have the opportunity to complete the mission the Lord gave him to bear testimony of Jesus “before the Gentiles, and kings” (Acts 9:15). Look for what Paul’s conduct teaches us about respecting the law of the land.

Prayerfully study Acts 24–26 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, and other secular leaders and in obeying the law (see Acts 24–26; see also Articles of Faith 1:12).

- Those with testimonies of the truth should always be willing to testify of Jesus Christ, the scriptures, and the words of the living prophets (see Acts 24:10–21; 25:8–11; 26:2–29).
- All mortals will be resurrected (see Acts 24:15; see also Alma 11:43–44).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 341–42.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Acts 24–26.

Acts 24–26. Who’s who? (15–20 minutes)

The following memory game will help students become familiar with the key figures in Acts 24–26. Draw the accompanying chart on the board or on an overhead transparency. Cover each square with a blank piece of paper. The object is to match the names to descriptions of those people or to what they did or said. Invite a student to select two squares (for example 1-B and 3-D). Uncover them, and allow students time to thumb through Acts 24–26 looking for references to the individuals. If the squares match, leave them uncovered. Otherwise cover them up again and have the next student pick two more squares. Continue until all the squares are uncovered.

	A	B	C	D
1	Tertullus	sister of Agrippa	Festus	Tertullus presented Paul to _____.
2	Roman emperor	Paul	accused Paul of being “a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes”	“Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.”
3	Agrippa	Felix	Lysias	chief captain
4	“This thing was not done in a corner.”	Bernice	took Felix’s place as governor	Caesar

Answers

Tertullus = accused Paul of being “a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes” (see Acts 24:1–5)

sister of Agrippa = Bernice (see Acts 25:13; Bible Dictionary, “Herod,” pp. 700–701)

Festus = took Felix’s place as governor (see Acts 24:27; Bible Dictionary, “Festus,” p. 674)

Tertullus presented Paul to _____ = Felix (see Acts 24:1–3)

Roman emperor = Caesar (see Acts 25:10–12; 26:32)

Paul = “This thing was not done in a corner” (see Acts 26:26)

“Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian” = Agrippa (see Acts 26:28)

Lysias = chief captain (see Acts 24:7)



Acts 24:10–21; 25:8–11; 26:2–29. Those with testimonies of the truth should always be willing to testify of Jesus Christ, the scriptures, and the words of the living prophets. (30–35 minutes)

Have students imagine going with a nonmember friend to another state or country. The newspapers there have printed some untruths about the Church, and your friend asks you for an explanation. Discuss with students questions such as:

- What would be the most difficult part of this experience? Why?
- Why do you think some members might find it hard to defend the Church in a situation like that?
- If you could talk with the leader of that country for twenty minutes, what would you say about the Church?

Read with students Paul’s “mission call” in Acts 26:12–18. Ask:

- To whom was Paul sent to preach the gospel?
- What message was Paul to deliver?
- How was Paul’s message like the one we bear today?

With the class read Acts 24:10–21; 25:8–11; 26:2–29 and answer the following questions:

- What did Paul teach?
- How did he teach?
- Who did he teach?
- When did he teach?
- What was his attitude toward teaching the gospel?

Ask students: What can we learn from Paul about being valiant in our testimonies of Jesus Christ? Discuss their answers. Have a student read the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks:

“What does it mean to be ‘valiant in the testimony of Jesus’? Surely this includes keeping his commandments and serving him. But wouldn’t it also include bearing witness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Redeemer, to believers and nonbelievers

alike? As the Apostle Peter taught the Saints of his day, we should ‘sanctify the Lord God in [our] hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh [us] a reason of the hope that is in [us]’ (1 Peter 3:15)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1990, 38; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 31).

Encourage students to prepare to teach the gospel to others.

Acts 27–28

Introduction

After two years of imprisonment in Caesarea, Paul set sail for Rome to be tried by Caesar. He traveled in the company of 276 prisoners and sailors. Paul foresaw that the voyage would be troubled and advised the sailors to wait out the winter near Lasea. The centurion refused to follow his advice, and the ship was wrecked off the island of Melita. Paul was inspired to reassure the passengers that all would be saved (see Acts 27:21–26). While stranded on the island, Paul healed the sick and was himself bitten by a poisonous snake but suffered no harm. Finally arriving in Rome, Paul lived as a private citizen, though guarded by a soldier. He spent the next two years preaching the gospel, thus fulfilling the Lord’s promise (see Acts 23:11). This is where the book of Acts ends.



Prayerfully study Acts 27–28 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Heeding the prophets' warnings will give us protection and safety (see Acts 27).
- Facing difficulties with courage can strengthen our character. Having faith in God gives us courage (see Acts 27:13–28:10).
- Paul preached first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles (see Acts 28:23–28).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 342–43.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Acts 27–28.

Acts 27. Heeding the prophets' warnings will give us protection and safety. (20–25 minutes)

Begin class by reading the following story:

"In January of 1975, on a dark, rainy night in Tasmania, a 7,300-ton barge smashed into two piers of the Tasman Bridge, which connects Hobart, Tasmania, with its eastern suburbs across the bay. Three spans of the bridge collapsed. An Australian family by the name of Ling were driving across the bridge when suddenly the bridge lights went out. Just then a speeding car passed them and disappeared before their very eyes. Murray Ling 'slammed on his brakes and skidded to a stop, one yard from the edge of a black void' (Stephen Johnson, "Over the Edge!" *Reader's Digest*, Nov. 1977, 128).

"Murray got his family out of the car and then began warning oncoming traffic of the disaster ahead. As he frantically waved his arms, to his horror, a car 'swerved around him and plummeted into the abyss' (p. 128). A second car barely stopped in time, but a third car showed no sign of slowing down and crashed into the Lings' car at the edge of the bridge.

"Suddenly a loaded bus headed toward Murray, ignoring his waving arms. In desperation, risking his very life, he 'ran alongside the driver's window. "There's a span missing," he yelled' (p. 129). The bus swerved just in time and came to a halt against the railing. Dozens of lives had been saved" (Spencer J. Condie, in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 21; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 17).

Tell the students that Paul was in a similar position to the man on the bridge. Have them read Acts 27:9–26, and ask:

- What difficulties did the ship's passengers face when the centurion chose not to listen to Paul?
- What can we learn from this experience?

Invite students to finish the story by reading verses 27–44. Ask:

- How was Paul vindicated as a prophet?
- What does this teach us about the confidence we can have in what a prophet says?

Discuss with students the "downed bridges," or dangers, we face in life. Ask:

- Who has the Lord given us to warn about the dangers ahead?
- What have the prophets warned us about recently?
- What could happen if we choose not to listen to the prophets?
- What happens when we do listen and heed?

Read the following statement by Elder Spencer J. Condie, a member of the Seventy:

"I am grateful for these Brethren whom we sustain as prophets, seers, and revelators who forewarn us of bridges not to be crossed" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 21; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 17).

Encourage students to develop this same appreciation for the living prophets and to carefully heed their counsel.

Acts 27:13–28:10. Facing difficulties with courage can strengthen our character. Having faith in God gives us courage. (25–30 minutes)

Ask: What are some difficulties people face in their lives? (Answers might include illness, loss of loved ones, work-related stress.) Read with students Acts 27:13–15 and look for the difficulty encountered by Paul on his way to Rome. Ask: How can this be compared to the difficulties or "storms" of life?

Read with students Acts 27:16–44 looking for Paul's characteristics that allowed him to survive this crisis, and list them on the board. These might include courage (see vv. 21–24), hope (see vv. 22, 25), faith in God (see vv. 30–31), common sense and the ability to calm others (see vv. 33–36). Discuss how these traits can help us weather our own "storms."

Bring a dumbbell to class and ask a student to curl the weight (lift it from the waist upwards to the shoulders), or invite a student to do some push-ups. Explain that muscles grow and become strong as they overcome resistance. Ask:

- How do character and spiritual growth compare to muscle growth?
- What happens to us as we overcome the obstacles in our life?

Write on the board *2 Corinthians 1:3–4; 4:8–9, 17; Philippians 3:8; 4:13*. Invite students to read the scriptures and answer the following questions:

- What was Paul’s attitude toward the challenges of his life?
- What can we learn from Paul in facing our own challenges?
- How would having the wrong attitude toward life’s challenges affect our strength of character?
- How can we develop an appropriate attitude toward dealing with the trials of life?

Have a student read the following testimony from Elder Richard G. Scott, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“The Lord is intent on your personal growth and development. That progress is accelerated when you willingly allow Him to lead you through every growth experience you encounter, whether initially it be to your individual liking or not. When you trust in the Lord, when you are willing to let your heart and your mind be centered in His will, when you ask to be led by the Spirit to do His will, you are assured of the greatest happiness along the way and the most fulfilling attainment from this mortal experience. If you question everything you are asked to do, or dig in your heels at every unpleasant challenge, you make it harder for the Lord to bless you” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 33; or *Ensign*, May 1996, 25).

Have students read Acts 28:1–10, and ask:

- How did the spiritual strength and character Paul showed in these verses allow him to bless others?
- What are some ways we can allow the Lord to help us become a blessing to others also?

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE ROMANS

This Epistle written during this time

First missionary journey (Acts 13–14)	Second missionary journey (Acts 15:36–18:22)	Third missionary journey (Acts 18:23–21:15)	Imprisonment in Caesarea and Rome (Acts 21:16–28:31)	Through second Roman imprisonment
About A.D. 47–50	50–53	53–57	57–62	62–65

Author: The Apostle Paul introduces himself as the writer in the first line of the Epistle to the Romans.

Audience: This letter was written to the gentile and Jewish Saints in Rome.

Historical Background: Paul wrote this letter about A.D. 57 while he was in Corinth, just before his last journey to Jerusalem. He sent it to prepare the Saints for his upcoming visit to Rome. (For more background information, see the commentaries for Romans in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, pp. 315–16.)

Unique Features: Romans is the most systematically written of Paul’s Epistles and perhaps the most doctrinal book in the New Testament. It points to Jesus Christ as the source of salvation by teaching how we can put off sins and replace them with a newness of life. Romans also emphasizes the importance of walking after the Spirit over legal formalism. (See the commentaries for Romans in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, p. 316.)

Theme: Paul wrote to the Saints in Rome to prepare them for his visit, but more importantly to present his apostolic explanation of God’s universal plan of salvation. We all sin, Paul taught. But through faith in and obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ, we can all be saved through His power and grace. In developing this theme Paul addressed doctrines such as sin and righteousness, faith in Christ and works of righteousness, justification, and election. Paul summarized the theme of this letter when he wrote:

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

“For therein is the righteousness of God revealed through faith on his name; as it is written, The just shall live by faith” (JST, Romans 1:16–17).

Romans 1–3

Introduction

Romans 1–3 emphasizes that Jesus Christ, not the law of Moses, is the source of righteousness, and that all people may become righteous through faith in Him.

Prayerfully study Romans 1–3 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The gospel of Jesus Christ makes salvation available to all people (see Romans 1:16; see also 2 Nephi 26:27–28, 33).
- When people rebel and reject God, they separate themselves from the Holy Ghost, and God allows them to suffer the full effects of their sins (see Romans 1:21–32; see also Mosiah 2:36–37; D&C 1:33).
- God’s judgment is righteous, rewarding each person according to his deeds and his obedience to gospel laws (see Romans 2:1–16; see also Luke 12:47–48; D&C 82:3).
- Righteousness requires righteous acts, not just professions of righteousness (see Romans 2:21–29; see also Romans 10:1–4; 2 Nephi 31:5).
- No one lives the law perfectly. We can only become righteous through faith in Jesus Christ, which will move us to keep His commandments (see Romans 3:9–26; see also Alma 22:14; Moroni 6:4).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 269–71, 314–18.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Romans 1–3.

 *New Testament Video* presentation 13, “The Doctrine of Grace” (14:04), can be used in teaching Romans 2–5. Presentation 14, “Faith and Works” (8:32), can also be used in teaching Romans 2–5; however, you might choose to use this video to teach James 2. (See *New Testament Video Guide* for teaching suggestions.)

Romans 1:1. Romans is the first book in the section of the New Testament called “the Epistles,” which is made up of letters written by the ancient Apostles. (15–20 minutes)

Ask students to name a mission to which one of their family members or friends has been called. Ask: What is the name of the mission that our city, ward, or branch is part of? Tell students that each mission includes many different locations and that missionaries might serve in several different wards, branches, towns, cities, or even countries during their missions. Ask students to look at Bible map 13, and discuss some of the following questions:

- If Paul were called today and labored in these places, what “mission” name do you think would appear on his mission call?

- What locations was he “transferred” to?
- Why do you think it would have been challenging for him?
- Can you see a similarity between the names of some of the cities where Paul served and the names of books in the New Testament? Why do you think this is so?

Have students turn to “The Names and Order of All the Books of the Old and New Testament” in the front of their Bibles. Using the information on how the New Testament is organized from “An Introduction to the New Testament” (see p. 8), invite students to label their table of contents page according to the following chart:

**THE NAMES AND ORDER
OF ALL THE
BOOKS OF THE OLD AND
NEW TESTAMENT**

The Books of the Old Testament

	Page		Page
Genesis (Gen.)	1	Ecclesiastes (Ecc.)	845
Exodus (Ex.)	79	The Song of Solomon (Song.)	856
Leviticus (Lev.)	146	Isalah (Isa.)	861
Numbers (Num.)	190	Jeremiah (Jer.)	942
Deuteronomy (Deut.)	252	Lamentations (Lam.)	1020
Joshua (Josh.)	308	Ezekiel (Ezek.)	1027
Judges (Judg.)	343	Daniel (Dan.)	1099
Ruth	377	Hosea	1122
1 Samuel (1 Sam.)	382	Joel	1133
2 Samuel (2 Sam.)	426	Amos	1137
1 Kings (1 Kgs.)	463	Obadiah (Obad.)	1146
2 Kings (2 Kgs.)	507	Jonah	1147
1 Chronicles (1 Chron.)	548	Micah	1150
2 Chronicles (2 Chron.)	587	Nahum	1156
Ezra	634	Habakkuk (Hab.)	1159
Nehemiah (Neh.)	648	Zephaniah (Zeph.)	1162
Esther (Esth.)	668	Haggai (Hag.)	1166
Job	678	Zechariah (Zech.)	1168
Psalms (Ps.)	714	Malachi (Mal.)	1180
Proverbs (Prov.)	811		

The Books of the New Testament

	Page		Page
Matthew (Matt.)	1187	2 Thessalonians (2 Thes.)	1503
Mark	1241	1 Timothy (1 Tim.)	1506
Luke	1271	2 Timothy (2 Tim.)	1512
John	1324	Titus	1517
The Acts	1365	Philemon (Philem.)	1520
The Epistle to the Romans (Rom.)	1415	To the Hebrews (Heb.)	1521
1 Corinthians (1 Cor.)	1438	The Epistle of James	1538
2 Corinthians (2 Cor.)	1460	1 Peter (1 Pet.)	1544
Galatians (Gal.)	1473	2 Peter (2 Pet.)	1551
Ephesians (Eph.)	1480	1 John (1 Jn.)	1555
Philippians (Phillip.)	1488	2 John (2 Jn.)	1561
Colossians (Col.)	1493	3 John (3 Jn.)	1562
1 Thessalonians (1 Thes.)	1498	Jude	1563
		Revelation (Rev.)	1565

	Page
Topical Guide (tc)	1
Bible Dictionary (BD)	599
Joseph Smith Translation (JST)	795
Gazetteer	815
Maps	827

Explain to students why the books from Romans through Hebrews are called the Pauline Epistles (see Bible Dictionary, “Pauline Epistles,” pp. 745–47). Tell them that Romans is the first Epistle in the New Testament but it was not the first one Paul wrote. Discuss which Epistles were written before Romans (see Bible Dictionary, “Pauline Epistles,” p. 743).

Read the statements by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, then a member of the Seventy, on page 316 of *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles* (see “What Are Some of the Significant Contributions of Romans?” and the commentary for Romans 1:7–8). This will help you guide your students to look for the significant contributions of Romans as well as the challenges this Epistle presents.



Romans 1–3 (Scripture Mastery, Romans 1:16). Everyone has sinned and needs a Savior. The gospel of Jesus Christ offers salvation to all of Heavenly Father’s children. (30–35 minutes)

Ask students to imagine that the class is going on a trip to the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico. They have been invited to spend four days with an archaeological team that is investigating the ruins of what may be an ancient Book of Mormon city. To prepare for the trip, ask students to rank the following items from most useful to least useful: flashlight, insect repellent, shovel, sturdy boots, water purifier, life raft, pocketknife, first-aid kit. After the class has voted, say, “Oh, did I mention that we’ll be traveling by boat and that our ship will sink in the Gulf of Mexico?” Ask:

- Does that information make you want to change your ranking of the most useful items? How? (Most will probably want to move the life raft to the top of their list.)
- Why didn’t you think the life raft was so important before?

Write the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson on the board or give it to students as a handout:

“Just as a man does not really desire food until he is hungry, so he does not desire the salvation of Christ until he knows why he needs Christ.

“No one adequately and properly knows why he needs Christ until he understands and accepts the doctrine of the Fall and its effect upon all mankind” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 106; or *Ensign*, May 1987, 85).

Read the statement to the class and discuss the following questions:

- What do people often place higher on their list of priorities than the Savior? Why?
- How is knowledge of our impending shipwreck like an understanding of the Fall?
- How can a knowledge of our fallen condition change how we feel about the Savior?
- How is the life raft in our story like the Savior?
- How do you think the world would be different if people understood that they are fallen and live in a fallen world? (You may want to use 1 Nephi 10:6; Mosiah 16:4; and Alma 34:9 to show how the Book of Mormon clearly identifies this doctrine and helps us to recognize it in the Bible.)

Tell students that the Apostle Paul tried to help the Roman Saints understand the doctrine of the Fall and its effect on all mankind. Have them read Romans 1:14–17 (note the Joseph Smith Translation change in footnote 17b). Ask:

- How did Paul feel about the gospel?
- Why do you think he felt that way?

Tell students that in Romans 1–3, Paul reminded the Saints that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the only hope of salvation for Jew or Gentile. Paul taught that we are justified by the power of Jesus Christ and that this power (or grace) is given to those who have faith in Him (see Romans 3:24–31). Ask students the following questions and use the accompanying scriptures to help answer them:

- Why do people who refuse to accept God need the Savior? (Paul explained that God’s wrath is against those who refuse to believe in Him when all creation testifies of His power; see Romans 1:18–23.)
- Why do people who believe in God also need the Savior? (Paul declared that all are judged by their works and God is no respecter of persons; see Romans 2:1–16; see also 1 Nephi 17:35.)
- Why did the Jews, who thought having the law of Moses would save them, also need the Savior? (Paul warned that the law of Moses alone could not save them. Since no one can live the law perfectly, all are condemned by the law; see Romans 2:16–3:23.)
- Why do some people in the Church today seem to think that just being a member of the Church will save them?
- What do the scriptures teach about that philosophy? (see Matthew 7:21).

Consider concluding with this statement by President Spencer W. Kimball:

“The mission of the Church to its members is to make available the principles, programs, and priesthood by which they can prepare themselves for exaltation. Our success, individually and as a Church, will largely be determined by how faithfully we focus on living the gospel in the home. . . . Then we can understand that people are more important than programs, and that Church programs should always support and never detract from gospel-centered family activities” (“Living the Gospel in the Home,” *Ensign*, May 1978, 101).

Romans 1:18–32. When people rebel and reject God, they separate themselves from the Holy Ghost, and God allows them to suffer the full effects of their sins. (25–30 minutes)

Turn off the lights in your classroom and turn on a flashlight. (You may want to cover the windows in advance so that it is very dark when you turn off the lights.) Ask students to think of the light as a representation of the influence or companionship of the Spirit of the Lord.

Turn the flashlight off and on a few times while discussing some of the following questions:

- What actions or thoughts cause a person to draw away from the Lord?
- What happens to us spiritually when we draw away?
- What effect does sin have in our lives?

- How does it feel to lose the Lord’s Spirit?
- Why is darkness a good representation for being void of the Spirit? (see Matthew 6:22–23).
- Why do you think some people seem to prefer darkness to light? (see D&C 10:21).

Turn on the classroom lights, and read and discuss some of the following scriptures: 2 Nephi 26:10–11; Mosiah 2:36–37; Doctrine and Covenants 1:31–35. Invite students to read Romans 1:24, 26, 28 and look for phrases that describe how God allows people to withdraw from His Spirit (“God gave them up,” “God gave them over”). Explain that the Spirit can’t dwell with the wicked. This does not show a lack of love on God’s part but is the natural consequence of people’s sinful behavior (see John 15:10; D&C 95:12). Have students silently read Romans 1:21–32. Ask:

- What sins can you identify that led the people to withdraw from the Lord?
- How serious are these sins?
- Why are these sins prevalent in today’s world?
- What righteous actions are the opposite of the sins described in Romans 1?
- Why does living righteously bring the Lord’s Spirit into our lives in greater abundance?

Turn off the lights once more and shine the flashlight on your scriptures. Testify that the scriptures teach us about the hope and light that Jesus Christ offers to guide us away from sin.

Romans 4–6

Introduction

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, then a member of the Seventy, wrote: “The atonement of Jesus Christ is the foreordained but voluntary act of the Only Begotten Son of God. He offered his life, including his innocent body, blood, and spiritual anguish as a redeeming ransom (1) for the effect of the Fall of Adam upon all mankind and (2) for the personal sins of all who repent, from Adam to the end of the world. Latter-day Saints believe this is the central fact, the crucial foundation, the chief doctrine, and the greatest expression of divine love in the plan of salvation. The Prophet Joseph Smith declared that all ‘things which pertain to our religion are only appendages’ to the atonement of Christ ([*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*], p. 121) (“Atonement of Jesus Christ,” in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. [1992], 1:82–83).

In Romans 4–6 Paul declared that justification comes through faith in Jesus Christ by His atoning power. Paul cited the example of Abraham and recounted the doctrine of the Fall to help illustrate this principle. Paul also discussed the

ordinance of baptism. By studying this ordinance and its symbolism we can come to understand the steps we must take to enjoy the full blessings of the Atonement.

Prayerfully study Romans 4–6 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Faith in Jesus Christ includes showing our belief in and love for the Lord by keeping His commandments (see Romans 4; see also John 14:15; James 2:14–19).
- Salvation comes not through faith and obedience alone but by the Lord’s grace through the Atonement. Through Christ we can be forgiven and become justified, or made clean (see Romans 5; see also Galatians 2:16; 2 Nephi 10:24).
- Baptism is symbolic of the death, burial, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. It also represents the symbolic death and burial of our sins and our rebirth as we covenant to follow the Savior (see Romans 6:1–13; see also Mosiah 27:24–26; D&C 76:50–52).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 318–23.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Romans 4–6.



Romans 4–5. If we exercise faith in the Lord by keeping His commandments, He will give us the gift of eternal life. (45–50 minutes)

Display a glass of ice-cold water. Invite the students to imagine that they are in the desert dying of thirst. On a nearby hill is this glass of lifesaving water. Ask: Which of the following will save your life: your confidence that the water will save you, your effort to crawl up the hill to get the water, or drinking the water in the glass? Allow students to express their opinions. Do not comment on the correctness of their responses. Ask:

- How could this situation be compared to our need for spiritual salvation?
- What could the water represent? (The Atonement, the grace and love of Jesus Christ; see John 7:37.)
- What could the effort to crawl up the hill represent? (Repenting, keeping the commandments.)
- What could confidence in the saving power of the water represent? (Faith, trust.)
- What would it take to save your life?

Tell students that it is the water that has power to save our lives. But we must have confidence that the water will save us so that we will make the effort to climb the hill. We must climb the hill to get the water. And we must drink the water

for it to save us. The same conditions are necessary in the gospel. It is Jesus Christ’s Atonement that gives us salvation. But for His Atonement to be of full effect in our lives, we must have faith in the Lord and do what He requires.

Explain that just as we need water when we are dying of thirst, so we need a Savior to overcome the effects of sin and death. Read Romans 5:12–14 and ask:

- Why is a Savior needed for all mankind?
- In what ways did Adam’s Fall affect each of us?
- How many people sin? (see Romans 3:23).

Invite students to silently read Romans 5:15–20 and mark the words *death* and *sin* each time they appear. Read Romans 5:21 looking for how both sin and death can be conquered. As time permits, you may also want to share some of the following scriptures that show why we need a Savior: 1 Nephi 10:6; 2 Nephi 9:21; Alma 12:22; Ether 12:27; Doctrine and Covenants 20:19–25.

Explain that just as having confidence that the water will save us leads us to seek it, so we must have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. True faith will motivate us to keep God’s commandments so we can partake of the Atonement. Read Romans 4:1–3 looking for phrases that show us Abraham had faith. Ask:

- Why do you think Paul chose Abraham as a model of faith?
- What actions can you recall from Abraham’s life that show his faith led him to do works of righteousness?

Invite students to read Romans 4:17–25 and look for other evidence of Abraham’s faith and works. Ask: Why do you think these details of Abraham’s life were written down? Read James 2:14–18; 2 Nephi 25:23; and the Joseph Smith Translation of Romans 4:16, and then discuss the balance between faith and good works. Share the following statement by Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Poorly defined, faith not only produces little conviction but also is difficult to nurture and increase.

“Faith has several specific dimensions. Each facet is important. President Brigham Young illustratively taught that we must have ‘faith in [Jesus’] name, character, and atonement . . . faith in his Father and in the plan of salvation.’ Only such faith, said Brigham, will produce steady and enduring ‘obedience to the requirements of the Gospel.’” (*Lord, Increase Our Faith* [1994], 2).

To help students more fully appreciate our reliance on the Savior, point out that faith itself is a gift from Christ. So is the strength to be able to perform good works. (See Bible Dictionary, “grace,” p. 697.) In other words, we could not even have the confidence needed to desire the water, nor could we walk up the hill toward the water, if it were not for Jesus Christ. Explain that the water represents the divine help given

by God through the Atonement. This gift provides us with the power needed to repent, to keep the commandments, and to become like God.

Drink some of the ice-cold water. Testify that it is not just our faith or good works that save us. Faith and works are the keys that unlock the door to salvation, but salvation comes only in and through Jesus Christ (see Mosiah 3:17; Alma 38:9; Moses 6:52). Invite students to read Romans 5:1–11 and look for how Paul taught the Saints that salvation comes through the Atonement and grace of Jesus Christ.

- Which of Paul’s phrases most impressed you?
- How does a deeper understanding of the Atonement help us love the Savior?

Remind students that although Jesus agreed in the premortal life to be our Savior, He did not owe it to us to die for us. It was an act of love. Sing the hymn “I Stand All Amazed” (*Hymns*, no. 193) and ask students to ponder the significance of the words.

Romans 6. Baptism is symbolic of the death, burial, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. It also represents the symbolic death and burial of our sins and our rebirth as we covenant to follow the Savior. (35–40 minutes)

Invite a student to read to the class the following excerpts from a talk by Elder Henry B. Eyring, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“All of us can remember times in our lives when we felt a pull to be better than we were, to rise higher. The feeling may have come at about the same time we had the thought ‘There must be something better in life than this.’ Sadly, there are also times when we felt like giving up. And then the thought was something like ‘Maybe this feeling of being miserable is what life is really like. Maybe I need to learn to live with it. It looks as if that’s how everyone else feels.’ . . .

“But everyone who I have come to know well, even the most discouraged and the most miserable, will tell you that some time in their lives, maybe just once that they can remember, they felt that upward pull, that thought that there just had to be something better and higher” (*Covenants* [CES fireside for college-age young adults, 6 Sept. 1996], 1).

Ask students to contemplate times when they have experienced feelings of discouragement or despair as Elder Eyring described. Invite any who would like to discuss how they dealt with these feelings to do so. Ask: What did you do to find hope?

Invite students to read the following scriptures and look for the comfort and hope they offer: Isaiah 40:30–31; Mosiah 4:6–7; Moroni 10:32–33. Ask: By whose power are we able to become perfected and receive salvation? Tell students that

many people Paul was writing to were still committed to the law of Moses and did not understand that the Atonement had fulfilled it. They needed someone to teach them that they could overcome sin through Jesus Christ, not through the law. Have students read Romans 6:8–23 and look for what Paul taught about sin and about who helps us overcome its effects.

Elder Eyring continued:

“Heavenly Father does more than allow you to feel that upward pull. He has provided a way to rise higher—almost beyond our limits of imagination—not by our own powers alone, which would not be nearly enough, but through the power of the Atonement of his Son, Jesus Christ. . . .

“Our Heavenly Father not only provided a Savior and a gospel of Jesus Christ, which teaches us the purpose of life and gives us commandments, but he also provided covenants we could make with him. And with those covenants he provided ordinances where he could signify what he promised or covenanted to do and we could signify what we promised or covenanted to do” (*Covenants*, 1).

Testify that we receive the power of the Atonement in our lives as we make and keep sacred covenants.

Explain to students that Romans 6:1–2 teaches us to turn away from our sins. Have them read verses 3–7 looking for the initial ordinance and covenant that allows us to do this. Show students a shovel or draw one on the board. Teach that baptism is a time when we covenant to “bury” our sins and our sinful nature and that we gain access to the power to have our sins “covered” through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Discuss some of the following questions:

- What does baptism symbolize? (Death, burial, and resurrection; see D&C 128:12–13.)
- If baptism is a time when we covenant to “bury” or give up our sins, why is it important that we be baptized by immersion?
- What events from Christ’s life does baptism also symbolize? (His death, burial, and Resurrection.)
- How are our lives better if we choose to put off our sinful selves and be baptized?
- Read Doctrine and Covenants 20:68–69; Mosiah 18:8–10. According to these verses, what are some of the promises we make at baptism?

Make sure students understand that while the covenant of baptism symbolizes that we can become clean from sin, baptism does not actually wash our sins away. Baptism is a time when we commit to become clean and walk in a newness of life, a time when we prepare to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. It is through the cleansing power of the Holy Ghost that we are actually cleansed from sin. The following statement by

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, may be helpful:

“Sins are remitted not in the waters of baptism, as we say in speaking figuratively, but when we receive the Holy Ghost. It is the Holy Spirit of God that erases carnality and brings us into a state of righteousness. We become clean when we actually receive the fellowship and companionship of the Holy Ghost. It is then that sin and dross and evil are burned out of our souls as though by fire” (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 290; see also 2 Nephi 31:17; Moroni 6:4; 8:25–26).

Romans 7–8

Introduction

When Jesus Christ fulfilled the law of Moses, the old covenant was replaced with the law of the gospel. Paul tried to persuade those still clinging to Mosaic rituals and practices to abandon those laws and fully accept the gospel of Jesus Christ, the new covenant (see Hebrews 9:15). Romans 7–8 contains an analogy of a woman who is no longer bound by law to her husband after he dies. It represents the fact that the Saints were no longer bound to the law of Moses after it was fulfilled by Christ. Paul then testifies that those who embrace the gospel and accept its covenants become joint-heirs with Jesus Christ and inherit all that Heavenly Father has.

Prayerfully study Romans 7–8 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The Atonement gives us power to overcome our natural tendency to sin; thus we become new creatures, spiritually reborn children of God (see Romans 7:14–25; 8:1–14).
- Nothing can separate the true disciples of Christ from the love of the Father and the Son (see Romans 8:31–39; see also D&C 122:9).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 323–28.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Romans 7–8.

Romans 7. The law of Moses was fulfilled in Jesus Christ and replaced with the law of the gospel. (10–15 minutes)

Ask students to name some family rules they are expected to keep. List a few of them on the board, and then discuss the following questions:

- Who made up these rules?
- Why do you feel a responsibility to obey them?
- What rules might apply to little children but not young adults?
- How are rules a blessing in our lives?

Tell students that just as there will come a time when they will not have to keep the rules their parents have established for their home, so there came a time when Israel was no longer expected to live the law of Moses. Remind students that in the book of Romans, Paul was speaking to people who were still holding onto the traditions and regulations of the law of Moses. Invite students to read Romans 7:1–6 looking for the analogy Paul used to show the people they were no longer bound by the law of Moses. Consider using the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“Paul was an absolute genius at devising illustrations to drive home his gospel teachings. Here [in Romans 7:1–6] he compares Israel’s allegiance to the law of Moses with that of a wife to her husband. As long as her husband lives, a wife is bound to him, must obey his laws, and if she be with another, she is an adulteress. But when the husband dies, he can no longer direct her actions, and she is free to marry another; she can no longer be subject to him that is dead.

“So with Israel and the law. As long as the law lived, and was therefore in force, Israel was married to it and required to obey its provisions. If she went after other gods, or followed other religions, it was as adultery. But now the law is fulfilled; it no longer lives; it has become dead in Christ; and Israel is married to another, even to Christ, whose gospel law must now be obeyed” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 2:253–54).

Invite students to read Mosiah 13:27–30 and Alma 34:9–13, and ask:

- Why did God give Israel the law of Moses?
- Why do you think some of the Jews in Paul’s day may have continued to cling to the law?
- What event fulfilled the law of Moses?

Explain that in Romans 7:7–25 Paul answered these questions and emphasized the important truth that the law of the gospel replaced many aspects of the law of Moses. Point out that there are extensive changes to Romans 7 in the Joseph

Smith Translation that clarify this principle. Encourage students to study from the Joseph Smith Translation when reading Romans 7 in their personal study.

Romans 8. Through the Atonement we can gain power to overcome our natural tendency to sin; thus we become new creatures, spiritually reborn children of God. (35–40 minutes)

Discuss as a class what the word *inheritance* means. Talk about how we can inherit material objects, character traits, and spiritual gifts. Show or talk about some of the significant objects, traits, or gifts you have inherited from your ancestors. Ask the following questions:

- Whose will would you most like to be included in?
- What one item would you most like to inherit? Why?
- What qualities or characteristics of your ancestors do you hope to attain?

Read the following statement:

“Latter-day Saints regard Jesus Christ as the firstborn spirit child of God the Father and the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh. Because of this priority, he is the natural heir of the Father. Through strict obedience to the Father’s will, progressing from grace to grace by obeying the gospel and its ordinances and making the infinite Atonement, Jesus became the Savior of all mankind and also heir to all that the Father has. Those who accept Jesus Christ as their redeemer, repent of their sins, obey the ordinances of the gospel, and live in willing obedience with the Holy Spirit as their guide, can also become heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. In the eternities, they can inherit the same truth, power, wisdom, glory, and exaltation possessed by God the Father and by the Son (see D&C 84:38)” (“Heirs,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 2:583).

Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 84:33–40 and look for what is promised in the oath and covenant of the priesthood. Read Romans 8:15–19 looking for the doctrine of inheritance. Discuss some of the following questions:

- What did Paul teach about our potential for inheritance in Heavenly Father’s kingdom?
- What does *Abba* mean? (“Father.” This title was used by Christ and early members of the Church as a sacred and intimate name for Heavenly Father; see Bible Dictionary, p. 600.)
- What does the meaning of *Abba* teach you about Heavenly Father’s love for us?
- What does verse 17 teach we must do to become joint-heirs with Jesus Christ?
- From verse 18, how do you think the blessings of being heirs of God compare with the requirements?

The Prophet Joseph Smith gave the following definition of joint-heirship:

“To inherit the same power, the same glory and the same exaltation, until you arrive at the station of a God, and ascend the throne of eternal power, the same as those who have gone before” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 347).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie said:

“A joint-heir is one who inherits equally with all other heirs including the Chief Heir who is the Son. Each joint-heir has an equal and an undivided portion of the whole of everything. If one knows all things, so do all others. If one has all power, so do all those who inherit jointly with him. If the universe belongs to one, so it does equally to the total of all upon whom the joint inheritances are bestowed” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 395).

Testify that Heavenly Father’s promises are sure and that our potential is truly to obtain all He possesses. The following scriptures may also be helpful: Galatians 3:26–29; 4:1–7; Doctrine and Covenants 50:26–28; 88:107.

Ask students to imagine receiving all that Heavenly Father possesses. Ask:

- What do you think that would be like?
- What would you be willing to do to qualify for that kind of inheritance?
- How do you think we should use that inheritance?
- What did the Savior do to be worthy of being the Father’s Chief Heir?

Write the following questions on the board:

- How do we qualify to become joint-heirs with Jesus Christ?
- How does God feel about us? What is His relationship with each of us?
- Why do you think He provided an opportunity for each of us to become joint-heirs with His Son Jesus Christ?
- What blessings will come into our lives while we are striving to become worthy of receiving all that Heavenly Father has?

Divide students into two groups. Assign one to search Romans 8:1–14 and the other Romans 8:28–39. Remind them to include any Joseph Smith Translation changes in their assigned verses. Have them look for answers to the questions and be prepared to specify which verses helped them find the answer. Discuss their findings as a class.

Conclude by singing “I Am a Child of God” (*Hymns*, no. 301). Testify that we are literally the spirit children of Heavenly Father. We can return to live with Him someday and receive all that He has.

Romans 9–11

Introduction

We are God’s children, and we lived with Him before we came to earth. He created us in His image and endowed each one of us with the power and ability to become like Him. To become like God is eternal life.

Elder M. Russell Ballard, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, taught:

“Before the world was created, we all lived as the spirit children of our Heavenly Father. Through a natural process of inheritance we received in embryo the traits and attributes of our Heavenly Father. We are His spirit children. Some of what our Eternal Father is, we have inherited. What he has become we may become. (For spiritual enlightenment on this important concept, please see Acts 17:29 and Romans 8:16.)” (*Our Search for Happiness: An Invitation to Understand The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* [1993], 70).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained:

“The greatest and most important talent or capacity that any of the spirit children of the Father could gain is the talent of spirituality. Most of those who gained this talent were chosen, before they were born, to come to earth as members of the house of Israel. They were foreordained to receive the blessings that the Lord promised to Abraham and to his seed in all their generations. This foreordination is an election. . . . Though all mankind may be saved by obedience, some find it easier to believe and obey than others. Hence the concept, taught by Jesus, that his sheep know his voice and will not follow the dissident voices of the world” (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 512–13).

In Romans 9–11 Paul taught the doctrine of election, or foreordination. Paul’s audience already understood the doctrine of the premortal existence and knew why Israel was God’s covenant people. Paul pointed out that the doctrine of foreordination in no way limited the Gentiles’ opportunity to be grafted into the house of Israel and partake fully of the blessings and promises of the gospel.

Prayerfully study Romans 9–11 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- In the premortal life certain people were foreordained (chosen) to be born into the house of Israel and receive special blessings and responsibilities in this life (see Romans 9:1–5, 11, 23; 11:2, 5; see also Jeremiah 1:5; Ephesians 1:3–5).
- Being of the house of Israel is of little value unless a person believes and obeys the Lord (see Romans 9:31–33; 10:1–4, 16, 21; 11:1–10, 25).
- Those who prove themselves spiritual Israelites and become the Lord’s chosen children are those who accept and follow Christ (see Romans 9:6–8, 15, 24–26, 30; 10:5–13, 17–20; 11:1–5, 17–28; see also 2 Nephi 30:2).
- Those people of the house of Israel who rejected Christ lost their promised blessings. The Lord then offered the gospel and its blessings to the Gentiles and the people of Israel scattered among them. If any of these people reject Jesus Christ’s teachings, they will also lose the blessings of the gospel (see Romans 10:12–13, 20; 11:11–13, 17–22; see also Jacob 5:3, 7, 9, 17).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 330–37.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Romans 9–11.

Romans 9–10. In the premortal life, certain people were foreordained (chosen) to be born into the house of Israel and receive special blessings and responsibilities. The fulfillment of these blessings depends on their willingness to follow Jesus Christ. (40–45 minutes)

Tell students that you want to choose one of them to receive a special reward. Explain that you will use one of three methods to make your decision: (1) a random drawing, (2) a vote, or (3) a decision based on the best performance. Ask students which method they would like you to use and why.

Read Abraham 3:23 looking for what Abraham was foreordained to become. (A ruler.) Ask: Do you think Abraham was chosen randomly, by vote, or because of his faithfulness? Why? Read Alma 13:3–4 to help students understand that God’s selections are based on faithfulness.

Tell students that in Romans 9–11 Paul continued to teach the doctrine of foreordination that he had begun to discuss in chapter 8. Explain that these chapters contain three important points:

1. In the premortal life certain people were foreordained to be born into the house of Israel and receive special blessings and responsibilities in this life.
2. To receive foreordained blessings we must accept and follow Jesus Christ.
3. Gentiles (those not of Israel’s lineage) can inherit all of Israel’s blessings through their acceptance of Jesus Christ and obedience to the gospel.

Two of these points are covered in this teaching suggestion. The third point will be treated in the teaching suggestion for Romans 11:11–22. Write these statements on the board, or write each on a poster in advance and display them as you discuss each point.

Read the first point to students (or display the first poster). Have the students read Romans 9:1–5 and make note of the words *adoption*, *glory*, *covenants*, and *promises*. Ask:

- According to verse 4, who is promised these blessings? (The Israelites.)
- Why do you think they were chosen?

Explain that Israel, like his grandfather Abraham, was foreordained to receive the covenants and promises of the gospel. Invite a student to read the statements by Elders M. Russell Ballard and Bruce R. McConkie in the introduction to Romans 9–11 (p. 166). Read Romans 9:9–14 and ask:

- What was Jacob’s name changed to? (Israel; see v. 6; see also Genesis 32:28.)
- How is Jacob an example of someone who received a greater blessing because of premortal faithfulness?
- Do you think the scriptures teach that this was fair or unfair?
- How did Paul answer the question about God’s fairness? (see v. 14).

Read the following statement by President Harold B. Lee:

“Those born to the lineage of Jacob, who was later to be called Israel, and his posterity, who were known as the children of Israel, were born into the most illustrious lineage of any of those who came upon the earth as mortal beings.

“All these rewards were seemingly promised, or foreordained, before the world was. Surely these matters must have been determined by the kind of lives we had lived in that premortal spirit world. Some may question these assumptions, but at the

same time they will accept without any question the belief that each one of us will be judged when we leave this earth according to his or her deeds during our lives here in mortality. Isn’t it just as reasonable to believe that what we have received here in this earth [life] was given to each of us according to the merits of our conduct before we came here?” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1973, 7–8; or *Ensign*, Jan. 1974, 5).

Read the second point from the board (or display the second poster). Ask students to read Romans 9:7 and the Joseph Smith Translation of the verse (see footnote 3a), and then ask:

- Why weren’t some of Abraham’s descendants true to their covenants?
- What do you believe Paul meant in verse 6?
- Why does being a member of the house of Israel not guarantee a person celestial blessings?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 64:35–36 and look for what happens to those who are rebellious. Tell students that premortal faithfulness, foreordained promises, or being born into a certain lineage do not guarantee salvation. God did not grant certain blessings so that some would feel arrogant or superior to others.

Many scriptures teach this doctrine. You may want to study and discuss some of them with your students (see D&C 121:34; JST, Matthew 3:34–36; John 8:39; 2 Nephi 30:1–2). Consider sharing also the “Points to Ponder” section in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles* (pp. 335–37). You could assign the parts of the dialogue to different students to read aloud in class.

Testify that Paul taught this doctrine so that Israel “might be saved” (Romans 10:1). Help students know that they are of the house of Israel and a covenant people. Because of this the Lord expects them to do a great work and requires that they keep His commandments (see D&C 82:10). Invite students to read Romans 10:1–3, 9–18 looking for the responsibilities they have and for how they can develop faith. When they have finished, invite them to share what they found.

If time permits, you may wish to sing “Israel, Israel, God Is Calling” (*Hymns*, no. 7). Ask students:

- What message do you learn from the words of this hymn?
- How can you apply its message to your life?
- How can an understanding of the doctrines found in Romans 9–10 be a blessing in your life?
- What will you do differently as a result of what you have learned today?

Romans 11:11–22. When the house of Israel rejected Christ, they lost their promised blessings. The Lord then offered the gospel and its blessings to the Gentiles.

(40–45 minutes)

Note: This teaching suggestion is a continuation of the one for Romans 9–10. You should have the three points from that lesson written on the board or on posters.

Review the three points on the board and read the third one (or display the third poster). Have students think about patriarchal blessings and of their own blessing in particular. Ask: What do you think is the most important word in a patriarchal blessing? Discuss their answers. Write the word *if* on the board and ask: Why is this such an important word in a patriarchal blessing? (Blessings are dependent on our faithfulness; they do not come automatically.) Read Doctrine and Covenants 130:20–21 looking for how God blesses His children. Ask:

- What might keep a person or a group of people from qualifying for the Lord’s blessings, even though they were foreordained to receive them?
- How does Paul’s phrase “they are not all Israel, which are of Israel” (Romans 9:6) support this doctrine?
- How do some people forfeit their blessings?
- What are common temptations that could lead to the loss of gospel blessings?

Ask a student to read the following statement by Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Keeping the covenants is not hard when you do it willingly with a ‘broken heart and a contrite spirit.’ When obeyed, those covenants bring happiness and joy. They give purpose to life. Difficulty comes when agency is used to make choices that are inconsistent with those covenants. Study the things you do in your discretionary time, that time you are free to control. Do you find that it is centered in those things that are of highest priority and of greatest importance? Or do you unconsciously, consistently fill it with trivia and activities that are not of enduring value nor help you accomplish the purpose for which you came to earth? Think of the long view of life, not just what’s going to happen today or tomorrow. *Don’t give up what you most want in life for something you think you want now*” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 78–79; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 54).

Testify of the importance of continued worthiness in order to receive the blessings promised to the house of Israel.

Paul taught that many Israelites who were foreordained had forfeited their blessings through disobedience (see Romans 9:31–33; 10:1–3, 16–21; 11:3–10). Ask students to read Romans 11:11–13 and look for who would now begin to receive the gospel and its blessings. Have students quickly read Romans 11:25–31 and look for why it was time for the Gentiles to

begin to receive the gospel. Read the following statement by Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, who was then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“In this manner was the gospel taught in the meridian dispensation. It was first offered to the Jews and after they rejected it, then it was carried to the Gentiles and from among them branches of the Church were organized. In the dispensation in which we live, the second part of this prophecy by our Lord is being fulfilled. When the gospel was restored through the agency of Joseph Smith, it came first to the Gentiles and during the past one hundred and twenty years it has been proclaimed among the Gentile nations. It has not been carried to any extent to the Jews, and only a few have accepted it. In speaking to the saints at Rome, Paul said that ‘blindness in part had happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles is come in.’—Rom. 11:25” (*The Restoration of All Things* [1945], 163–64).

Help the students understand that the Gentiles (those not of Israel’s lineage) can inherit the same blessings as Israel. Through their acceptance of Jesus Christ and obedience to the gospel, they can be grafted into the house of Israel and become full heirs. To illustrate this point, you might want to bring a large and a small tree branch to class. Tell students that grafting is the process by which branches from one plant are inserted into the branches of another. Demonstrate for the class how a tree branch is grafted by cutting and splicing the two branches and wrapping them with a piece of cloth as illustrated:



Discuss some of the following questions:

- Will the grafted branch ever become part of the tree just as the original branches are? (Yes.)
- If an original branch gets its nourishment from the roots, where does the grafted branch get its nourishment? (Also from the roots.)
- When and why might a gardener use grafting?
- What benefits come to a tree through grafting? (It increases in size and may produce more or better fruit.)
- What benefits come to a branch that has been grafted? (It becomes part of the tree.)

Invite students to read Romans 11:14–24. Tell them to keep in mind the grafting process as they read. Ask:

- What spiritual process does Paul compare to grafting? (The adoption of Gentiles into the house of Israel.)
- From what you have learned about grafting, how will the Gentiles who are adopted into the house of Israel benefit?
- Do you see any difference between the blessings of those who are adopted and the blessings of literal descendants of Israel? (Have them explain their answers.)
- How does this grafting process show the great love that the Lord has for all of His children?

Tell students Jesus Christ is the root of the tree we are grafted into (see Revelation 22:16). Testify that the most important part of the doctrine of adoption is that any person, whether born into the house of Israel or not, can receive nourishment and strength from the Lord. If they will accept and follow Jesus Christ, they will be grafted into His family, and all of the choicest blessings of the Lord will come to them as part of the covenant.

Romans 12–16

Introduction

Having expounded the doctrines of foreordination, election, and adoption in Romans 9–11, Paul concluded his Epistle to the Romans by encouraging the Saints to remain true and faithful in order to reap the full blessings of the covenant.

Speaking to those who have experienced the blessing of being a member of the house of Israel, Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained:

“A knowledge of these wondrous truths places upon us a greater burden than rests upon any other people to follow Christ—to take his yoke upon us, to keep his commandments, to do ever those things that please him. And if we love and serve him, we will give heed to the words of the apostles and prophets whom he sends to reveal and teach his word among us” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1974, 103–4; or *Ensign*, May 1974, 73).

Paul taught that the house of Israel has many responsibilities. These include living as Saints, following the counsel of leaders, keeping the commandments, avoiding contention, embracing righteousness, fellowshiping one another, and being unified by avoiding evil.

Prayerfully study Romans 12–16 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The grace of God is the help He gives us through His love and mercy. It is the power by which He enables us to perform works of righteousness and gain eternal life (see Romans 12:6; 15:15; see also Acts 15:11; 2 Nephi 25:23).
- Before Jesus Christ’s mortal ministry, He commanded His followers to offer animal sacrifices as a way of looking ahead to His Atonement. Today the Lord commands us to offer ourselves as “living sacrifices” by dedicating our lives in obedience and service (see Romans 12:1–3, 9–18; see also 3 Nephi 9:19–20; Moroni 10:32).
- Each member of the Church has different spiritual gifts. We are like parts of a body, joined together to form a whole. We must each contribute our talents without thinking that we are more important than others (see Romans 12:3–8, 13–18).
- If we truly love all people, we are fulfilling the law of God (see Romans 13:8–10; see also Matthew 22:36–40; 2 Nephi 31:20).
- We are not to judge others but should work on being righteous ourselves. We must help and fellowship one another, especially those who may be weaker in the faith (see Romans 14:1–21; 15:1–7).
- We must avoid those who teach false doctrines and create divisions in the Church. Such people are serving themselves, not God (see Romans 16:17–18).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 334–35.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Romans 12–16.



Romans 12–16. We are saved by grace after all we can do (see 2 Nephi 25:23). The final chapters of Romans show that works of righteousness are essential in the gospel plan. (30–35 minutes)

Write on the board the word *saved*, and ask:

- What does it mean to be saved?
- How many of you feel that you have been saved?

Tell students that the word *saved* is often used in religious discussions. Invite them to read Romans 10:9–10. Explain that many good Christians cite these verses as proof that they have been “saved” because they have sincerely confessed or declared that Jesus Christ is their Savior.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, pointed out that the question “Have you been saved?” can be

puzzling to members of the Church because people from other churches attach different meanings to the word *saved*:

“As Latter-day Saints use the words *saved* and *salvation*, there are at least six different meanings. According to some of these, our salvation is assured—we are already saved. In others, salvation must be spoken of as a future event (e.g., 1 Corinthians 5:5) or as conditioned upon a future event (e.g., Mark 13:13). But in all of these meanings, or kinds of salvation, salvation is in and through Jesus Christ” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 76; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 55).

The six meanings spoken of by Elder Oaks are listed below. Read and discuss each of the meanings, using the accompanying scriptures and excerpts from Elder Oaks’s speech:

1. We are all saved from physical death (see Alma 11:43–44).

“First, all mortals have been saved from the permanence of death through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. ‘For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive’ (see 1 Corinthians 15:22).”

2. We can be saved from sin through obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel if we endure to the end (see James 2:14–17; D&C 14:7; Articles of Faith 1:3).

“As to salvation from sin and the consequences of sin, our answer to the question of whether or not we have been saved is ‘yes, but with conditions.’ Our third article of faith declares our belief:

“‘We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.’ . . .

“ . . . We testify that being cleansed from sin through Christ’s Atonement is conditioned upon the individual sinner’s faith, which must be manifested by obedience to the Lord’s command to repent, be baptized, and receive the Holy Ghost (see Acts 2:37–38). . . . But [believers] will not be saved *finally* until they have completed their mortal probation with the required continuing repentance, faithfulness, service, and enduring to the end.”

3. We can be saved by being “born again” (see John 3:3–5; Mosiah 27:24–26).

“We were born again when we entered into a covenant relationship with our Savior by being born of water and of the Spirit and by taking upon us the name of Jesus Christ. We can renew that rebirth each Sabbath when we partake of the sacrament.

“Latter-day Saints affirm that those who have been born again in this way are spiritually begotten sons and daughters of Jesus Christ . . . with new spiritual parentage and the prospects of a glorious inheritance [see Mosiah 5:7; 15:9–13; 27:25].”

4. We can be saved from ignorance through the light of the gospel (see John 8:12).

“A fourth meaning of being saved is to be saved from the darkness of ignorance of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and of the purpose of life, and of the destiny of men and women. The gospel made known to us by the teachings of Jesus Christ has given us this salvation. ‘I am the light of the world,’ Jesus taught; ‘he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life’ (John 8:12; see also John 12:46).”

5. We can be saved from the second death (see 1 Corinthians 15:40–42; Revelation 2:11).

“For Latter-day Saints, being saved can also mean being saved or delivered from the second death (meaning the final spiritual death) by assurance of a kingdom of glory in the world to come (see 1 Corinthians 15:40–42). Just as the Resurrection is universal, we affirm that every person who ever lived upon the face of the earth—except for a very few [see D&C 76:40–43]—is assured of salvation in this sense.”

6. We can be saved by receiving exaltation (see D&C 76:52–60).

“The words *saved* and *salvation* are also used to denote exaltation or eternal life (see Abraham 2:11). This is sometimes referred to as the ‘fulness of salvation’ (Bruce R. McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah*, 4 vols. [1979–81], 1:242). This salvation requires more than repentance and baptism by appropriate priesthood authority. It also requires the making of sacred covenants, including eternal marriage, in the temples of God and faithfulness to those covenants by enduring to the end. If we use the word *salvation* to mean ‘exaltation,’ it is premature for any of us to say that we have been ‘saved’ in mortality. That glorious status can only follow the final judgment” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 76–78; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 55–57).

Review with students the six meanings of the word *saved*. As you read each one, ask the students to consider whether they have been saved according to that meaning.

Tell students that in the final chapters of Romans, Paul speaks of conditions that are required in order to qualify for salvation. There are commandments we must follow, ordinances we must receive, and ways we must pattern our lives in order to be saved in the kingdom of God.

Divide students into five groups and assign each group one of the chapters from Romans 12–16. Have each group read any fourteen consecutive verses from their assigned chapter looking for commandments, ordinances, or counsel that Paul said the Saints should follow. Invite them to share their findings with the class. Consider asking some of the following questions:

- What verses impressed you? Why?
- What have you learned that would be important to apply in order to be saved?
- How would the world change if everyone lived according to Paul’s counsel?

Romans 12:1–18. Before Jesus Christ’s mortal ministry, He commanded His followers to offer animal sacrifices as a way of looking ahead to His Atonement. Today the Lord commands us to offer ourselves as “living sacrifices” by dedicating our lives in obedience and service. (30–35 minutes)

Bring some rocks, sticks, and matches to class. Ask:

- How would these items be used if we were to offer an Old Testament sacrifice? (To build an altar and start a fire.)
- What important item is missing? (An animal.)

Read Exodus 12:5 and look for some characteristics of a sacrificial animal. Ask: How did animal sacrifice teach people about the coming of Jesus Christ?

Read the following statement by Elder M. Russell Ballard:

“There are two major, eternal purposes for the law of sacrifice that we need to understand. These purposes applied to Adam, Abraham, Moses, and the New Testament Apostles, and they apply to us as we accept and live the law of sacrifice. The two major purposes are to test us and prove us and to assist us in coming unto Christ” (*The Law of Sacrifice* [address to religious educators at a symposium on the New Testament, Brigham Young University, 13 Aug. 1996], 1).

Discuss Elder Ballard’s statement with your class. Have a student read the following from the same talk by Elder Ballard:

“While the primary purpose of the law of sacrifice continued to be that of testing and assisting us to come unto Christ, two adjustments were made after Christ’s ultimate sacrifice. First, the ordinance of the

sacrament replaced the ordinance of the sacrifice; and second, this change moved the focus of the sacrifice from a person’s animal to the person himself. In a sense, the sacrifice changed from the offering to the offerer” (*Law of Sacrifice*, 5; see also 3 Nephi 9:19–20; D&C 59:8, 12).

Invite students to read Romans 12:1–2 and have them suggest ways these verses fit with Elder Ballard’s statement. Discuss the following questions:

- What do you think it means to “present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God” (v. 1)?
- What sacrifices are you making to become holy and acceptable before God?
- How are those sacrifices a test?
- How do they assist you in coming unto Christ?

Tell students that Romans 12:9–21 includes many phrases that describe sacrifices we can make to become acceptable to God. (Examples from verse 9 include “let love be without dissimulation [insincerity]” and “abhor that which is evil.”) Write each phrase on a separate piece of paper and give one paper to each student. Have students read their phrase, ponder what it means, and think of one thing they can do to better live that principle. Invite several students to share their phrases and ideas with the class.

Read and discuss the following excerpts from Elder Ballard’s talk:

“As we sacrifice our selfish desires, serve our God and others, we become more like [the Lord]. Elder Russell M. Nelson [a member of the Quorum of the Twelve] taught:

“We are still commanded to sacrifice, but not by shedding blood of animals. Our highest sense of sacrifice is achieved as we make ourselves more sacred or holy.

“This we do by our obedience to the commandments of God. Thus, the laws of obedience and sacrifice are indelibly intertwined. . . . As we comply with these and other commandments, something wonderful happens to us. . . . We become more sacred and holy—[more] like our Lord!” (*Lessons from Eve,* *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 88). . . .

“Instead of the Lord requiring a person’s animal or grain, now the Lord wants us to give up all that is ungodly. This is a higher practice of the law of sacrifice; it reaches into the inner soul of a person. Elder Neal A. Maxwell described it this way: ‘Real, personal sacrifice never was placing an animal on the altar. Instead, it is a willingness to put the animal in us upon the altar and

letting it be consumed!’ (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 91; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 68). . . .

“Sacrifice is a demonstration of pure love. The degree of our love for the Lord and for our fellowman can be measured by what we are willing to sacrifice for them” (*Law of Sacrifice*, 3, 5–6).

Ask students to turn over the piece of paper and write on the back at least one personal sacrifice they feel the Lord would have them make to help them draw closer to Him. Encourage them to make that sacrifice over the next several weeks and to ask the Lord for the strength to do so. Consider inviting students to share their experiences and testimonies with the class at a later date.

Consider giving each student a copy of the following statement by Elder Ballard as a handout:

“The sacrifice the Lord asks of us is to wholly rid ourselves of the ‘natural man’ and all the ungodliness associated with it. When we completely surrender ourselves to the Lord, then he will cause a mighty change in us and we will become a new person, justified, sanctified, and born again with his image in our countenances (see Mosiah 5:2; Alma 5:14; Moses 6:59–60).

“As in all things, our Lord and Savior manifested the supreme example of sacrifice. His life and ministry established a pattern for us to follow. His divine mission was culminated in a supreme act of love as he gave his life for our redemption. Through his personal sacrifice, he provided a way for us to have our sins forgiven and return to the presence of our Father. . . .

“. . . The principle of sacrifice is a law of God. We are obliged to understand it and to teach it and to practice it. If it becomes too easy to be a member of this Church, testimonies will become shallow, the roots of testimony will not go down into the soil like they did with our pioneer forefathers. May God grant you an understanding of the law of sacrifice and that it is with us today. It is vitally important that we understand it, teach it, and live it” (M. Russell Ballard, *The Law of Sacrifice*, 9–10).

Romans 12:3–8; 16:17–18. Each member of the Church has different spiritual gifts. We are like parts of a body, joined together to form a whole. We must each contribute our talents without thinking that we are more important than others. (30–35 minutes)

Use any or all of the following object lessons to show students that each part is needed to make a whole:

- Bring a puzzle to class and discuss how each piece is important. If any piece were missing, the puzzle would not be complete.
- Bring a picture of a favorite sports team (or simply talk about the team). Discuss how essential each player is to the team’s success.
- Bring a food item you have prepared at home. Show students the recipe for it, and discuss how the ingredients complement each other and are all necessary.

Tell students that Paul also used an analogy to show that each individual member of the Church is important, even though we each have different talents and responsibilities. Invite students to read Romans 12:3–5 looking for the analogy Paul used. Ask:

- Why do you think a human body is a good analogy to teach this principle?
- How important are your eyes, heart, ears, hands, or brain to the well-being of your body?
- How do those parts of your body rely on each other?

Help students see how this analogy relates to members of the Church. Explain that each member has different strengths, gifts, and weaknesses, but we are commanded to be one (see D&C 38:27). Invite students to read Romans 12:6–8 looking for gifts Paul said members of the Church possess. (More complete lists can be found in 1 Corinthians 12:4–12; Moroni 10:8–23; and D&C 46:11–29.)

- How can the gifts Paul mentioned bless other members of the Church?
- Read Doctrine and Covenants 46:12. What is one reason God has bestowed these gifts on us?
- Why do you think He would want everyone to profit from the blessings He bestows on members?

If you have time, consider inviting students to point out strengths they have noticed in their classmates and ways they use those gifts to bless others. This can strengthen your students spiritually and help build rapport and unity in your class.

Romans 13–15. We should love others and not judge them but work on being righteous ourselves. We must help and fellowship one another, especially those who may be weaker in the faith. (30–35 minutes)

Share examples of times you have seen class members serve each other. Invite students to share similar observations. Ask:

- How did it make you feel to be served?
- How do you think the person who served felt?
- How did you feel about the person who served you?
- How did your testimony and relationship with the Lord change as a result of the experience?

Testify that there is great power in loving and serving one another, and that through service we can help others to come unto Jesus Christ.

Read Matthew 5:43–47 and ask: Who did the Savior command us to love and serve? Tell students that Romans 13–15 contains some excellent counsel on how we can follow this teaching of the Savior. Assign students one of the following blocks of scripture: Romans 13:8–14; 14:10–23; 15:1–7; or 15:13–18. Invite them to read it silently, looking for what it teaches about serving others. Discuss their findings, using the following questions if desired:

- What impressed you most in the verses you read?
- What did these verses teach you about loving and serving others?

- How could you implement those teachings in your life?
- How would the Church or your school change if everyone were to follow this counsel?
- How might the Church or your school change if *you* were to follow this counsel?

Continue this pattern of reading a scripture block and asking questions until you have completed the verses you think will be most significant for your students.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

This Epistle written during this time

First missionary journey (Acts 13–14)	Second missionary journey (Acts 15:36–18:22)	Third missionary journey (Acts 18:23–21:15)	Imprisonment in Caesarea and Rome (Acts 21:16–28:31)	Through second Roman imprisonment
About A.D. 47–50	50–53	53–57	57–62	62–65

Author: Paul is the author of 1 Corinthians (see 1 Corinthians 1:1–2; 16:21). He had already written at least one other letter to the Corinthian Saints (see 1 Corinthians 5:9). Unfortunately we have no record of the earlier letter.



Audience: Paul established the Church in Corinth during his second missionary journey around A.D. 50. While there he received a revelation directing him to speak openly and fearlessly to the people God had prepared to receive the gospel (see Acts 18:1, 9–11). He remained there a year and a half proclaiming the gospel and organizing the Church. However, the Corinthian Saints became divided and combined pagan beliefs and rituals with some of the true gospel principles and ordinances Paul had taught them. Paul had a sincere concern for the Saints in Corinth, so when specific needs and requests came to his attention, he responded by writing them this letter.

Historical Background: Corinth is situated on an isthmus connecting mainland Greece with the Peloponnesian Peninsula (see Bible map 13). This choice location allowed for a flow of commerce, philosophy, and religion from the East and the West. Idol worship dominated Corinth's religious culture. People worshiped in twelve temples throughout the city. They engaged in ritual prostitution in the temple of Aphrodite, and their leaders encouraged immoral behavior. Paul wrote to these members from Ephesus during his third missionary journey between A.D. 55–57 (see 1 Corinthians 1:3–8; Bible Dictionary, "Pauline Epistles," p. 743).

Unique Features: Paul addressed several issues and doctrines in 1 Corinthians that set this letter apart. He taught that the body is a temple for the Holy Spirit (see 1 Corinthians 6:19), he gave instructions regarding missionaries and marriage (see

1 Corinthians 7), he explained the gifts of the Spirit (see 1 Corinthians 12:1–12), he expounded on the virtues of charity (see 1 Corinthians 13), and he testified of the doctrines of resurrection and baptism for the dead (see 1 Corinthians 15).

Theme: Paul encouraged the Corinthian Saints to be unified. He taught that this could be achieved through the gospel of Jesus Christ, the influence of the Holy Ghost, and the spiritual maturity of each member.

1 Corinthians 1–4

Introduction

Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians was a voice of warning. News of divisions and petty bickering had come to him through members of the house of Chloe, and he was determined to set the Saints right by teaching that they should be unified in the fellowship of Jesus Christ. Paul reminded them that through the gospel they were "sanctified in Christ Jesus" (1 Corinthians 1:1–6).

Prayerfully study 1 Corinthians 1–4 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Church members are to be unified and avoid contention (see 1 Corinthians 1:9–13; see also Ephesians 2:19–22; 4:11–14; D&C 38:25–27).
- God chooses humble people to preach the gospel by the power of the Holy Ghost (see 1 Corinthians 1:17–31; 2:4–5; see also D&C 1:18–20, 23).
- God's wisdom is greater than man's and can only be learned through the Holy Ghost (see 1 Corinthians 2:1–14; see also Mosiah 3:19).
- Gospel knowledge is built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ and grows line upon line (see 1 Corinthians 3:1–15; see also 2 Nephi 28:30).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 280, 282–84.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for 1 Corinthians 1–4.



New Testament Video presentation 15, “The Body Is a Temple” (7:18), can be used in teaching 1 Corinthians 3–6 (see *New Testament Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).

1 Corinthians 1:1–13. Members of the Church must be unified and avoid contention. (15–20 minutes)

Discuss some of the following questions with students:

- Have you ever been in a church class or quorum in which some students were more popular than others?
- What is that like for those who are left out?
- What does it do to the class or the quorum as a whole?
- How does it affect the class or quorum members’ service in the Church?

Have a student read Doctrine and Covenants 38:25–27 and ask how this scripture applies to the discussion. Explain that because members of the Church in Corinth had a problem with contention, Paul had to remind them how the Lord wants us to treat one another. Invite students to read 1 Corinthians 1:10–13; 3:3. Ask:

- What do these verses teach about unity?
- What impact would the members being divided have on missionary work?
- Why do division, jealousy, and contention make living the gospel difficult? (see 3 Nephi 11:29).
- How can Church members be united in doctrine?
- What are other ways we can unite as a Church?

Ask students to read 1 Corinthians 1:2–9 and look for who sanctifies us, calls us to be Saints, and gives us grace. Ask: What did Jesus Christ do that has the power to change and unify us? (He provided the Atonement.) Invite students to read the following scriptures and tell what each teaches about unity:

- Doctrine and Covenants 61:8. (Repentance will help prepare us to be unified with others.)
- Moses 7:18. (We must be unified in order to build Zion.)
- John 17:20–23. (Jesus Christ prayed for and expects His followers to be one.)
- 1 Corinthians 1:9–10. (We should be unified and bound together in our beliefs.)

Read the following statement by President Marion G. Romney, who was a member of the First Presidency:

“The way to unity is for us to learn the will of the Lord and then to do it. . . . The power of the Church for good in the world depends upon the extent to which we, the members thereof, observe this principle” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1983, 22; or *Ensign*, May 1983, 17).

Discuss with students what they could do to help bring greater unity to their church classes and quorums. Ask:

- Are there people you know who are often left out or shunned by their peers?
- What specific things could you do to help them?
- What would create unity among your peers at school or among your family members?

Invite students to write down one “unity” goal that they will work on for the next week.

1 Corinthians 1:17–31. God chooses humble people to preach the gospel by the power of the Holy Ghost. (15–20 minutes)

Discuss the following questions:

- If the Church needed to send a representative to an important discussion with several prominent leaders of other religions, would you prefer them to send a well-known university professor or a young student? Why?
- What strengths would the professor have compared to the student?
- What strengths might the student have that the professor might not have?
- How might the strengths of the professor be helpful?
- How might they get in the way?

(*Note:* Do not use this discussion to criticize the educated. The “weak things of the earth” refers to those who, regardless of position or education, are humble enough to rely on the Holy Ghost.)

Read 1 Corinthians 1:25–27 and the following quotation from Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“Question: How is it that the weak things of the earth confound the mighty and strong?

“Answer: True religion is not a matter of intellectuality or of worldly prominence or renown, but of spirituality; and they are not weak but strong in the realm of spiritual things” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 2:316).

Ask students: How does this affect your choice between the professor and the student?

Have students read 1 Corinthians 1:17–31 looking for verses that show why God chooses the weak things of the world. Discuss their findings. Explain that the “weak” things of the world are people who are humble, not of worldly renown, unlearned as to the things of the world. Those who fit this definition of “weak” rely more upon God than on their own intelligence. Because of that reliance the Lord is able to use them to “confound the wise” (see also D&C 35:13).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 1:18–20, 23 looking for who God chose to spread the gospel in the last days. Ask:

- Who do you know from Church history or modern times who has been called to do the Lord’s work but may have been considered weak in the eyes of the world? (Possible answers include the Prophet Joseph Smith, President Gordon B. Hinckley, other latter-day prophets, the Church’s missionaries, ward and branch leaders.)
- Why might you be considered simple or weak?
- What must you do to become a powerful tool in the hands of the Lord?

Testify to students that the Lord needs them to be humble and lowly so He can rely on them to do His work in the world today.

1 Corinthians 2. God’s wisdom is greater than man’s and can only be learned through the Holy Ghost. It is the source of knowledge that leads us successfully through this life and on to celestial glory. (20–25 minutes)

Bring some copies of your local telephone directory to class. Write on separate slips of paper descriptions of problems that require the assistance of a competent professional (for example your car will not start, you were just laid off work, your child has chest pains). Give the slips of paper to students and ask them to decide where to go for help by looking in the telephone directory. Ask:

- Who did you decide to call? Why?
- Why is it important that the person you go to for help is experienced in treating your problem?

To help students understand that God is the source of the knowledge that will lead us to celestial glory, discuss the following questions:

- Do you typically ask God what to wear each day, what you should eat for lunch, or for the correct answers on your homework? Why or why not?
- To whom would you go for answers to these questions?
- What kinds of information should we ask God for?

Read 1 Corinthians 2:1–5 and look for what Paul’s faith was based on. Ask:

- In what ways do we sometimes let our faith “stand in the wisdom of men”?
- Why do we sometimes allow our faith to do this?
- How can we keep from doing this?

Read 1 Corinthians 2:9–10; Doctrine and Covenants 1:38; 18:33–36 looking for ways the voice of the Lord is revealed to us. Ask: How can hearing the voice of God help us build on the foundation of Christ?

Read 1 Corinthians 2:11–16 and discuss some of the following questions:

- Why do you think it is important to seek the Lord’s Spirit to guide our lives?

- Why might one have difficulty learning spiritual truths?
- How does the natural man tend to regard the gospel?
- How do we obtain the “mind of Christ”? (see also 2 Nephi 32:2–3).

Read the following statement by Elder Joseph Fielding Smith and testify of its truthfulness:

“Only by the aid of the Holy Ghost, and through obedience to the principles of the gospel, will a man eventually attain to the knowledge of all truth. In other words, those who will not make their lives conform in every particular to the Divine Life; who will not adjust their lives through faith and repentance and obedience to all divine law, will never be in a position to comprehend truth in its fulness” (Doctrines of Salvation, 1:298).

1 Corinthians 3:1–15, 21–23. Gospel knowledge is built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ and grows line upon line. (20–25 minutes)

Show students a glass of milk and a piece of meat. Ask:

- Which would you feed to a baby? Why?
- What would happen if you fed a baby some meat?
- What does milk provide until the child can eat meat?

Ask students to read 1 Corinthians 3:1–2 and look for who Paul compared the Corinthian Saints to. What do you think the phrase “babes in Christ” means (v. 1)?

Tell students that the milk can be compared to a basic understanding of the gospel and the meat to more advanced gospel understanding. Have students imagine they are missionaries teaching a nonmember, and ask:

- Why would it be important to teach basic gospel principles first rather than the deeper truths of the gospel?
- What harm might come if we taught people deeper doctrines first?
- What do basic gospel doctrines provide for people who are learning about the Church?

Read 2 Nephi 28:30 and ask: How does the Lord teach His children? As you read the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, invite students to identify how we gain an understanding of gospel doctrines today:

“God’s earthly kingdom is a school in which his saints learn the doctrines of salvation. Some members of the Church are being taught elementary courses; others are approaching graduation and can do independent research where the deep and hidden things are concerned. All must learn line upon line and precept upon precept” (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 2:324; see also D&C 78:17–18; Alma 12:9–11).

Ask students to read 1 Corinthians 3:3–15 looking for evidence that the Corinthians were still like infants who needed milk. Ask: According to these verses, what is the foundation upon which gospel knowledge must be built? Read this statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“Paul, ‘as a wise masterbuilder,’ laid the foundation for the Corinthian Church on Christ and his atoning sacrifice. Similarly, in this day, Joseph Smith said: ‘The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the apostles and prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that he died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it.’ (*Teachings [of the Prophet Joseph Smith]*, p. 121.)” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 2:325).

Ask:

- What can you do to make the Savior the foundation of your life?
- How can you build on that foundation?

1 Corinthians 5–7

Introduction

Before 1 Corinthians, Paul had written an earlier letter to the Corinthian Saints (see 1 Corinthians 5:9). Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained:

“The contentious souls in the Corinthian congregation wrote a reply [to this first letter], taking issue with some of the doctrines of the Apostles and asking detailed questions about his teachings. Thereupon, with vigor and true apostolic zeal, Paul wrote a second epistle, canonized and known as First Corinthians, which answered the points raised by his detractors and further amplified the teachings of the original letter.

“Unfortunately we do not know what was said in Paul’s prior epistle to the Corinthians, nor in their reply to him. All that has come to us is his reply to the reply. We have, thus, only a few comments about certain aspects of the doctrines they were considering” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 2:309–10).

Given this background, it is easy to see why some have misunderstood some of Paul’s writings. However, as you carefully read 1 Corinthians 5–7 and look for the doctrines of the gospel, you will find them. In these chapters Paul explained doctrines relating to marriage, church discipline, legal questions, bondage to sin, and missionary work.

Prayerfully study 1 Corinthians 5–7 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- It is easier to live righteously when we associate with righteous people (see 1 Corinthians 5; 6:15–17; see also Galatians 6:1).
- Through the Atonement, the Lord can make us holy (see 1 Corinthians 6:9–12, 19–20; 7:23–24; see also Alma 22:14; D&C 60:7).
- We should not defile our bodies, for they are the sacred temples of our spirits (see 1 Corinthians 6:19; see also Romans 12:1; 1 Corinthians 3:16–17; Mosiah 2:37; Helaman 4:24; D&C 89:18–21).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 286–90.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for 1 Corinthians 5–7.

1 Corinthians 5. It is important to choose friends who are living the gospel. (15–20 minutes)

Show students a bowl of fresh fruit containing one rotten piece. Discuss the effects of a rotten piece of fruit on the rest of the fruit. (The spoilage in rotten fruit will spread to good fruit.) Read 1 Corinthians 5:1 and look for the wickedness of some of the people in Corinth (see also the commentary for 1 Corinthians 5:1, 11 in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, pp. 287–88). Ask:

- How could fornication be compared to “rotten fruit”?
- Read verses 2–5. What did Paul want to do to protect the Saints?
- How would removing the wicked people from among them be a blessing to the righteous?

Read the following statement by Elder Neal A. Maxwell:

“Do not company with fornicators—not because you are too good for them but, as C. S. Lewis wrote, because you are not good enough. Remember that bad situations can wear down even good people. Joseph had both good sense and good legs in fleeing from Potiphar’s wife” (“The Stern but Sweet Seventh Commandment,” in *Morality* [1992], 29).

Read 1 Corinthians 5:6–8 and explain that leaven is yeast. Ask:

- Why is the effect of yeast on a loaf of bread a good analogy to sin?
- What do you think the phrase “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” means?
- How does this analogy relate to the bowl of fruit? (The leaven affects all the dough, just as the bacteria in the rotten fruit can spoil the good fruit. Likewise unrepentant sinners can influence those around them to sin.)

Have students read 1 Corinthians 5:9–13 looking for kinds of people who can have a bad influence. Ask:

- What can we do to avoid the effects of those who commit sin?
- How can we help those who commit sin without becoming tainted ourselves?

Read the first two paragraphs on page 12 of the *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet about the importance of having good friends. Encourage students to be wise in their choice of friends so they will have a better chance of living the gospel. Explain that this does not mean we should avoid those who are not members of the Church. Stress to students that they have a duty to help others through their example and through proclaiming the gospel.



1 Corinthians 5–6. In order to have joy in this life, we need to keep ourselves clean and worthy to have the Spirit of the Lord. (30–35 minutes)

Before students arrive, push desks or chairs out of order, turn some upside down, scatter books on the floor, tip over the trash can, and so on. When class begins, ask: How did it feel to enter a classroom in such disarray? Why? Invite the students to put things back in order. Ask: What do you feel when you are in an organized, beautiful, and well-kept building? Discuss their answers.

Read 1 Corinthians 6:19 and ask:

- How does this scripture relate to the untidy classroom?
- If our bodies are temples, how should we care for them?
- What might cause our bodies to become “cluttered,” “dirty,” or “out of order”?
- In what other ways do the object lesson and this verse apply to our bodies?

Tell students about the people of Corinth (see the historical background information in the introduction to 1 Corinthians, p. 174). Explain that Paul had great success in turning the Corinthian Saints from their wickedness and bringing them to Jesus Christ. After Paul left Corinth, however, he learned that many of them had returned to their former ways. Explain that Paul wrote 1 Corinthians to chastise the Saints and encourage them to remain steadfast in the faith.

Have students scan 1 Corinthians 5:1–6:8 looking for the sins many of the Corinthians had committed, and list them on the board. Ask: Which of these temptations do we face today? Continue scanning through 1 Corinthians 6:20. Ask: How can we keep ourselves worthy of the Spirit of God while living in a sinful world?

Display an item that is clean and white (such as a handkerchief, a picture of a bride, or a clean piece of paper), and ask: What does the color white symbolize? Display a bowl of mud. Invite a student to soil his or her hands in the mud, and then give the student the clean, white item to hold. Ask the class: How did you feel when you saw the item become dirty? Compare this activity to the Corinthian Saints who had become unclean, and point out to students that the same situation can exist today. Ask:

- What kinds of things make us unclean?
- What keeps us clean?

Explain that the major sin among the Corinthian Saints was sexual immorality. Read 1 Corinthians 6:19–20 and 7:23 and ask:

- To whom do we belong?
- How does this apply to our body and our spirit?
- In what ways does God own us?
- Since we belong to Him and since our bodies are temples in which the Holy Spirit is to dwell, how should we live our lives?

Read the following three statements and ask students to suggest how they apply to the discussion.

President Stephen L. Richards, who was a member of the First Presidency, said:

“Some . . . think that they have freedom to do what they will. They seem to think that they have freedom to do with their lives as they desire. They ought to be taught the Lord’s words regarding life. Life is precious, ‘For ye are bought with a price. . . .’ (1 Cor. 6:20)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1956, 85).

President Joseph Fielding Smith said:

“The great love, with its accompanying blessings, extended to us through the crucifixion, suffering, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is beyond our mortal comprehension. We never could repay. We have been bought with a price beyond computation—not with gold or silver or precious stones, ‘but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot.’ (1 Pet. 1:19.)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1966, 102).

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, taught:

“Christ suffered for the sins and sorrows and pains of all the rest of the human family, providing remission for all of our sins as well, upon conditions of obedience to the principles and ordinances of the gospel He taught (see 2 Nephi 9:21–23)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1995, 88; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 67).

Read Doctrine and Covenants 93:36–37. Testify that disobedience and uncleanness result in darkness and loss of the Spirit. As we are obedient and clean, the Holy Ghost can abide with us and give us greater light.

1 Corinthians 7. Paul answered difficult questions about marriage. (10–15 minutes)

Invite three students to come to the front of the class. Assign each of them one of the following roles: a teenager preparing for a mission; a full-time missionary; and a single, twenty-five-year-old returned missionary. Ask the following questions and invite each of the three students to answer in character:

- Do you think you have already met the person you will eventually marry?
- How much time do you spend thinking about marriage?
- How soon do you think the Lord wants you to be married?

Help students realize that answers to questions regarding marriage may be different depending on one’s circumstances. Explain that 1 Corinthians 7:1–24 deals with some delicate questions regarding marriage. Verses 25–40 deal specifically with issues facing those involved in missionary or other priesthood service requiring extended periods of time away from home.

Read 1 Corinthians 7:1, 7–9, 27, 32–34, 38. Ask students:

- Why might these verses be difficult to understand?
- Could some of them seem contrary to our beliefs regarding marriage?

To help students understand these writings of Paul, go back and read the chapter heading and the Joseph Smith Translation changes in the footnotes and appendix. Choose paragraphs from the commentaries for 1 Corinthians 7 in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles* (pp. 288–90) and read them to your students. It may be useful to duplicate these pages and give them to students as a handout. Point out what a blessing it is to have prophetic help to understand difficult passages of scripture.

1 Corinthians 8–11

Introduction

The plan of happiness includes instructions regarding what we must do to become like God. Paul’s teachings clarify many important doctrines about God and His plan. One analogy Paul used involves an athlete whose training and discipline allow him to win the prize (see 1 Corinthians 9:24–27). We need to be as disciplined as athletes in order to gain “an incorruptible” crown (v. 25), the reward of eternal life (see 2 Timothy 4:7–8; D&C 14:7).

Prayerfully study 1 Corinthians 8–11 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- A person’s bad example can be a stumbling block to others (see 1 Corinthians 8:1–13; see also Alma 4:10; 39:11).
- While many have attained the status of a god, we worship only one Godhead (see 1 Corinthians 8:4–6).
- Jesus Christ is the God of Israel and the spiritual Rock that sustains us (see 1 Corinthians 10:1–14; see also Helaman 5:12).
- Celestial marriage is necessary for exaltation (see 1 Corinthians 11:11–12; see also D&C 131:1–4).
- The sacrament is a great blessing to us only when we partake worthily (see 1 Corinthians 11:23–30; see also 3 Nephi 18:28–32).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 290–93.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for 1 Corinthians 8–11.

1 Corinthians 8. Since nonmembers judge the Church by the conduct of its members, our example may greatly affect others. (20–25 minutes)

Place a large obstacle in the doorway of your classroom. Allow students to walk around or step over it. If someone tries to move it, allow them to do so. Discuss questions such as these:

- How did the obstacle in the doorway make it difficult to come to class today?
- What effort did it take to remove the obstacle?

Read Alma 4:10 and ask:

- If we compared the door of the classroom to the gateway to the Church, what would the obstacle in the doorway represent?
- Read Alma 39:11. What effect did the example of Corianton have on others?
- How can we avoid being affected by the bad examples of others?

Read 1 Corinthians 8:1–6 looking for the problem Paul was addressing. (Eating food that had been offered to idols.) Ask:

- How might it have appeared to a member of the Church to see another member eating something that he felt was forbidden?
- In what ways may nonmembers become offended by the unrighteous actions of members of the Church today?
- What forbidden things do some members partake of that could hinder a weaker Church member or a nonmember from learning more about the gospel?

Have students read 1 Corinthians 8:7–13 looking for Paul’s solution to the problem. Ask:

- What did Paul say he would rather do than offend a brother? Why?
- What is more important: something that seems to benefit us or something that benefits the Lord and His kingdom?
- How can we better follow the spirit of Paul’s teachings?



1 Corinthians 9:24–10:14. With the Lord’s help we can gain mastery over our bodies and prepare for an eternal inheritance. (15–20 minutes)

Identify a good athlete in your class or show a picture of one. Discuss with the class what it takes to be a good athlete and the rewards that come from discipline and training. Read 1 Corinthians 9:24–25 and ask:

- Who does Paul compare to an athlete? (Those seeking to live the gospel and receive eternal life.)
- What does it take for a true Christian to succeed?
- Who can win the reward God offers us?

Read the following statement by Elder M. Russell Ballard:

“Let me explain why you young men and women must keep your covenants you have made with God. In the premortal world before we left the presence of Heavenly Father, He warned and cautioned us about new experiences we would have in mortality. We knew that we each would have a physical body of flesh and bone. Never having been mortal before, we had no experience dealing with the temptations of mortality. But Heavenly Father knew and understood. He charged us to control our mortal bodies and to

make them subject to our spirits. Our spirits would have to master the physical temptations that our bodies would encounter in a temporal world. Spiritual power over the influence of Satan comes to us by keeping the commandments of our Lord, Jesus Christ” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1993, 5; or *Ensign*, May 1993, 6).

Ask: How does this statement relate to Paul’s analogy of the athlete?

Divide the class into four groups and give each group one of the following sets of scripture references to study:

- 1 Corinthians 10:7; Exodus 32:6–8, 17–20
- 1 Corinthians 10:8; Numbers 25:1–9
- 1 Corinthians 10:9; Numbers 21:1–9
- 1 Corinthians 10:10; Numbers 16:41–50

Have each group retell the story from their assigned scriptures and explain the temptation the children of Israel faced. Then discuss the following questions as a class:

- What evidence is there that many of the Israelites lacked self-control?
- How could mastering the flesh have helped them?
- What difficulties do people have in dealing with temptations of the body today?
- What can we do to help ourselves?
- In what ways can the Lord help?

Read 1 Corinthians 10:1–4 and look for how the children of Israel were led anciently. Ask:

- Who is the Rock?
- What was the spiritual meat and drink He provided? (see Exodus 16:15; Numbers 20:7–11).
- What has He provided today? (see 1 Corinthians 10:16–17).

Testify that because of the Atonement we can gain eternal life if we keep our covenants. (You may wish to use the information in the teaching suggestion for 1 Corinthians 10:13 and encourage students to be masters of their bodies so they can win the prize.)



1 Corinthians 10:13 (Scripture Mastery). Because of God’s love for us, He has provided a way for us to escape temptation and bear our trials. (5–10 minutes)

Talk with students about the power of the adversary and ask: How does Satan entice us to sin? Use additional questions such as the following:

- Can Satan make you sin?
- How may Satan have power or influence with us?
- What strategies does he use to trap you in sin?

Read the following statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“All beings who have bodies have power over those who have not. The devil has no power over us only as we permit him” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 181).

Ask: What does this add to your understanding of Satan’s power to entice us to sin?

Read to students the first part of 1 Corinthians 10:13 (through the phrase “above that ye are able”). Ask: How does this scripture support Joseph Smith’s statement? Testify that we do have power over Satan.

Read the following story from President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“The story is told of a king who was choosing between two drivers for his coach. He ordered each of them to drive his coach down a steep, winding road cut into a high cliff.

“The first driver came down slowly, hugging the wall of the cliff. The second driver demonstrated great talent and ability. He raced down the mountain, with the coach so close at times that half the wheel was off the edge of the cliff.

“The king was very thoughtful, then wisely chose the first man to drive his coach. It is best to stay on the safe side of things” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 22; or *Ensign*, May 1996, 18).

Ask students: According to this story, what is one good way to avoid Satan’s power?

Have a student read 1 Corinthians 10:13 in its entirety. Ask: What does the last part of this verse add to our understanding? The Prophet Joseph Smith continued:

“The moment we revolt at anything which comes from God, the devil takes power” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 181).

Ask: What do we learn from this?

Help students understand that as we flirt with temptation we lose power to resist it. What does 1 Corinthians 10:14 teach about resisting temptation? Invite students to read Alma 13:27–28 and look for how we can maintain control over Satan. Share your desire that the students stay far away from evil and not succumb to temptation. Discuss the following insight from Elder Neal A. Maxwell:

“God has given us a guarantee that there will always be a way to escape, and/or that we will not be tempted

above that which we are able to bear. This truth, echoed by different prophets in different dispensations, is vital to us; the very prophetic repetition is reassuring” (*Things As They Really Are*, 88).

Explain that this does not mean that we can encourage temptations in our lives and expect God to rescue us. Our Father helps those who are humble and prayerful (see Alma 13:27–29). Elder Maxwell offered this option:

“As to temptation, most of the time there is an obvious way to escape, but prevention—not being enticed in the first place—is more sure and is part of having sufficient faith” (*Not My Will, But Thine* [1988], 75).

President George A. Smith, who served as a member of the First Presidency, said:

“There is a line of demarcation well defined between the Lord’s territory and the devil’s territory. If you will remain on the Lord’s side of the line, the adversary cannot come there to tempt you. You are perfectly safe as long as you stay on the Lord’s side of the line. But . . . if you cross onto the devil’s side of the line, you are in his territory, and you are in his power, and he will work on you to get you just as far from that line as he possibly can, knowing that he can only succeed in destroying you by keeping you away from the place where there is safety” (in George Albert Smith, in Conference Report, Oct. 1945, 118).

1 Corinthians 11:23–30. As we worthily partake of the sacrament, we will be forgiven of our sins and the Lord will heal our spirits. (20–25 minutes)

Ask students if it matters what emblems are used in the sacrament. Tell them that the scriptures identify bread and wine as the appropriate emblems but that we commonly use water instead of wine. In time of emergency or when those items are not available, an appropriate substitute item may be used. For example, potatoes or potato peelings were sometimes used for the sacrament by European Latter-day Saints during World War II (see Ezra Taft Benson, in Conference Report, Oct. 1952, 120).

Read 1 Corinthians 11:23–26 and Doctrine and Covenants 27:2. Ask:

- Which is more important, what we take for the sacrament or how prepared we are to partake? Why?
- Why do we take the sacrament?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 20:77 looking for the covenants we make when we take the sacrament, and list them on the

board. Discuss with students how we can better keep our covenants. Ask:

- What is significant about remembering Jesus' body?
- What is significant about remembering His blood?
- How can the emblems of the sacrament give us hope?
- How should remembering these things affect our lives?

Testify of the importance of the sacrament, and point out that it is the only ordinance we experience for ourselves more than once. Read 1 Corinthians 11:27–31 and look for what Paul warned us to avoid. Elder Joseph Fielding Smith taught:

“The partaking of these emblems constitutes one of the most holy and sacred ordinances in the Church” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:339).

Explain that the sacrament has the power to help us perfect our lives if we take it worthily. Elder Melvin J. Ballard, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, explained:

“If we have sincerely repented and put ourselves in proper condition, we shall be forgiven, and spiritual healing will come to our souls. . . . You feel the wounds of the spirit being healed, and the load being lifted. Comfort and happiness come” (“The Sacramental Covenant,” *New Era*, Jan. 1976, 8).

Elder John H. Groberg, a member of the Seventy, said:

“What does it mean to partake of the sacrament worthily? Or how do we know if we are unworthy?”

“If we desire to improve (which is to repent) and are not under priesthood restriction, then, in my opinion, we are worthy. . . .”

“If, however, we refuse to repent and improve, if we do not remember him and keep his commandments, then we have stopped our growth, and that is damnation to our souls.

“The sacrament is an intensely personal experience, and we are the ones who knowingly are worthy or otherwise” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1989, 49–50; or *Ensign*, May 1989, 38; see also 3 Nephi 18:27–29).

Discuss the following questions:

- How do we know if we are partaking of the sacrament worthily?
- What happens to those who partake unworthily?
- What blessings come to those who partake worthily?

Testify again of the sacred nature of the sacrament and of the power it can have in our lives. Encourage students to experience this power the next time they partake by applying the principles discussed in the lesson.

1 Corinthians 12–14

Introduction

Paul taught the Corinthian Saints the principle of unity by telling them about the gifts of the Spirit. He told them that God gives us these gifts not only to bless our individual lives but also to give us the opportunity to bless one another (see 1 Corinthians 12:1–12). Every gift of the Spirit comes from the same source, the Holy Ghost. Paul compared these gifts to the parts of the body. Each part works independently but in a common cause. Likewise, the Saints were to use their gifts to benefit one another and be as one. Paul taught that of the spiritual gifts of faith, hope, and charity, the greatest is charity. He reminded the Saints that if they did not have charity, the other gifts would be of no value.

Prayerfully study 1 Corinthians 12–14 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The knowledge that Jesus is the Christ comes by revelation through the Holy Ghost (see 1 Corinthians 12:1–3).
- There are many gifts of the Spirit given to bless the Saints (see 1 Corinthians 12:4–31).
- We should seek to obtain charity, the pure love of Christ, so we can properly use all the gifts of the Spirit (see 1 Corinthians 13; see also Moroni 7:45–48).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 294–99.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for 1 Corinthians 12–14.

 **1 Corinthians 12–14. The Holy Ghost reveals and testifies that Jesus is the Christ; this is the spirit of prophecy. The Holy Ghost also blesses our lives through other gifts of the Spirit.** (35–40 minutes)

Invite a student to play a song on the piano or some other musical instrument using only one key or note. Or have a student write a sentence on the board using a single word. Have students read 1 Corinthians 12:1–4, and ask:

- What is described in this scripture that can be compared to the keys of a piano or the words of a sentence?

- According to verse 3, what important knowledge comes as a gift of the Spirit?
- What are some of the other gifts of the Spirit?

Divide students into three groups and assign each group one of the following scripture passages: 1 Corinthians 12:4–11; Doctrine and Covenants 46:11–26; Moroni 10:8–19. Ask them to:

1. Make a list of spiritual gifts.
2. Determine why the gifts are given.
3. Determine whether all people may receive at least one gift.
4. List as many examples as they can of people being blessed with spiritual gifts.

Have each group report, and compare and discuss their findings. Ask students why they think the gifts are explained in such detail in three different books of scripture.

Ask: Are there other gifts besides those listed in these scriptures? Read the following statement by Elder Marvin J. Ashton, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Let us review some of these less-conspicuous gifts: the gift of asking; the gift of listening; the gift of hearing and using a still, small voice; the gift of being able to weep; the gift of avoiding contention; the gift of being agreeable; the gift of avoiding vain repetition; the gift of seeking that which is righteous; the gift of not passing judgment; the gift of looking to God for guidance; the gift of being a disciple; the gift of caring for others; the gift of being able to ponder; the gift of offering prayer; the gift of bearing a mighty testimony; and the gift of receiving the Holy Ghost” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1987, 23; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 20).

Ask: Are all the gifts equally useful? Show students an item or toy that is powered by batteries. Demonstrate how it works. Remove the batteries and show that now it will not work. Have students read 1 Corinthians 13:1–3 looking for what gives validity to exercising spiritual gifts. Ask:

- How is charity like a battery?
- Why do you think charity is a most important gift of the Spirit?

Invite students to read 1 Corinthians 13:4–7 and list the seven elements that describe how charity is manifest and the eight elements that describe what charity is not. Ask: How would your lives change if these elements of charity were part of your nature?

Read the definition of *charity* in the Bible Dictionary (p. 632) and the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“Above all the attributes of godliness and perfection, *charity* is the one most devoutly to be desired. Charity is more than love, far more; it is everlasting love, perfect love, the pure love of Christ which endureth forever. It is love so centered in righteousness that the possessor has no aim or desire except for the eternal welfare of his own soul and for the souls of those around him” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 121).

Read Matthew 22:34–40. Explain that “the law and the prophets” (v. 40) refer to sections of the Old Testament. Ask:

- If all the law and the prophets hang on two commandments, what is the relationship between the scriptures and charity?
- Read Moroni 7:46–48. How does Mormon describe charity?
- According to him, how do we obtain charity?

Point out to students that praying for charity is like praying for other blessings—we must also work hard to receive this blessing. Ask: What else can we do to develop charity? (Answers might include giving service, sacrificing for others, and obeying the commandments; see 1 John 5:2–3.)

Read 1 Corinthians 13:8–13 and ask: How is developing charity like growing up from childhood? Encourage students to seek after charity, the most important of all the gifts of the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:13–31. Every member of the Church is important to the Lord and His Church. (15–20 minutes)

Place on a table or other solid surface a small pile of pencil shavings or dry dirt. Invite a student to come forward, and give the student a single straw from a broom to sweep up the pile. Ask:

- How is your broom working?
- How long will it take to finish the job?
- What would help?

Hand the student a real broom to finish the work. List the different parts of a broom. (Handle, stitches, strands of straw.) Ask:

- How important are the different parts of the broom for doing the work?
- Read 1 Corinthians 12:13–18. What did Paul compare to Church members?
- To what parts of the body did he refer?
- Which parts would we want to do without? Why?
- What was Paul teaching? (see D&C 84:109–110).
- How does this teaching compare to the broom?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:19–23 and ask: Who is Paul referring to when he speaks of parts that are considered more feeble or less honorable or comely? (Perhaps those who feel useless or inadequate in the Church, or those whose duty may be of little notice.) Read this statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“This church does not belong to its President. Its head is the Lord Jesus Christ, whose name each of us has taken upon ourselves. We are all in this great endeavor together. We are here to assist our Father in His work and His glory, ‘to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man’ (Moses 1:39). Your obligation is as serious in your sphere of responsibility as is my obligation in my sphere. No calling in this church is small or of little consequence. All of us in the pursuit of our duty touch the lives of others. To each of us in our respective responsibilities the Lord has said:

“Wherefore, be faithful; stand in the office which I have appointed unto you; succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees’ (D&C 81:5)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 94; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 71).

Have students read 1 Corinthians 12:24–27. Have each student write a letter giving counsel to an imaginary friend who has confided feeling insignificant at church. Collect the letters and share some of them.

1 Corinthians 15–16

Introduction

Paul concludes 1 Corinthians by testifying of the reality of Jesus Christ’s Resurrection and declaring himself and others as witnesses (see 1 Corinthians 15:3–9). Christ’s Resurrection opened death’s doors and assured that all mankind will be raised from the grave (see vv. 19–27). All will be judged and receive a reward according to their faithfulness (see vv. 33–42). Look in 1 Corinthians 15:53–58 for the testimony and promise the Lord has extended to everyone (the sting of death can be removed through the hope of a glorious resurrection). Finally Paul urges the Saints to have faith and charity as their standard (see 1 Corinthians 16:13–14, 22–24).

Prayerfully study 1 Corinthians 15–16 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- All mortals will be resurrected and receive immortal, perfected bodies (see 1 Corinthians 15:19–26, 42–57; see also Alma 11:43–45).

- Baptisms for the dead were performed anciently and continue today (see 1 Corinthians 15:29; see also D&C 128:11–16).
- Through our faithfulness and by the power of the Atonement, we can inherit one of three kingdoms of glory (1 Corinthians 15:35–42; see also D&C 76).
- We faithfully endure by keeping our covenants throughout our lives (see 1 Corinthians 15:58; 16:13–24).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 297–98.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for 1 Corinthians 15–16.



1 Corinthians 15. Through our faithfulness and by the power of the Atonement, we can inherit one of three kingdoms of glory. (30–35 minutes)

Write the word *death* on the board. Ask students:

- What concerns you most about death?
- Who is the person closest to you who has passed away?
- In what ways was the death of this loved one painful for you?
- How did you get over the pain or “sting” of the passing of this loved one?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1–4 and look for the message of hope. Explain that Paul was teaching Saints in Corinth, some of whom rejected belief in the Resurrection. He tried to correct their disbelief with his testimony.

Divide the class into four groups and assign each one of the following four passages of scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:5–11; 15:12–26; 15:35–42; and 15:42–50. Have each group read their passage looking for insights into the Resurrection. Have them share their findings, and write them on the board. Ask:

- What evidence is there that Jesus was resurrected?
- What is “the last enemy” that the Resurrection defeats?
- What kinds of bodies will the Resurrection provide?

Share and discuss the following statement by Elder Joseph Fielding Smith:

“In the resurrection there will be different kinds of bodies; they will not all be alike. The body a man receives will determine his place hereafter. There will be celestial bodies, terrestrial bodies, and telestial bodies, and these bodies will differ as distinctly as do bodies here. . . . *Some will gain celestial bodies with all*

the powers of exaltation and eternal increase. These bodies will shine like the sun as our Savior’s does, as described by John. Those who enter the terrestrial kingdom will have terrestrial bodies, and they will not shine like the sun, but they will be more glorious than the bodies of those who receive the celestial glory” (Doctrines of Salvation, 2:286–87).

Explain that although everyone will be resurrected because of Jesus Christ, death may still have a sting. Have students find “the sting of death” in 1 Corinthians 15:55–56. Ask: How can sin sting? Read President Spencer W. Kimball’s warning:

“Paul says, ‘The sting of death is sin,’ meaning that if men die in their sins, they will suffer the prescribed penalty and gain a lesser glory in the realms ahead (1 Cor. 15:56)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1978, 109; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 72; see also D&C 42:44–48).

Ask: What must we do to avoid the sting of death? Conclude by reading the following testimony by President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“The pain of death is swallowed up in the peace of eternal life. . . . Whenever the cold hand of death strikes, there shines through the gloom and the darkness of that hour the triumphant figure of the Lord Jesus Christ, He, the Son of God, who by His matchless and eternal power overcame death. . . . He is our comfort, our only true comfort, when the dark shroud of earthly night closes about us as the spirit departs the human form” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 92; or *Ensign*, May 1996, 67).

Testify that Jesus opens the door to celestial glory for those who are worthy.

 **1 Corinthians 15:20–22 (Scripture Mastery).**
Everyone will be resurrected through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. (10–15 minutes)

Insert your hand into a glove to demonstrate that the spirit gives life to the physical body. Remove your hand from the glove to demonstrate that the body is lifeless without the spirit. In the Resurrection the spirit will be reunited with the body, never to die or separate again.

Give students the following quiz:

Of the following people, who will not be resurrected?

- A. Cain
- B. Hitler
- C. Judas Iscariot
- D. Laman and Lemuel

Invite students to read 1 Corinthians 15:20–22 to discover the correct answer. Ask: What does the phrase “firstfruits of them that slept” mean? (Jesus Christ was the first person to be resurrected.)

Show students the picture *Burial of Jesus* (Matthew 27:57–60, John 19:38–42) (item no. 62180). Point out the flower and ask:

- Why do you think the artist included a flower in this picture depicting death?
- In what season of the year was Jesus resurrected? (Spring.)
- How is this a significant symbol of the Resurrection?

Conclude by reading President Joseph F. Smith’s insight:

“Every creature that is born in the image of God will be resurrected from the dead . . . by the power of Jesus Christ. It matters not whether we have done well or ill, whether we have been intelligent or ignorant, or whether we have been bondsmen or slaves or freemen, all men will be raised from the dead” (“The Second Death,” in Brian H. Stuy, ed., *Collected Discourses: Delivered by President Wilford Woodruff, His Two Counselors, the Twelve Apostles, and Others*, 5 vols. [1987–92], 4:224–25).

Discuss the power by which Jesus was able to bring about the Resurrection of the dead (see Ephesians 1:17, 19–20; 1 Peter 1:20–21). Invite students to share how their knowledge of the doctrine of the Resurrection influences their appreciation for the Savior.

 **1 Corinthians 15:29 (Scripture Mastery).** **We can help those who have died to gain salvation by being baptized for them.** (10–15 minutes)

Ask students to name an ordinance of the Church that no other church offers but that is clearly named in the Bible. Have them read 1 Corinthians 15:29 for the answer. Ask:

- What does this verse tell us about the Church of Jesus Christ at the time of Paul?
- Why do we perform baptisms for the dead?

Have students read the following passages of scripture looking for the answer to the last question: John 3:5; 1 Peter 3:18–20; 4:6; Doctrine and Covenants 124:28–31. After discussing the scriptures, you may also wish to share the following explanations. The Prophet Joseph Smith said:

“Every man that has been baptized and belongs to the kingdom has a right to be baptized for those who have gone before; and as soon as the law of the Gospel is obeyed here by their friends who act as proxy for them, the Lord has administrators there to set them free” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 367).

Elder Joseph Fielding Smith said:

“Salvation for the dead was understood in the days of the primitive Christian Church, and to some extent baptisms for the dead continued to be performed until A.D. 379, when the Council of Carthage forbade any longer the administration of this ordinance and ‘holy communion’ for the dead” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:163).

Ask:

- Where are these sacred baptisms performed?
- What must we do so we can be worthy to go to the temple?
- How do we prepare ourselves?
- What must those in the spirit world do to make vicarious baptism effectual for them?

If you have students who have been to the temple to be baptized for the dead, invite them to share how they felt about their experience.



1 Corinthians 15:40–42 (Scripture Mastery). We will receive one of three degrees of glory according to our works in this life. (10–15 minutes)

Have students imagine that a friend has asked them whether all people go to heaven or hell. Invite students to write a

response to this question and give reasons for their answers. Then ask for volunteers to read their responses.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:40–42 (including the Joseph Smith Translation of verse 40) and ask students to name the three degrees of glory. Make three columns on the board with these headings: *celestial*, *terrestrial*, and *telestial*. Write the reference Doctrine and Covenants 76:50–70 under *celestial*, 76:71–80 under *terrestrial*, and 76:81–90 under *telestial*. Have students read these verses looking for the characteristics of those who will go to each of the kingdoms of glory. Invite them to take turns going to the board to write their discoveries. Have them underline these characteristics in their scriptures if they wish.

Consider displaying three different lamps, each with lightbulbs of different wattage (such as 40, 60, or 100 watt). Darken the room, turn on each lamp separately, and ask students to notice the differences in brightness. Point out that Paul illustrated well the difference in brightness and joy of each kingdom. Testify that if we will faithfully make and keep our covenants, we will inherit the greatest happiness in the celestial kingdom.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

This Epistle written during this time

First missionary journey (Acts 13–14)	Second missionary journey (Acts 15:36–18:22)	Third missionary journey (Acts 18:23–21:15)	Imprisonment in Caesarea and Rome (Acts 21:16–28:31)	Through second Roman imprisonment
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About A.D. 47–50 50–53 53–57 57–62 62–65

Author: Paul wrote 2 Corinthians as a follow-up letter to his previous communications (see the introduction to 1 Corinthians, p. 174; 2 Corinthians 1:1; 10:1).

Audience: Paul wrote 2 Corinthians to the same Church members he had addressed in 1 Corinthians (see 2 Corinthians 1:1), and also to the Saints living in Achaia. Achaia was essentially a Roman province comprising all of Greece (see Bible map 13). A growing discontent had arisen among the Corinthian Saints due to the accusations of false teachers. Paul wrote to answer these accusations and to reassure the Saints in their faith.

Historical Background: Shortly after Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, he sent his close friend Titus on a visit to Corinth to determine how his letter was received (see 2 Corinthians 7:13, 15). While Paul waited for Titus’s return, a riot developed in Ephesus in opposition to his teachings (see Acts 19), so he fled to Macedonia (see 2 Corinthians 1:8–11). When Titus joined him again (see 2 Corinthians 7:6), Paul learned of the news from Corinth.

False teachers had infiltrated the Church there and were preying on the gullible for money. These teachers had accused Paul of taking money that was collected to assist the poverty-stricken Saints in Jerusalem. They had also challenged his authority as an Apostle. After hearing the concerns delivered by Titus, Paul wrote the letter known as 2 Corinthians sometime during A.D. 55–57 (see Bible Dictionary, “Pauline Epistles,” p. 743).

Unique Features: Paul shared more autobiographical information in this letter than in any other (see 2 Corinthians 11–12). He did so to answer his critics in Corinth who questioned his authority in the gospel and his loyalty to the gospel cause.

2 Corinthians 1–3

Introduction

Paul opened 2 Corinthians by answering the concerns of false leaders who had assumed authority among the Saints in Corinth. As you read 2 Corinthians 1–3 notice that by answering his critics, Paul was able to teach the Corinthians that the gospel was superior to the teachings of his enemies.

Prayerfully study 2 Corinthians 1–3 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- God comforts us in tribulation, which helps us comfort others (see 2 Corinthians 1:3–7; see also D&C 81:4–6).
- Members of the Church should love and forgive one another (see 2 Corinthians 2:1–11).
- True spirituality comes from living the gospel and following the promptings of the Holy Spirit, not from merely filling our assigned tasks (see 2 Corinthians 3:1–18).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 300–302.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for 2 Corinthians 1–3.

2 Corinthians 1:1–11, 21–22; 2:1–11. God comforts us in tribulation, which helps us comfort others. (30–35 minutes)

Discuss with students events in their lives that have caused grief, suffering, or discomfort. Ask:

- What did others do to comfort you?
- How does the Holy Ghost comfort people in times of distress? (see John 14:16–18, 26–27).

Read 2 Corinthians 1:1–4 looking for who sends the Holy Ghost and why. Ask: What does Heavenly Father want us to do when we receive comfort from the Spirit?

Tell students the following true incident related by Spencer J. Condie, who was later called to the Seventy. A young mother died in childbirth, leaving behind a husband and four children. Many who attended the funeral service felt a bitterness that God would allow such a devastating blow to come to this young family. At the end of the service the husband calmly got up and went to the pulpit:

“‘I sense your grief and concern,’ he said quietly, ‘but there is something I should tell you to comfort you. The first hour after my wife’s death I didn’t know how I could possibly stand it—how I could possibly go on without her. But then a sweet, peaceful spirit filled my soul, and since then I have had the

assurance that everything will be all right. Don't worry about us, we're going to be just fine.'

"This same comforting spirit distilled upon the congregation. Everyone went home comforted" ("Thy Constant Companion," *Ensign*, Oct. 1980, 33).

Ask students:

- Who comforted whom in this story?
- How is this similar to what the Savior did for each of us?
- Why do you think God comforts us during our trials rather than simply removing them?

Read 2 Corinthians 1:7 looking for the promise given to those who suffer.

- What does *consolation* mean? (Comfort, soothing, relief from grief.)
- How does verse 7 relate to verses 3–4?
- In what ways can we console others?

Read verses 8–11 looking for how the Corinthian Saints were able to bring comfort to Paul. Ask: How can prayer be a powerful tool in bringing comfort to ourselves and those around us?

Explain to students that a certain man in Corinth was excommunicated for fornication (see 1 Corinthians 5:1–6) and severely rebuked by the members there. Paul wrote that the man had suffered enough. Read 2 Corinthians 2:6–8 with students and ask:

- What did Paul counsel the Saints to do?
- Why was it so important that they forgive and love this man?
- If they refused to comfort and forgive him, Paul said he could be "swallowed up with overmuch sorrow" (v. 7). What do you think this means?

Have students read 2 Corinthians 2:9–11 and discover the danger in not forgiving. Ask:

- Who gets the advantage over us if we are unforgiving?
- In what way would Satan have an advantage?

Suggest students cross-reference 2 Corinthians 2:7–11 with Doctrine and Covenants 64:9–10. Read Doctrine and Covenants 64:9 and ask: Why is it a greater sin to refuse to forgive others? Share the following statement:

"When we take the position of withholding forgiveness from our fellow men, we are attempting to block his progress towards salvation. This position is satanical and our motive is not Christlike. We are endeavoring to impede the progress of a living soul and deny him the forgiving blessings of the atonement. This philosophy is saturated with impure motives that are designed to destroy the soul" (Leaun G. Otten and C. Max Caldwell, *Sacred Truths of the Doctrine and Covenants*, 2 vols. [1993], 1:314).

Ask students:

- How could not forgiving a murderer be a greater sin than murder?
- How could not forgiving an adulterer or an abuser of children be a greater sin than adultery or child abuse?

In magnitude, sins such as these are much greater, but if we do not forgive we poison our own soul. Tell students that Satan uses an unforgiving spirit as a device to cause division between people.

Conclude with Elder Bruce R. McConkie's description of compassion:

"True *compassion* for one's fellow men is a mark of a true saint. It consists in sorrow for their sufferings, in having pity and sympathy for them, and in exhibiting mercy, tenderness and kindness towards them" (*Mormon Doctrine*, 152).

2 Corinthians 3:6, 17–18. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." (10–15 minutes)

Tell students that in February, 1847, Brigham Young had a dream in which he visited with the Prophet Joseph Smith. Brigham Young told Joseph Smith that he wanted to be with him, but the Prophet told him that he would have to wait awhile. Brigham Young asked if he had any message for the brethren. Read for students the following, which is taken from Brigham Young's journal. Don't read the words in italics but ask students to guess what is missing. (You may wish to write the sentence on the board with a blank line in place of the italicized words.)

"Joseph stepped toward me, and looking very earnestly, yet pleasantly said, 'Tell the people to be humble and faithful, and be sure to *keep the spirit of the Lord.*'"

Ask students to suggest what the Prophet said to Brigham Young. Have them read 2 Corinthians 3:6 for help. Once they get the right answer, ask: Why is keeping the Spirit so important? Discuss their answers, and then continue reading from Brigham Young’s account of what Joseph Smith told him in his dream:

“. . . Tell the brethren to keep their hearts open to conviction, so that when the Holy Ghost comes to them, their hearts will be ready to receive it. They can tell the Spirit of the Lord from all other spirits; it will whisper peace and joy to their souls; it will take malice, hatred, strife and all evil from their hearts; and their whole desire will be to do good, bring forth righteousness and build up the kingdom of God. Tell the brethren if they will follow the spirit of the Lord they will go right. Be sure to tell the people to keep the Spirit of the Lord” (*Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, ed. Elden J. Watson [1971], 529–30; italics added).

Look again at 2 Corinthians 3:6. Ask:

- What does the phrase “the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life” mean?
- What are some examples? (Attending church or seminary because your parents force you to, fasting without any prayer or purpose.)

Have them read 2 Corinthians 3:17–18, looking for the two blessings that come from living the spirit of the law. Discuss the greater personal freedom that comes with living according to the Spirit.

Conclude by sharing President Ezra Taft Benson’s comment:

“The Spirit is the most important matter in this glorious work” (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, 198).

2 Corinthians 4–7

Introduction

In the face of serious criticism, Paul defended his sincerity as a servant of the Lord (see 2 Corinthians 5:11–6:18). He reminded the Saints that earthly trials are nothing compared to eternal glory (see 2 Corinthians 4:17). As you read 2 Corinthians 4–7 look for Paul’s description of the characteristics of true ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ (see 2 Corinthians 6:4–7).

Prayerfully study 2 Corinthians 4–7 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Earthly trials are nothing compared to the eternal glory awaiting the faithful (see 2 Corinthians 4:15–18).
- Through the Atonement we can become new creatures in the Lord (see 2 Corinthians 5:14–21; see also 2 Nephi 10:23–25).
- We must not participate with or agree with those who believe and practice ideologies that go against the gospel (see 2 Corinthians 6:14–18).
- A person with godly sorrow for sin realizes he has offended God and desires to repent. Those with worldly sorrow still want to sin and will not repent (see 2 Corinthians 7:8–11; see also Alma 42:29–30).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 302–3.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for 2 Corinthians 4–7.



New Testament Video presentation 16, “Godly Sorrow Leads to Repentance” (9:25), can be used in teaching 2 Corinthians 7 (see *New Testament Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).



2 Corinthians 6:16–7:1, 8–10. Godly sorrow results from knowing that we have offended God and leads to true repentance. (20–25 minutes)

Write *godly sorrow* and *worldly sorrow* on the board. Ask students what they think the difference is between the two. Invite students to imagine the following situation and listen to see what kind of sorrow it represents: In an interview for a temple recommend for marriage, a young woman confesses some past sins to her bishop. The sins are serious enough that the bishop denies the recommend, explaining that she will have to wait until she fully repents. She is alarmed, claiming she has repented because she hasn’t repeated any of those sins for a long time. She is very upset because the invitations to the wedding and reception have already been sent out. She says she could not face all the questions and the embarrassment of a delay in her wedding plans. The bishop explains that merely stopping the sin is not complete repentance and invites her to sincerely begin the process of true repentance. Ask students:

- What do you think the young woman would be feeling at this point in the interview?
- Why would it be appropriate for a bishop to withhold a recommend in a situation like this?

Read 2 Corinthians 7:8–10. Explain that Paul had called the Corinthians to repentance in his previous letter. Ask: According to Paul, what is the difference between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow? Display a poster or overhead transparency with the following explanation by President Ezra Taft Benson:

“It is not uncommon to find men and women in the world who feel remorse for the things they do wrong. Sometimes this is because their actions cause them or loved ones great sorrow and misery. Sometimes their sorrow is caused because they are caught and punished for their actions. Such worldly feelings do not constitute ‘godly sorrow’ (2 Corinthians 7:10).

“Godly sorrow is a gift of the Spirit. It is a deep realization that our actions have offended our Father and our God. It is the sharp and keen awareness that our behavior caused the Savior, He who knew no sin, even the greatest of all, to endure agony and suffering. Our sins caused Him to bleed at every pore. This very real mental and spiritual anguish is what the scriptures refer to as having ‘a broken heart and a contrite spirit’ (D&C 20:37). Such a spirit is the absolute prerequisite for true repentance” (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, 72).

Discuss the following questions:

- Why must a person feel godly sorrow to truly repent?
- Read Alma 42:29. How did Alma say our sins should affect us?
- Why is it not enough to just stop sinning?

Read the following statement to your students:

“To be effective, repentance must be directed toward one’s relationship to God. . . .

“True repentance follows when a person has deep remorse that he has offended God by breaking his laws and being disobedient. He is sorry because of the alienation from God that the sin has brought into his life. . . . Because repentance requires a broken heart and a contrite spirit, nothing less will bring permanent relief” (Robert J. Matthews, “The Doctrine of the Atonement: The Revelation of the Gospel to Adam,” in Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson, *Studies in Scripture: Volume 2, the Pearl of Great Price* [1985], 124).

- How can concern about our own embarrassment get in the way of godly sorrow?
- Read James 4:6. How might pride keep us from feeling sorrow for our sins?

You may wish to conclude by testifying that godly sorrow has brought you closer to Heavenly Father and helped you find true relief in repentance.

2 Corinthians 8–9

Introduction

Because Paul was accused of taking money that had been gathered for the Saints in Jerusalem, he sent Titus and two other brethren to collect the remaining contributions (see 2 Corinthians 8:16–24). He asked the Corinthian Saints to give generously, for “God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7; see also 8:1–15).

Prayerfully study 2 Corinthians 8–9 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The Saints should be equal in earthly things (see 2 Corinthians 8:13–15; see also D&C 78:6–7; 82:17–19).
- True Saints give of their substance to the poor (see 2 Corinthians 8:12–15; see also Jacob 2:17–19).
- God loves and blesses cheerful givers (see 2 Corinthians 9:6–7; see also Moroni 7:8).

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for 2 Corinthians 8–9.

2 Corinthians 8–9. True Saints cheerfully give to the poor according to gospel principles. (20–25 minutes)

Invite a student to come to the front of the room. Ask: If money were no object, what would you buy? Once the student decides on something, write a fake check for the amount it costs (or use play money) and hand it to him. Invite another student to join the first student at the front of the room, and ask the class to imagine that this student’s family has just experienced a tragedy. Their home recently burned to the ground and they have no insurance. Ask the student to whom you gave the check:

- How could you help this needy family?
- How hard would it be to part with the amount of money on the check? Why?
- Who needs the money more?

Invite students to relate experiences they are familiar with that show people caring for others.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:7 looking for what it takes to live the gospel.

- Why does it take faith to give to those in need?
- How can we give to the needy today?

Read the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“Some of the tests incident to man’s mortal probation involve his instinctive love for money, his pursuit of riches in general, his desires for the power, influence, and ease that grow out of great wealth. When ‘he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit,’ however, ‘and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord’ (Mosiah 3:19), he then becomes subject to a higher law. Money is no longer his master; it is his servant to do good and work righteousness; he becomes a cheerful giver” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 2:435).

Invite students to read 2 Corinthians 9:7, and ask:

- What does this verse teach about giving?
- How does the Lord want us to give?

Explain that Paul was asking the Corinthian Saints to help those in Jerusalem who were less fortunate. Have them read 2 Corinthians 8:14–15, and ask: How did Paul want them to accomplish this?

Share this statement by President Marion G. Romney:

“The Lord claims the earth as His; . . . it is not yours and mine to own and manage independently of Him. No matter how many stocks and bonds or how much land and other properties we possess, they are not wholly ours. They are His” (in Glen L. Rudd, *Pure Religion* [1995], 291).

Remind students that everything on the earth belongs to the Lord (see D&C 104:12–18), so we should cheerfully share what we have according to His principles of caring for the poor. Have them read 2 Corinthians 9:6 looking for the promise the Lord made to those who give with a willing heart (see also Luke 6:38). Encourage students to regularly contribute to the fast offering fund in addition to paying their tithing.

2 Corinthians 10–13

Introduction

From the day of his conversion while on the road to Damascus (see Acts 9:1–9), Paul was devoted to the Savior

and His cause. Though beaten and stoned, imprisoned and rejected, in peril and physical discomfort, he gladly gave all he had to the Lord (see 2 Corinthians 11:23–31). He did so with the firm testimony that all things are insignificant compared to “the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus” (see Philippians 3:8). Through all of his trials and challenges God did not leave Paul without comfort. Paul received visions and revelations (see 2 Corinthians 12:1–4) that left him firm in the belief that God would strengthen him in his weakness (see 2 Corinthians 12:7–10).

Prayerfully study 2 Corinthians 10–13 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- We should control our thoughts (see 2 Corinthians 10:3–5; see also Proverbs 23:7).
- Satan can transform himself into an angel of light in order to deceive. Those who follow him may pretend to be ministers of light for the same purpose (see 2 Corinthians 11:7–17; see also Alma 30:50–53).
- The Lord gives us weakness so we can be humble. We must do all we can to overcome our weaknesses while asking the Lord for help (see 2 Corinthians 12:7–10; see also Jacob 4:7; Ether 12:27).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 303–5.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for 2 Corinthians 10–13.

2 Corinthians 11–13. God gives us weaknesses and trials to humble us; He will help us endure them. (20–25 minutes)

Show the class the largest thorn or thistle you can find. Ask:

- What would it be like to have this thorn puncture your side?
- How would it affect you if for some reason it could not be removed?
- What would it be like to live with it?

Read 2 Corinthians 12:7 looking for what Paul experienced. Ask: What is a “thorn in the flesh”? President Brigham Young, commenting on these verses, said:

“We find a pure spirit inhabiting the tabernacle of the creature which is always prompting the individual to good, to virtue, to truth and holiness; all of which emanate from that source of purity from which this spirit came. And here the evil that came through

transgression that is in this tabernacle, is warring with this pure spirit, it seeks to overcome it, and is striving with all its power to bring this spirit into subjection. . . . This is the warfare which Paul refers to when speaking of the 'thorn in the flesh,' which is no more or less than the spirit contending against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 18:258).

Invite students to discuss the types of "thorns" we have today.

Read Ether 12:27 and look for God's promises. Read 2 Corinthians 12:8 to see if Paul asked for his affliction to be taken away. Read verse 9 to see how the Lord answered his request. Ask:

- Why do you think the Lord didn't remove Paul's thorn?
- Since trials and afflictions are a part of life, what effect do they have on the human soul?
- How familiar was Paul with affliction?

Invite students to read 2 Corinthians 11:23–27. They may wish to underline Paul's afflictions. Ask:

- How committed was Paul to the gospel?

- What evidence is there for your answer?
- What do you think gave Paul the strength to endure?
- How can we feel this same strength in our lives?

Read 2 Corinthians 12:10 and look for Paul's attitude regarding his trials.

Paul's suffering strengthened his faith in Christ. Read 2 Corinthians 13:5, 9 and ask:

- How can we examine our own faith?
- How might our weaknesses make our faith stronger?

Share Elder Neal A. Maxwell's remark:

"As it must be with anyone who seeks sainthood, Paul had to be 'willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him' (Mosiah 3:19)" (*All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience*, 31).

Testify that if we are humble and learn to rely on our God, we will be strong enough to endure any trial, persecution, or weakness of the flesh.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS

This Epistle written during this time

First missionary journey (Acts 13–14)	Second missionary journey (Acts 15:36–18:22)	Third missionary journey (Acts 18:23–21:15)	Imprisonment in Caesarea and Rome (Acts 21:16–28:31)	Through second Roman imprisonment
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About A.D. 47–50 50–53 53–57 57–62 62–65

Author and Audience: Galatians was written by the Apostle Paul and addressed to “the churches of Galatia” (Galatians 1:2). It is unclear whether Paul was addressing the Saints in the southern region or the northern region of Galatia. Paul had baptized and organized the southern Saints during his first missionary journey and the northern Saints during his second missionary journey (see Bible map 13).

Historical Background: If Paul wrote the book of Galatians to the southern Saints, he may have written it as early as A.D. 48. However, similarities between the organization and style of this book and the book of Romans favor the conclusion that it was written during his third missionary journey, around A.D. 57.

Theme: Paul was alarmed when he learned that false teachings were creeping into the lives of his Galatian converts. Many had rejected the teachings of the Atonement and reverted to following the law of Moses. Paul wrote to urge the Saints to return to the higher law of the gospel. He taught that works alone are not sufficient for salvation, but that we must rely on our Savior Jesus Christ.

Galatians 1–2

Introduction

Paul was amazed that the Galatian converts were turning away from the living Christ in favor of a dead law. Could they really prefer the bondage of the old law of Moses over the liberty of the new law of Christ? In Galatians 1–2, notice Paul’s emphasis on faith in Jesus Christ as the foundation that gives new life.

Prayerfully study Galatians 1–2 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- There is only one gospel of Jesus Christ. It is revealed by God through prophets and apostles (see Galatians 1:1–2:9; see also Ephesians 2:20; 4:5, 11, 13; D&C 1:30).

- We are justified through faith in Jesus Christ (see Galatians 2:16–21; see also Romans 3:20–24, 28; Mosiah 13:27–28; D&C 20:29–30).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 306–10.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Galatians 1–2.

Galatians 1:1–2:10. There is only one gospel of Jesus Christ. It is taught by revelation from God through prophets and apostles. (15–25 minutes)

Invite students to share their school’s requirements for graduation. Discuss requirements such as attendance, required classes, exams, and so on. Ask: Why do schools have such standards?

Read this explanation by Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“A few weeks ago I was returning from the East with President [Gordon B.] Hinckley. We conversed with a passenger who said something to the effect that all churches lead to heaven. How often have you heard that—the parallel path to heaven philosophy?”

“They claim one church is not really better than another, just different. Eventually the paths will converge. One is, therefore, quite as safe in any church as in any other.

“While this seems to be very generous, it just cannot be true.

“... Suppose schools were operated on that philosophy, with each discipline a separate path leading to the same diploma. No matter whether you study or not, pass the tests or not, all would be given the same diploma—the one of their choice.

“Without qualifying, one could choose the diploma of an attorney, an engineer, a medical doctor.

“Surely you would not submit yourself to surgery under the hands of a graduate of that kind of school!”

Ask students why the kind of education described would fail to prepare them for their chosen career. Elder Packer concluded:

“But it does not work that way. It cannot work that way—not in education, not in spiritual matters. There are essential ordinances just as there are required courses. There are prescribed standards of worthiness. If we resist them, avoid them, or fail them, we will not enter in with those who complete the course” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1985, 106; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 82).

Testify to your students that there is only one true gospel on the earth that has all the teachings, ordinances, and covenants we need to return to Heavenly Father and live like Him in His kingdom. Tell students that the Apostle Paul understood this doctrine and tried to explain it to the Saints (see Ephesians 4:5, 13).

Read and discuss the following verses and the corresponding questions with students. They may wish to underline the answers in their scriptures.

Galatians 1:6–9	How many true gospels are there? Why would the teaching of different gospel plans be a serious problem to one’s faith?
Galatians 1:10	Why are the teachings of men often more pleasing to some than the teachings of the Savior?
Galatians 1:11–12	Paul had learned much about the gospel from the scriptures and his religious training from the time he was a child, and he no doubt talked with Church members after his conversion. Why do you think Paul said he was taught the gospel “by the revelation of Jesus Christ”? (see Acts 9:4–6). How is revelation vital to learning the gospel?

Explain that Paul was a relatively new convert who taught the gospel with confidence and power. He wanted the presiding officers to know that the doctrine he was teaching was sound and centered in Jesus Christ (see also the commentary for Galatians 2:2–4, 9 in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, pp. 308–9). Read Galatians 2:1–2, 9 and ask:

- Who did Paul speak to in Jerusalem? (If necessary, have students read John 1:40–42 to discover that Cephas was Peter.)
- How did Peter, James, and John respond to Paul’s teachings?
- Why would it be important that they all taught the same gospel?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 1:30. Invite students to share how they feel knowing that the Savior has restored, through revelation to prophets and apostles, the same true Church that was on the earth in Paul’s day.

Galatians 2:9–14. The unity of the Apostles provides an example of strength for members of the Church.
(15–20 minutes)

Provide thirteen new pencils, or sticks of about the same size, and a few rubber bands. Ask for a volunteer to break a pencil (or stick) in half. Tightly bundle the remaining pencils with the rubber bands and invite someone to attempt to break the bundle. Ask:

- Why is it so hard to break them when they are grouped together? (Be sure students understand that the strength of one is increased when united with many.)
- Read Galatians 2:9. Why was it important that Paul and Barnabus receive the “right hands of fellowship” (acceptance and support) of Peter, James, and John?
- How does unity among Church leaders bless the work of teaching and administering the gospel?

Explain that when Peter first went to Antioch, he ate openly with the Gentiles. That changed when a group of Jewish Saints, who believed they should not associate with Gentiles, arrived with the Apostle James (see Galatians 2:11–12). Read Galatians 2:13–14 and ask:

- Who followed Peter’s example when he left the gentile converts to go eat with the Jewish members?
- How did Paul respond to Peter’s action?
- Why was it important that Peter and Paul have the same view on this matter?
- How would the Church be weakened if the leaders disagreed on the doctrine of Christ?

Share Elder Bruce R. McConkie’s explanation of this apparent conflict:

“Peter temporized for fear of offending Jewish semi-converts who still kept the law of Moses. . . . Without question, if we had the full account, we would find Peter reversing himself and doing all in his power to get the Jewish saints to believe that the law of Moses was fulfilled in Christ and no longer applied to anyone either Jew or Gentile” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 2:463–64).

Read President Gordon B. Hinckley’s insight about the harmony of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“Each man is different. We speak from various backgrounds and experiences. We discuss ways to improve and strengthen the work. At the outset of these discussions, there may be various points of view. But before the discussion is ended, there is total unanimity, else no action is taken. The Lord Himself has declared that such unity is an absolute necessity” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 79; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 59).

Ask students: What can we learn from the unity of the Lord’s Apostles? Testify that we can find great strength in unity with our leaders and fellow Church members.

Galatians 2:16–21. We are justified through faith in Jesus Christ. (20–25 minutes)

Write the following on the board: *Pardoned from punishment for sin and declared guiltless.* Have students silently read Galatians 2:16–17; 3:11, 24 looking for the word *justified*. Note that it appears six times. Invite various students to read the verses out loud, substituting the above definition in place of the word *justified*. Ask:

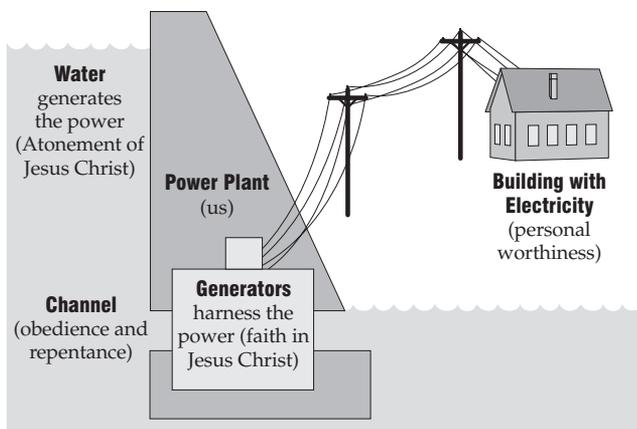
- What justifies a person?
- What does not justify a person?

Share with students the theme of the book of Galatians from the introduction (p. 193). Discuss these questions:

- Why was Paul’s teaching of justification an important message for the Galatian Saints? (They were rejecting faith in Jesus Christ and emphasizing the works of the law of Moses.)
- Why is justification an important doctrine for us to understand? (We may overemphasize our works and neglect our faith in Jesus Christ and His power to justify us.)

Paul taught that it is impossible for us to be declared guiltless based on our own efforts. We are justified “by the faith of Jesus Christ” (Galatians 2:16). Yet we also know that works of righteousness are essential to our spiritual growth (see Romans 2:13; James 2:17–18).

To help your students understand the relationship between faith and obedience, reproduce the following diagram on the board, leaving out the words in parentheses. Describe how a hydroelectric power plant operates. (Water flowing through the channel near the base of the power plant turns the generators, which produce the electricity that travels to buildings and blesses the lives of those who use it.) Label the power plant *us*. Explain that just as the power plant is not able to produce electricity by itself, we do not have the power to be justified by our own works. We need the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Ask students where the source of power to generate the electricity is. (In the moving water.) What converts the strength of the river into power we can use? (The generator.)



Explain to students that our faith in Christ harnesses the power of the Savior’s Atonement. Label the generator *faith in Jesus Christ* and the river behind the dam *Atonement of Jesus Christ*. Invite students to look at the diagram and determine what we must do to allow the water to flow through the generators. (We must open the water channel and keep it clear.) Explain that to access the power of the Atonement we must keep our channel clear through our obedience and repentance. This allows the power of the Atonement to flow into our lives and make us worthy. Label the water channel *obedience and repentance* and the building *personal worthiness*.

Read Galatians 2:20 with students. Ask: How can we “live by the faith of the Son of God” and keep our channels open so we can have the power of the Atonement in our lives? Read 2 Nephi 25:23. Testify that if we do all we can to obey and repent, the power of the Atonement will make us clean and enable us to return home to Heavenly Father.

Galatians 3–6

Introduction

The lessons we learn in elementary school prepare us to understand the greater truths of an advanced education. While these lessons are useful, serious students are not satisfied to remain at the basic level. Paul likened the law of Moses to a schoolmaster who prepared Israel to come to Christ and the higher gospel law. As you read Galatians 3–6, look for the superior blessings of the gospel law.

Prayerfully study Galatians 3–6 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The law of Moses was given to prepare Israel for Jesus Christ (see Galatians 3:17–25; JST, Galatians 3:19–20; see also Mosiah 13:30–33).
- We become sons and daughters of Jesus Christ when we are born again (see Galatians 3:26–4:7; see also Mosiah 5:7; D&C 11:30).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 310–13.

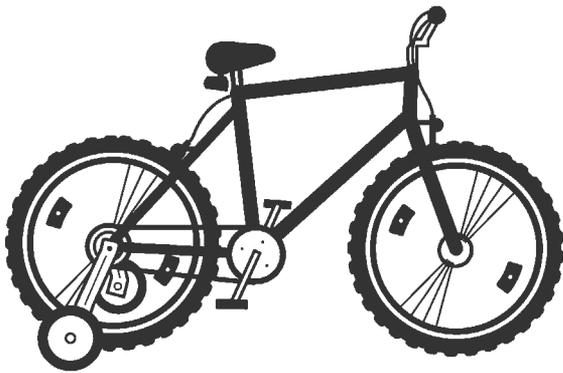
Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Galatians 3–6.



New Testament Video presentation 17, “The Law of the Harvest” (3:24), can be used in teaching Galatians 6 (see *New Testament Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).

Galatians 3:17–25. The law of Moses was given to prepare Israel for Christ. (30–35 minutes)



Bring a bicycle with training wheels to class or draw a picture of one on the board. Prepare two posters, one with the words *Law of Moses* and the other with *Gospel of Jesus Christ*. Explain to students that many children learn to ride a bicycle with the use of additional, temporary wheels called training wheels. Ask:

- Why would these wheels be helpful when learning to ride a bicycle?
- How long would you leave them on the bicycle?
- How would removing the training wheels change your bicycling ability?

Have students read Moses 5:58–59 and Galatians 3:8 looking for how long the gospel has been on the earth. Have them read Mosiah 3:14 and Galatians 3:19 looking for why the children of Israel were given the law of Moses instead of the higher gospel law. Explain that the Apostle Paul wanted the Galatian Saints to understand that the blessings of the gospel are superior to what the law of Moses offered.

Write the following chart on the board, leaving the “Yes/No” column blank (except for the heading). Ask students to read each verse and decide if the statement reflects what the verse teaches. Write the answer in the “Yes/No” column.

Verse	Statement	Yes/No
Galatians 3:19	The law of Moses was given to a righteous people.	(No)
Galatians 3:19	The law of Moses was intended to last forever.	(No)
JST, Galatians 3:20	Abraham knew that Jesus Christ would come.	(Yes)
Galatians 3:21	The law of Moses removed the need for the promised Savior.	(No)
Galatians 3:22	Everyone sins; everyone needs Jesus Christ and His Atonement.	(Yes)
Galatians 3:23	The law of Moses, by itself, limited spiritual growth.	(Yes)

Have students read Galatians 3:24–25 and the definition of *schoolmaster* in footnote 24b. Discuss Paul’s analogy, using questions like the following:

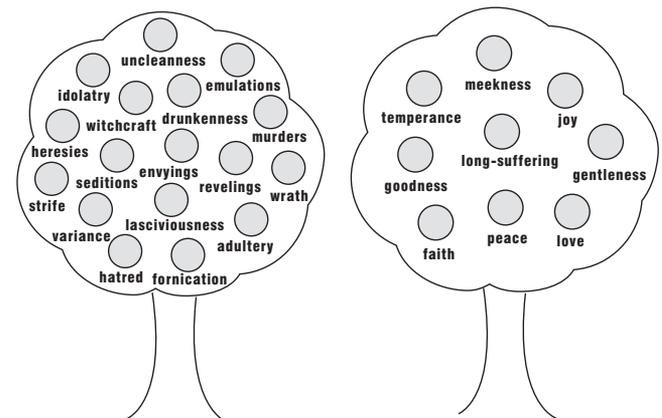
- What is the schoolmaster in this analogy? (The law of Moses.)
- Who are the students? (The house of Israel.)
- What sorts of burdens do schoolmasters place on students? (Tests, homework.)
- How could those burdens be compared to the law of Moses? (The law included dietary restrictions; ceremonial, sacrificial, and ritual requirements; and so on.)
- How long do students need a schoolmaster?
- How is that like the law of Moses? (When the Savior came, He fulfilled the law and replaced portions with the higher gospel law.)

Have students turn their attention back to the bicycle with training wheels. Show them the two posters and ask them to identify which part of the bike best represents the law of Moses (training wheels) and which best represents the gospel of Jesus Christ (the bicycle without the training wheels).

Emphasize that the law of Moses was a good law. It was given by the Savior (see 3 Nephi 15:5). As far as the law of Moses was understood and obeyed, it prepared the people for the Savior’s coming (see 2 Nephi 25:24–25). Read Mosiah 13:32 and ask: What did the Jews fail to understand and learn from the law? (Redemption comes through Jesus Christ.)

Discuss how we might make the same error as the ancient Jews if we fail to see the importance of Jesus Christ in our lives. Read Jacob 7:10–11; Mosiah 13:33 and ask: According to these verses, how can we learn about Jesus Christ? Encourage students to continue to follow the Savior by searching the scriptures and heeding the words of the modern prophets.

Galatians 5:16–25. Living in tune with the Holy Ghost brings the fruits of the Spirit into our lives. (10–15 minutes)



Display two different fruits that grow on trees. Ask students what trees they come from. Draw on the board the trees from

the accompanying illustration, but do not label the fruit or the trees. Read Galatians 5:19–23. Ask two students to come to the board. Have a student label the first tree with the fruits listed in verses 19–21. Have the other student label the second tree with the fruits from verses 22–23. While the two students are labeling the fruit, give two other students dictionaries and ask them to look up any difficult words from the board. Discuss these fruits as a class, calling on the students with the dictionaries as needed.

Ask:

- What should each tree be labeled? (*Works of the Flesh and Fruits of the Spirit.*)
- Why do so many people choose works of the flesh when these works can do them so much harm?
- Read Galatians 5:16. How can we enjoy the fruits of the Spirit and shun the works of the flesh?

Emphasize that the promptings of the Holy Ghost direct us to do those things that bring the fruits of the Spirit into our lives. Read Galatians 5:25 and ask students what it means. President Joseph Fielding Smith, who was then President of the Quorum of the Twelve, gave further insight when he said:

“There is nothing more important in the lives of members of the Church than to have the gift of the Holy Ghost” (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., 5 vols. [1957–66], 2:114).

Testify that as baptized members we have the gift of the Holy Ghost. By keeping our baptismal covenants, we can reject the works of the flesh and become worthy of the Spirit. This will bring the joy of the fruits of the Holy Ghost into our lives.

Galatians 6:7–10. The law of the harvest applies to all that we do. (15–20 minutes)

Write *planting* and *harvesting* on the board and have students explain these two basic steps of gardening. You may want to show students some seeds they are familiar with and ask them to identify which plant would grow from each seed. Ask: How likely is it, if we plant one kind of seed, that a different kind of plant will grow? Why?

Divide the class into four groups. Write each verse of Galatians 6:7–10 on its own piece of paper and give one to each group. Invite each group to compose a sentence that summarizes their verse. Then have one person from each group write their sentence on the board, leaving out key words. As a class, read Galatians 6:7–10 and fill in the missing words.

Read Galatians 6:7, and then discuss the law of the harvest and how it applies to life. (The law of the harvest is that we reap what we sow.) Have students read verse 8, and ask: What do you think it means to sow to the flesh and to sow to the Spirit? Invite students to share blessings they have harvested by sowing to the Spirit. These might include experiences reading scriptures, giving service, fasting, or showing patience.

In life we sometimes observe situations that appear to be exceptions to the law of the harvest. Have students read Galatians 6:9 and 3 Nephi 27:11, and then discuss how the phrases “in due season” and “for a season” reveal that there are no exceptions to this law. Even though the law may seem to be delayed, it will be fulfilled according to the Lord’s timetable. Give your students the following case studies and have them discuss how the law applies in each situation:

- Clark pays a full tithe and never seems to get ahead financially. Tom has the same salary as Clark but does not pay tithing. He has significantly more material possessions.
- Jill is honest, studies diligently, and gets average grades in high school. Diane cheats in her classes and gets top grades. Because of her grades Diane has received a scholarship to college.

Share the following statement by Elder Spencer W. Kimball, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“The wicked may prosper for a time, the rebellious may seem to profit by their transgressions, but the time is coming when, at the bar of justice, all men will be judged, ‘every man according to their works.’ (Rev. 20:13.) No one will ‘get by’ with anything. On that day no one will escape the penalty of his deeds, no one will fail to receive the blessings he has earned. . . . There will be total justice. (See Matt. 25:31–46.)” (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 305).

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

This Epistle written during this time

First missionary journey (Acts 13–14)	Second missionary journey (Acts 15:36–18:22)	Third missionary journey (Acts 18:23–21:15)	Imprisonment in Caesarea and Rome (Acts 21:16–28:31)	Through second Roman imprisonment
About A.D. 47–50	50–53	53–57	57–62	62–65

Author and Audience: Ephesians was written by Paul and addressed to the Saints at Ephesus, an important city in western Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey). Ephesus, located at an intersection of major trade routes, was a center for commercial trade (see Bible map 13). Paul used this select location as a central point for his ministry for about three years.

The book of Ephesians was written to gentile converts who were baptized members of the Church, not people who were converts from Judaism and who had once lived under the law of Moses. The Epistle is written in a general manner and lacks personal references, so it was probably sent to several congregations in the area.

Historical Background: During Paul's third missionary journey, he spent about three years in Ephesus. This city was the site of a famous temple for the fertility goddess Diana. Paul's mission had been so successful at turning people from idol worship to the worship of Jesus Christ that the craftsmen of the city who sold pagan statues created an uproar about the threat to their trade (see Acts 19:21–41). Paul probably wrote the book of Ephesians during his first Roman imprisonment around A.D. 60–62.

Unique Features: The book of Ephesians addresses vital gospel principles. Among these are foreordination, the latter-day Restoration, and the Holy Spirit of Promise. Ephesians also addresses the importance of prophets and apostles, Church organization, and family relationships.

Theme: Much like today, the Church members of Paul's day came from a variety of backgrounds. Paul reminded them of the uniting force of the gospel organization built on prophets and apostles, with Jesus Christ as the foundation. He counseled the members to be one in doctrine, righteousness, and family life.

Ephesians 1–3

Introduction

Jesus Christ gives us rich gospel blessings to show His great love for us. The doctrines of foreordination, the grace of Jesus Christ, and gospel fellowship are a few examples of this love.

Prayerfully study Ephesians 1–3 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Heavenly Father foreordained some of His children to receive certain responsibilities and blessings on this earth. We receive these callings and blessings according to our faithfulness (see Ephesians 1:3–12; see also Jeremiah 1:4–5; Alma 13:3; Abraham 3:23).
- We are saved by Jesus Christ's grace through our faith in Him (see Ephesians 2:1–10; see also 2 Nephi 10:24; Moroni 10:32–33).
- Those who come unto Christ and His Church become new creatures, leaving behind the ways of the world (see Ephesians 2:1–3, 11–22; see also Ephesians 4:1–7, 11–24; Mosiah 5:2; Alma 19:33).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 348–51, 355–57.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Ephesians 1–3.

Ephesians 1:3–12. In the premortal world Heavenly Father foreordained His faithful children to receive certain responsibilities and blessings on this earth. In order to fulfill our foreordained callings and realize the promised blessings, we must remain faithful. (15–20 minutes)

Hold up a cloth or bedsheet or hang one from the ceiling. Invite students to imagine that the sheet represents the veil of forgetfulness that separates premortal life from earth life. Have them suppose they could step through the veil and recall premortal experiences. Ask what they would want to learn about themselves, and allow them to share a few ideas. Explain that although we may not know many details about our individual premortal existence, there is one important doctrine we do know about. Ask three students to read the following scriptures aloud and summarize for the class what each teaches: Jeremiah 1:4–5; Acts 17:24, 26; and Abraham 3:23.

Write the word *foreordain* on the board. Invite students to discuss its meaning. It might be helpful to separate the word and consider its two parts: *fore* and *ordain*. After a brief discussion, provide this definition: "God's premortal selection of His valiant spirit children to fulfill certain missions during their mortal lives." Invite students to suggest the kinds of missions someone might be foreordained to perform. Remind them to refer to the scriptures the three students read.

Share this insight from the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before this world was. I suppose I was ordained to this very office in that Grand Council” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 365).

Select, read, and discuss verses from Ephesians 1:1–12. You may want to use some of the following comments and questions:

Ephesians 1

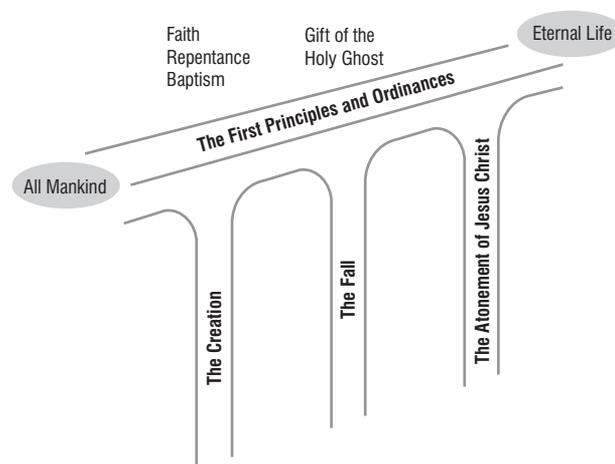
v. 1	Notice who Paul was writing to. How much of the gospel had these people already been taught? (As Saints they would have had an understanding of basic gospel principles.) This might be a good place to emphasize that all of Paul’s Epistles were written to members of the Church.
vv. 2–3	What do these verses tell us about Paul’s understanding of the nature of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ?
v. 4	What phrase describes foreordination? What are we foreordained to become?
vv. 5, 11	Notice the definition of <i>predestinated</i> as given in footnote 5a. If we keep our covenants, what great blessing have we been promised?

Testify to your students that as they serve faithfully in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Heavenly Father will place them where they need to be in order to fulfill their foreordained callings. Conclude with the following testimony and counsel from President James E. Faust of the First Presidency:

“In this great hall and listening this evening are thousands of future leaders of the Church who have been called out of the world and chosen by the Lord before the foundations of the world, as described by Abraham. . . . I believe the Lord has brought forth special spirits who were reserved from before the world was to be strong and valiant in this difficult time of the world’s history. . . .

“With all my heart I urge you . . . to be worthy and true” (in Conference Report, Sep.–Oct. 1995, 63–64; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 47).

Ephesians 2:1–10. We are saved by Jesus Christ’s grace through our faith in Him. (25–30 minutes)



Draw the accompanying diagram on the board. Have students examine the picture, and ask:

- Which elements are necessary for us to receive eternal life? (All of them.)
- Which of the elements did man provide? (Our first parents, Adam and Eve, provided the Fall in accordance with God’s plan.)
- Which elements are available because of the Savior?

Explain that all the elements of salvation are provided through Jesus Christ. We cannot progress to eternal life without the Savior. Have students read Ephesians 2:4–6 looking for words that describe the help our Savior provides. Have them read verses 5, 7–8 looking for the significant word that occurs in all three verses.

Read the first two paragraphs of the definition of “grace” in the Bible Dictionary (p. 697) and list on the board the elements of grace. Ask: What must we do to receive the full benefits of grace? (Exercise faith, repent, do our best to keep the commandments.) Read Ephesians 2:8–9 and emphasize that grace is a gift. Help students understand that the Lord provides gifts for us that we cannot provide for ourselves. Ask them to look again at the drawing, and ask:

- Why can’t we be saved without His grace?
- In addition to the gifts included in the diagram, what other blessings does the Savior provide us through His grace? (Answers might include health, answers to prayers, help in daily life.)

Have students read Helaman 14:13 and compare it with Ephesians 2:8. Ask: What does the Book of Mormon add to our understanding of being saved by grace through faith? Read Ephesians 2:10 and discuss the good works God has ordained that we should do.

Point out that the Savior does so much for us each day. Without Jesus Christ we could not become like Heavenly Father. We may express gratitude to Him by daily recognizing His hand in our lives. Conclude by singing “I Stand All Amazed” (*Hymns*, no. 193), paying particular attention to how Jesus Christ’s grace is described.

Ephesians 4–6

Introduction

The Book of Mormon prophet Moroni closed his record with the invitation, “Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness” (Moroni 10:32). Paul’s counsel in the second half of Ephesians is similar. He taught that Saints could come unto Christ and be perfected in Him by being one in the Savior’s doctrines, obeying divinely called leaders, following the example of Jesus Christ in our families, and using God-given armor as protection from the attacks of Satan.

Prayerfully study Ephesians 4–6 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The Lord has called apostles, prophets, and other Church leaders to help perfect and unify the Saints (see Ephesians 4:1–16; see also D&C 84:109–10; 107:13–25; Articles of Faith 1:6).
- Married couples become one as the husband loves his wife the way Christ loves the Church and as the wife follows her husband in righteousness (see Ephesians 5:22–33; see also 1 Corinthians 11:3, 11–12; D&C 42:22).
- We must “put on the whole armour of God” so we can be protected in our war against Satan and his followers (see Ephesians 6:10–18; see also D&C 27:15–18).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 351–53.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Ephesians 4–6.

 *New Testament Video* presentation 18, “The Whole Armour of God” (14:43), can be used in teaching Ephesians 6:10–18 (see *New Testament Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).

 **Ephesians 4:1–16 (Scripture Mastery, Ephesians 4:11–14).** The Lord has called apostles, prophets, and other Church leaders to help perfect and unify the Saints. (20–25 minutes)

Show a piano keyboard to your class. Ask students why there are so many keys on the keyboard. Have a student who has been trained in music decide which key is the most important. Strike it repeatedly. Ask:

- Why does emphasis on just one key fail to make pleasing music?
- Which keys could we do away with?

Emphasize that all the keys are important but may be used in different songs. Read Ephesians 4:1–6. Explain to students that the gospel is like the keyboard. Baptism is one key, faith in Christ is another, a correct understanding of the Godhead is another. The full keyboard provides the harmony of gospel principles necessary for exaltation.

Draw the following piano keys diagram on the board. Include the words *Church Leaders*, *Purpose*, and *Needed Until We Become* across the top, but leave out the other words.

Church Leaders	Purpose	Needed Until We Become
Apostles	• To perfect the Saints	• Unified in our faith and knowledge of Jesus Christ
Prophets		
Evangelists	• To do the work of the ministry	• Perfect (like Jesus Christ)
Pastors		
Teachers	• To edify the body of Christ (Saints)	

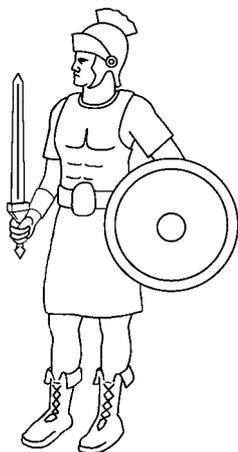
Have your students read Ephesians 4:11–13. Divide the class into three groups. Ask the first group to identify the Church leaders described. Have the second group find purposes of these leaders. Have the third group determine how long we will need these leaders in the Lord’s Church. With the help of the three groups, fill in the rest of the diagram on the board. (You may wish to define some of these offices for students. Evangelists are patriarchs; see *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 151. Pastors are bishops and stake presidents; see *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 2:510.)

Ask: Which of these leaders could we do without? Tell students that just as we need all the piano keys, we need all the Church leaders spoken of by Paul. Have students read Ephesians 4:14 looking for what would happen if we didn’t have these leaders. Ask students to write the message of this verse in their own words, and invite some of them to share what they have written with the class.

Testify that the organization of the Lord’s Church assists us in becoming perfect and Christlike. Invite students to share examples of counsel they have received and followed from prophets, apostles, stake presidents, bishops, patriarchs, or teachers.



Ephesians 6:10–18. We must “put on the whole armour of God” to be protected from Satan’s attacks. (25–30 minutes)



Reproduce the accompanying line drawing of a Roman soldier on the board for later reference.

Bring to class several items of protective gear, such as a construction hard hat, a baseball catcher’s or hockey goalie’s face mask, a fire extinguisher, a heavy coat, or steel-toed safety boots, or draw such items on the board. Ask students to explain how each of these items provides protection.

Show the picture of the Roman soldier. Write the following question above the picture: *Are we at war?* Allow students to briefly discuss this question. Have students open their hymnbooks. Give them two or three minutes to find as many hymns as possible that mention conflict, and write their titles on the board. (Examples might include “Onward, Christian Soldiers,” no. 246, and “We Are All Enlisted,” no. 250.) Ask:

- Who are we at war with? (Satan; see Revelation 12:7–11.)
- How much experience does the enemy have in this war?

Read and discuss Ephesians 6:10–12. Point out that we should not take lightly the war Satan is waging against us (see Revelation 12:17; D&C 76:28–29). He hates us and will do anything he can to make us miserable (see 2 Nephi 2:18). President Harold B. Lee warned:

“Our most deadly contest in life is not with human enemies” (*Stand Ye in Holy Places*, 330).

Ask: Are we strong enough to defend ourselves against Satan without any help? Testify that the Lord has not left us alone in this battle.

Have a student go to the board. As you read Ephesians 6:13–17, have the student label each piece of the soldier’s armor with the corresponding spiritual armor as taught by Paul.

Physical Armor	Spiritual Armor
sash or belt	truth
breastplate	righteousness
footwear	the gospel of peace
shield	faith
helmet	salvation
sword	the word of God

Ask students if they can identify the four body areas that the armor protects. Teach them what each represents. You may wish to add these symbols to your picture.

head	thoughts
heart	feelings or attitudes
loins	virtue and chastity
feet	goals and the direction we are headed

To help students understand how each of these parts of the armor protects us, consider asking questions such as these:

- What is there in our concept of salvation that can guide our thoughts? (see D&C 121:45).
- How can our feelings and attitudes be guided and disciplined by righteousness? (see Alma 38:12).
- What gospel truths protect our chastity?
- How can the gospel direct the course we take in life?

Ask: How does faith in Jesus Christ shield us from Satan? Discuss how the word of God (the sword of the Spirit) defends us from Satan’s attacks.

Read Ephesians 6:18 and ask students to name the final piece of armor. (Prayer.) Emphasize that removing any of the armor can weaken our defense. Share the counsel of Elder Spencer W. Kimball, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the devil to enter a door that is closed. He seems to have no keys for locked doors. But if a door is slightly ajar, he gets his toe in, and soon this is followed by his foot, then by his leg and his body and his head, and finally he is in all the way. . . .

“ . . . Lucifer readily becomes the master when one succumbs to his initial blandishments [flattery]. Soon

then the conscience is stilled completely, the evil power has full sway, and the door to salvation is closed until a thorough repentance opens it again” (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 215–16).

President Gordon B. Hinckley taught:

“The war goes on. It is as it was in the beginning. . . . It is an ongoing battle. . . . We cannot be unclean and expect the help of the Almighty. . . .

“You cannot afford to partake of things that will weaken your minds and your bodies. These include cocaine, ‘crack,’ alcohol, tobacco. You cannot be

involved in immoral activity. You cannot do these things and be valiant as warriors in the cause of the Lord. . . .

“. . . We are engaged in a great eternal struggle that concerns the very souls of the sons and daughters of God. We are not losing. We are winning. We will continue to win if we will be faithful and true. We *can* do it. We *must* do it. We *will* do it” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 57; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 44).

Invite students to share times they experienced the protection of the armor of God.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

This Epistle written during this time

First missionary journey (Acts 13–14)	Second missionary journey (Acts 15:36–18:22)	Third missionary journey (Acts 18:23–21:15)	Imprisonment in Caesarea and Rome (Acts 21:16–28:31)	Through second Roman imprisonment
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About A.D. 47–50 50–53 53–57 57–62 62–65

Author and Audience: Philippians was written by Paul to Church members in the city of Philippi during his first Roman imprisonment (see Philippians 1:1, 7, 13, 16; see also Acts 28:14–21).

Historical Background: Philippi was located in eastern Macedonia (northern Greece) on a major highway that linked Rome and Asia (see Bible map 13). This was the first city in Europe to receive the gospel. A woman named Lydia and her household were Paul's first converts there (see Acts 16:9–15). Approximately ten years after his first missionary visit to Philippi, Paul was preaching the gospel as a prisoner in Rome. The Philippians, hearing of Paul's situation, sent Epaphroditus bearing gifts for him. He was to stay with Paul and assist him as needed. But a life-threatening illness forced Epaphroditus to return home (see Philippians 2:25–27). Paul sent this letter of thanksgiving and counsel to the Philippian Saints sometime around A.D. 60–62 (see Bible Dictionary, "Pauline Epistles," p. 743).

Theme: "This Epistle is a letter of friendship, full of affection, confidence, good counsel and good cheer. It is the happiest of St. Paul's writings, for the Philippians were the dearest of his children in the faith. . . ."

" . . . It admits us to [his] prison meditations and communings with his Master. We watch his spirit ripening through the autumn hours when patience fulfilled in him its perfect work" (J. R. Dummelow, ed., *A Commentary on the Holy Bible* [1936], 969).

Philippians 1–4

Introduction

Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote: "Philippians . . . is a sweet and refined statement into which a number of gospel doctrines are woven. And our Bible is greatly enriched by its presence there" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 2:525). Paul taught the people of Philippi to live a vigilant Christian life by humbling themselves (see Philippians 2:1–4), working out their own salvation (see Philippians 2:12), and pressing

toward the goal of eternal life (see Philippians 3:13–14). He encouraged them with the truth that they could "do all things through Christ" (see Philippians 4:13).

Prayerfully study Philippians 1–4 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- We can find peace and joy through the gospel even in adversity (see Philippians 1:12–26; see also D&C 122:5–9).
- When the Lord comes again, every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (see Philippians 2:9–11; see also Isaiah 45:23; Romans 14:11).
- We must work out our own salvation, relying upon the Atonement of Jesus Christ (see Philippians 2:12–13; see also 2 Nephi 25:23; Mormon 9:27).
- No earthly reward compares with the blessing of knowing and serving Jesus Christ (see Philippians 3:7–14).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 358–61.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Philippians 1–4.

Philippians 1:12–26; 3:8–14; 4:4–13. The gospel can bring us joy in adversity if we realize that no earthly reward compares to knowing and serving Jesus Christ. (30–35 minutes)

Have students imagine being imprisoned for a crime they didn't commit. Ask:

- What kind of attitude do you think you would have in that circumstance?
- Have you ever been accused of a wrong you didn't commit?
- How did you feel about being falsely accused?

Write students' answers on the board. Have the students read Philippians 1:7, 13, 16 looking for key words that describe Paul's situation. List what they find on the board. Explain that Paul was imprisoned in Rome because of his belief in the gospel. Have the students read Philippians 1:12–26 looking for words that describe Paul's attitude while in prison, and write these beside the first list. Discuss the similarities and differences between the two lists. Ask: Why do you think Paul felt the way he did?

Have students read Philippians 3:7–14 looking for some of the reasons Paul’s faith was so strong. Ask:

- What did Paul give up to follow Christ?
- What did he gain?
- Why are some people willing to suffer “the loss of all things” for Christ?
- How can we develop that same faith?

The following activity will help students understand what Paul learned from his adversities. Give students a handout with a chart like the one here but with the answers out of order.

Philippians 1:12	Because of the things that have happened to me, the gospel has moved forward.
1:19	I know that this suffering will aid in my salvation.
3:10	Through this I can come to know Christ and the power of the Resurrection.
3:13–14	I forget the trials of the past and press forward to the future.
4:11	I have learned to be content in every situation (see also Alma 29:1–6).
4:12	I have learned how to be humble and to receive the Lord’s abundance.
4:13	I can do anything because I am strengthened by Christ.

Correct the handout and discuss how these principles can help students as they face their own difficulties.

Read Philippians 4:4–10 looking for how we can stay at peace in the midst of trials and tribulations. Consider sharing the following statement by Elder Milton R. Hunter, who was a member of the First Council of the Seventy:

“Our Savior declared to a modern prophet: ‘. . . he who doeth works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come.’ (D&C 59:23.)

“The peace spoken of in this modern revelation is the peace that results from a clear conscience. It is that peace which comes when one stands void of offense against God and man” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1966, 40; see also Mosiah 2:15; 4:3; D&C 135:4).

Encourage students to live by Paul’s example. Testify that we, like Paul, can rejoice in our trials and be blessed with peace in this life through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Explain to students that there are roadblocks to obtaining this peace. Elder James E. Faust, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, explained:

“One reason for the spiritual sickness of our society is that so many do not know or care about what is morally right and wrong. So many things are justified on the basis of expediency and the acquiring of money and goods. In recent times, those individuals and institutions that have had the courage to stand up and speak out against adultery, dishonesty, violence, gambling, and other forms of evil are often held up to ridicule. Many things are just plain and simply wrong, whether they are illegal or not. Those who persist in following after the evil things of the world cannot know the ‘peace of God, which passeth all understanding’ (Philippians 4:7)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1992, 5; or *Ensign*, May 1992, 6).

Philippians 2:2–16. We must do our part in working out our own salvation, relying upon the Atonement of Jesus Christ. (20–25 minutes)

Show students a desk, couch, or other object too heavy for one person to lift. Ask a student to move it to the back of the room. Invite another student to help. Ask:

- How can this object be compared to gaining salvation?
- Can we save ourselves?
- Who do we need to help us?

Have students read Philippians 2:12. Ask: If Jesus Christ plays the crucial role in our salvation, what do you think Paul meant when he counseled the Saints to “work out your own salvation”?

Write two headings on the board: *Our work* and *Christ’s work*. Have students read Philippians 2:5–11 and Moses 1:39 looking for words that describe Christ’s work, and list their answers under *Christ’s work* on the board. Ask:

- What is Christ’s work?
- What part of His work has been completed? (The Atonement.)

Testify that Jesus Christ has made our salvation possible through His Atonement and that now we must do those things that are necessary to be saved.

Have students read Philippians 2:13–16; Mormon 9:27–29; and Doctrine and Covenants 11:20 looking for words that describe our work, and list their answers under *Our work* on the board. Discuss ways we can implement these works in our lives.

Explain that Paul taught that Christ had already performed the Atonement, and all that was left for us to do was to worship Him and keep His commandments (see

Philippians 2:5–13). Concerning the work that we must do, Elder Bruce R. McConkie said:

“To claim for ourselves the cleansing power of his blood, we must believe in him and in his Father, repent of our sins, covenant in the waters of baptism to love and serve them all our days, and then receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

“Thereafter . . . we must walk in the light, keep the commandments, and overcome the world. Such is the plan of salvation for all men in all ages. Such is

the plan that has been revealed from age to age so that fallen man might work out his salvation with fear and trembling before the Lord (see Philip. 2:12)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1979, 81; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 54).

Testify of the truthfulness of this teaching.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

This Epistle written during this time

First missionary journey (Acts 13–14)	Second missionary journey (Acts 15:36–18:22)	Third missionary journey (Acts 18:23–21:15)	Imprisonment in Caesarea and Rome (Acts 21:16–28:31)	Through second Roman imprisonment
About A.D. 47–50	50–53	53–57	57–62	62–65

Author and Audience: Colossians was written by Paul during his first Roman imprisonment and addressed “to the saints and faithful brethren . . . at Colosse” (Colossians 1:2; see Colossians 1:1; 4:3, 10, 18; see also Acts 28:16–31). It was also to be read to the Saints in Laodicea (see Colossians 4:16).

Historical Background: Colosse (along with the larger neighboring cities of Hierapolis and Laodicea) was a successful mercantile city in Asia Minor (see the map of the Mediterranean world in the appendix, p. 295). The record is silent as to how the gospel was introduced to the Colossians. Paul referred to a local member named Epaphras as “a faithful minister of Christ” (see Colossians 1:7–8). This man may have been converted by Paul in Ephesus during Paul’s third missionary journey (see Acts 19:10). It is believed that Epaphras took the gospel home to Colosse and it spread throughout the region. Just as the gospel flourished, however, so did an odd blend of Jewish religion and Greek philosophy. In time, this heresy made inroads into the congregations of the Saints. Epaphras, unable to deal with the growing acceptance of false religion, visited Paul in Rome for counsel on how to combat the threat. Paul wrote this letter sometime around A.D. 60–62 (see Bible Dictionary, “Pauline Epistles,” p. 743).

Theme: The effect of the encroaching heresy was to diminish the preeminence of Jesus Christ. Paul corrected this false idea by teaching that Christ is the very image of God, that He is the Creator, the Head of the Church, the first to be resurrected, a member of the Godhead, the Redeemer, and the “hope of the gospel, which ye have heard” (see Colossians 1:15–23).

Colossians 1–4

Introduction

Today there is a growing skepticism in the world about the divinity of Jesus Christ. The Savior is represented by many as just a great teacher or healer or a prophet. Many people consider Him irrelevant as they grow worldly or rely on their own wisdom. Without a correct understanding of the Son of God or commitment to His teachings, their faith slowly slips away in the face of life’s challenges. Despite all this, living prophets continue to declare the good news of the gospel.

Like Paul they valiantly teach the truth about Jesus Christ, “the hope of glory” (see Colossians 1:27).

Prayerfully study Colossians 1–4 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- We are redeemed through the blood of Christ, who is the Firstborn of the Father and the Creator of all things (see Colossians 1:12–20; see also John 1:1–4; D&C 88:1–13).
- By building upon the foundation of Jesus Christ, we avoid being led astray by deceptive teachings (see Colossians 2:6–23).
- To become new creatures in Christ, we must overcome evil and develop righteous attributes (see Colossians 3:1–16; see also Mosiah 3:19).
- Righteous family relationships are important to the Lord’s plan of happiness (see Colossians 3:17–21).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 343–47.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Colossians 1–4.

Colossians 1:12–23. We are redeemed through the blood of Christ. Through obedience to the gospel we can deepen our faith in Jesus Christ and avoid being led astray. (20–25 minutes)

Display a potted plant or a picture of a tree and discuss what gives it strength and stability. Write on the board this incomplete sentence: *The deeper the roots, the _____.* Have students complete the sentence. (Possible answers include the “stronger the plant” or the “more stable the tree.”) Ask: What spiritual comparisons can we draw from this illustration?

Write on the board: *I know that Jesus was the son of a carpenter, a great teacher, a good leader, a prophet.* Ask students if they believe this is true. Tell students you will be looking at another testimony from the scriptures. Read Colossians 1:12–23 and discuss some of the following questions:

- Which words and phrases from Paul’s testimony of the Savior impressed you the most?
- What are some differences between this testimony and the one written on the board?
- Which one has deeper roots?

- What power can come into your life when you have a deep testimony? Why?

Tell students that in Paul’s day there were some who thought of Jesus Christ as simply one of the angels. Some denied His physical birth, His humanity, and His Atonement. Paul corrected such ideas. Explain that in our own day there are people who think of Jesus Christ as a mere man. Ask:

- What can we do to counter this lack of understanding about the Savior?
- What must we do to be in a position to give a testimony like Paul’s?

Read Colossians 2:6–10 looking for clues given by Paul as to how to gain this testimony. List these clues on the board (these might include “walk ye in him” [v. 6]; be “rooted and built up in him” [v. 7]; be “stablished in the faith” [v. 7]; be “complete in him” [v. 10]). Discuss the meaning of each item you list on the board. Ask:

- What does verse 8 suggest could happen to us if we are not “rooted” in Christ?
- What can we do to be more “rooted” in the Savior?

Share the following statement by Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Jesus Christ is infinitely more than a great teacher and philosopher. . . . As part of the plan, Jesus offered to atone for the sins of all mankind and bear the suffering for those sins, satisfying the law of justice if the sinners repent. . . .

“He also offered his mortal life, was crucified, and became the first to be resurrected, making possible the literal resurrection of all of our Father’s children. . . . He is our Mediator with the Father and our Exemplar in all things. His loving kindness toward us is beyond our comprehension” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 99; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 75).

Explain to students that as we come to realize all that Jesus Christ does for us, it should inspire our worship and adoration of Him. President Howard W. Hunter asked:

“How often do we think of the Savior? How deeply and how gratefully and how adoringly do we reflect on his life? How central to our lives do we know him to be?” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1993, 79; or *Ensign*, May 1993, 64).

Elder Neal A. Maxwell counseled:

“Let our gratitude . . . be expressed by striving to become, attribute by attribute, more and more as Jesus is (see 3 Nephi 27:27). By so living, ours will not then be a mere appreciation of Jesus, nor a modest admiration of Him. Rather, ours will be an adoration of Jesus expressed by our emulation of Him!” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 26; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 20).

Encourage students to follow this counsel so they can remain firm in their testimonies of Jesus Christ.

Colossians 3:5–25. To become new creatures in Christ, we must overcome evil and develop righteous attributes. (15–20 minutes)

Bring to class two shirts (or other items of clothing that can be easily put on and taken off). Write some of the negative qualities listed in Colossians 3:5–9 on a piece of paper, and pin it to the back of one of the shirts. Write on another piece of paper some of the positive qualities in Colossians 3:10–17, and pin it to the back of the other shirt. Hang the shirts in the front of the class in such a way that the lists are hidden. Read Colossians 3:1–4 and ask:

- According to these verses, what event should we be preparing for?
- How can we prepare?

Explain that when Christ comes again our countenances will reflect how we lived our lives, and He will see us as we really are (see Alma 5:14; Moroni 7:48).

Have students read Colossians 3:5–9 looking for things we need to put off. Define difficult words by using the footnotes or a dictionary. Turn the first shirt around. Ask:

- What counsel would you give to a person with these habits?
- How difficult is it to acquire these habits?
- How difficult is it to put them off? Why?
- How do you put them off?
- Why would you want to put them off?

Read Colossians 3:10–17 looking for things we need to put on. List them on the board and discuss each item. Turn the second shirt around. Ask:

- What would you say to a person with these qualities?
- How difficult is it to acquire these qualities?
- What blessings come from putting them on?

Give the students paper and have them write their own private lists of what they want to put off and put on.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

This Epistle written during this time

First missionary journey (Acts 13–14)	Second missionary journey (Acts 15:36–18:22)	Third missionary journey (Acts 18:23–21:15)	Imprisonment in Caesarea and Rome (Acts 21:16–28:31)	Through second Roman imprisonment
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About A.D. 47–50 50–53 53–57 57–62 62–65

Author and Audience: The book of 1 Thessalonians was written by Paul and addressed to the church at Thessalonica (see 1 Thessalonians 1:1). Many believe it to be his earliest Epistle.

Historical Background: The Thessalonian church had its beginnings during Paul's second missionary journey. Soon after leaving Philippi, Paul arrived in Thessalonica, a major port city and trade center on the northwest corner of the Aegean Sea (see Bible map 13). On three successive Sabbaths he preached the gospel of Jesus Christ in Jewish synagogues with a good measure of success (see Acts 17:1–4). However, some unbelieving Jews, "moved with envy," gathered a hostile crowd that sought to assault Paul and his companions and any others who sympathized with them (see Acts 17:5). Paul, concerned for the safety of the new converts, agreed to leave (see Acts 17:10). He continued his missionary journey and at some point sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to strengthen the young church (see 1 Thessalonians 3:1–3). Later Timothy joined Paul at Corinth to report on the condition of the Thessalonian church (see Acts 18:5). Paul wrote this letter from Corinth around A.D. 50–51 to counsel the Thessalonian Saints regarding the concerns reported by Timothy.

Theme: Paul wrote this letter to encourage the Thessalonians to live worthy lives in preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to relieve their concerns about relatives who had died without a knowledge of the gospel.

1 Thessalonians 1–5

Introduction

Just as members of the Church today sometimes struggle with false traditions, the Saints in Thessalonica labored with an incomplete understanding of the Resurrection. They worried that faithful members of the Church who died would not receive the same blessings as those who lived until the Second Coming. Paul reassured them that all those "which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him" (1 Thessalonians 4:13–14). As you read, search for counsel as to how we can prepare for the Second Coming, keeping in mind that "the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" (1 Thessalonians 5:2).

Prayerfully study 1 Thessalonians 1–5 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Those who accept the gospel of Jesus Christ have a responsibility to lead others to it (see 1 Thessalonians 1:6–10; see also D&C 88:81–82).
- True ministers live and teach the gospel in righteousness (see 1 Thessalonians 2:1–10).
- Missionaries glory and have joy in those who are converted to the Lord and His gospel (see 1 Thessalonians 2:11–20; see also D&C 18:10–16).
- Sanctification comes through the Atonement and by submission to Heavenly Father's will (see 1 Thessalonians 4:1–7; see also Helaman 3:35).
- The Saints of God who die in the faith will be resurrected at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (see 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; see also D&C 45:44–46).
- True Saints should watch for the signs that will precede the Second Coming (see 1 Thessalonians 5:1–10; see also Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:46–55).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles, 272–75.*

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for 1 Thessalonians 1–5.

1 Thessalonians 1:6–2:20. True ministers live the gospel and teach it in a righteous manner, sharing in the joy of those who accept the message. (20–25 minutes)

Ask students to imagine the following scenario: After accepting a challenge to bring a nonmember friend to church, you nervously approach someone you think might come. Your friend declines the invitation. When you ask the reason, your friend explains that if your church teaches people to live the way you do, then it must not be a very good church.

Discuss some of the following questions:

- How would you feel if this happened?
- What would you say?
- Why is it important to live your religion if you hope to share it with others?
- If you could rewrite this scenario, how would you have it end?

Have students read 1 Thessalonians 1:6–10 and look for examples of how to live the gospel. Write their answers on the board and discuss them. Ask:

- How is being a good example at school, at home, or at church like being on a mission?
- What does the phrase “every member a missionary” mean to you?

Have students read 1 Thessalonians 2:5–12 and write down the characteristics of a good missionary. Have them share their findings. Ask:

- Which of these characteristics do you possess now?
- Which do you want to develop?

If desired, have students rewrite the scenario told at the beginning of class using a person who has those characteristics.

Invite students to tell about a person who has had a positive impact on their lives. Ask:

- Why was this person able to have such an impact?
- How do you feel about this person?

Explain that returned missionaries often describe the joy of sharing the gospel with others. Testify to students that they can experience the same joy and satisfaction even now. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:17–20 looking for the words that describe Paul’s feelings about the Thessalonian Saints. Compare those verses with Doctrine and Covenants 18:10–16. Ask:

- Why is there so much joy and love expressed in 1 Thessalonians 2:17–20?
- How can we experience this same joy?

Encourage students to be a positive influence for someone this week.

1 Thessalonians 5:1–23. True Saints prepare for the coming of the Lord by watching for the predicted signs and by living the gospel. (20–25 minutes)

Invite students to predict the exact day their first child will be born. Ask: Why is it difficult to determine the exact moment a baby will be born? Read 1 Thessalonians 5:1–3 and look for how Paul related this to the Second Coming. Ask:

- What other image did Paul use to describe the Second Coming?
- What makes these images good comparisons?
- Who will be surprised at His coming?

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:4–5 and look for who will be surprised and who won’t.

Make two columns on the board, one titled *Children of Light* and the other *Children of Darkness*. Have students search 1 Thessalonians 5:6–11 for the characteristics of each. List these on the board in their respective columns and discuss them as a class. Share the following quote by Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“Living the commandments brings us into harmony with Deity; we become *one* in purpose with the Father and the Son. When we are *one* with God, we walk with spiritual light. Our diligence in keeping the commandments allows the Holy Ghost to dwell within us. We are given the gift of personal revelation. This is a spiritual light that protects us and serves as a beacon, guiding us in righteous ways. It dispels the darkness of the adversary. So powerful is this light that it can reach us even when we are drawn into a black hole of sin so deep and so dark that we believe no spiritual light could ever penetrate” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 51; or *Ensign*, May 1996, 36).

Ask students:

- Why will some be caught by surprise at the Lord’s coming?
- What will happen to them? (Discuss the students’ answers.)

Read Doctrine and Covenants 106:4–5 looking for what we can do to be children of light. Ask:

- What does “gird up your loins” mean? (Prepare, or get ready.)
- How do we do that?

Paul suggested that one way to prepare is to improve our relationship with both God and man. He then gave seven specific ways to do each. Divide the class in half. Assign one half 1 Thessalonians 5:12–15 and invite them to list seven ways Saints can improve their relationship with their fellowmen. Assign the other half 1 Thessalonians 5:16–22 and invite them to list seven ways Saints can improve their relationship with God. List the fourteen items on the board and discuss as needed.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and look for Paul’s expression of hope for the Thessalonian Saints. Ask:

- Can you think of a greater blessing?
- Why is this blessing priceless?
- How would doing these fourteen things help you to receive this blessing?

If time allows, cross-reference verse 23 to 1 Thessalonians 4:3–7 and discuss the importance of sexual purity in becoming sanctified.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

This Epistle written during this time

First missionary journey (Acts 13–14)	Second missionary journey (Acts 15:36–18:22)	Third missionary journey (Acts 18:23–21:15)	Imprisonment in Caesarea and Rome (Acts 21:16–28:31)	Through second Roman imprisonment
About A.D. 47–50	50–53	53–57	57–62	62–65

Author and Audience: The book of 2 Thessalonians was written by Paul and addressed to the church at Thessalonica (see 2 Thessalonians 1:1; 3:17). Paul wrote this letter around A.D. 50–51 (see Bible Dictionary, “Pauline Epistles,” p. 743).

Historical Background: The similarities between this letter and 1 Thessalonians are so strong that many believe they were written within six months of each other. Paul wrote it soon after hearing the reports of Silas and Timothy when they returned from delivering his first letter. For more information see the introduction to the book of 1 Thessalonians (p. 208).

2 Thessalonians 1–3

Introduction

Paul had taught the doctrine of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ with such power that the Saints in Thessalonica were eagerly preparing for it. Then some false notions crept into the Church from teachers who speculated that the coming of the Lord was already at hand. Many Thessalonians were so caught up in this belief that they discontinued their daily labors to simply wait for the Lord’s coming. In this Epistle Paul further defines the signs of the Second Coming.

Prayerfully study 2 Thessalonians 1–3 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The wicked shall suffer the punishments of the Lord at His Second Coming (see 2 Thessalonians 1:3–10; see also D&C 5:19; 133:50–52).
- Paul prophesied that an apostasy and restoration would precede the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (see 2 Thessalonians 2:1–10; see also Amos 8:11–14; Ephesians 1:10).
- We should pray for and be obedient to those God has called to lead the Church (see 2 Thessalonians 3:1–7; see also 2 Chronicles 20:20; Matthew 10:41).
- Latter-day Saints must not become weary in laboring to provide for themselves and their families (see 2 Thessalonians 3:10–13; see also D&C 42:42; 64:33).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 275–79.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for 2 Thessalonians 1–3.

 *New Testament Video* presentation 19, “The Second Coming” (4:51), can be used in teaching 2 Thessalonians 1:1–2:3 (see *New Testament Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).

 **2 Thessalonians 1:1–2:3. Church leaders can help us prepare for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. We should pray for and be obedient to the leaders of the Church.** (40–45 minutes)

Show the class a calendar without dates and a clock missing the hour hand. Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 49:7 to determine what these objects could represent. Ask:

- Would any of you like to know the exact time of the Second Coming? Why?
- What problems could arise if we knew the exact day or hour of the Lord’s coming?

Invite students to read Alma 34:33, 35 and look for what those verses teach about procrastination and its consequences. Testify of the importance of always being spiritually prepared and of not putting off our repentance.

Tell students that the Thessalonian Saints misunderstood Paul’s teachings about the Second Coming. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13–17 and ask: What phrase in these verses may have been falsely interpreted to give the idea that the Second Coming would soon occur? (“We which are alive”; vv. 13, 17.)

Paul wrote a second letter to clear up misunderstandings about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Read 2 Thessalonians 1:3–10 looking for key words or phrases that showed the Second Coming was still in the future. Ask:

- What would the Saints experience before the Second Coming?
- What comfort did Paul offer?
- Read 2 Thessalonians 2:1–3. What else would happen before the Lord’s coming?
- Why would this have been disappointing to the Saints in Paul’s time?
- How would you have felt?

Help students understand the following phrases:

“Be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter” (v. 2).	Do not be concerned by false teachings you hear, but listen only to those in authority.
“Let no man deceive you” (v. 3).	Beware of those who teach false doctrines.

Discuss the importance of prophets in helping us prepare for the Second Coming. Ask: How can they help? Explain that you are going to read three case studies and ask students to think about how they would handle each situation.

Case Study 1: A boy in your seminary class has expressed concern about the things he has heard about the Second Coming. He wants to know if there is enough time for him to plan on a mission, college, marriage, and children. How would you answer him? Discuss their responses, then share the following statement by Elder Boyd K. Packer:

“Everything that I have learned from the revelations and from life convinces me that there is time and to spare for you to carefully prepare for a long life.

“One day you will cope with teenage children of your own. That will serve you right. Later, you will spoil your grandchildren, and they in turn spoil theirs. If an earlier end should happen to come to one, that is more reason to do things right” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1989, 72; or *Ensign*, May 1989, 59).

Ask:

- How is this insight from Elder Packer comforting?
- What challenge comes in knowing that the Second Coming of Jesus Christ may be far in the future?

Case Study 2: A friend tells you she attended a fireside in which the speaker had a dream about the Second Coming and was told to teach the Saints certain things they must do to be ready. Your friend doesn’t know if she should do what the speaker said or not. What would you say to her? Discuss their responses, and then share the following statement by Elder Boyd K. Packer:

“We are entitled to personal revelation. However, unless we are set apart to some presiding office, we will not receive revelations concerning what others should do. . . .

“Occasionally someone will claim to have received authority to teach and bless without having been called and set apart. . . .

“That is why the process of sustaining those called to office is so carefully protected in the Church—that all might know who has authority to teach and to bless.

“An unusual spiritual experience should not be regarded as a personal call to direct others. It is my conviction that experiences of a special, sacred nature are individual and should be kept to oneself” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1989, 17; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 14–15).

Ask:

- According to Elder Packer, who can receive revelation for the Church?
- Who is benefitted by unusual spiritual experiences?
- Whose counsel should we follow?

Case Study 3: Your sister came home concerned because her seminary teacher said that the signs of the Second Coming were almost all fulfilled, great catastrophes were coming, and if Church members did not get their food storage now it would be too late. What would you say to your frightened sister? Discuss their responses, and then share the following statement by Elder Neal A. Maxwell:

“Over the sweep of Christian history, some believers have, by focusing on a few prophecies while neglecting others, prematurely expected the Second Coming. Today, while we are obviously closer to that great moment, we are in the same danger. . . .

“In the context of such cautions, I have no hesitancy in saying that there are some signs—but certainly not all—suggesting that ‘summer is nigh’ (Matthew 24:32). . . .

“Members of the Church need not and should not be alarmists. They need not be deflected from quietly and righteously pursuing their daily lives” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1988, 6–8; or *Ensign*, May 1988, 7, 9).

Ask:

- Have all the signs of the Lord’s coming been fulfilled?
- What does Elder Maxwell counsel us to do?

Testify that living prophets, seers, and revelators have been sent to help prepare us for “the day of the Lord.” Share the following testimony from President Brigham Young:

“Are you prepared for the day of vengeance to come, when the Lord will consume the wicked by the brightness of his coming? No. Then do not be too anxious for the Lord to hasten his work. Let our anxiety be centered upon this one thing, the sanctification of our own hearts, the purifying of our own affections, the preparing of ourselves for the approach of the events that are hastening upon us. This should be our concern, this should be our study, this should be our daily prayer. . . . Seek to have the Spirit of Christ, that we may wait patiently the time of the Lord, and prepare ourselves for the times that are coming. This is our duty” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 9:3).

Encourage students to follow President Young’s counsel.



2 Thessalonians 2:1–3 (Scripture Mastery). Paul prophesied that an apostasy would take place before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. (10–15 minutes)

Invite two students to role-play the part of a missionary companionship. Ask a third to take the part of an investigator. You might want to have them practice briefly before class, or give them directions on index cards when class begins. Assign the missionaries to tell how Jesus Christ restored the true Church to the earth. Have the investigator ask: “If Christ’s Church has been on the earth since He established it here, why would there need to be a Restoration?”

Invite the class to suggest what answers they might give to this question. Ask: How frequently do you think a question like this is asked of our missionaries? Tell students that understanding the doctrines of the Apostasy and of the Restoration will be critical in their missionary experiences.

Have students read 2 Thessalonians 2:1–3. Ask:

- What is “the day of Christ”?
- What will happen before that day?

Explain that the falling away is also known as the Great Apostasy. Read the Joseph Smith Translation of 2 Thessalonians 2:7–9 looking for what brought the Apostasy about. Ask:

- What might Satan’s “signs and lying wonders” have been?
- Besides the Great Apostasy (the falling away of the Church), what other kind of apostasy is there?
- If individuals can fall away also, what kinds of “signs and lying wonders” does Satan use to deceive them?
- How can we avoid Satan’s signs and lying wonders?
- Why would Satan be interested in encouraging us to fall away?

Have students read 2 Thessalonians 3:1–7 looking for what we can do to avoid individual apostasy. Share your testimony of the truths just taught. Conclude by reading the following statement by President Harold B. Lee:

“Now the only safety we have as members of this church is to do exactly what the Lord said to the Church in that day when the Church was organized. We must learn to give heed to the words and commandments that the Lord shall give through his prophet. . . . You may not like what comes from the authority of the Church. It may contradict your political views. It may contradict your social views. It may interfere with some of your social life. But if you listen to these things, as if from the mouth of the Lord himself . . . ‘the gates of hell shall not prevail against you. . . .’” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1970, 152; see also D&C 21:4–6).

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO TIMOTHY

This Epistle written during this time

First missionary journey (Acts 13–14)	Second missionary journey (Acts 15:36–18:22)	Third missionary journey (Acts 18:23–21:15)	Imprisonment in Caesarea and Rome (Acts 21:16–28:31)	Through second Roman imprisonment
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About A.D. 47–50 50–53 53–57 57–62 62–65

Author and Audience: The book of 1 Timothy was addressed by Paul to his former missionary companion, whom he refers to as “my own son in the faith” (1 Timothy 1:2). This letter, together with 2 Timothy and Titus, are known as the pastoral letters because they provide significant counsel to those serving as pastors or leaders in the Church.

Historical Background: Timothy was born in Lystra (see Acts 16:1–3; see also Bible map 13). His father was Greek. He grew up under the watchful care of his righteous Jewish mother and grandmother (see 2 Timothy 1:5). They taught him the scriptures from his youth (see 2 Timothy 3:15). Paul invited Timothy to serve with him during his second missionary journey (see Acts 16:3). From that time on, Timothy served faithfully as a missionary and Church leader (see Acts 19:22; Philippians 2:19). Paul wrote this letter while he was between his first and second Roman imprisonments, probably about A.D. 64 (see Bible Dictionary, “Pauline Epistles,” p. 743). During this time Paul traveled to the regions where he had established branches of the Church, strengthening them in the faith. At some point Paul assigned Timothy to watch over the Church in Ephesus, with the specific assignment to stop the growth of false doctrine (see 1 Timothy 1:3–7).

Theme: In this letter, Paul counseled Timothy regarding how the Church should function and how members should interact with one another (see 1 Timothy 6:11–16). He insisted that Church leaders should set an appropriate example for members to follow (see 1 Timothy 4:6–10).

1 Timothy 1–6

Introduction

Timothy, when he received Paul’s letter, was a priesthood leader in Ephesus. Paul had entrusted him with many important assignments, and Timothy had always proved faithful. Timothy’s young age, however, made it difficult for older and more prominent members of the Church to accept his leadership (see 1 Timothy 4:12). Paul wrote to counsel and encourage his frustrated friend. Like Timothy, we too receive challenging calls to serve. As you read this letter, look for counsel and advice that can help you as you serve in the Church.

Prayerfully study 1 Timothy 1–6 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Church leaders are responsible for ensuring that true doctrine is taught to the Saints (see 1 Timothy 1:3–7, 18–20).
- God extends mercy to us through the Atonement (see 1 Timothy 1:12–17; see also D&C 29:1).
- Individual apostasy is one of the signs of the last days (see 1 Timothy 4:1–15; see also 2 Nephi 27:1–2; D&C 112:23–24).
- The Saints have a responsibility to care for the poor and needy (see 1 Timothy 5:1–16; see also James 1:27; Jacob 2:19).
- We should not put our trust in worldly riches, “for the love of money is the root of all evil” (1 Timothy 6:1–19; see also D&C 6:7).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 361–66, 369–70.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for 1 Timothy 1–6.

1 Timothy 1:3–7, 18–20. Church leaders are responsible for ensuring that true doctrine is taught to the Saints.

(25–30 minutes)

Show students military medals or a picture with a military theme (soldiers, battle, weapons) or play an audio recording of a military march. Read Doctrine and Covenants 35:13–14 and ask:

- How is this scripture related to the picture (music)?
- Why do you think the Lord used military imagery in this scripture?
- Read 1 Timothy 1:18–19. How is doing the work of the Lord like going to war?
- Read Doctrine and Covenants 76:28–29. Who is the enemy?
- Who has he declared war on?
- What kind of war are we fighting?

Explain that in Paul’s day apostasy was seeping into the Church. Paul warned about false teachers who taught erroneous doctrines based on Jewish fables or myths that twisted or changed the truth (see Titus 1:14), and yet many members believed them.

Give each student a piece of paper and assign the students to write a letter to a fictitious friend who has begun to believe false doctrines. Have them use the principles in 1 Timothy 1:3–7 and 4:1–7 to counsel the friend. Gather the papers and read some of them to the class. Ask:

- Why is it important for Church leaders to make sure that true doctrine is taught?
- What can our leaders do to help us learn true doctrine?

Share the counsel of Elder M. Russell Ballard:

“Those who teach must make sure the doctrine remains pure and that it is taught. Teach by the Spirit, using the scriptures and the approved curriculum. *Do not* introduce or dwell on speculative and questionable topics. . . . In a world that is filled with sin, conflict, and confusion, we can find peace and safety in knowing and living the revealed truths of the gospel” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 104; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 77).

Ask:

- Why do our prophets speak so often about daily scripture study?
- How can daily study of the doctrines taught in the scriptures shield us from the false teachings that are so popular in the world?

1 Timothy 1:12–17. God extends mercy to us through the Atonement. (10–15 minutes)



Show the class a balance scale. Label some small blocks *law*, *sin*, and *punishment*. Place them all on one side of the scale so the scale tips to that side. (If you do not have a scale, draw one on the board, draw the blocks on one side of the scale, and ask the students what will happen to the scale.) Write the

word *Justice* on the board and explain that it is an attribute of Heavenly Father. Ask students:

- If this scale represented your final judgment, how would you be affected by Heavenly Father’s justice?
- Would it be fair?

Label a brick *Atonement* and place it on the other side of the scale so that the scale tips the other way. (If you use a drawing, ask the students what will happen to the scale now.) Ask: What does this teach about the power and hope that Jesus Christ offers us? Write the word *Mercy* on the board and explain that it is also a characteristic of God. Read Acts 9:1–5 and ask:

- How unbalanced was Paul’s scale when he was on the road to Damascus?
- How would you feel if you were in Paul’s place? Why?

Read 1 Timothy 1:12–17 and look for how Paul obtained mercy. Ask: Why do we need mercy? Invite students to read Alma 5:32–33 looking for how we obtain mercy. Read 1 Timothy 2:3–6 and the Joseph Smith Translation of 1 Timothy 2:4. Testify of the great mercy that comes to us through the Atonement of Jesus Christ as we repent.

1 Timothy 2:9–15. Members of the Church should be examples of the gospel of Jesus Christ. (10–15 minutes)

Give students paper to write on. Have the girls make a list of moral qualities they expect young men in the Church to have. Ask the boys to do the same for the young women. Invite some of the students to share their ideas, and discuss them as a class.

Read 1 Timothy 2:9–15 looking for the qualities Paul said women in the Church should have. (You may wish to share the commentary for 1 Corinthians 14:34–35 in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, p. 297). Compare Paul’s list with the list made by the boys.

Read 1 Timothy 3:1–7 looking for the qualities Paul taught that a bishop should have. Compare this list with the list made by the girls. You may want to explain that although Paul was speaking of bishops, most of these are qualities that the Lord expects all men to develop. Ask:

- Who besides the Lord values these qualities?
- How do these qualities compare with those the world values?
- What can we do to develop these qualities?

1 Timothy 5:3–16; 6:1–19. We should not put our trust in worldly riches, “for the love of money is the root of all evil.” (25–30 minutes)

Show the class a large stack of play money. Ask:

- What would you do if you made this much money in a month? a week? a day? an hour?

- How many of you plan to be wealthy someday? Why?
- What are dangers of having a lot of money?

Read Jacob 2:18–19 looking for the Lord’s teachings about riches. Ask:

- What conditions does the Lord place on obtaining wealth?
- What are we to seek above all else? (see also Matthew 6:33).
- What is the value of this counsel?

Read 1 Timothy 6:10–12 and look for Paul’s warning. Ask:

- What is the danger of wealth?
- What should we be seeking in this life?
- If we obtain riches according to the Lord’s counsel in Jacob 2, how should we use them?

Turn to 1 Timothy 5:8–10 and have students look for whom the Lord particularly wants us to care for. Ask: Why is it important to care for widows and family members? Cross-reference this scripture with Ezekiel 16:49 and ask: What were

the major reasons why God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah? Read James 1:27 and look for how James described those who exercise pure religion. Discuss how this doctrine relates to Paul’s teachings in 1 Timothy 5.

Read 1 Timothy 6:17–19 and identify the six charges Paul gave wealthy Saints. Write them on the board and discuss them. Ask:

- What blessing comes to those who obey the six charges listed on the board?
- When will this blessing be received?

Write the following sentence on the board: *It is one thing to be rich, but another to be rich in the Lord’s way.* Ask students to share what they think it means to be rich in the Lord’s way. Read Doctrine and Covenants 6:7 with students. Ask:

- How does being rich in the Lord’s way differ from the world’s way?
- Why might someone desire the riches of the Lord over the riches of the world?

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO TIMOTHY

This Epistle written during this time

First missionary journey (Acts 13–14)	Second missionary journey (Acts 15:36–18:22)	Third missionary journey (Acts 18:23–21:15)	Imprisonment in Caesarea and Rome (Acts 21:16–28:31)	Through second Roman imprisonment
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About A.D. 47–50 50–53 53–57 57–62 62–65

Author and Audience: The book of 2 Timothy was addressed by Paul “to Timothy, my dearly beloved son” (2 Timothy 1:2; see v. 1).

Historical Background: Paul finished his ministry in Rome. Thirty years of strenuous service as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ had transformed Saul of Tarsus into Paul, the candidate for “a crown of righteousness” (see 2 Timothy 4:6–8). This second imprisonment was difficult (see 2 Timothy 2:9). Friends deserted him and others betrayed him; only Luke, Paul confided to Timothy, remained true (see 2 Timothy 4:10–11). Still, despite the encircling gloom, Paul remained faithful and courageous to the end. Facing certain conviction and execution, he declared, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7). He wrote this letter shortly before his execution in about A.D. 65 (see Bible Dictionary, “Pauline Epistles,” p. 743).

Theme: Paul wrote 2 Timothy primarily to give his last instructions to a favorite son in the faith. The letter is positive despite Paul’s circumstances. He encourages Timothy to be faithful, reminds him of the eternal blessings that come to the “good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Timothy 2:3), and once again warns of the encroaching evils of false doctrine. Paul wrote that we gain salvation through the grace of God and through applying the true doctrines taught both in the scriptures and by living prophets (see 2 Timothy 3:13–17; 4:1–2).

2 Timothy 1–4

Introduction

As people approach death, their perspective on what is most important often changes. Because of this we tend to pay special attention to a person’s last words. The book of 2 Timothy is a record of Paul’s last words, solemnized by his approaching death. They are his final legacy, the distillation of his experience and wisdom. You will find that Paul warned of dangers similar to those we face today. Read 2 Timothy looking for teachings about how to face death and for Paul’s parting counsel on how to successfully complete your life’s journey and secure the deep joy promised by the Savior (see John 16:24).

Prayerfully study 2 Timothy 1–4 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- We were chosen before we came to earth to fulfill responsibilities given us by the Lord (see 2 Timothy 1:8–11; see also Abraham 3:22–23).
- Eternal life is promised to those who live the gospel and endure to the end (see 2 Timothy 2:1–10; 4:1–8; see also 1 Nephi 22:31; D&C 14:7).
- The scriptures expose the evils of our day and guide us to salvation (see 2 Timothy 3:1–17; see also Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:37).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 372, 375–79.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for 2 Timothy 1–4.



2 Timothy 1–4. Eternal life is promised to those who live the gospel and endure to the end. (25–30 minutes)

Divide students into three groups and assign each group one of the following chapters: 2 Timothy 1; 2; 4. Have them study their assigned chapter along with Acts 20:28–31 and 2 Thessalonians 2:1–3 looking for evidence that the Church in Paul’s day was falling away from the truth. Have them report their findings, and discuss them as a class. Ask:

- What evidence did Paul give that a general apostasy would occur?
- When would it happen?
- What evidence can you give that, although some may apostatize in our day, the Church will not be withdrawn from the earth again?

Write *The Latter-day Church* on the board. Beneath it write *Daniel 2:44–45* and *Doctrine and Covenants 65:2–6*. Have each group read these scriptures and determine what they prophesy for our day. Ask: Is there hope for us? Discuss how we can help fulfill these prophecies. Have a student read the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“There are still those, not a few, who criticize and rebel, who apostatize and lift their voices against this

work. We have always had them. They speak their piece as they walk across the stage of life, and then they are soon forgotten. I suppose we always will have them as long as we are trying to do the work of the Lord. The honest in heart will detect that which is true and that which is false. We go forward, marching as an army with banners emblazoned with the everlasting truth. We are a cause that is militant for truth and goodness. We are a body of Christian soldiers ‘marching as to war, with the cross of Jesus going on before’ (“Onward, Christian Soldiers,” *Hymns*, no. 246).

“Everywhere we go, we see great vitality in this work. There is enthusiasm wherever it is organized. It is the work of the Redeemer. It is the gospel of good news. It is something to be happy and excited about” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 115–16; or *Ensign*, May 1996, 83).

Ask: Why can we have hope for the Church in our day? Write on the board the following statement by President Wilford Woodruff:

“The Lord will never permit me or any other man who stands as President of this Church to lead you astray” (“Excerpts from Three Addresses by President Wilford Woodruff Regarding the Manifesto,” following Official Declaration 1 in the Doctrine and Covenants).

According to this statement what else can we do to avoid apostasy? Read 2 Timothy 4:7–8 and testify that if we are valiant we will be able to conclude our lives with the same confidence as Paul.



2 Timothy 3:1–5, 16–17 (Scripture Mastery). The scriptures expose the evils of our day and guide us to salvation. (15–20 minutes)

Ask students:

- How many of you have been immunized for a disease?
- Can you remember how it felt?

- Was it worth the pain? Why?
- What risks do you take if you are not immunized?

Read 2 Timothy 3:1–5 and ask:

- What kinds of diseases are represented here?
- How might they be even more dangerous than polio or smallpox?

Explain that Paul prophesied that the spiritual diseases described would devastate society in the last days. Ask: If you could be immunized against these spiritual diseases, what price would you be willing to pay? Why? Read 2 Timothy 3:15 looking for the antidote to the evils of our day. Ask:

- What has the Lord provided to help immunize us against spiritual diseases?
- How can the scriptures help protect us from these ills?

Read 2 Timothy 3:16–17 and look for ways the scriptures help us combat spiritual disease. Have students compare these verses with 2 Timothy 3:1–5, and discuss how the scriptures can provide protection against each spiritual disease listed.

Read this statement by Elder Boyd K. Packer:

“Paul taught that a knowledge of the scriptures was our immunization against these [latter-day] evils” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1985, 42; or *Ensign*, May 1985, 33).

President Ezra Taft Benson added:

“This is an answer to the great challenge of our time. The word of God, as found in the scriptures, in the words of living prophets, and in personal revelation, has the power to fortify the Saints and arm them with the Spirit so they can resist evil, hold fast to the good, and find joy in this life” (“The Power of the Word,” *Ensign*, May 1986, 80).

Encourage students to be more consistent in their scripture study so that they might be fortified against the evils that surround them.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS

This Epistle written during this time

First missionary journey (Acts 13–14)	Second missionary journey (Acts 15:36–18:22)	Third missionary journey (Acts 18:23–21:15)	Imprisonment in Caesarea and Rome (Acts 21:16–28:31)	Through second Roman imprisonment
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About A.D. 47–50 50–53 53–57 57–62 62–65

Author and Audience: Titus was a Greek convert and a faithful fellow laborer with Paul in spreading the gospel and organizing the Church (see Galatians 2:3; 2 Corinthians 8:16–23). The book of Titus was written by Paul (see Titus 1:1) and addressed “to Titus, mine own son after the common faith” (v. 4).

Historical Background: Sometime after being released from his first Roman imprisonment, Paul visited the island of Crete with Titus. Paul was unable to remain on the island, so he left Titus there to set the Church in order (see Titus 1:5). Paul’s letter, written to strengthen and encourage Titus, provides definite instructions about the duties of those who minister in the Church. Specifically, the Apostle warns Titus to beware of false ministers and doctrines. He also speaks about the character and conduct befitting one who is called to priesthood leadership. This letter was written approximately A.D. 64 (see Bible Dictionary, “Pauline Epistles,” p. 743).

Theme: Like Timothy, Titus had a difficult assignment. The main challenge that confronted him and the new leaders he would appoint lay in ensuring that the doctrine remained pure among the new members. Like so many other congregations of Saints, the branch in Crete was ravaged with false teachers and doctrines (see Titus 1:14; 3:9–11). Some of them were “unruly . . . teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake” (Titus 1:10–11). Paul encouraged Titus to be vigilant in sustaining the faith (see Titus 1:13–16; 2:15), to appoint strong and appropriate leaders (see Titus 1:1–9), and to teach the Saints the way to salvation (see Titus 2:11–3:8).

Titus 1–3

Introduction

Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote: “Titus is the epistle of obedience. Writing in his old age, Paul seems increasingly impressed by the Spirit to counsel his beloved Titus, and through him all the saints, of the overpowering need to walk in paths of truth and righteousness. . . .

“Titus is written to and for the saints. It is a sermon of practical exhortation to those in the fold, a common sense approach to the problem of living in the world without being of the world” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3:119).

Prayerfully study Titus 1–3 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- In the premortal world God promised eternal life to those who would be faithful in mortality (see Titus 1:1–3).
- Denying ourselves ungodliness and worldly lusts will lead us to the Lord (see Titus 2:1–15; see also Moroni 10:32).
- Through God’s mercy we can obtain eternal life by being baptized and continuing in good works (see Titus 2:11–3:8; see also Alma 12:33–34).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 370–75.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Titus 1–3.

Titus 2:11–3:8. Through God’s mercy we can obtain eternal life by being baptized and continuing in good works. (20–25 minutes)

Display a live plant. Write the words *water* and *light* on the board. Ask:

- Which of these can the plant live without?
- What happens if one is missing?

Write on the board *faith in Jesus Christ* and *obedience to God’s commandments (works)*. Ask:

- Which of these is needed for eternal life?
- How might we compare these gospel principles to the needs of a plant?

Read Titus 1:16; 2:7, 14; 3:8, 14 to discover the doctrine Paul was emphasizing. Ask:

- What are good works?
- How can they help us return to Heavenly Father?

Read Titus 3:3–5 and ask:

- Do these verses agree or disagree with the previous verses we studied on works?

- Did Paul contradict himself? Why or why not?
- What do you think Paul meant? (Works and grace go together.)

Read the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks:

“We testify that being cleansed from sin through Christ’s Atonement is conditioned upon the individual sinner’s faith, which must be manifested by obedience to the Lord’s command to repent, be baptized, and receive the Holy Ghost (see Acts 2:37–38). . . .

“Nephi taught, ‘. . . for we know it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do’ (2 Nephi 25:23). And what is ‘all we can do’? It surely includes repentance (see Alma 24:11) and baptism, keeping the commandments, and enduring to the end” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 76–77; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 55–56).

Have students read Titus 3:4–8. Then have them write a letter to a fictional nonmember friend explaining why Latter-day Saints believe that both the grace of Jesus Christ and our good works are required for salvation.

Titus 2:1–15. Denying ourselves ungodliness and worldly lusts will lead us to the Lord. (15–20 minutes)

Discuss with students the effect that someone who is critical and irritable has on others. Ask: Why is it unpleasant to be in

the presence of such people? Read Titus 1:10–14 and describe the people that Titus lived with. Ask:

- What do you think it was like for him to teach the gospel to these people?
- What would it be like to be their priesthood leader?
- How important would it be to befriend them?
- How would you do it?

Read Titus 3:10–11 looking for Paul’s counsel and ask:

- What did Paul mean by “reject”?
- Is there a time when we should reject the association of an individual? When? Why? (compare Galatians 6:1).

Give the students paper and have them draw four columns. Have them scan Titus 2:2–6 looking for the four groups of people for whom Paul gave “sound doctrine” (v. 1). Tell the students to use these groups as headings for the columns. Then have them read verses 1–8 carefully and list in the columns the counsel Paul wanted each group to receive. Invite them to ponder the counsel given and consider how it applies to them. Explain that we may not be able to change many of the people around us, but we can resist their worldly influences and improve ourselves. Read Titus 2:11–15 looking for what we can do to change ourselves. Ask:

- What has the Savior done that enables us to change?
- What blessings come to those who work at changing their lives?

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON

This Epistle
written during
this time

First missionary journey (Acts 13–14)	Second missionary journey (Acts 15:36–18:22)	Third missionary journey (Acts 18:23–21:15)	Imprisonment in Caesarea and Rome (Acts 21:16–28:31)	Through second Roman imprisonment
About A.D. 47–50	50–53	53–57	57–62	62–65

Author and Audience: Paul wrote the book of Philemon during his first Roman imprisonment. The letter is addressed to Philemon, a member of the Church and owner of the slave Onesimus, one of Paul’s converts (see Philemon 1:1–10).

Historical Background: Philemon was a resident of Colosse and was probably also one of Paul’s converts (see Philemon 1:19–20). He was a zealous member who generously lent his house and means for the use of the Church (see Philemon 1:2–5). Paul made it clear in this letter that he entertained the notion of keeping Onesimus—Philemon’s runaway slave—with him, for he was a valuable friend. Paul could not do so, however, since the young convert-slave was the property of someone else. The punishment for a runaway slave was death. Paul begged Philemon to receive Onesimus as he would receive Paul himself (see Philemon 1:12–19).

Theme: Paul desired his new convert to return home and make amends with his owner. He wrote this letter to plead his cause, hoping that Philemon would accept him back into his good graces. Although returning to his master would result in the loss of his newfound freedom from slavery, Onesimus had found another freedom that only comes through the gospel of Jesus Christ (see Philemon 1:10).

Philemon 1

Introduction

The book of Philemon gives one of the finest explanations of the meaning of forgiveness and repentance that can be found in Paul’s writings. The Apostle stands revealed as a model of Christlike love and compassion. Encased in prison walls, Paul reveals his tender feelings as he pleads the cause of a poor runaway who has no one but Paul to recommend him.

Prayerfully study Philemon 1 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- We must forgive others their offenses against us (see Philemon 1:10–20; see also D&C 64:9–11).
- Through the gospel, all are equal before the Lord (see Philemon 1:15–17; see also Alma 1:26; D&C 88:107).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 353–55.

Suggestions for Teaching

Use the following idea or one or more of your own as you prepare to teach Philemon 1.

Philemon 1. Through the gospel all are equal before the Lord. (35–40 minutes)

Write *Paul*, *Onesimus*, and *Philemon* on the board, and draw a heavy chain.



- What have chains been used for throughout history?
- What do they symbolize?

Explain that the names on the board are of people who had chains in their lives. Ask students to quickly read Philemon 1:1–21 looking for each person’s chain. As they find the answers, write them on the board and discuss them. (These might include that Paul was in prison, Onesimus was a slave, and Philemon may have been an unforgiving master.)

Share appropriate information from the introduction to the book of Philemon. Explain that in the days of Philemon and Onesimus, slaves were completely at the mercy of their owners. Even trivial offenses often were punished in the most cruel manner. Consider sharing the following explanation:

“The attitude of the law toward the slave was expressed in the formula *servoile caput nullum jus habet; the slave has no right*. The master’s power was unlimited. He might mutilate, torture, or kill the slave at his pleasure. . . . Tracking fugitive slaves was a trade. Recovered slaves were branded on the forehead, condemned to double labor, and sometimes thrown to the beasts in the amphitheatre. The slave population was enormous. Some proprietors had as many as twenty thousand” (Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, 4 vols. [1900–1901], 3:519).

Ask:

- What could Philemon legally do to his servant?
- Would it be within his religious right?
- What had changed in Onesimus’s life that put a different light on the situation? (He had become converted to the Savior’s gospel.)

Read Philemon 1:8–20 again as a class, looking for answers to the following questions:

- What principle of the gospel was Paul asking Philemon to practice?
- Why might it be difficult for Philemon to forgive?
- What can we learn from these teachings?

Have students think about a time when they had difficulty forgiving someone. Ask:

- How hard was it to change your attitude about the person? Why?

- How were you finally able to change it?

Point to the names on the board and ask:

- Which of these individuals does God favor the most?
- Read 2 Nephi 26:33. Why is it impossible to choose?
- We know that each has different circumstances in life, but what do all have in common?
- What does the gospel make of all of us, regardless of our place in society?

Testify that the gospel is the great equalizer. Because of that we should practice being more accepting and tolerant of each other.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS

Author and Date: Since about A.D. 400 the book of Hebrews has traditionally been ascribed to Paul. There are, however, some who question Paul's authorship of this Epistle because its style and language are so different from Paul's other letters. It is generally agreed that even if the pen was not Paul's, the ideas were, because the doctrines in Hebrews agree with those found in Paul's other letters.

When the Prophet Joseph Smith made inspired revisions of the Bible he did not question Paul's authorship (see Bible Dictionary, "Joseph Smith Translation," p. 717). For instance the Prophet taught:

"It is said by Paul in his letter to the Hebrew brethren, that Abel obtained witness that he was righteous" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 59).

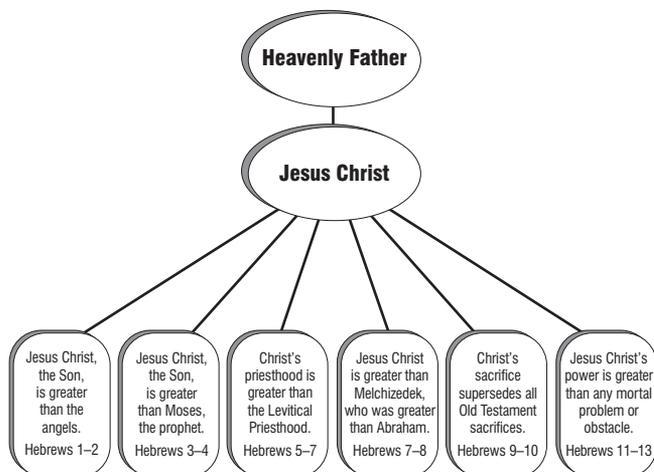
The dating of this Epistle is also uncertain. But since Hebrews makes no mention of the destruction of the temple, which occurred in A.D. 70, and always refers to the temple in the present tense, it is assumed this letter was written before that time. Also, if Paul was the author, it must have been written before his death in about A.D. 65.

Audience: This Epistle draws heavily on Old Testament themes and practices. Therefore it is likely that the intended audience was Jewish (Hebrew) Christians.

Historical Background: As we have seen in Acts and in the Epistles we have already studied, there was often sharp disagreement between gentile and Jewish Christians over whether or not Saints were subject to the law of Moses (see Acts 15). One reason the book of Hebrews was written was to encourage Jewish converts to remain faithful to the gospel and not revert to their Old Testament way of life.

As it became clear that Mosaic rituals were done away in Christ's atoning sacrifice, an interesting pair of questions arose: If we accept the truth that the law of Moses is no longer binding on Christians, what is the true value of the Old Testament? and how should it be interpreted? With a few possible exceptions, the only scriptures available to the Christians at this early date were what we now call the Old Testament. The New Testament was in the process of preparation, and nearly three centuries passed before it was accepted as a standard. Hebrews appears to have been written, at least in part, to answer the question of how Christians were to view the Old Testament and the law of Moses. Christ and His gospel were to have precedence over the old law.

Jesus Christ Supersedes All Things



Theme: Paul taught the Colossian Saints that they should give "thanks unto the Father" who sent His Firstborn Son "that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Colossians 1:12-18). The book of Hebrews adds to this theme the fact that Jesus Christ, under the Father, is superior to all things. He is therefore authorized to fulfill the old covenant of the law and administer the new covenant of the gospel. As one Latter-day Saint educator wrote:

"Hebrews . . . is to the New Testament what Leviticus is to the Old: Leviticus announces the Mosaic system, while Hebrews explains it. In it, Paul shows how the gospel grew out of the soil of the Levitical order. By the light of the gospel restored in his day, he shows how the Levitical system was intended as a bridge by which those in the wilderness of carnality could cross over to the rest of the Lord.

"None of the books in the New Testament, the Gospels included, are more Christ centered than Paul's epistle to the Hebrews. In it, Paul seeks to show Christ as the fulfillment of the Mosaic system. The imagery of the Mosaic system finds its reality in Jesus of Nazareth and his atoning sacrifice" (Joseph Fielding McConkie, "Jesus Christ, Symbolism, and Salvation," in Robert L. Millet, *Studies in Scripture: Volume 6, Acts to Revelation* [1987], 192).

Hebrews 1–2

Introduction

Hebrews 1–2 focuses on Jesus Christ’s special position as the Son of God. His glory and honor is greater than the angels of heaven, yet He allowed Himself to be made “a little lower than the angels” (Hebrews 2:9; see also Psalm 8:5). Consider what this statement means and search in Hebrews for the teachings of the supremacy of Jesus Christ over all.

Prayerfully study Hebrews 1–2 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Jesus Christ is the Only Begotten Son and is in the “express image” of Heavenly Father (see Hebrews 1:1–6; see also John 14:9).
- Jesus Christ is greater than the angels of heaven, but He was willing to take upon Himself mortality that He might comprehend our sufferings and temptations (see Hebrews 1:4–12; 2:9–18; see also Alma 7:11–13).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 380–83.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Hebrews 1–2.

Hebrews 1–2. Jesus Christ is in the “express image” of Heavenly Father. He is greater than the angels of heaven, but He was willing to take upon Himself mortality that He might comprehend our sufferings and temptations.

(35–40 minutes)

Arrange for several students to bring to class a childhood photograph of themselves and of their parents at a similar age. Display the photographs and see if the other students can match the parents’ photographs to the correct sons or daughters. Discuss what physical characteristics helped students match parent and child.

Invite students to read Hebrews 1:1–3 looking for what these verses teach about the physical characteristics of Jesus Christ. Ask: If you could look at a photograph of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, how similar would they look? Discuss with students other characteristics, besides physical resemblance, that we can receive from our parents.

Have students read John 14:6–10 and look for an additional way that Jesus Christ is in the “express image” of Heavenly Father. Invite students to read Hebrews 1:6–12, this time looking for attributes, powers, or characteristics of Jesus Christ that are the same as Heavenly Father’s. You may wish to list the following points from Hebrews 1 on the board:

Verse 6	The angels will worship Him.
Verse 8	He will have a scepter of righteousness.
Verse 9	He hates iniquity.
Verse 10	He laid the foundation of the earth.
Verse 12	He will be the same forever.

Ask students to read Hebrews 2:7, and then ask: Since Jesus Christ was a God in the premortal life, why did He choose to come to earth and be made “a little lower than the angels”? Discuss students’ ideas. Explain that Jesus was willing to come to earth in order to perform the Atonement for the rest of Heavenly Father’s children (see Hebrews 2:9; Philippians 2:5–11; Mosiah 3:5–9). The Savior’s willingness to leave His throne on high, become mortal, suffer death on the cross, and pay for the sins of mankind is called “the condescension of God” (1 Nephi 11:26–33).

Invite students to silently read Hebrews 2:10–18. Ask them to look for evidence that it was Christ’s love for us and His desire that we have the opportunity to return to His Father that motivated Him to suffer all that He did. Ask:

- Which of the verses touched you the most? Why?
- How does it feel to know that because He suffered temptations He is better able to succor us when we are tempted?

Share with students the love you feel for the Savior Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 3–6

Introduction

Hebrews 1–2 declares that Jesus Christ is superior to the angels. Hebrews 3–4 compares Jesus to Moses, the prophet most revered by the Jews. Hebrews 5–6 teaches us that Christ, as a high priest after the order of Melchizedek, is greater than the Mosaic high priest of the Levitical order. Look for teachings about faith, mercy, grace, and gaining perfection.

Prayerfully study Hebrews 3–6 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Jesus Christ is greater than any prophet (see Hebrews 3:1–6).
- Those who do not harden their hearts against the Savior will enter into His rest in this life and in the life to come (see Hebrews 3:8–19; 4:1–11).
- Hearing the gospel brings conversion to those with faith (see Hebrews 4:1–2; see also Alma 32:21–43).
- The Lord offers mercy and grace to cleanse us and enable us to come to Him (see Hebrews 4:12–16; see also Ether 12:27).
- Authorized priesthood holders must be called of God as was Aaron (see Hebrews 5:1–4; see also Articles of Faith 1:5).
- Sons of perdition cannot repent or be redeemed (see Hebrews 6:4–6; see also D&C 76:30–49).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 383–85.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Hebrews 3–6.

Hebrews 3–4. Those who do not harden their hearts against the Savior will enter into His rest in this life and in the life to come. (30–35 minutes)

Ask a student to share with the class an important goal she or he wants to accomplish in this life. Ask the student how difficult it will be to obtain that goal. List some of the steps that may be required to reach that goal, and discuss them as a class. Ask the student:

- Whose responsibility is it to obtain that goal?
- If you do not meet the requirements for that goal, do you think you should be given the reward anyway? Why or why not?

Write the phrase *enter into the rest of the Lord* on the board. Have students read Hebrews 3:8–19 looking for the group of people who were refused entrance into the Lord’s rest. Ask:

- What does this rest refer to? (The fulness of God’s glory; see D&C 84:24.)
- What sins caused them to forfeit this privilege?
- What sins did Paul warn the people of his day against so they would not incur the same punishment?
- How do you think the warnings in verses 12–15 apply to us?

Explain that the righteous enter into a state of rest called paradise when they die, but that we can also receive the

Lord’s rest in this life. Share the following statement by President Joseph F. Smith:

“The ancient prophets speak of ‘entering into God’s rest’; what does it mean? To my mind, it means entering into the knowledge and love of God, having faith in his purpose and in his plan, to such an extent that we know we are right, and that we are not hunting for something else, we are not disturbed by every wind of doctrine, or by the cunning and craftiness of men who lie in wait to deceive. . . . The man who has reached that degree of faith in God that all doubt and fear have been cast from him, he has entered into ‘God’s rest,’ . . . rest from doubt, from fear, from apprehension of danger, rest from the religious turmoil of the world” (*Gospel Doctrine*, 58; see also Matthew 11:28–30).

Ask:

- Why is it worthwhile to pursue the goal of entering into the rest of the Lord, during and after this life?
- Whose responsibility is it to obtain that goal?
- If you do not fulfill the requirements to enter into the Lord’s rest, do you think you should be given that blessing anyway? Why or why not?
- Read Hebrews 4:1. What did Paul encourage others not to do? (Fall short of entering into the rest of God.)
- How might you feel if you were to fall short of this important goal?

Have students read Hebrews 4:2–12 silently. Invite them to mark the phrases they feel will give them strength and direction in seeking the Lord’s rest. Invite several students to share with the class the phrases they have marked.

Read Hebrews 4:14–16. Help students understand that Jesus Christ has the power to help each of us obtain His rest. Have students read Matthew 11:28–30; Jacob 1:7–8; Alma 12:34; and Doctrine and Covenants 59:23 looking for ways we can “come boldly unto the throne of grace” and obtain the power that Jesus Christ offers. Encourage students to seek the peace, joy, and rest that come to those who come unto Christ.

Hebrews 4:12–16. The Lord offers us mercy and grace to cleanse us and enable us to return to Him. (15–20 minutes)

Before class write the words *mercy* and *grace* on the board. Tell students: Imagine that you are magically transported to a faraway kingdom you have never heard of before. The people are interesting and friendly, but you discover that each day at noon everyone in the kingdom is required to stop what they are doing and join in playing the national anthem on special trumpets. When it is discovered that you

do not have a trumpet, you are arrested, taken before the king, and informed that the penalty for not playing is death.

Ask students: What would you say to the king? Show students the words on the board and ask: Which of these would you hope the king would offer you, since you did not know the law?

Tell students: To your great relief, the king does offer you mercy and forgives you for not having a trumpet. Point to the word *grace* on the board. Ask: What is the difference between mercy and grace? To help answer this question, read with students the definition of *grace* in the Bible Dictionary (p. 697).

Read Hebrews 4:12–16. Discuss how the Lord not only forgives us when we repent but also helps us change our natures so we are better able to keep the commandments. Make copies of the following statements and give them to students as a handout. Review them in class and encourage students to study them at home.

Mercy is the spirit of compassion, tenderness, and forgiveness. It is one of the attributes of God.

Grace is the enabling power from God that allows us to obtain blessings in this life and gain eternal life and exaltation in the life to come. It is this power that can change our sinful nature and turn our weakness into strength. This divine help is given through the mercy and love of God to those who exercise faith, repent, and earnestly strive to keep the commandments (see Ether 12:27; Bible Dictionary, “grace,” p. 697).

Explain that mercy and grace work together for the blessing and exaltation of mankind. If we have faith in Christ and repent, Heavenly Father will extend His mercy and forgive and cleanse us (see D&C 110:5). By His grace we are able to “put off the natural man” and become Saints. All this comes through the Atonement of Jesus Christ (see Mosiah 3:19; Alma 33:8–11). Read and discuss the following statement by Elder Gene R. Cook, a member of the Seventy:

“Perhaps some of us have not received or known how to use the great gift of grace the Father has given to us through the Atonement of His Son, Jesus Christ. . . .

“Let me share with you five principles that may help us obtain that divine intervention in our own lives. . . .

“The first principle is *faith*. . . .

“It is evident that this grace, or enabling power, is accessed by faith. No wonder faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the first principle of the gospel. . . .

“*Repentance* is the second principle. The grace of the Lord through the Atonement can both cleanse us of sin and assist us in perfecting ourselves through our trials, sicknesses, and even character defects. We are both sanctified and justified through the grace of the Lord (see D&C 20:30–31). . . .

“The third principle is *humility*. ‘But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble’ (James 4:6). . . .

“*Doing all in your own power* is the fourth principle. . . .

“. . . For we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do’ (2 Nephi 25:23).

“. . . What a glorious principle to understand: the Lord’s assistance to us—whether we have strong faith or weak faith; whether a man, a woman, or a child—is not based just on what we know, how strong we are, or who we are, but more upon our *giving all that we can give and doing all that we can do* in our present circumstance. Once one has given all he can, then the Lord, through His grace, will assist him (see D&C 123:17). . . .

“The fifth principle, *keeping the commandments*, surely is a condition for receiving the grace of the Lord: ‘If you keep my commandments you shall receive of his fulness . . . ; therefore, . . . you shall receive grace for grace’ (D&C 93:20; see also 93:28).

“To obtain grace, one does not have to be perfect, but he does have to be trying to keep the commandments the best that he can. Then the Lord will allow him to receive that power” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1993, 98–100; or *Ensign*, May 1993, 79–81).



Hebrews 5:4 (Scripture Mastery). Authorized priesthood holders must be called of God.
(10–15 minutes)

Show students a diploma, certificate, or license of some sort. Ask:

- What is required to receive one of these?
- What is required to issue one?
- How would you like to be operated on by a doctor who printed his own license without ever going to medical school?

Tell students that the same principle applies to priesthood holders. Have them read Hebrews 5:1–4 looking for what is required for a person to be a legitimate priesthood holder. Have them read Exodus 28:1 to learn how Aaron was called. Read the following by Elder Boyd K. Packer:

“The priesthood cannot be conferred like a diploma. It cannot be handed to you as a certificate. It cannot be delivered to you as a message or sent to you in a letter. It comes only by proper ordination. An authorized holder of the priesthood has to be there. He must place his hands upon your head and ordain you” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1981, 46–47; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 32).

Assure students that true priesthood authority and power is found in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Hebrews 7–10

Introduction

The Melchizedek Priesthood is greater than the Levitical Priesthood (Hebrews 7), and the gospel of Jesus Christ and His offering are greater than the law of Moses (Hebrews 8–10). Read Hebrews 7–10 to see what is taught about Melchizedek and how the higher priesthood is different from the Aaronic or Levitical Priesthood.

Prayerfully study Hebrews 7–10 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Sanctification can come only by the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ (see Hebrews 7:11–28; 8:6–13; 9:11–15, 22–28; 10:1–4, 9–22).
- The priests and the offerings they made under the Mosaic law were types and symbols of Jesus Christ and His Atonement (see Hebrews 8:3–6; 9:6–28; 10:1–12; see also 2 Nephi 11:4).
- The blood of animals cannot save us; only the blood of Jesus Christ can redeem us from our fallen state (see Hebrews 9:11–28; see also Alma 34:9–15).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 385–93.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Hebrews 7–10.

Hebrews 7–10. Jesus Christ is greater than Abraham and Melchizedek. His priesthood is greater than the Levitical Priesthood. His sacrifice was greater than all the sacrifices of the Old Testament. (30–35 minutes)

Ask students what priesthood the prophet holds, and write the answer on the board. Invite students to briefly share an appropriate story about having experienced the power of that priesthood. Have them read Doctrine and Covenants 107:2–4 looking for the name of that priesthood and why it is called after Melchizedek’s name.

Explain that in Hebrews 7–10 Paul taught the superiority of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Melchizedek Priesthood over the ordinances of the law of Moses. Discuss the following questions as a class, using the references provided. (Or give them to students as a handout and have them work on them as individuals or in groups.) As necessary, use information from the commentaries for these chapters of Hebrews in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles* (pp. 385–93) to help clarify the doctrine.

- Who was Melchizedek? (see Hebrews 7:1–2).
- Who had greater authority, Melchizedek or Abraham? (see Hebrews 7:2–4; if students ask about the meaning of verse 3, refer to the Joseph Smith Translation of this verse in the appendix).
- What priesthood did Jesus Christ hold? (see Hebrews 5:5–6).
- If Jesus Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek, how could he be greater than Melchizedek? (see JST, Hebrews 7:3).
- In what ways is the Melchizedek Priesthood greater than the Aaronic or Levitical Priesthood? (see Hebrews 7:11–12, 22–25; 3 Nephi 15:8–9).
- How is the new covenant of the gospel, administered by the Melchizedek Priesthood, superior to the old covenant or law of Moses, administered by the Aaronic Priesthood? (see Hebrews 8:8–13).
- How is the Atonement of Jesus Christ, made by the Great High Priest, superior to all the offerings and sacrifices offered by priests in the Old Testament? In other words, what does the Atonement of Jesus Christ do that the law of Moses could not do? (see Hebrews 9:1–15; Alma 34:10, 13–14).

Hebrews 10:9–22. Sanctification can come only by the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. (15–20 minutes)



Show students the inmate in the accompanying picture (see appendix, p. 307). *Note:* Be sensitive to students who may have relatives in jail. Ask:

- Why do people end up in jail? (They break the law.)
- Why do you think a man in this situation might be sad?
- When he finishes paying the penalty for his crimes and is released from prison, why might he be happy? unhappy?

Show the second picture (see appendix, p. 306) and ask students why they think some convicts do not change their ways and have to return to prison. (Some are angry and continue to break the law.) Have students read Mosiah 2:41, and discuss what this man must do before he can truly be happy. Discuss the following questions:

- What results when we break God’s laws? (see Alma 41:10).
- How is our happiness determined by the way we live and not merely by our environment?
- How are we sometimes guilty and, like the inmate, prisoners in a spiritual prison? (see Romans 3:23; 1 John 3:4).
- What must we do to obtain happiness in this life and in the life to come?

Invite students to read Hebrews 10:10, 14–17 and look for what can happen to us because of the offering of Jesus Christ. (We can be sanctified.) Write the word *sanctified* on the board and ask students to explain what it means to them. Have a student read the following statement by Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, and discuss it as a class:

“Through the marvelous power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, a power activated by our obedience to His commandments, we can be washed clean of our sins. His infinite ‘mercy can satisfy the demands of justice’ [Alma 34:16] for everyone who will repent” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 98; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 72).

Discuss the following questions:

- What must we do to be sanctified by the power of the Atonement?
- How can being sanctified from sin bring us happiness in this life and in the next?

- Why is it worth paying any price for the happiness the Lord can give?
- What can you do today to enjoy true happiness?

Hebrews 11–13

Introduction

The *Lectures on Faith*, compiled under the direction of the Prophet Joseph Smith, declare that faith in Jesus Christ is the first principle of the gospel and the “foundation of all righteousness” (*Lectures on Faith* [1985], 1). They also teach that “faith is not only the principle of action, but of power also, in all intelligent beings” (13). Hebrews 11–13 teaches us about faith and how it can become a principle of power in our lives.

Prayerfully study Hebrews 11–13 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Faith is a hope for and an assurance of things that are not seen but that are true (see Hebrews 11:1–3; see also Alma 32:21).
- Faith is the power by which the ancient Saints were able to keep the commandments of God and perform great deeds of righteousness (see Hebrews 11:4–40; see also Alma 26:22–36).
- By faith we can endure the chastening of a loving Father and allow it to refine and perfect us (see Hebrews 12:5–13; see also D&C 95:1).
- The marriage relationship is holy and ordained of God (see Hebrews 13:4; see also D&C 131:1–2).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 394–401.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Hebrews 11–13.

 *New Testament Video* presentation 20, “The Just Shall Live by Faith” (12:32), can be used in teaching Hebrews 11 (see *New Testament Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).

 **Hebrews 11:1–12:3. Faith in Jesus Christ is a principle of action and power. This faith enabled the ancient Saints to keep the commandments of God and perform great deeds of righteousness.** (35–40 minutes)

Ask students if they have ever planted a garden. Ask: How did you know that the seeds would grow? Ask them if they

have ever waited for a bus. Ask: How did you know the bus would come? Ask if they have ever mailed a letter. Ask: How did you know it would be delivered as intended? Help the students understand that they didn't actually know these things would happen, but based on past experience they believed or trusted that they would. Ask: What are some other things that we do each day believing that they will bring the results we expect? (Going to school or work, accepting money, crossing a bridge.)

Write *What is faith?* on the board with the following references under it: *Hebrews 11:1*; *Alma 32:21*; and *Ether 12:6*. Read these three verses with your students and work together to write a definition of faith from the scriptures (see also Bible Dictionary, "faith," pp. 669–70). Discuss how this definition of faith helps explain why we are willing to plant seeds or go to school or work each day.

Tell students that in order for faith to be a principle of power, it must be more than just a strong belief in some future outcome. Write on the board: *The first principle of the gospel is not faith. It is faith in _____*. Have students read the fourth article of faith and finish the statement on the board (the answer is "Jesus Christ"). Invite a student to read the following statement by Elder Boyd K. Packer:

"I recognize two kinds of faith. The first is the kind which is apparent in the world. It is the common denominator of most everything that goes on. It is the thing that lets us exist. It is the thing that gives us some hope of getting anything done. Everyone has it, some in a larger measure than others. The second kind of faith, remarkably rare, unusual to find, is the kind of faith that causes things to happen. Faith is a power as real as electricity except a thousand times more powerful. Now did you ever exercise faith—exercise it, practice it, you see, not just take it for granted? When you look at yourself, ask yourself how faithful are you? It is a first principle of the gospel according to the Lord. Is it a first principle in the gospel according to you?" (*Your Articles of Faith*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year [21 Mar. 1962], 8).

Ask: How can centering our belief in Jesus Christ help us have this second kind of faith? To see examples of people who have experienced the power of this second kind of faith, read all or selected parts of *Hebrews 11:2–40*. Invite students to identify the examples that impressed them the most and share them with the class.

Ask: Why do you think Paul listed so many examples of faith? Read *Hebrews 12:1–3* and ask your students if they can find a reason. Ask: What does it mean to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us" (v. 1)?

Share the following statement by Elder Neal A. Maxwell, then a member of the Seventy:

"We must realize that the weight of the cross is great enough without our also carrying burdens that we could jettison through the process of repentance. Paul gave us wise counsel in this regard when he said, '... let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily [beset] us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.' (*Hebrews 12:1*.) It is much more difficult for us to carry the cross when our back is already bent with the burdens of bad behavior" (*Deposition of a Disciple* [1976], 75).

Discuss the following questions:

- How does patience help us handle life's challenges?
- How does looking unto Jesus Christ help us develop our faith?
- How does His example of faith, patience, and endurance affect how you feel about your trials and sufferings?



Hebrews 12:5–11. By faith we can accept and endure the chastening of a loving Heavenly Father and allow it to refine and perfect us. (25–30 minutes)

Write on the board *When we suffer*. Under that phrase, write *Cause:*. Ask:

- How many of you have ever had a bad day?
- How many have had a bad day because of some bad choices you made? (*Note:* Do not ask for examples.)
- How many of you have had a bad day that was not caused by something you did wrong?
- Have you ever wondered, "Why is this happening to me?"

Share with your students the following statement by Elder Richard G. Scott. Have them listen for at least two reasons that bad things happen.

"No one wants adversity. Trials, disappointments, sadness, and heartache come to us from two basically different sources. Those who transgress the laws of God will always have those challenges. The other reason for adversity is to accomplish the Lord's own purposes in our life that we may receive the refinement that comes from testing. It is vitally important for each of us to identify from which of these two sources come our trials and challenges, for the corrective action is very different" (in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1995, 18; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 16).

Under *Cause*: write *my own sins* and *to help me grow*. Add the word *purpose* to the board and explain that even though our trials have more than one cause, they seem to have the same general purpose. Invite students to read Hebrews 12:6–11 looking for the purpose of the Lord’s chastening (see also D&C 95:1). Consider using the following questions:

- Why does the Lord chasten His children?
- How will He deal with us if we endure His chastening?
- What adversities do we suffer that are not the Lord’s doing?
- What does Hebrews 12:9 teach that explains why Heavenly Father is so interested in our growth?
- How is knowing that we are spirit children of our Heavenly Father helpful as we strive to become like Him?

Invite your students to write a paragraph describing what it means to them to know that they are literally the spirit children of Heavenly Father. Have several students share what they wrote with the class. Conclude by reading the following statement by Elder Richard G. Scott:

“When you face adversity, you can be led to ask many questions. . . . What am I to do? What am I to learn from this experience? What am I to change? Whom am I to help? How can I remember my many blessings in times of trial? Willing sacrifice of deeply held personal desires in favor of the will of God is very hard to do. Yet when you pray with real conviction, ‘Please let me know Thy will’ and ‘May Thy will be done,’ you are in the strongest position to receive the maximum help from your loving Father” (in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1995, 18; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 17).

Hebrews 1–13. A review of the book of Hebrews reveals Paul’s testimony of the superiority of Jesus Christ over all things. (20–25 minutes)

Make copies of the diagram entitled *Jesus Christ Supersedes All Things* found in the introduction to Hebrews (p. 222). Leave the boxes under *Jesus Christ* blank except for the scripture references. Give each student a copy as a handout. Tell them that this handout is an illustration of the theme of Hebrews.

Write the scripture references from the following chart on the board, and invite students to search them, looking for the theme expressed in each reference. (You could have them work individually or in groups.) As they discover the themes, have them write them in the boxes on the handout.

References	Theme	Additional Resources
Hebrews 1:4–6	Jesus Christ, the Son, is greater than the angels.	Commentary for Hebrews 1:13, 14 and 2:6–9 in <i>The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles</i> , pp. 382–83.
Hebrews 3:1–6	Jesus Christ, the Son, is greater than Moses, the prophet.	
Hebrews 5:5–10; 7:11–12; D&C 107:1–4	Christ’s priesthood is greater than the Levitical Priesthood.	Commentary for Hebrews 7:11–14 in <i>The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles</i> , pp. 385–86.
Hebrews 7:1–4; JST, Hebrews 7:3	Jesus Christ is greater than Melchizedek and Abraham.	
Hebrews 9:1, 10–14; 10:10–14; Alma 34:10	Christ’s sacrifice supersedes all Old Testament sacrifices.	Commentary for Hebrews 9:11–15, 23–28 in <i>The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles</i> , p. 391.
Hebrews 11	Jesus Christ’s power is greater than any mortal problem or obstacle.	

Review their answers. Testify of the majesty of Jesus Christ, encouraging students to believe in and rely more on the power of the Lord. He has the power to assist us and save us in this generation as much as He did in former times. Consider concluding by singing or reading the hymn, “How Great Thou Art” (*Hymns*, no. 86).

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES

Author and Audience: The author of the book of James wrote to “the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad” and identified himself as “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” (James 1:1). This was probably James the half brother of Jesus, not James the brother of John (see Matthew 13:55; Galatians 1:19; Bible Dictionary, “James,” p. 709). As the son of Joseph and Mary, James would have been closely associated with the Lord and probably knew Him as intimately as anyone in mortality. In addition, James received a witness of Christ’s divinity and Resurrection (see 1 Corinthians 15:7).

Historical Background: James is classified as a General Epistle. The General Epistles are so named because they do not address a specific audience as do many of Paul’s Epistles. The lack of specific information makes it difficult to determine the date and place of writing. Since James gave no clue as to when or where he penned his letter, we can only assume that it was written in Jerusalem, since that is where he lived.

We can determine that the Epistle of James was written prior to A.D. 62 since it was in that year, as recorded by the historian Josephus, that James the Lord’s brother and some others were taken before the Sanhedrin, sentenced to death, and delivered to be stoned (*Antiquities of the Jews*, 20.9.1). Also, the fact that James does not mention the Jerusalem conference of about A.D. 50 (see Acts 15) could indicate that this letter was written even before that time. If so it would make this letter one of the earliest in the New Testament.

Theme: This letter teaches that once we have accepted the gospel and have faith in the Lord, we should demonstrate the reality of that faith in our day-to-day lives. The Epistle of James is characterized by a series of mini-sermons that counsel the Saints not to merely know the word of God but to live it.

James 1–5

Introduction

James 1–5 is notable for its emphasis on practical religion. If we have faith, we must show it through our works, for example by comforting and aiding those in need. For James faith is always accompanied by action. One of the most striking instances of such faith occurred when the boy Joseph Smith read in James 1:5: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” Joseph felt prompted to go to the woods and inquire of the Lord which church was true. Heavenly Father rewarded his faith by appearing to him, together with Jesus Christ. The Father answered Joseph’s

prayer by pointing to Jesus and saying, “This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!” (Joseph Smith—History 1:17).

Prayerfully study James 1–5 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The Lord strengthens us as we patiently endure afflictions and resist temptations (see James 1:2–4, 12–21; 4:7–10; see also JST, James 1:2, 12).
- Pure religion is to reach out in compassionate service to the needy and stay unspotted from the world (see James 1:27; 2:1–9; see also Matthew 22:34–40; Mosiah 4:15–27; D&C 59:9).
- We cannot have faith without works, nor can we be saved by faith alone. Righteous works are the fruits of faith (see James 2:14–26; 1:22–25; JST, James 2:18).
- Governing the tongue (controlling our speech) helps us in developing perfection (see James 3:1–12; see also Mosiah 4:30; Alma 12:14).
- Those who embrace the things of this world become enemies to God (see James 4:4–10; see also Mosiah 3:19).
- Faith in the Lord, prayer, and priesthood are essential ingredients in blessing and healing the sick and afflicted (see James 5:13–18; see also D&C 35:9).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 403–13.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for James 1–5.



James 1:5–6 (Scripture Mastery). We can ask for and receive wisdom from God if we ask in faith and do not doubt. (25–30 minutes)

Write on the board the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“This single verse of scripture has had a greater impact and a more far reaching effect upon mankind than any other single sentence ever recorded by any prophet in any age” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3:246–47).

Invite students to guess what scripture Elder McConkie was referring to and why.

Read James 1:5 as a class and ask how this scripture fulfills the declaration on the board. Read Joseph Smith—History 1:10–19 and look for what came from Joseph Smith’s reading of that verse. Ask:

- How has the First Vision affected your life?
- What might be different in your life if Joseph Smith had never followed the prompting of the Spirit to pray?
- How does asking for wisdom differ from what we often request in prayer?
- What is the difference between asking Heavenly Father to solve your problems and asking for the wisdom to deal with problems?
- Can you think of any examples of that difference? (Allow students to share experiences if they desire, but caution them not to share anything too sacred or personal.)
- How could asking for wisdom bring more power to our personal prayers?

Read James 1:6 looking for the source of power Joseph used to get his answers from God. Ask: What is the difference between a prayer offered in faith and one asked with wavering?

Have a student read what President Joseph F. Smith taught about prayer:

“It does not take many words to ask the Lord for what we need; but we must ask in faith, confidence and trust. It will not do to have doubts in our minds when we call upon the Lord for a blessing” (*Gospel Doctrine*, 216).

Discuss with students what they can do to pray with more faith and less wavering. Testify that our prayers will have life-changing power if we ask God for the blessings we need with confidence and faith.



James 1:22–27. Be doers of the word and not hearers only. (35–40 minutes)

Before class find and read a recent talk by the President of the Church in which he addresses the youth of the Church (for example at a priesthood session or women’s conference). Select three or four requests he makes of the youth. Write them on the board and ask students to determine in their own minds if they have been obedient to the prophet’s counsel.

Read James 1:22–25 and discuss the following questions:

- What does it mean to be a doer of the word?
- What does it mean to be a hearer only?
- What is a forgetful hearer? (One who does not act on what is learned.)
- What benefits come to those who choose to be doers as opposed to those who only hear?

(Note: If desired, you could insert the teaching suggestion for James 2:17–18 here to show the relationship between being a hearer but not a doer and having faith but no works.)

Read James 1:26–27 and look for the definition of “pure religion.” Ask:

- What is the difference between seeming to be religious and practicing pure religion?
- How can being a doer of the word help us overcome merely seeming to be religious?

The book of James gives a great deal of practical advice on how to be doers of the word. Divide the class into five groups. Give each group a piece of paper labeled *To Do List*. Assign each group a different chapter in James. Have the groups read their chapter looking for what James suggests we can do to be better followers of Jesus Christ. Discuss their findings and write a comprehensive “to do” list on the board. Ask:

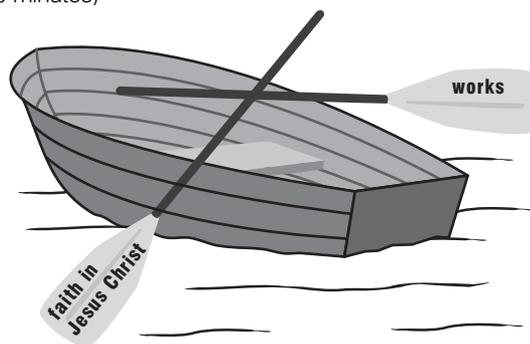
- How could your life change if you follow James’s counsel?
- Which of these instructions have already benefitted you because you followed them?

Invite those who are willing to share an example of how they were blessed to do so. Encourage students to practice keeping “to do” lists (especially those from prophets) so they can be doers of the word and not forgetful hearers.



James 2:17–18 (Scripture Mastery). We cannot have faith without works, nor can we be saved by faith alone. Righteous works are the fruits of faith.

(10–15 minutes)



Bring two rowboat oars to class. Label one *faith in Jesus Christ* and the other *works*. Keep the oars turned so students cannot see the labels. Or draw on the board a picture of a rowboat with oars (do not label the oars yet). Ask:

- Which oar is the more important one?
- If one oar was attached to one side of a rowboat and you rowed as hard as you could, what direction would you go?
- Why do you need both oars?

Read James 2:17–18 and turn the oars to show the labels (or label the oars on the board). Ask:

- How is the message of these verses like the lesson of the oars?

- In what ways might we fail to use the “faith in Jesus Christ” oar?
- How might we ignore the “works” oar?

Invite students to read and answer the questions in James 2:14. Read James 2:15–26 looking for James’s answer and for what we can do to ensure that we have both faith and works.

James 3:1–12. Governing the tongue (controlling our speech) helps us in developing perfection. (20–25 minutes)

Write *Who Am I?* on the board and read the following clues. Have students write possible answers as you give each clue.

- I am difficult to tame.
- I can both bless and curse.
- I can give out much poison.
- I can comfort people.
- I can harm the work of the Lord.
- I can hurt other people’s reputations.
- I can witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Give students an opportunity to solve the puzzle. Read James 1:26 together looking for the answer. Ask: In what ways can the tongue match all these clues?

If one is available, display a horse’s bridle and ask students to identify it. Ask:

- What is a bridle used for? (To control and direct a horse.)
- What does it mean to “bridle” the tongue?
- How can we do this?
- What kinds of trouble can we experience when we do not bridle our tongue? (see also Alma 38:12).

Have students read the following statement from the *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet:

“How you speak says much about who you are. Clean and intelligent language is evidence of a bright and wholesome mind. Use language that uplifts, encourages, and compliments others. Do not insult others or put them down, even in joking. Speak kindly and positively about others so you can fulfill the Lord’s commandment to love one another. When you use good language, you invite the Spirit to be with you.

“Always use the names of God and Jesus Christ with reverence and respect. Misusing their names is a sin. Profane, vulgar, or crude language or gestures, as well as jokes about immoral actions, are offensive to the Lord and to others. Foul language harms your spirit and degrades you. Do not let others influence you to use it” (*For the Strength of Youth*, 22).



Invite students to consider who is affected when we do not bridle our tongue. Read James 3:1–10 as a class and discuss the meaning verse by verse. It may be helpful to draw on the board pictures of a horse’s bridle and bit, a ship’s rudder, a match, and a bottle of poison to refer to as you discuss these verses. Read and cross-reference Matthew 15:10–20 looking for how these verses relate to James’s teachings about the tongue. Ask:

- Where do the words we speak come from?
- Can bridling the tongue affect what is in the heart? How?
- How can bridling our heart influence our ability to become perfect?

Read Mosiah 4:30 looking for the counsel King Benjamin gave about the tongue. Why should we watch our words? Read Alma 12:14 to find the answer. Testify that we must watch our words because improper words will condemn us. Encourage students to learn to bridle their tongues as a means to bless others and perfect themselves.

James 4:4–10. If we embrace the things of this world, we become enemies to God. (25–30 minutes)

Make a sign that says *The Things of God* and place it on the back of a chair. Prepare a second sign that says *The Things of the World* and place it on the back of a second chair. Set the chairs

side by side and ask the students if it is possible to be in both “places” at the same time. Invite a student to demonstrate by sitting on both chairs at once. Have the student stand, and then separate the chairs by several chair-widths. Ask the student if it is still possible to be in both places at the same time. Have the student choose one of the chairs to sit in.

Ask students:

- What could this demonstration represent?
- What happens to our relationship with God when we try to be in the world and in the kingdom at the same time?
- What difficulties come into our lives as a result of choosing the things of this world over the things of God?

Read James 4:4–10 and invite students to identify phrases that teach how to become a friend of God. Cross-reference Mosiah 3:19 and discuss how this verse is a second witness of James’s teaching.

Read James 1:12–13, noting the Joseph Smith Translation change in verse 12. Ask if God is responsible for the temptations we face. Read James 1:14–16 and share the commentary for James 1:14 in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles* (p. 408). Ask:

- How does the devil entice us to sin?
- Why would you want to be friends with the Lord when He comes again?

Read James 5:7–20 looking for ways we can prepare to be friends with God, and list them on the board. These might include:

- Be patient (vv. 7–8).
- Stablish (strengthen) your heart (v. 8).

- Grudge not one against another (v. 9).
- Take the example of the prophets (v. 10).
- Endure (v. 11; see also James 1:2–4).
- Swear not (v. 12).
- Pray when afflicted (v. 13).
- Sing hymns (v. 13).
- Call for the elders for blessings (v. 14).
- Confess your faults (v. 16).
- Pray for one another (v. 16).
- Convert the sinner (v. 20).

Ask students how obeying the counsel listed on the board would help them prepare to be friends of Jesus Christ at His coming. Invite students to select from the list one or two items in which they are weak and write a personal plan to improve in those areas. Share the counsel of Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin:

“The simple fact is this: anything that does not draw us closer to God takes us away from Him. We have no middle ground, no foggy gray area where we can sin a little without suffering spiritual decline. That is why we must repent and come to Christ daily on submissive knees so that we can prevent our bonfires of testimony from being snuffed out by sin” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 48; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 36).

Encourage students to set aside the world and become friends of God.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER

Author and Audience: The book of 1 Peter was addressed by the senior Apostle to Saints in five provinces in Asia Minor (see 1 Peter 1:1; see also Bible map 13).

Historical Background: In Peter's day the Roman government displayed a general tolerance for all religions, including Christianity. The Church was under a divine commission to preach the gospel unto "all the world" (Mark 16:15), and it began by circulating the gospel message throughout the Roman Empire. Although the gospel was spread by peaceful means, the message proclaiming the coming of the risen Christ as the King of Kings was not a favorable message to the Roman monarchs.

In A.D. 64 a fire destroyed much of Rome. The emperor Nero was implicated in the tragedy despite his efforts to help those who became homeless because of it. In an effort to divert the blame, Nero pointed an accusing finger at the Christians. Soon the Saints throughout the empire were persecuted because of hatred and misunderstandings. This change from tolerance to hostility provoked great anxiety among the Saints. About the same time, Peter wrote to encourage the Saints in their sufferings and to remind them of the eternal reward for their faithfulness. Peter wrote this letter from "Babylon" (1 Peter 5:13), which probably means Rome (see Bible Dictionary, "Babylon," p. 618).

Unique Features: In this Epistle, Peter included some of the most revealing statements in the Bible about salvation for the dead.

1 Peter 1–5

Introduction

The Prophet Joseph Smith said, "Peter penned the most sublime language of any of the apostles" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 301). As you read 1 Peter look for this sublime language and the principles it teaches. Mark the passages that inspire you to change your life.

Prayerfully study 1 Peter 1–5 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Faithfully enduring trials of our faith can help us obtain salvation (see 1 Peter 1:3–11; 4:12–16; see also Ether 12:4–6).
- God has called the Saints to be separate and distinct from the world (see 1 Peter 2:9–17; see also Deuteronomy 7:6; 2 Corinthians 6:14, 17).

- Christ prepared the way for the gospel to be preached to those who are dead (see 1 Peter 3:18–20; 4:6; see also D&C 138:1–32).
- Church leaders are to feed God's flock out of love and by example. They are to prepare them for the coming of Jesus Christ, the Chief Shepherd (see 1 Peter 5:1–4).
- Humbly trusting in God leads us to eternal life (see 1 Peter 5:5–11; see also 2 Peter 1:1–10; Mosiah 4:6–7).

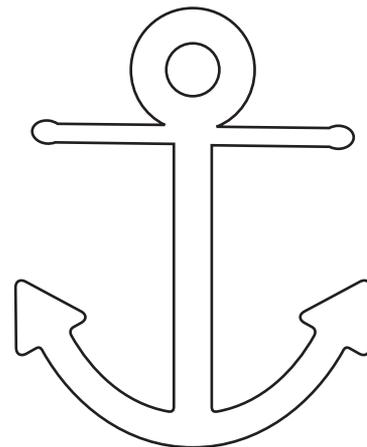
Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 403–4, 414–19.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for 1 Peter 1–5.

-  **1 Peter 1:3–11. Faithfully enduring trials of our faith can help us obtain salvation.** (30–35 minutes)



Draw an anchor on the board and ask:

- What purpose does an anchor serve?
- What kinds of anchors do we need in life?

Write on the board the following words of comfort from the Prophet Joseph Smith:

"Though the thunders might roll and lightnings flash, and earthquakes bellow, and war gather thick around, yet this hope and knowledge would support the soul in every hour of trial, trouble and tribulation" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 298).

Invite students to decide what “this hope” is, and write their ideas on the board. Read Ether 12:4–6 and look for key words that describe hope. Discuss the following questions:

- How does faith and belief in God give us a sure hope?
- What does Ether relate this kind of hope to?

Return to the Prophet Joseph Smith’s statement and suggest that it can also be read symbolically. Have students suggest ways that thunders might roll, and lightnings flash, and earthquakes bellow, and war gather in their own lives. Read the Prophet’s statement again, substituting the suggestions given by students for the thunder, lightening, earthquakes, and wars. Ask:

- How can a sure hope in a glorious resurrection anchor us as we face the challenges of life?
- How can we be sure that our anchor settles deeply and keeps us from drifting?
- How does knowing that this hope will “support the soul in every hour of trial, trouble and tribulation” increase your courage?
- Why do trials tend to tug at our anchors and challenge our faith?

Read the historical background information from the introduction to the book of 1 Peter (p. 234) and discuss the trials the ancient Saints were facing. Ask: Why would their circumstances have tried their faith? Explain that Peter, as the President of the Church, was giving them counsel on how to deal with their tribulations. Divide the following scripture blocks among students: 1 Peter 1:3–11; 2:19–25; 3:8–17; 4:12–19. Ask them to find and write down the teachings about trials that impress them. Discuss their findings as a class.

Testify that increasing our faith will provide us with a hope that anchors us to God as we endure the trials of life. Read 1 Peter 1:7; 2:21; 3:17; 4:12–13. Conclude by testifying of the redeeming value of enduring trials of our faith.

1 Peter 2:1–17. God calls the Saints to be separate and distinct from the world. (20–25 minutes)

Write the words *chosen*, *royal*, *holy*, and *peculiar* on the board. Have students imagine standing before the throne of God. Invite them to select one word from that list that they would most like their Heavenly Father to use to describe them. Ask which of the students selected *chosen*. Ask them why. Repeat these questions for the other three words.

Explain that generally the word *peculiar* means different, strange, or odd. Read 1 Peter 2:9 and ask what they think Peter meant by declaring that the Saints were to be “a peculiar people.” Have a student read footnote 9f to define

the word *peculiar*. Ask: Why is “peculiar” a desirable title? Share Elder Russell M. Nelson’s comment on this word:

“Thus we see that the scriptural term *peculiar* signifies ‘valued treasure,’ ‘made’ or ‘selected by God.’ For us to be identified by servants of the Lord as his *peculiar* people is a compliment of the highest order” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 44; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 34).

Discuss how we can become God’s “special possession.” Ask: What must one do to own something? Have students read 1 Corinthians 7:23 and Acts 20:28 and look for the price that was paid for us to become God’s special possession. Ask: Knowing that Jesus Christ paid such a high price for us to become *peculiar*, *chosen*, *royal*, and *holy*, what must we do? Divide the class into two groups. Have one group search 1 Peter 1:1–5, 13–25 and the other group 1 Peter 2:1–17 for principles that help us remain God’s special possession. List the principles on the board as students discover them.

Read paragraphs 2–3 on page 2 of the *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet. Discuss:

- Why has the Lord given us standards?
- How can living His standards make us peculiar or different from the rest of the world?
- How can comparing our behavior and thoughts to God’s standards help us?

Testify that our Father in Heaven wants us to be peculiar, different from those who live their lives after the manner of the world. Testify that we will be different and worthy to receive “countless blessings from heaven” if we choose to live according to the covenants and commandments of the gospel.

1 Peter 3:18–20; 4:6. Christ prepared the way for the gospel to be preached to those who are dead. (25–30 minutes)

Invite a student to the front of the room. Ask another student to step outside the classroom and close the door. Have the student in the front of the room quietly and briefly tell the Joseph Smith story. Invite the student outside the door to come in, and ask that student if he or she heard the message delivered by the other student. Why or why not? Ask the class: How can this demonstration be likened to the spirit world? Explain that the righteous are separated from the wicked in the spirit world (see the commentary for Luke 16:19–31 in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, p. 125). Read Moses 7:38 and ask:

- What people perished “in the floods”?
- What was the “prison” they were to be shut in?



Read 1 Peter 3:18–20 and look for what Jesus did while His body was in the tomb. Explain that the account in Peter is an abbreviated version of the story. President Joseph F. Smith, the sixth President of the Church, received a vision of the event. Read Doctrine and Covenants 138:28–32 and invite students to explain how Jesus was able to “preach to those spirits . . . in so short a time.”

Have students read 1 Peter 4:6, and share the following comments. Elder Mark E. Petersen, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, said:

“Jesus explained that he is God of both the living and the dead, and that, in fact, even the dead are alive unto him. (See Luke 20:38.)

“However, he has but one gospel; and since both living and dead are alike unto him, both living and dead must be saved by the same gospel principles. The Lord is no respecter of persons” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1976, 20; or *Ensign*, May 1976, 15).

Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, taught:

“In the case of the dead there must be vicarious work if they are to be judged according to men in the flesh, and in order to accomplish this they must be identified; hence the great genealogical program of The Church of

Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It was not established to satisfy the interests of a hobby, but to accomplish the eternal purposes of God” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1977, 96; or *Ensign*, May 1977, 65).

Elder Joseph Fielding Smith said:

“The Savior *inaugurated* this great work when he went and preached to the spirits held in prison, that they might be *judged according to men in the flesh* (or in other words, according to the principles of the gospel) and then live according to God in the spirit, through their repentance and acceptance of the mission of Jesus Christ who died for them” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:132–33).

Discuss the following questions:

- Why did Jesus bridge the gap and prepare a way for the gospel to be preached to those in spirit prison?
- What does it mean to “be judged according to men in the flesh” and “live according to God in the spirit”?

Testify that because Heavenly Father loves us, He provided a plan of salvation so we can all learn about and accept His gospel message.

1 Peter 5:1–11. Church leaders can help prepare us for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and for eternal life if we humble ourselves, heed their counsel, and learn to trust in Heavenly Father. (30–35 minutes)

Display a picture of the First Presidency. Have students identify each man by name. Take turns reading the First Presidency message on pages 2–3 of the *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet. Then discuss the following questions:

- How does the First Presidency feel about the youth of the Church?
- Why do you think they took the time and effort to make this pamphlet available?
- What hope do they have for the youth?
- What can you do to help them realize this hope?

Explain that the scriptures reveal that Church leaders are to help prepare us for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Read with students 1 Peter 5:1–4, using the footnotes, and discuss what it means to:

- “Feed the flock” (v. 2).
- Take “the oversight thereof” (v. 2).
- Be “ensamples to the flock” (v. 3).

Ask: Who is “the chief Shepherd”? Read 1 Peter 2:21 and look for two ways Jesus has blessed our lives. Ask:

- How can Jesus’ example and His suffering for us prepare us for His coming?
- Read 1 Peter 2:25. In what ways might we be “as sheep going astray”?
- How can we make Jesus “the Shepherd and Bishop of [our] souls”?

Peter also gave counsel to young members. Read 1 Peter 5:5–11 looking for key words and phrases that describe this counsel, and then list them on the board. Discuss how this counsel can help the youth prepare themselves for the coming of “the chief Shepherd.”

Ask students if they know individuals who are missing from seminary or from their last young women class or Aaronic Priesthood quorum meeting. Ask: Why is it important to know who they are? Read the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“With the ever-increasing number of converts, we must make an increasingly substantial effort to assist them as they find their way. Every one of them needs three things: a friend, a responsibility, and nurturing with ‘the good word of God’ (Moroni 6:4). It is our duty and opportunity to provide these things” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 66; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 47).

Ask students for specific ways we can follow President Hinckley’s counsel with those we know.

Testify that the Lord and His Church need everyone, including the youth, to bring about God’s designs in the last days. Hold up the scriptures and the *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet, and encourage students to willingly obey the counsel given by faithful leaders of the Church from every dispensation.

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER

Author and Audience: The book of 2 Peter was addressed by Peter to the faithful Saints in Asia Minor (see 2 Peter 1:1; 3:1; see also 1 Peter 1:1).

Historical Background: Peter probably wrote his second Epistle from Rome sometime between A.D. 64 and 67. Unlike his first letter, which helped the Saints deal with external persecution, his second letter addressed the internal apostasy that threatened the future of the Church. False prophets and teachers were spreading “damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them” (2 Peter 2:1; see also “Background Information” in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, p. 422).

Theme: The dominant theme in this letter is how one comes to a knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. The letter may be divided into three main sections. The first section teaches that we come to a knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ by becoming “partakers of the divine nature” and having our “calling and election made sure” (see 2 Peter 1). The second section contrasts this true knowledge of Jesus Christ with the false knowledge and heresies perpetrated by apostates (see 2 Peter 2). The third section describes the hope that comes to those who acquire a true knowledge of the glorious return of the Lord to the earth, where the righteous will dwell (see 2 Peter 3). Peter wrote the letter to encourage the Saints to make their calling and election sure by faithfully living the gospel and growing in their knowledge of the Lord.

2 Peter 1–3

Introduction

President Harold B. Lee said: “I consider the Epistles of Peter among the finest writings we have in the New Testament. When I am wanting to pick up something that would give me some inspiring thoughts I have gone back to one of the Epistles of Peter” (regional representatives’ seminar, 5 Apr. 1973, 2). As you read this Epistle, notice the inspiring thoughts that come to you, and share them with your students.

Prayerfully study 2 Peter 1–3 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- We must develop godly attributes to inherit eternal life (see 2 Peter 1:1–9).
- The Holy Ghost helps us to understand the scriptures (see 2 Peter 1:20–21).
- The Holy Ghost can help us recognize and avoid false teachers and doctrines (see 2 Peter 2:1–2, 9).

- Living the gospel helps us avoid being deceived by false doctrine (see 2 Peter 2:1–19).
- Apostates bear greater accountability than people who never learned gospel truths (see 2 Peter 2:20–22; see also Alma 24:30; D&C 82:3).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 420–26.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for 2 Peter 1–3.

2 Peter 1:1–9. Our lifetime effort should be to develop godly attributes that will prepare us for eternal life.
(20–25 minutes)

Ask students:

- What do you most desire in school? in family life? in a career?
- In general, what must you do to accomplish your goals?

Peter spoke to the Saints regarding their desire to become like Heavenly Father. Invite students to read 2 Peter 1:1–4. Ask: What words does Peter use in verse 4 to describe being like God? President David O. McKay, commenting on the phrase “partakers of the divine nature,” said:

“[Peter] realized what it means to be in touch with the spiritual, to rise above the temporal, the sensual, and partake of the divine Spirit of God” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1961, 90).

Invite students to describe what they think President McKay’s statement means. Have them give examples of how we can follow Peter’s counsel.

Draw a picture of a tree with eight circles representing fruit. Label the tree *divine nature*. Invite your students to read 2 Peter 1:5–8. Have them label the fruits according to the eight attributes in these verses, and then briefly discuss each attribute. Share the following insight by President Ezra Taft Benson:

“The virtues outlined by Peter are part of the divine nature, or the Savior’s character. These are the virtues we are to emulate if we would be more like Him” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 59; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 45).

You may wish to discuss the following questions:

- Whose character do the virtues or attributes found in 2 Peter 1:5–8 describe?
- Who have we been instructed to become like? (see 3 Nephi 27:27).
- How will seeking after these qualities bring us closer to God?
- If we seek to emulate these virtues, how will that affect our daily choices?

Testify that becoming more Christlike is an ongoing effort. Have students read 2 Peter 1:8 again, emphasizing the need to be fruitful in our knowledge of Jesus Christ. Ask: How does knowing more about the Savior give us an advantage over knowing less? Emphasize that learning more about Jesus Christ will help us emulate the qualities of His divine nature.

Have students read the definition of *grace* in the Bible Dictionary (p. 697). They may wish to highlight the words “divine means of help or strength” and “enabling power.” Explain that the power to change and to partake of the divine nature comes from our humble reliance on God’s grace. Have students read 2 Peter 1:9–10 and notice the difference between those who lack the godly attributes (v. 9) and those who make the diligent effort to exemplify the attributes (v. 10). Tell students that we must not become discouraged if all of these attributes do not come easily or quickly. Share President Joseph Fielding Smith’s counsel on perfection:

“The Savior’s words in the Sermon on the Mount, ‘Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect’ [Matthew 5:48], evidently have been by many misapplied or limited in their application. The Savior knew that mortal man could not reach the great goal of perfection like his Heavenly Father, but here in mortality is the place where that foundation should be laid. Then we should continue on from grace to grace, not only in this life but also in the eternities to come, and it is within the possibility of any faithful soul eventually to attain to that perfection” (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, 4:72).

2 Peter 1:20–21. To understand the scriptures, we must study them with the Spirit. (10–15 minutes)

Show your class a book written in a foreign language that none of the students understand. Have a student attempt to read it. Show students a set of scriptures and ask what language they were written in. Some may suggest Hebrew, Greek, or English. After several suggestions read 2 Nephi 32:2–3 and ask:

- What is the “tongue” or language “of angels”?
- By what power do angels speak?
- Where can we read the words of Christ?

Read 2 Peter 1:20–21 and explain that while it is true that scriptures are translated from and into various languages, they were originally revealed to prophets by the power of the Holy Ghost. Have a student read this statement by Elder Delbert L. Stapley, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“If prophets speak by the power of the Holy Ghost, then the Holy Ghost is required to interpret correctly the teachings of holy men. Therefore, those who do not possess the Spirit of God cannot comprehend the things of God” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1966, 113; see also 1 Corinthians 2:10–11, 14; 2 Nephi 25:4).

Discuss why we need the help of the Holy Ghost to properly understand scripture. Ask students to share what they have learned about how to invite the Spirit into their study of the scriptures.



2 Peter 2:1–20. Living the gospel helps us avoid being deceived by false doctrine. (40–45 minutes)

Write the following on the board: *Apostasy: A turning away from the truth.* Ask: Does this word apply to the past, present, or future? Why? Tell students that the Lord has warned us of ways we could be led away from the truth. Help them understand that Satan uses the same methods of deception today as in Peter’s day. To illustrate, divide your class into small groups and give paper to each. Assign each group to read one or more of the following scripture blocks and draw a picture to represent the means of deception used. You do not need to use all of the scripture blocks.

- 2 Peter 2:1–2
- 2 Peter 2:12–13
- 2 Peter 2:18–19
- 1 John 2:9–11
- Jude 1:4
- Jude 1:16
- Jude 1:19

Invite the groups to show their pictures to the class. Read the scripture that goes with each picture and explain the warning it gives.

Explain that the Church during Peter’s time was encountering apostasy. The Saints were being persecuted not only by non-Christians but also by some within the Church who had left the truth and rejected the Church leaders. These apostates were especially dangerous to new members with tender

testimonies (see “Background Information” in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, p. 422). We are not without similar enemies today. Share President Gordon B. Hinckley’s statement:

“As surely as this is the work of the Lord, there will be opposition. There will be those, perhaps not a few, who with the sophistry of beguiling words and clever design will spread doubt and seek to undermine the foundation on which this cause is established. They will have their brief day in the sun. They may have for a brief season the plaudits of the doubters and the skeptics and the critics. But they will fade and be forgotten as have their kind in the past” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1994, 76; or *Ensign*, May 1994, 60).

Help your students understand that we can learn how to resist apostasy by reading about the experiences of the Saints in Peter’s day. Write the following references on the board:

- 1 John 2:4–5
- 1 John 2:15
- 1 John 3:9–10 (see also JST, 1 John 3:9)
- 1 John 4:7–10
- Jude 1:20

Assign several students to read aloud one of the scripture blocks from the board, looking for what it teaches about avoiding apostasy. After they read the counsel, have them come to the board and write their findings next to the scripture they read. Discuss how living the gospel as described in these scriptures will strengthen a person against deception. Read the counsel of Elder Marvin J. Ashton:

“In our present day there are many who are sowing seeds of dissension and discord. With half truths and slander, they are endeavoring to lead members of the Church of Jesus Christ into apostasy. . . . Those who are firmly committed to living the gospel of Jesus Christ will not be confused, confounded, or led astray” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1983, 89; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1983, 63; see also Mosiah 23:14).

Testify that living the gospel helps us recognize and avoid deceptive doctrines and practices.

2 Peter 2:20–22. If we know the gospel is true and then turn from our testimonies, we are worse off than if we had never known the truth. (15–20 minutes)

Bring a bowl of mud and two small plates of cookies, bread, or other food that could be eaten with the hands. Invite two students to the front of the class. Have each of them make a ball with the mud. Provide a way for them to wash their hands. Then have one of them make another mud ball. Present a plate of food to each and invite them to eat. Ask: Which student is in the best condition to eat? Why?

Choose a student to read 2 Peter 2:20–22. Invite the other students to listen as the student reads and to raise their hands as soon as they see how the verses tie in with the object lesson. Ask:

- To what can we liken the student with the muddy hands?
- To what can we liken the student with the clean hands?
- Why are we worse off returning to sin after having repented?

Emphasize that Peter was speaking to members of the Church who knew the gospel. Have students silently read Alma 24:30 and Doctrine and Covenants 82:3. Invite them to explain how these verses reinforce Peter’s teaching. Share President Spencer W. Kimball’s caution:

“Having received the necessary saving ordinances—baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost, temple ordinances and sealings—one must live the covenants made. He must endure in faith. No matter how brilliant was the service rendered by the bishop or stake president or other person, if he falters later in his life and fails to live righteously ‘to the end’ the good works he did all stand in jeopardy. In fact, one who serves and then falls away may be in the category spoken of by Peter, ‘the dog turning to his vomit or the sow returning to her wallowing in the mire.’ (See 2 Peter 2:22.)” (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 121).

Conclude by discussing the following questions:

- Since it is better never to have heard the gospel than to have heard it and then return to our sins, why take the risk?
- What does the gospel offer that makes it worth the risk?

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN

Author: John, one of the original Twelve Apostles of Jesus, is traditionally identified as the author of 1, 2, and 3 John. Although John's name is never mentioned in these letters, there are three compelling clues that point to him as the author. First, early second-century writers referred to him as the author. Second, the letters include similar vocabulary and writing style to the Gospel of John. Third, the author wrote that he had seen and touched the body of Jesus, which was certainly true of the Apostle (see 1 John 1:1–4; 4:14).

Audience: The audience for 1 John is not indicated explicitly in the letter. However, the contents indicate that John wrote to believers (see 1 John 1:3–4; 2:12–14). It is possible that it was addressed to Saints in several locations. The letter provides little or no evidence on which to fix a place or time of writing. If the tradition of John's long residence in Ephesus is correct, the letter could have been written from there between A.D. 70–100.

Historical Background: Deceivers arose among the early Saints. Their false doctrines are known to us as Gnosticism (see the commentary for Colossians 2:18, 19 and the "Introduction" to 1 John in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, pp. 345, 429). John corrected the false teachings of the Gnostics by bearing powerful witness of the Savior's physical existence (see 1 John 1:1–2; 4:2, 14; 5:6).

1 John 1–5

Introduction

John wanted to protect the Saints from the destructive ideas of the Gnostics. He refuted Gnostic doctrine by encouraging the Saints to continue believing and living what they had previously been taught about the divine sonship of Jesus. President Ezra Taft Benson taught:

"When we put God first, all other things fall into their proper place or drop out of our lives. Our love of the Lord will govern the claims for our affection, the demands on our time, the interests we pursue, and the order of our priorities.

"We should put God ahead of *everyone else* in our lives" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1988, 3; or *Ensign*, May 1988, 4).

Prayerfully study 1 John 1–5 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Our knowledge and love of God grow as we keep His commandments (see 1 John 1:1–7; 2:1–6; 5:1–3; see also John 14:15, 21, 23; 15:10).
- We express our love for God when we love and serve one another (see 1 John 3:10–18, 23; 4:7–10, 20–21; see also John 13:34–35; 15:12–13).
- "Perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4:18).
- Saints are born of God through belief in Christ and keeping His commandments (see 1 John 5:1–4; see also Alma 5:14–30).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 428–33.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for 1 John 1–5.

1 John 1:1–2:11. Keeping God's commandments brings us into the light of God. (40–45 minutes)

Turn off the classroom lights and display on a table as many safe light sources as you can gather (for example flashlights, lamps, strings of Christmas lights). Ask: Why do we depend on light so much?

Turn on the classroom lights. (If your other light sources are bright enough, you may wish to continue using them instead.) Write the word *light* on the board. Ask your students to describe as many properties of physical light as possible, and list them on the board. (For example, light allows sight, gives life, can be reflected, varies in intensity.)

Explain that there are characteristics of physical light that also apply to spiritual light. We can benefit from comparing the two. Divide your class into two groups. Assign one group 1 John 1:1–10 and the other 1 John 2:1–11. Invite them to read their verses looking for words or phrases that relate to light. Discuss their findings. Discuss how light's spiritual attributes are similar to its physical attributes.

Write the following questions on the board. Divide the questions among your class and have students search the accompanying scripture to find the answers:

- 1 John 1:1–3. To what had John been an eyewitness? What are some scripture mastery scriptures that speak of eyewitnesses to Christ?
- 1 John 1:5–6. How do these two verses relate to Matthew 6:24?
- 1 John 1:7. How do we “walk in the light”? How will following Christ’s example “[cleanse] us from all sin”?
- 1 John 1:8–2:1 (see JST, 1 John 2:1). How does bringing our sins to light (confessing) prepare us to repent?
- 1 John 2:3–4. How do you feel about the Savior when you try hard to do what He asks? Do you feel any different about Him when you ignore His words? Why?
- 1 John 2:5–6. How does keeping the Savior’s words reflect His example in our lives?

Discuss the questions as a class. (*Note:* The answer to the scripture mastery question is Exodus 33:11; Luke 24:36–39; D&C 76:22–24.)

You may wish to conclude by discussing the principles relating to light taught in the following scriptures: 1 John 1:7; Matthew 5:14–16; 3 Nephi 18:16, 24; Doctrine and Covenants 88:67; 93:36–37. Suggest to your students that after they read each of these scriptures, they create a scripture chain by writing the reference to the next scripture in the margin. When they have read all the scriptures, have them complete the chain by writing the reference to the first scripture by the last.

1 John 2–5. Heavenly Father blesses us when we demonstrate our love for Him by loving and serving one another. (35–40 minutes)

Display a picture of a large, red heart. To its left place a picture of the Savior. To its right place pictures of the scriptures and various people, such as a family, students, political leaders, or a prophet. Ask students to determine what the display is depicting. (One possible answer is the relationship between love for God and love for others.)

Write the accompanying chart on the board. Ask students to choose and silently read one of the scripture references from the chart looking for answers to the two questions.

1 John						
Love for God	2:5	5:3	3:11, 23	4:20–21	3:16–18	4:9–11
What does this scripture say about love?						
What does it mean to me?						
Combine and summarize both ideas.						

When students have finished, discuss what they have learned. Fill in the chart as students comment on the verses they read (or invite students to come to the board and write in their answers). Ask students to suggest what John is teaching about loving God with each pair of references, and write their answers in the “Combine and summarize” row. (Possible answers include that our love for Christ grows as we obey Him; we cannot truly love God without loving others; and we show our love best when we follow the example of the Savior by helping others.)

Invite students to read and contemplate 1 John 4:18–19. Then read this statement by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, then a member of the Seventy:

“Life has its share of some fear and some failure. Sometimes things fall short, don’t quite measure up. Sometimes in both personal and public life, we are seemingly left without strength to go on. Sometimes people fail us, or economies and circumstance fail us, and life with its hardship and heartache can leave us feeling very alone.

“But when such difficult moments come to us, I testify that there is one thing which will never, ever fail us. One thing alone will stand the test of all time, of all tribulation, all trouble, and all transgression. One thing only never faileth—and that is the pure love of Christ.

“. . . Only the pure love of Christ will see us through. It is Christ’s love which suffereth long, and is kind. It is Christ’s love which is not puffed up nor easily provoked. Only his pure love enables him—and us—to bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, and endure all things” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1989, 32; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 26).

Teach students that as our love for God increases, He will bless us with greater confidence and take away our fear.

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN

Author: John the Apostle is traditionally identified as the author of 2 John (see the introduction to the book of 1 John, p. 241).

Audience: This Epistle was written to “the elect lady and her children” (v. 1). It is unknown whether John was addressing specific people or speaking to the Church community in figurative language (see “Background Information” in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, pp. 435–6).

Historical Background: The background of 2 and 3 John is similar to that of John’s first letter (see the introduction to the book of 1 John). It is supposed that these two letters were written about A.D. 85–95 somewhere in the Roman Empire (see “Place and Date of Writing” in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, p. 435).

Theme: The early Saints often housed and supported traveling Church leaders and teachers (see 3 John 1:5, 6). False and apostate teachers advancing their Gnostic message also traveled and took advantage of the hospitality of Church members. John appealed to his readers to use discernment and avoid supporting these people, lest the Saints contribute to the promotion of heresy.

2 John 1

Introduction

Elder Bruce R. McConkie believed that 2 and 3 John may have been personal letters written to members of John’s immediate family (see *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3:409). These letters provide a view of John as one who was concerned with the Church membership as a whole but who also had personal concerns for individual members.

Prayerfully study 2 John 1 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Living the gospel brings joy to ourselves as well as to others (see 2 John 1:1, 4; see also 3 John 1:1–4).
- Saints must be watchful as they associate with those who do not believe in Jesus Christ (see 2 John 1:7–11).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 434–37, 439.

Suggestions for Teaching

Use the following idea or one or more of your own as you prepare to teach 2 John 1.

2 John 1:1, 4; 3 John 1:4. We can bring happiness to others when we live the gospel. (15–20 minutes)

Prior to class ask parents, friends, or Church leaders who know your students to write a brief paragraph commenting on how they feel when the student they know chooses to keep the commandments. If possible, obtain a paragraph for every student. Keep these notes a secret from your students. (Another option would be to have the students write about an assigned peer who has kept the commandments.) Before class, write the following three questions on the board: *Who was faithful? Who was affected by that faithfulness? How did that faithfulness affect others?* Ask:

- How does keeping the commandments bring us happiness?
- What are some examples?
- How does your obedience touch the lives of those you know?

Have students read 2 John 1:1, 4 and 3 John 1:4. Ask:

- How did John feel about his “children”?
- What did they do to bring him such joy?

Invite a student to read aloud one of the following scriptures:

- Matthew 3:13, 17
- 1 Nephi 3:6–8
- Alma 38:3
- Moroni 8:1–2

Have that student call on another student to answer the questions on the board for that scripture. Have another student read the second scripture and call on yet another student to answer the questions for that scripture. Continue until you have studied all the references. Ask students to share observations about how faithfulness blesses others. Invite them to suggest other scriptural examples or real life examples with which they are familiar.

Testify that obedience to the gospel not only brings happiness to our lives but also blesses those around us. Conclude by sharing the letters you gathered about your students. Urge them to ponder and remember the joy their good choices bring to others.

THE THIRD EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN

Author: John the Apostle is traditionally identified as the author of 3 John (see the introduction to the book of 1 John, p. 241).

Audience: This Epistle was written to Gaius, a faithful member of the Church. It was the custom of early Church members to take Christian missionaries into their homes and provide for their needs. John praised Gaius for his unselfish devotion to the cause of Christ in providing accommodations for God’s traveling servants.

Historical Background: In addition to the problem of false teachers traveling around and deceiving the Saints (see the introduction to the book of 2 John, p. 243), some Church leaders served for personal ambition rather than for the love of Christ or His Saints. Diotrephes was one such erring leader. He was guilty of trying to assert his authority over that of an Apostle.

Theme: John wrote to compliment Gaius for his faithfulness and encourage him. John also wanted to indirectly warn Diotrephes.

3 John 1

Introduction

Because the faithful Saints in John’s day suffered persecution from outside the Church, they watched out for one another. John complimented them for their support of their fellow Saints. Latter-day Saints of past years experienced similar conditions that served to strengthen them. Elder Harold B. Lee, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, explained: “During the early days of the Church we passed through a period of slander and misrepresentation, and we came through. It drove us together because of enemies from the outside. And we survived it. We passed through a period of mobbing and driving, when lives were taken and blood was shed, and somehow the place of the martyr gave us strength. We passed through poverty, and we gained strength from the test of it. Then we passed through an age of what we might call apostasy, or betrayal from the inside—one of the severest tests through which we have passed. We are now going through another test—a period of what we might call sophistication. This is a time when there are many clever people who are not willing to listen to the humble prophets of the Lord. And we

have suffered from that. It is rather a severe test” (“Sweet Are the Uses of Adversity,” *The Instructor*, June 1965, 217).

Prayerfully study 3 John 1 and consider the following principle before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Practicing unrighteous dominion separates us from the Spirit (see 3 John 1:9–11; see also D&C 121:34–39).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 435–37, 439–41.

Suggestions for Teaching

Use the following idea or one or more of your own as you prepare to teach 3 John 1.

3 John 1. Selfless service brings us closer to God. Imposing our authority on others separates us from the Spirit. (10–15 minutes)

Write on the board the following chart:

Scripture	Who is addressed?	What did he do?	Was John pleased or displeased?	Why?
3 John 1:1, 3, 5–6				
3 John 1:9–11				

Divide your class into two groups and have each group read one of the scripture blocks, looking for answers to the questions. Fill in the chart and discuss what students learned. Read Mosiah 2:17 and Doctrine and Covenants 121:37, 39 and ask:

- How do these scriptures relate to Gaius and Diotrephes?
- Why do so many people “exercise unrighteous dominion”?

Invite students to tell about Church leaders they know who have displayed great humility in their callings. Ask what they have learned about humble service from their leaders.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE

Author: The author of Jude identified himself as “the servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James” (Jude 1:1). This Jude was most likely the half brother of Jesus (see Matthew 13:55). We have no indication of what office Jude held, but the Epistle itself suggests that he had a position of authority that qualified him to write letters of counsel.

Audience: As with the other General Epistles, little is known about the audience of the book of Jude. Jude merely addressed his writing “to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ” (Jude 1:1).

Unique Features: Although it is one of the shortest books in the New Testament, Jude has information that is not found anywhere else in the Bible. Jude speaks of angels “which kept not their first estate” (v. 6; see also Abraham 3:26), of a confrontation between Michael and Lucifer over the body of Moses (v. 9), and of a prophecy of Enoch about the Savior’s Second Coming (vv. 14–15; see also Moses 7:65–66).

Theme: Jude wrote to urge his readers to be devoted in their defense of the faith in the midst of ongoing apostasy and to warn them against people in the Church who were trying to lead them into forbidden paths (see Jude 1:3–4). Jude 4–9 is similar in wording to 2 Peter 2, but whereas Peter was prophesying of future apostasy, Jude spoke of the fulfillment of that prophecy (see 2 Peter 2:1; Jude 4).

Jude 1

Introduction

Jude 1 uses three examples to illustrate how God dealt with rebellion: (1) the children of Israel were kept out of the promised land, (2) the angels “which kept not their first estate” were cast out, and (3) those in Sodom and Gomorrah who rejected divine warnings were destroyed. Jude warned apostates that one day the Lord would come “to execute judgment upon all” the ungodly (see Jude 1:4–8, 14–19). He promised the faithful that by building their faith through prayer and love for God they would be saved from the fate of the apostates (see Jude 1:20–25).

Prayerfully study Jude 1 and consider the following principle before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Strengthening our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ prepares us to help others whose faith is weaker (see Jude 1:20–23).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 437–41.

Suggestions for Teaching

Use the following idea or one or more of your own as you prepare to teach Jude 1.

Jude 1. We can strengthen others who are weak in the faith. (10–15 minutes)

Divide your class into five groups. Have each group read one of the following scripture blocks and write a summary of it in their own words: Jude 1:1–4; 1:5–11; 1:12–16; 1:17–19; 1:20–25.

Invite a student to collect the five summaries and read them, in order, to the class. Ask another student to summarize the summaries for the entire book of Jude (see the “Introduction” for Jude chapter 1).

Place a chair next to a sturdy table. Have a student stand on the chair and another student stand on the floor next to the chair. Ask the class which student is in the best position to help the other student get up onto the table. Why is the one in a higher position better able to assist the one who is lower? Jude realized that the Saints needed to help one another overcome apostate teachings. Have students read Jude 1:20–21 and look for the counsel given to faithful Saints. Read Jude 1:22–23. Ask: Why is this counsel given after rather than before the counsel in Jude 1:20–21? Share the following by Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“The example of our living will carry a greater influence than will all the preaching in which we might indulge. We cannot expect to lift others unless we stand on higher ground ourselves” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1975, 57; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1975, 38–39).

Ask students to tell about specific ways that others have lifted them to a higher level of living a gospel principle or standard.

Explain that the way we live our lives may influence others to resist temptation and embrace the gospel message. President Hinckley said:

“Never before has the Church had a better reputation than it has now. This is because of you, my brethren and sisters. The opinions of people concerning us for the most part arise out of personal and individual experiences. It is your friendliness, your concern for others, and the good examples of your lives that result in the opinions held by others concerning the Latter-day Saints” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 3; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 4).

Invite students to write in their journals about a quality they have that, if it were strengthened, could help them lift others to higher ground.

THE REVELATION OF SAINT JOHN THE DIVINE

The book of Revelation is sometimes called the Apocalypse, which in Greek means “revelation,” “uncovering,” or “unveiling.” In Revelation John records events Jesus Christ showed him in vision “which must shortly come to pass” (Revelation 1:1). The purpose of the book is to bless those who hear “the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein” (v. 3).

The Prophet Joseph Smith said that “the book of Revelation is one of the plainest books God ever caused to be written” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 290). Though it is rich with imagery and symbols that are not always easy to identify, the themes of the book are simple and inspiring. As one Latter-day Saint educator wrote: “We can, like Former-day Saints, watch and be ready. We can be vigilant, ever alert to evil in all its diverse forms. We can take heart that the God of heaven is in charge, that He presides over the affairs of men and women, and that divine justice and pardoning mercy shall yet deliver and reward the Saints” (Robert L. Millet, “Revelation of John Offers Recurring Lessons, Doctrinal Refrains and Hope,” *Church News*, 23 Dec. 1995, 10). For more information about the book of Revelation see “John’s Witness of the Church Triumphant” in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles* (pp. 443–47).

Author: John, the son of Zebedee and the beloved disciple of Jesus Christ (see Matthew 4:21–22), is the author of this book (see 1 Nephi 14:18–27; see also Bible Dictionary, “John,” p. 715).

Audience: Revelation is addressed to seven branches of the Church in Asia Minor (see Revelation 2–3). However, the message of Revelation is not reserved exclusively for them. The Prophet Joseph Smith said, “John saw that only which was lying in futurity” (*Teachings*, 289), which makes it of interest to Saints living in the latter days. The Lord revealed to Moroni that when latter-day Israel repents and once again acknowledges their covenants, “then shall my revelations which I have caused to be written by my servant John be unfolded in the eyes of all the people” (Ether 4:16; see vv. 14–17).

Historical Background: Revelation was written in a day of severe persecution against the Saints. Most likely this persecution was administered by Rome either during the reign of Nero (A.D. 54–68) or Domitian (A.D. 81–96). Domitian in particular persecuted those who did not worship gods approved by the state, and many who refused were executed or exiled during his reign. John wrote from the island of Patmos, a Roman penal colony, where he had been exiled “for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (see Revelation 1:9; see also “Introduction” in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, pp. 449–50).

Along with heavy persecution from external forces, the early Church suffered from internal apostasy. Paul said that “grievous wolves [would] enter in among you, not sparing the flock” (Acts 20:29). By the late first century A.D. Paul’s

prophecy had become a reality. The warning voice against false teachers and doctrines found in John’s epistles and in Revelation 2–3 reveals the extent to which apostasy had seeped into the Church in his day (see Bible Dictionary, “John, Epistles of,” p. 715).

Theme: “The message of Revelation is the same as that of all scripture: there will be an eventual triumph on this earth of God over the devil; a permanent victory of good over evil, of the saints over their persecutors, of the kingdom of God over the kingdoms of men and of Satan” (Bible Dictionary, “Revelation of John,” 762). John extended the message of hope to all those who overcome the enticements of the world (see Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21).

Revelation 1–3

Introduction

The book of Revelation can be divided into two sections: a vision of John’s day (chapters 1–3) and a vision of the future (chapters 4–22). The book begins with John’s vision, received on a Sabbath day, of Jesus Christ standing in glory amid seven candlesticks representing “the seven churches which are in Asia” (Revelation 1:11). Though the Saints of John’s day suffered through apostasy and persecution, they could take comfort in this image of the Lord standing with them. In chapters 2–3 the Lord reveals to the seven churches their strengths and weaknesses and invites them to prepare for the future by repenting and learning to overcome the world.

Prayerfully study Revelation 1–3 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- If we heed the revelations of God, He will lead us back into His presence (see Revelation 1:1–3; see also Revelation 22:7; 1 Nephi 10:17–19).
- When Jesus Christ returns to the earth, accompanied by “ten thousands of his saints,” “every eye shall see him” and the wicked will mourn (JST, Revelation 1:7; see also 1 Thessalonians 4:14–18; Jude 1:14–16; D&C 88:95–98; 101:23–24).
- Through the power of Jesus Christ we can overcome the world and partake of the blessings of godhood (see Revelation 2:2–3, 7, 10–11, 17, 26–28; 3:5, 8, 11–12, 21; see also Revelation 5:10; 7:9–17; 21:7; D&C 101:35–38).
- Because our Heavenly Father loves His children, He chastens them so they will repent (see Revelation 2:4–5, 14–16, 20–23; 3:2–3, 19; see also Helaman 15:3; D&C 95:1–3).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 448–55.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Revelation 1–3.



New Testament Video presentation 21, “Helps for Understanding the Book of Revelation” (8:36), can be used in teaching the book of Revelation (see *New Testament Video Guide* for teaching suggestions).

Revelation 1:1, 9–11. The Lord ordained the Apostle John before mortality to write the book of Revelation.

(15–20 minutes)

Ask students:

- How much does the Lord know about each of us?
- How is the Lord able to reveal future events? (see 2 Nephi 9:20).

Read 1 Nephi 14:18–22 and have students describe the man Nephi saw in vision. Read 1 Nephi 14:24–27 and look for this man’s name. Ask: Where can we find this Apostle’s writings of the last days? Point out that the Lord told Nephi about the book of Revelation centuries before it was written. Ask: What does that teach us about the importance of the book of Revelation?

Testify to students of the value of studying the book of Revelation. Read Revelation 1:1 and compare it with the Joseph Smith Translation of the same verse. Discuss the changes made by Joseph Smith. Read Revelation 1:9–11. Review 1 Nephi 14:24–27, and ask:

- How was Nephi’s vision fulfilled in the book of Revelation? (Jesus commanded the Apostle John to write the book; see 1 Nephi 14:25; Revelation 1:11.)
- How can we help to fulfill the mission God has asked us to do?

Encourage students to receive a patriarchal blessing at the appropriate time to help them better fulfill God’s mission for them.

Revelation 1–22. The main emphasis of the book of Revelation is on the last days and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. (10–15 minutes)

Show students a microscope and a magnifying glass (or pictures of these items). Ask:

- How does a microscope differ from a magnifying glass in what it can show?
- What are the benefits of seeing the smallest details?
- How can we benefit from seeing a bigger picture?

Tell students that today we are going to look at the “big picture” of the book of Revelation.

Make an overhead transparency of the chart “Where the Emphasis Is” in the appendix (p. 300) or draw it on the board. Review the chart with your students, pointing out that the first five seals (representing the history of the earth from Adam’s to John’s day) are treated in eleven verses, while the last two seals (representing our day to the end of the world) take 273 verses. Read the Joseph Smith Translation of Revelation 1:3 and ask:

- For what event is the book of Revelation written to prepare the Saints?
- What does this teach about the importance of the book of Revelation to us today?

Tell students that the Lord has taken great care to make the book of Revelation available to us. Encourage them to study it carefully.

Note: See “The Book of Revelation” in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles* (pp. 220–21) for a more detailed overview of the book of Revelation to help you study and teach this book.

Revelation 1:1–3. As we heed the revelations of God, He will lead us back into His presence. (15–20 minutes)

John included some principles that would help his readers benefit from this book of prophecy and revelation. To help students learn and benefit from the same principles, draw on the board a road that branches in several directions. Invite students to imagine being at the crossroads trying to determine which direction to go. Ask:

- How can this illustration be compared to life?
- How do you choose which direction you will go?
- What resources are available to help you make the best choice?

Have a student read the following statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“No man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations. The Holy Ghost is a revelator” (*History of the Church*, 6:58).

Ask:

- How can the Holy Ghost help us choose a direction in life?
- To what destination will the Holy Ghost ultimately lead us? (Have students read the first few sentences of “revelation” in the Bible Dictionary [p. 762] to find the answer to this question.)
- If God desires to give us direction by revelation through the Holy Ghost, what is our responsibility?

Have students read the Joseph Smith Translation of Revelation 1:1–3, and ask: According to these verses, what can we do to allow the words of this revelation to bless our lives? Write the answers on the board and discuss how they apply to the students. The answers might include:

- Read them
- Hear them
- Understand them
- Keep or obey them

Explain that though John was speaking in these verses of the words of the book of Revelation, the same principles apply for any revelation. We must read the words of the scriptures and our patriarchal blessings. We must listen to the words spoken by living prophets and the whisperings of the Spirit. We must ponder these words and think how they apply to our lives. And we must follow them.

Conclude by reading the following statement by Elder James E. Faust:

“Members of the Church know that the promptings of the Spirit may be received upon all facets of life, including daily, ongoing decisions (see D&C 42:61). How could anyone think of making an important decision such as ‘Who is to be my companion?’, ‘What is my work to be?’, ‘Where will I live?’, and ‘How will I live?’ without seeking the inspiration of Almighty God” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1980, 16; or *Ensign*, May 1980, 13).

Revelation 1:4, 8, 19. John was commanded to write what had been, what was then, and what was to come. (5–10 minutes)

Note: This teaching suggestion could be taught as part of the teaching suggestion for Revelation 1–22 (p. 248). It offers another way of looking at the “big picture” of Revelation.

Show the students a collection of objects representing the past, present, and future. You could represent the past with such objects as a journal, old pictures, a birth certificate, or a history book. You could represent the present with a current driver’s license, a newspaper, or a calendar. You could represent the future with seeds, a wedding announcement, a patriarchal blessing, or a mission application. Go through the objects with the class asking them to identify whether they represent the past, present, or future.

Write on the board *Past, Present, Future*. Have a student read Doctrine and Covenants 93:24. Ask: Why is this a good definition of truth? Discuss the advantages of knowing about the past, present, and future.

- Read Revelation 1:4, 8. What do these verses tell us about Jesus Christ? (He was, and is, and is to come. He is the First and the Last.)
- What do you think these verses mean? (One answer is that Jesus created the earth, He guides and sustains us now, and He will come to the earth again in glory.)
- Read verse 19. Why is it appropriate that John should write of things that were past, present, and future?

Point out that since Christ is the First and the Last, to understand Him we must understand the past, present, and future. The book of Revelation speaks of events from each of these time periods. You may find it helpful to read scriptures on each period from the accompanying chart. (Point out that the events listed under “The Present” occurred in John’s day, and that many of the events under “The Future” are either occurring in our day or have yet to happen. The majority of the book of Revelation teaches of the future.)

The Past	The Present	The Future
Revelation 6:1–8; 12:7–11	Revelation 1–3; 6:9–11; 12:1–6, 12–17	Revelation 4–5; 6:12–17; 7–11; 13–22

Revelation 1:4–20. Becoming familiar with symbols in the book of Revelation helps unlock its meanings. (20–25 minutes)

Bring to class business logos or symbols clipped from newspapers or magazines. Pick ones that the students will readily recognize. Show them to students and see how many they can identify in a short period of time.

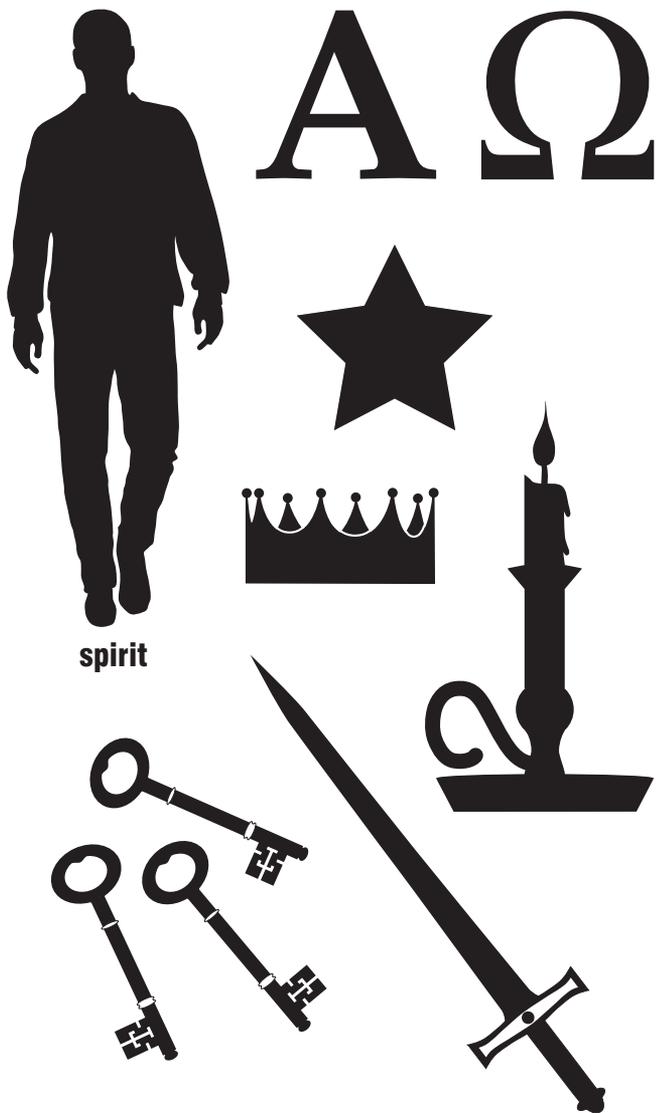
Explain that we recognize symbols we frequently see or use. People in the Bible also communicated with symbolic language. John’s vision is rich in imagery and symbols. Becoming familiar with Jewish use of imagery can help us better understand the book of Revelation (see “A Word about the Symbolic Language of John” in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, p. 451).

Draw a large numeral 7 on the board. Ask: Where are some places we see the number seven? (Days in a week, periods of the earth’s existence). Explain that in Hebrew culture the number seven represents completion or perfection. Ask:

- How do you think this meaning relates to days of the week?
- How might it relate to the periods of Creation?
- How might it relate to the periods of the earth’s history?

Point out that the number seven occurs repeatedly in the book of Revelation. Write the following words randomly around the numeral 7 on the board: *churches, spirits, stars, candlesticks, seals, angels, trumpets, vials, heads*. Explain that all

of these images have meanings and are important to John’s vision. Consider using one or both of the following activities:



- Use construction paper to make a figure labeled “spirit,” a king’s crown, the Greek letters alpha (Α) and omega (Ω), a candlestick, a star, a sword, and keys. Hand these items to groups of students and ask them to find the symbol in Revelation 1 and discover the meaning by using footnotes or the Bible Dictionary. When they finish, invite them to share what they learned with the class.
- Reproduce the accompanying chart as a handout, leaving the “Interpretation” column blank. Divide your class into groups. Have them locate, mark, and cross-reference each of the symbols in their scriptures and then fill in the interpretations on the handout. When they finish, go over the handout as a class.

Symbolism in Revelation 1			
Verse	Symbol	Interpretation	Reference
4	Seven spirits	Servants or leaders over the seven churches in Asia	JST, Revelation 1:4
6	Kings and priests	Status of those who inherit the celestial kingdom	D&C 76:51–59
8	Alpha and Omega	First and last letters of the Greek alphabet, representing the eternal nature of Jesus Christ	Bible Dictionary, “Alpha,” p. 606
12	Seven candlesticks	The seven churches, which are to hold up the light of the gospel	Revelation 1:20; 3 Nephi 18:24
16–17	Right hand	Covenant hand, hand of favor and honor, symbol of power	Acts 7:55; Hebrews 1:3, 13
16	Seven stars	Another image of the presiding officers of the seven churches	JST, Revelation 1:20
16	Sharp, two-edged sword	The word of God, rendering judgment on the wicked and freeing the innocent	Hebrews 4:12
18	Keys of hell and death	Keys that unlock the doors of spiritual and physical death	2 Nephi 9:10–13

Conclude by reading the following statement:

“Symbols are the timeless and universal language in which God, in his wisdom, has chosen to teach his gospel and bear witness of his Son. They are the language of the scriptures, the language of revelation, the language of the Spirit, the language of faith. They are a language common to the Saints of all generations” (Joseph Fielding McConkie, *Gospel Symbolism* [1985], 1).

Encourage students to practice “seeing,” not just reading, the book of Revelation. (For more information on the use of symbolism in Revelation, see “John’s Witness of the Church Triumphant” in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, pp. 443–46.)

Revelation 1:4–20. The book of Revelation is a testimony of the mission of Jesus Christ. (10–15 minutes)

Before class write on the board a few names and titles of historical figures (for example Richard the Lionhearted, Alexander the Great, Honest Abe). Ask: What can titles tell us

about individuals? Place a picture of the Savior on the board. Invite students to browse Revelation 1:4–20 looking for words and phrases that are used to describe Jesus Christ. (Possible answers include “faithful witness” [v. 5], “Alpha and Omega” [v. 8], “the Son of Man” [v. 13], “he that liveth, and was dead” [v. 18].) Write the titles they find on the board next to the picture. Ask: What do these titles tell us about the mission of the Savior?

Testify that the book of Revelation is a testimony of the mission of Jesus Christ to conquer Satan and save the children of God. Encourage students to look for evidence that this testimony is true as they study the rest of the book. (*Note:* Consider using student study guide activity A for Revelation 1 here.)

Revelation 2–3. Because the Lord loves us, He chastens us so we will repent. As we repent He helps us overcome the world so we can partake of the blessings of salvation. (35–40 minutes)

Tell students that it was a difficult time to be a disciple of Christ when John received the vision recorded in the book of Revelation (see “Introduction” in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, pp. 449–50). Severe persecution and false teachings challenged the faith of the members. In chapters 2–3 the Lord promised that although many had made mistakes, if they would repent and overcome the world they could still enjoy the blessings of salvation.

Explain that Revelation 2–3 is addressed to Church members in seven cities in Asia. The Lord revealed to John their strengths and weaknesses and told him to write each of the seven branches of the Church a letter.

Divide the class into seven groups and assign each of them one of the seven churches to “visit.” Give each group a copy of the map of the Mediterranean world from the appendix (p. 295) or display the map on an overhead projector. Have them find their city on the map. Give them copies of the chart “The Seven Churches in Asia (Revelation 2–3)” from the appendix (pp. 298–99) and have them fill in the blanks for their city. Invite them to share what they learned, especially what the churches did right, what they did wrong, and the Lord’s correction.

Ask students:

- How do you usually feel when someone chastises you?
- Since the Lord loves us, why would He chasten us?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 95:1 and discuss how chastening can help us repent and be forgiven.

- How does Heavenly Father chasten us? (Through the Spirit, scriptures, Church leaders, parents.)
- How can this verse affect how we respond to chastening?
- What blessings come to those who overcome the world and endure to the end?

Read Revelation 1:6 and Doctrine and Covenants 76:53–57 looking for the results of our faithful efforts. Challenge students to become more determined disciples of Jesus Christ. Read the following statement:

“While the Lord may chasten his people in mortality, chastisement will be tempered with his mercy and compassion as his children heed and obey him (D&C 101:2–9; 3 Ne. 22:8–10). Those who escape the wrath of God will include all persons who repent and keep the commandments, and prepare themselves for the hour of judgment that is to come, gathering ‘together upon the land of Zion, and upon her stakes’ as a place of refuge (D&C 115:6; cf. Alma 12:33–37; 13:30; D&C 88:76–88; 98:22). Even God’s wrath is intended to be beneficent, for whom he loves, he chastens (D&C 95:1; cf. Heb. 12:6–11)” (“Wrath of God,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4:1598).

Revelation 4–5

Introduction

Revelation chapter 4 begins John’s vision of the future. John sees a door open in heaven and is invited to “come up hither” and glimpse God’s plan from a divine perspective. There he sees the throne of God, the earth in its celestial glory, and the many exalted beings singing praises to God and the Lamb. This is the blessed end for all of God’s faithful children from every dispensation. This is made possible because Jesus Christ, “the Lion of the tribe of Juda,” (Revelation 5:5) has “redeemed us to God by [His] blood” (v. 9) that we might be made “kings and priests” unto God (v. 10).

Prayerfully study Revelation 4–5 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Our Father in Heaven is the Creator of all things, and all those saved in the celestial kingdom will worship Him (see Revelation 4; 5:13–14; see also Isaiah 6:2–3; D&C 88:104).
- This earth has a temporal existence of seven thousand years from the Fall of Adam to the end of the Millennium. The earth will then become a celestial kingdom and be inhabited by the many sons and daughters of God who are exalted through the Atonement of Jesus Christ (see Revelation 5:1, 9–11; see also Revelation 7:9–10; D&C 77:6–7, 12).
- Every creature will praise the Lamb of God, who was slain to redeem us in His kingdom (see Revelation 5:8–14; see also Isaiah 45:22–23).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 456–58.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Revelation 4–5.

Revelation 4. Our Father in Heaven is the Creator of all things, and all those saved in the celestial kingdom will worship Him. (20–25 minutes)

Almost the entire book of Revelation after chapter 4 refers to events that were in the future in John's day. To help students appreciate this chapter, consider singing or reading the words to "All Creatures of Our God and King" (*Hymns*, no. 62). Tell students that in chapter 4 they will learn of a time when this hymn will be fulfilled. Give them a copy of the accompanying chart as a handout, leaving the "Explanation" column blank. Have them mark the scriptures and complete the handout, working individually or in groups.

Revelation 4		
What John Saw	Cross-Reference	Explanation
Throne of God (see vv. 2–3)	D&C 137:1–4	The throne in heaven upon which God sits
Twenty-four elders with crowns (see v. 4)	D&C 77:5	Faithful elders who belonged to the seven churches
Seven spirits of God (see v. 5)	JST, Revelation 1:4; 4:5	The servants over the seven churches
Sea of glass (see v. 6)	D&C 77:1; 130:6–9	The earth in its glorified state
Four beasts (see vv. 6–7)	D&C 77:2–3	Actual animals representing classes of glorified beings
Many eyes and six wings (see v. 8)	D&C 77:4	The beasts' great knowledge and their power to move and act

When they finish, discuss what they learned. Use the following questions if desired:

- What was John to see while in heaven? (see Revelation 4:1).
- Who was sitting on the throne that John saw?
- Why would it have been important for the Saints in John's day to know that those who died faithful to the gospel were wearing crowns before the throne of God?
- Why is it important for the Saints in our day to know that?

Have students read Revelation 4:8–11 looking for the attitude of God's creatures seen by John. Ask questions like the following:

- What do we learn from what the creatures said in verse 8?
- Why is giving glory, honor, and thanks to God so vital? (see v. 9).
- How can we better prepare ourselves to dwell in God's presence for eternity? (see Mosiah 3:19; Helaman 3:35).
- According to verse 11, what is one reason that we worship God?
- What are some ways we can honor and worship God? (Discuss their answers.)

Testify that we truly worship God when we willingly submit ourselves to His will.

Revelation 5. This earth has a temporal existence of seven thousand years from the Fall of Adam to the end of the Millennium. Every creature will praise the Lamb of God, who was slain to redeem us in His kingdom. (20–25 minutes)

Display the picture *The First Vision* (item no. 62470). Ask:

- Which of the individuals in this picture do we worship?
- Why do we worship the Father? (see Revelation 4:11 for one reason).
- Why do we worship the Son?

Tell students that today we will discuss more fully why we worship Jesus Christ.

Give students a copy of the following quiz as a handout. Invite them to use their scriptures and answer as many questions as they can.

Revelation 5

1. What was contained in the book described in verse 1?
2. How long is the earth's temporal existence?
3. Who was the only one who could open and read the book in verse 5?
4. What number change did the Prophet Joseph Smith make to verse 6?
5. Who did the spirits of God in this verse represent?
6. Were the four beasts in verse 8 actual animals? (see also Revelation 4:8).
7. Why was Jesus Christ able to open the sealed book?
8. How many angels did John see shouting praise to the Lamb? (see v. 11).
9. Who else praised Him?

Answers:

1. The “will, mysteries, and the works of God” concerning the earth during its temporal existence (see D&C 77:6).
2. Seven thousand years (see D&C 77:6).
3. Jesus Christ (see Revelation 22:16).
4. He changed the number seven to twelve (see JST, Revelation 5:6).
5. The Twelve Apostles (see JST, Revelation 5:6).
6. Yes, though in Revelation 4:8 John describes them figuratively (see D&C 77:2–4).
7. Because of His atoning sacrifice (see v. 9).
8. “Ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands” (v. 11).
9. “Every creature” (v. 13).

Correct the quizzes as a class, providing the cross-references and inviting students to write the answers in their scriptures. Discuss the following questions:

- If Revelation 5 were a play script, who would be the leading character?
- What does He do that makes Him the leading character?
- From what you have learned, why do we worship Jesus Christ?

Have a student read the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“Be strong in your testimony of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He is the chief cornerstone of this great work. Of His divinity and reality I bear solemn witness. He is the Lamb without blemish, who was offered for the sins of the world. Through His pain and because of His suffering I find reconciliation and eternal life. He is my Teacher, my Exemplar, my Friend, and my Savior whom I love and worship as the Redeemer of the world” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 75; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 52).

Revelation 6–7

Introduction

In Revelation 6–7 Jesus Christ opens the book with seven seals. As each seal is opened, John sees a representation of an event or events of a thousand years of the earth’s history. Chapter 6 records the opening of the first six seals. Chapter 7 reveals how the Lord will prepare the faithful inhabitants of the earth for the catastrophic events in the seventh seal. Through the

restoration of the gospel and the ordinances of the priesthood, the Saints from all nations will be able to stand.

Prayerfully study Revelation 6–7 and consider the following principle before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- John saw in vision a representation of important events from the first six thousand years of the earth’s temporal existence. Included in the vision were war, wickedness, destruction, famine, death, the slaying of Christ’s disciples, signs of the last days, and the Restoration (see Revelation 6:1–7:4).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 458–60.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Revelation 6–7.



Revelation 6. John saw in vision a representation of important events from the first six thousand years of the earth’s temporal existence. (15–20 minutes)

(Note: Do not spend an inordinate amount of time on the first five seals. The book of Revelation only devotes eleven verses to these seals. Most of the book is devoted to the sixth and seventh seals, which are more relevant to us because they have to do with events of the latter days.)

Give students copies of the following chart as a handout, leaving the “Interpretations” column blank. Have the students list in the “Objects” column the objects or symbols that John saw as each seal was opened. When the students finish, fill in the “Interpretations” column as a class. Ask what the different details might represent (suggested answers are included below). Share the interpretations by Elder Bruce R. McConkie from *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles* (pp. 458–60), or use the summaries provided below.

Revelation 6: The First Six Seals

Seal	Objects	Interpretations
First seal (see v. 2)		white horse = victory bow = warfare crown = conqueror Elder McConkie suggested that this describes Enoch’s day, and that the rider is Enoch (see <i>The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles</i> , p. 458).
Second seal (see vv. 3–4)		red horse = bloodshed sword = war and destruction Elder McConkie suggested that this describes Noah’s day, when wickedness covered the earth (see <i>The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles</i> , p. 458).

Third seal (see vv. 5–6)	<p>black horse = famine balances = high price for food</p> <p>Elder McConkie suggested that this is the age of Abraham, when many died of starvation (see <i>The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles</i>, pp. 458–59).</p>
Fourth seal (see vv. 7–8)	<p>pale horse = color of dead bodies death and hell = wicked killing the wicked</p> <p>Elder McConkie said, “This is the millennium of those great kingdoms and nations whose wars and treacheries tormented and overran [Israel], again and again” (<i>The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles</i>, 459). These nations included Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome.</p>
Fifth seal (see vv. 9–11)	<p>altar = symbol of sacrifice souls = martyrs (Church members killed for their belief)</p> <p>Elder McConkie suggested that this refers to the persecutions in which so many early Christians in John’s day lost their lives (see <i>The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles</i>, p. 459).</p>
Sixth seal (see vv. 12–17)	<p>Catastrophic events given as signs of the last days</p> <p>Elder McConkie indicated that this describes our own time and events leading up to the Millennium, when Jesus will reign personally on the earth (see <i>The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles</i>, p. 460).</p>

 **Revelation 7. The restoration of gospel truths and priesthood authority helps prepare us for the events of the seventh seal.** (20–25 minutes)

Prepare seven “sealed” boxes or containers prior to class, and label them with the numbers one through seven. Place in each box a piece of paper with the description corresponding to that seal. (Note that the sixth seal has two descriptions.)

1. Enoch and Zion.
2. Warfare, wickedness, and the Flood.
3. Famine and death.
4. Empires and conquering nations.
5. Christian martyrs.
6. Natural disasters as signs of the last days.
Restoration of the gospel and temple blessings.
7. Babylon is destroyed; Jesus Christ comes in glory; Satan is bound; the righteous join the Savior; peace reigns for a millennium; Satan is loosed for a season; last great battle is fought; final judgment occurs; earth receives its celestial glory.

Display the boxes in front of the class. Briefly review the events of each seal by opening the first five boxes and reading the descriptions. Open the sixth box, but read only the first description (referring to natural disasters). Have students

read Revelation 7:1–4. Ask: In verse 1, who are the four angels at the four corners of the earth? (see D&C 77:8).

Share the following statement by President Wilford Woodruff:

“God has held the angels of destruction for many years, lest they should reap down the wheat with the tares. But I want to tell you now, that those angels have left the portals of heaven, and they stand over this people and this nation now, and are hovering over the earth waiting to pour out the judgments. And from this very day they shall be poured out. Calamities and troubles are increasing in the earth, and there is a meaning to these things. Remember this, and reflect upon these matters. If you do your duty, and I do my duty, we’ll have protection, and shall pass through the afflictions in peace and in safety. Read the scriptures and the revelations. They will tell you about all these things” (*Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, sel. G. Homer Durham [1946], 230).

Ask:

- In Revelation 7:2, who is the angel having the seal of the living God? (John himself, in the role of Elias, with authority to gather and seal the tribes of Israel; see D&C 77:9, 14.)
- What is this angel’s request? (He asks the other angels not to hurt the earth until the servants of God are sealed.)
- In verse 4, who are the 144,000 who are sealed? (see Revelation 7:5–8; D&C 77:11).
- How are we sealed today? (By receiving all ordinances of the gospel culminating in the temple and by keeping the commandments.)

Read the second description in the sixth box. Testify that it was necessary for the gospel and the priesthood to be restored in order to prepare people for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Read the following by President Howard W. Hunter:

“All of our efforts in proclaiming the gospel, perfecting the Saints, and redeeming the dead lead to the holy temple. This is because the temple ordinances are absolutely crucial; we cannot return to God’s presence without them” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 118; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 88).

Ask students:

- What part can we play in helping to prepare ourselves, our families, our friends, and others for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ?
- Read Revelation 7:9–10, 13–14. According to these verses, how many will be made white in the blood of the Lamb and dwell in the presence of God? (Testify that there will be an innumerable host of people who will receive a celestial glory.)

Encourage students to prepare for the coming of the Lord by obeying the commandments and receiving all the ordinances of the temple. Have a student read the following request by President Hunter:

“I encourage everyone to worthily attend the temple or to work toward the day when you can enter that holy house to receive your ordinances and covenants.

“May you let the meaning and beauty and peace of the temple come into your everyday life more directly in order that the millennial day may come” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 118; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 88).

Have students read Doctrine and Covenants 109:22–26, 35. Ask how the ordinances of the temple help us overcome the world and receive power from on high.

(*Note:* The seventh box will be opened in the teaching suggestion for Revelation 8:5–13; 9; 11.)

Revelation 8–11

Introduction

The seventh seal opens with “silence in heaven” (Revelation 8:1). John sees an angel with incense representing “the prayers of the saints” (v. 4), followed by seven angels trumpeting plagues of destruction and war. Despite the many warnings, John reports that men “repented not of the works of their hands” (Revelation 9:20). He sees his own mission to assist in gathering the tribes of Israel prior to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. He sees two prophets slain in the streets of Jerusalem who after three and a half days rise from the dead and ascend to heaven.

Prayerfully study Revelation 8–11 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- God will pour out plagues of destruction and war upon the wicked in preparation for the millennial reign of Jesus Christ (see Revelation 8:5–13; 9; 11; see also Revelation 16; D&C 88:92–110).
- John the Revelator was foreordained to assist in gathering the tribes of Israel in the last days (see Revelation 10:1–2, 8–11; see also D&C 77:14).
- Prior to the coming of the Lord, two prophets in Jerusalem will lay down their lives for the gospel and

after three and a half days will be raised from the dead and ascend to heaven (see Revelation 11:3–12; see also Zechariah 4:11–14; D&C 77:15).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 461.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Revelation 8–11.

Revelation 8–14. In the last days the Lord’s children will pray that He will deliver them from a wicked world. The Lord loves His children and answers their prayers in His way. (20–25 minutes)

Ask: What is an analogy? (An analogy is a comparison in which one thing is similar to or resembles another; for example, “faith is like a seed.”) Write on the board, *Prayer is like _____*. Ask students to try to come up with analogies for prayer.

Invite students to read Revelation 8:1–4 looking for another analogy. Ask:

- How is prayer like smoke?
- What do you think the Saints are praying for in these verses?

Invite three students to read to the class Revelation 6:9–10; Doctrine and Covenants 87:6–7; and Doctrine and Covenants 133:38–41. Ask:

- What will the Saints be praying for in the last days? (That the Lord will come in judgment and relieve their suffering and that wickedness will end.)
- Read Mormon 8:20. What does this verse teach about judging or seeking vengeance against our persecutors? (We must leave vengeance in the hands of the Lord.)

Divide Revelation chapters 8–14 among your students and have them quickly search to see how the Lord will answer the prayers of the Saints. List what they find on the board. Read or sing “Come, O Thou King of Kings” (*Hymns*, no. 59). Discuss how this hymn is like a latter-day prayer of the Saints. Invite students, if they haven’t done so already, to add their voices to those of the many who are praying for the Lord to come and for wickedness to end.



Revelation 8:5–13; 9; 11. Before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, God will pour out plagues and war upon the wicked. (35–40 minutes)

(*Note:* This teaching suggestion is a continuation of the suggestion for Revelation 7.)

Display the seven boxes used in the teaching suggestion for Revelation 7. Show students an overhead transparency of the

chart “Where the Emphasis Is” in the appendix (p. 300), or draw it on the board. Ask:

- How many verses in the book of Revelation deal with the first six seals? (25.)
- How many verses does that leave for the seventh seal? (259.)
- Why do you think so many verses are devoted to this seal?

Open the seventh box and read the description. (“Babylon is destroyed; Jesus Christ comes in glory; Satan is bound; the righteous join the Savior; peace reigns for a millennium; Satan is loosed for a season; last great battle is fought; final judgment occurs; earth receives its celestial glory.”) Point out that with so much yet to occur, it is no wonder that John writes so much to describe the events of the seventh seal.

Give students copies of “The Seven Trumps of the Seventh Seal” from the appendix (p. 301), and invite them to use their scriptures to answer the questions. Have them work individually or in groups. When they finish, go over the answers as a class (see accompanying chart).

Answers

1. One-third of all trees and all green grass were burned.
2. The sea, sea creatures, and ships.
3. A. Wormwood; B. The waters were made bitter.
4. The sun, moon, and stars.
5. Satan.
6. He may have been describing modern weapons of war such as planes, tanks, and cannons.
7. $200,000 \times 1,000 = 200,000,000$.
8. One-third.
9. Two prophets who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood.
10. A, B, C.
11. They will be killed and then resurrected in $3\frac{1}{2}$ days and rise up into heaven.
12. False.
13. The kingdoms of Christ.
14. B, D.

Revelation 10:1–3, 8–11. John the Revelator was foreordained to assist in gathering the tribes of Israel in the last days. (15–20 minutes)

Write *Sweet* on one side of the board and *Bitter* on the other side. Ask: Is it possible for something to be sweet and bitter at the same time? Show students several objects or pictures and ask them to explain how they could be considered both sweet and bitter. These objects might include:

- A bag of candy. (Candy tastes sweet, but too much can make you sick.)
- The picture Family with a Baby (item no. 62307). (Families experience both pleasure and heartbreak.)

- The picture Missionaries Tracting (item no. 62611). (Missionary work brings the joy of teaching the gospel, but it can be hard and disappointing.)

If desired, invite a Church leader to share an experience in which doing the work was sweet but disappointing because of choices made by others.

Have students read Revelation 10:1–3 looking for the object the angel held in his hand. Read Revelation 10:8–11 and ask:

- What did a voice from heaven ask John to do?
- What did the angel tell John to do with the little book?
- How did it taste?
- What do you think the book might represent?
- What clue does verse 11 give to understanding the meaning of the book? (John was to prophesy again before many nations.)

Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 77:14, and ask:

- According to this verse, what was John’s mission?
- How does this show that John was foreordained?
- Read Doctrine and Covenants 7:1–2. Why would this mission be sweet to John? (His greatest desire was to bring souls to Christ.)
- Why would it be bitter to him? (“The judgments and plagues promised those to whom the Lord’s word was sent caused him to despair and have sorrow of soul” [Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3:507].)

Conclude by singing or reading the words to “Sweet Is the Work” (*Hymns*, no. 147). Invite students to tell about experiences when the gospel has been sweet in their lives.

Revelation 12–14

Introduction

Revelation 12–14 represents a pause in the unfolding vision of the seventh seal. Before revealing the final victory of Jesus Christ over the kingdom of the devil, the Lord shows John the history of the war between good and evil that leads to the culminating events in the seventh seal. In chapter 12, John sees the War in Heaven, the casting out of a third part of Heavenly Father’s spirit children who had followed Lucifer, and the continuation of the war on earth. In chapter 13, John witnesses the worldwide rise of evil-inspired political and religious kingdoms (see vv. 7–8), increasing Satan’s control over the children of men. Finally, in chapter 14, he sees truth and priesthood power restored to the earth (see vv. 6–7) to prepare believers for the destruction of the wicked.

Prayerfully study Revelation 12–14 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The war that began in heaven is still being fought today. The Lord has provided the means for us to keep from being a casualty in this war (see Revelation 12:3–17; see also D&C 76:25–29; 1 John 1:6–7).
- Satan has power to deceive people through signs and wonders (see Revelation 13; see also D&C 52:14).
- God restored the gospel through His servants in the last days to prepare the people of the earth for the Lord’s coming (see Revelation 14:6–7; see also D&C 133:16–19, 36–40).
- Faithful followers of Jesus Christ will one day rest from their labors, and their righteous works will be remembered (see Revelation 14:8–13; see also Matthew 11:28–30; Alma 40:11–12).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 462–63.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Revelation 12–14.

Revelation 12:3–13. The war that began in heaven is still being fought today. The Lord has provided the means for us to keep from being a casualty in this war. (30–35 minutes)

Write *War* on the board. Help students understand that they are in the midst of a spiritual war by discussing some of the following questions:

- Do you know someone who has been in a war? If so, what was that person’s experience like?
- How might a person going to war feel?
- Read Ephesians 6:12. According to this verse, what battle are we a part of?
- What do you think is the hardest part of being in this spiritual war?

Explain to students that in Revelation 12–14, the Lord pauses in His explanation of the events of the latter days. Before revealing His final victory over the kingdom of the devil, the Lord shows John the history of the war between good and evil that leads to the culminating events in the seventh seal. Explain that knowing the meaning of some symbols helps us understand these chapters. Give students copies of the accompanying chart as a handout or draw it on the board, leaving the “Meanings” column blank. Work through it as a class, allowing students to discover possible meanings for the symbols from the cross-references.

Revelation 12		
Symbol	Cross-References	Meanings
Woman (see vv. 1, 6)	JST, Revelation 12:7; D&C 5:14	Christ’s Church
Twelve stars (see v. 1)	JST, Revelation 5:6	The Twelve Apostles
A child “who is to rule all nations” (see vv. 2, 5)	JST, Revelation 12:3; D&C 65:5–6	Christ reigning personally on the earth
Dragon (see vv. 3, 9)	D&C 88:110	Satan or Lucifer
Third part of stars being drawn away by the dragon (see v. 4)	D&C 29:36–38	Satan drawing away a third of the spirits
Rod of iron (see v. 5)	1 Nephi 11:25	The word of God
Woman fleeing into the wilderness (see v. 6)	Amos 8:11; D&C 86:1–3	The Church being withdrawn at the time of the Great Apostasy

Read with students Revelation 12:1–6 and discuss the following points:

- The mission of the early Church was to prepare for the coming of the kingdom of God in which Jesus Christ would reign (see vv. 1–2).
- Satan and his followers sought to destroy that kingdom (see vv. 3–4).
- The kingdom of God was taken to heaven as the Church fell into apostasy (see vv. 5–6).

Read Revelation 12:7–9 and ask: What war do these verses refer to? (The War in Heaven.) Tell students that they were part of that war as spirit children of God in the premortal world. Invite them to read Revelation 12:11, and ask: What enabled those on the Lord’s side to win that war? Write their responses on the board and discuss them. Possible answers include:

- Our faith in the Atonement of Jesus Christ (“the blood of the Lamb”).
- Our willingness to testify of our beliefs (“the word of their testimony”).
- Our willingness to live our mortal lives and in some cases even die for the cause of righteousness (“they loved not their lives unto the death”).

Tell students that the conflict that began with the War in Heaven and continued with the persecution of the early Church continues today. Read Doctrine and Covenants 76:28–29 and ask:

- How can the principles that helped us in the War in Heaven help us today?
- What can we do to strengthen our testimony of Jesus Christ?

To help students understand how we can strengthen our testimonies and overcome Satan, read and discuss the following statement by Elder Robert D. Hales:

“Testimonies often come when there is willingness to serve where we are called. They come when a decision is made to strive to be obedient. Testimonies come during efforts to help, lift, and strengthen others. They come from prayer and from studying the scriptures and applying them in our lives. Whatever our circumstances, there seem to be moments in each of our lives when we can be given the knowledge that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ. There is no greater search in life that we can embark upon than the quest to gain a testimony of the truth” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 27; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 22).

Revelation 13. Satan has power to deceive people through miracles and signs. (20–25 minutes)

Ask students:

- Of all the children of God, which one would have the greatest desire to appear righteous but teach falsehoods?
- Why does Satan want to mislead us?

Read the following statement or write it on the board:

“In relation to the kingdom of God, the devil always sets up his kingdom at the very same time in opposition to God” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 365).

Tell students that Satan’s mission is to destroy God’s work by leading His children away from the truth. By studying John’s vision, we can learn how Satan works so we can resist his deceptions. Have students read Revelation 13:1–4, including the Joseph Smith Translation changes in footnote 1a. Ask:

- What is the beast in verse 1 “in the likeness of”?
- From whom do these kingdoms receive their power and authority? (The dragon, or Satan; see Revelation 12:9).
- Why do the people worship the dragon and the beast?

Explain that the beast will have great power in the world. Read Revelation 13:7–8.

- According to these verses, who will the beast overcome?
- Who are the only ones who will not worship the beast?
- What does it mean to have your name written in the Lamb’s book of life? How do you get your name written there? (see Alma 5:57–58).

To see why Satan has so much power over the people of the earth, read aloud Revelation 13:11–18, discussing the following questions with students as you read:

- In verse 11, what might we conclude from the fact that the second beast had “horns like a lamb” but “spake as a dragon”? (It was not what it appeared to be.)
- In what way does this beast imitate God’s power?
- What effect do these miracles have on those dwelling on earth? (The miracles deceive them; see v. 14.)
- In verse 14, what does making an image of the first beast represent? (Worshiping the beast.)
- What was required in order to “buy or sell” in the kingdoms of the beast?

Note: The identity of the beast has not been revealed, so a discussion about the number 666 would be speculative and of little value. Instead discuss questions like the following:

- In what ways do Satan’s followers “mark” themselves? (see Isaiah 3:9; Alma 3:13–19).
- Read Alma 34:35. How can we allow Satan to have power over us?
- Do the Lord’s followers also receive a mark? (see Revelation 7:3; 14:1).
- What can we do to receive the Lord’s mark, or seal? (see Mosiah 5:7–12, 15).

Consider reading the following statement by Elder Marvin J. Ashton:

“The gospel of Jesus Christ is God’s pattern for righteous living and eternal life. It makes possible goal-setting and lofty priorities. Satan and his advocates will constantly try to deceive and entice us into following their patterns. If we are to achieve daily safety, exaltation, and eternal happiness, we need to live by the light and truth of our Savior’s plan. All salvation revolves around our Savior” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1990, 24; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 20).

Testify that, though Satan has great power, the Lord’s power is greater.

 **Revelation 14:6–7 (Scripture Mastery).** The gospel was restored in the last days through God’s angels to prepare the inhabitants of the earth for the coming of the Lord. (15–20 minutes)

Show students a picture of a temple, preferably one in your area, with an angel Moroni statue. Read Revelation 14:6–7 and ask: Who do you think the angel spoken of in these verses is? Point to the statue in the picture, and ask: Why do you think the angel Moroni is placed on the top of many of our temples?

Have a student read the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“John the Revelator ‘saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people’ (Revelation 14:6). That angel has come. His name is Moroni. His is a voice speaking from the dust, bringing another witness of the living reality of the Lord Jesus Christ” (in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1995, 93; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 70).

Show students the picture *Moroni Appears to Joseph Smith in His Room* (Joseph Smith History 1:29–47) (item no. 62492). Recount the story of Moroni’s visits from Joseph Smith—History 1:29–34, and then discuss the following questions:

- What was Moroni to bring to the earth? (see D&C 27:5; 133:36–37).
- What instruments did the Lord prepare that would help Joseph Smith fulfill this mission? (The Urim and Thummim; see D&C 20:8–10; Joseph Smith—History 1:35.)
- Why is it important that the message of the gospel be delivered? (The hour of God’s judgment has come; see D&C 133:38–40.)
- How does the gospel prepare people for the judgments of God that will take place before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ?
- In what way did Moroni help to save the world from destruction?
- What can we do today to help fulfill the mission that Moroni began?

Explain that the gospel must be preached “to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” (Revelation 14:6). Ask:

- Where have your friends and family members preached the gospel? (List places and languages on the board.)
- Has the gospel been preached in *every* tongue and in *every* nation?

Have a student read the following statement by President Hinckley:

“We have not as yet carried the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. But we have made great strides. We have gone wherever we are permitted to go. God is at the helm, and doors will be opened by His power according to His divine will. Of that I am confident. Of that I am certain” (in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1995, 93; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 70–71).

Encourage students to remember the meaning of the statue of the angel Moroni and to prepare themselves to fill missions when the time comes.

Revelation 14:8–13. Faithful followers of Jesus Christ will one day rest from their labors, and their righteous works will be remembered. (10–15 minutes)

Write the word *rest* on the board and ask one or two students to describe what they do to rest when they get home from a difficult day of school. Ask: What words would you use to describe how that rest feels to you?

Have students read Revelation 14:8–13 and mark each occurrence of the word *rest*. Ask:

- How many times is the word *rest* used? (Twice; see vv. 11, 13.)
- How does rest for the wicked compare with rest for the Saints?
- What would you be willing to do to receive the rest that the Saints obtain?

Invite students to read Alma 34:34–35 and Mosiah 5:15. Ask:

- What do you have to do to be “sealed” to the devil?
- What do you have to do to be “sealed” to the Lord?

Testify that we determine our eternal reward with every choice we make. Challenge students to make the choices that will eventually bring them rest from all their labors. Have a student read the following statement by President Joseph F. Smith:

“The ancient prophets speak of ‘entering into God’s rest’; what does it mean? To my mind, it means entering into the knowledge and love of God, having faith in his purpose and in his plan, to such an extent that we know we are right, and that we are not hunting for something else. . . . The man who has reached that degree of faith in God that all doubt and fear have been cast from him, he has entered into ‘God’s rest,’ . . . rest from doubt, from fear, from apprehension of danger, rest from the religious turmoil of the world; from the cry that is going forth, here and there” (*Gospel Doctrine*, 58).

Revelation 15–16

Introduction

Revelation 15–16 depicts some of the last events before the kingdom of the devil comes to an end. In chapter 15 John sees Saints in celestial glory praising God for His righteous

judgments, as well as seven angels ready to pour out “seven last plagues” on the earth (v. 1). Revelation 16 records disease, war, and other catastrophic events, as well as false prophets who perform miracles and continue to teach false doctrines to deceive the people of the earth (see vv. 13–14). Even with all the trials and destruction, many still “repented not of their deeds” (v. 11). Finally, a celestial voice declares, “It is done” (v. 17).

Prayerfully study Revelation 15–16 and consider the following principle before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- The Saints who keep their covenants and watch for the Lord’s coming will be blessed and preserved as God pours out His judgments upon the wicked (see Revelation 16; see also 1 Nephi 22:14–19, 28; D&C 106:4–5; Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:37, 46–50).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 463.

Suggestions for Teaching

Use the following idea or one or more of your own as you prepare to teach Revelation 15–16.

Revelation 16. The Saints who keep their covenants and watch for the Lord’s coming will be blessed and preserved as God pours out His judgments upon the wicked. (25–30 minutes)

Ask students to imagine that a new disease with no cure was unleashed on the earth and that it killed one in every three people. Imagine that the disease appeared in every nation at once and that millions died from the plague in a week. Ask: If there were a way to survive the plague and also enjoy God’s blessings, would you want to know what it was?

Ask your students to think about that question while studying Revelation 16.

Explain that in Revelation 15, John once again saw exalted Saints praising God in a celestial world (“sea of glass,” v. 2; see also D&C 77:1). He also saw seven more angels, each holding a vial (bowl) containing a plague. Then a great voice commanded the angels, “Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth” (Revelation 16:1).

Draw seven bowls on the board, and number them 1 through 7 (or simply write the numbers on the board). Invite students to read Revelation 16:2–4, 8–12, 16–21 and suggest what each of the plagues represents. Write their suggestions under the appropriate bowl or number. Explain that God lets people suffer the consequences of their sins so they have a witness that they need to repent. Ask:

- What does John say that indicates whether the people repented or not? (see vv. 9, 11).

- What might your life be like if you lived during these times?
- Will anyone escape?

Read 1 Nephi 22:14–19, 28 and discuss some or all of the following questions:

- Who will the Lord destroy?
- Why will the Lord destroy the wicked?
- How will the righteous be preserved?
- What is the key to dwelling safely in the Lord?

To help students understand that, even though the righteous will be preserved, some will still suffer, read the following statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“It is a false idea that the Saints will escape all the judgments, whilst the wicked suffer; for all flesh is subject to suffer, and ‘the righteous shall hardly escape;’ still many of the Saints will escape, for the just shall live by faith; yet many of the righteous shall fall a prey to disease, to pestilence, etc., by reason of the weakness of the flesh, and yet be saved in the Kingdom of God” (*History of the Church*, 4:11).

Have students read Revelation 16:15, and ask: What two phrases in this verse describe those who will enjoy the Lord’s blessing of protection? (“He that watcheth” and “keepeth his garments.”) Write the phrases as column headings on the board. Write *Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:37, 46–50* and *Mosiah 4:30* in the “he that watcheth” column. Write *2 Nephi 9:14* and *Doctrine and Covenants 36:6; 109:72–76* in the “keepeth his garments” column. Divide the class into two groups and assign each a column. Have them search the references looking for what their phrase means. Discuss their ideas, writing them on the board as appropriate.

Testify that the Lord loves His people and will preserve them in the last days, even in the midst of awful destruction. Urge students to be watchful and to keep their covenants so their garments may be clean and ready. Encourage them to develop their faith and to believe all that the Lord has promised.

Revelation 17–19

Introduction

The Lord declares to Latter-day Israel: “Go ye out . . . from Babylon, from the midst of wickedness, which is spiritual Babylon. . . .

“. . . lest sudden destruction shall come upon [you]” (D&C 133:14–15). In Revelation 17 John sees Babylon, the symbol of Satan’s power, spread across the earth. Then, “in one hour” (Revelation 18:19), he witnesses its destruction. Those who

have partaken of her sins weep and lament her fall while the righteous rejoice (see vv. 11–24). John then sees the preparation for the long-awaited “marriage of the Lamb,” for “his wife [the Church] hath made herself ready” (Revelation 19:7). The Lamb appears as the “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (v. 16).

Prayerfully study Revelation 17–19 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- Babylon, which symbolizes the wickedness of the world, will be destroyed at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. If we follow God’s command to “come out of Babylon,” we will not partake of the sins of the world nor be overtaken in the plagues that will destroy it (see Revelation 18; D&C 133:1–15).
- In the last days, those Saints who have prepared themselves for the coming of the Bridegroom (Jesus Christ) will be clothed in righteousness and invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb (see Revelation 19:5–9; see also D&C 58:8–12).
- All those who fight against the Lamb will be destroyed when Jesus Christ appears with “the armies which were in heaven” (Revelation 19:14; see Revelation 19:11–21; JST, Revelation 19:18; see also D&C 133:46–51).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 464–68.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Revelation 17–19.

Revelation 17:1–6, 14; 18:1–18. Babylon, which is the wickedness of the world, will be destroyed at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. If we follow God’s command to “come out of Babylon,” we will not partake of the sins of the world nor be overcome in the plagues that will destroy it. (25–30 minutes)

Have students read the first verse of “Israel, Israel, God Is Calling” (*Hymns*, no. 7). Ask:

- Who or what do you think “Babylon” represents in this hymn?
- How does it compare with Zion?
- In what ways is Babylon falling?

Explain that in Revelation 17–18 John saw the fall of Babylon. Invite students to read Revelation 17:1–4 and describe the woman John saw in these verses. Ask:

- What relationship does this woman have with the beast?
- Read Revelation 12:1–4. How does this woman’s relationship with the beast differ from that of the woman in Revelation 17?

For help in understanding the imagery and symbols surrounding this evil woman, read for students the commentary for Revelation 17:1 in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles* (p. 464).

Explain that the Lord has given inspired commentary on this passage of Revelation. Nephi saw a similar vision and recorded what he saw. Have students read and cross-reference Revelation 17:5–6 and 1 Nephi 14:9–12. Ask:

- How are the two women represented by Nephi? (The church of the Lamb of God and the church of the devil.)
- Where will you find these two churches? (Upon all the face of the earth.)

Have students read and cross-reference Revelation 17:14 and 1 Nephi 14:13–17, and then discuss the following questions:

- What is the mission of the church of the devil? (To fight against Jesus Christ.)
- What will keep the church of the devil from succeeding? (The power of the Lamb.)
- What allows the Saints of God to be armed with this power? (Righteousness.)
- What will be the eventual end of the church of the devil? (Destruction.)

Tell students that there is a danger in living in the day when both these churches exist. Have a student read the following statement by Elder Carlos E. Asay, a member of the Seventy:

“There is a lie—a vicious lie—circulating among the Latter-day Saints and taking its toll among the young. And it is that a ‘balanced man’ is one who deliberately guards against becoming too righteous. This lie would have you believe that it is possible to live successfully and happily as a ‘double-minded man’ with one foot in Babylon and one foot in Zion (see James 1:8)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1992, 59; or *Ensign*, May 1992, 41).

Ask:

- What are some examples of having one foot in Babylon (the world) and one foot in Zion (the Church)?
- Why is it difficult to keep a foot in both places?

Elder Boyd K. Packer said:

“The distance between the Church and a world set on a course which we cannot follow will steadily increase.

“Some will fall away into apostasy, break their covenants, and replace the plan of redemption with their own rules” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1994, 26; or *Ensign*, May 1994, 21).

Read Revelation 18:1–4 and ask:

- What would the Lord have us do?
- What two reasons does the angel give for us to “come out” of Babylon? (To escape the sins of the world and the plagues that will come.)

Read Revelation 18:5–8 and ask: How will the Lord reward Babylon and those who partake of her sins? (Discuss the students’ answers.)

Invite students to keep in mind the eventual end of Babylon as they consider the following questions by Elder Asay:

“Can a man be too righteous? Too Christlike? Impossible! Can the so-called ‘balanced man’ walk successfully the beam between good and evil? No. Each step is shaky, and eventually he will teeter and fall and break himself against the commandments of God” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1992, 59; or *Ensign*, May 1992, 41).

Ask: How will the reaction of the wicked to the fall of Babylon be different from that of the righteous? (see Revelation 18:11–18, 20). Point out that Babylon provided wealth that the world grew to love. Ask: What can we do to guard against mourning the loss of Babylon along with the wicked? Invite students to read Doctrine and Covenants 121:34–35 looking for how these verses relate to the lesson. Have them write on a piece of paper what they need to do to “come out” of Babylon. You could conclude by reading or singing verse three of “Israel, Israel, God Is Calling” (*Hymns*, no. 7).

Revelation 19:5–21. In the last days, those Saints who have prepared themselves for the coming of the Bridegroom (Jesus Christ) will be clothed in righteousness and invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. All those who fight against the Lamb will be destroyed. (25–30 minutes)

Display the picture The Second Coming (item no. 62562) and ask: Are you looking forward to the Lord’s coming? Explain that John saw the end to all wickedness on the earth. Have students read Revelation 19:11–16. Ask: How does this description of the Second Coming compare to the picture? Discuss the following points:

- The white horse seen by John is a symbol of Christ’s return as King of Kings and a conqueror of evil (see the commentary for Revelation 19:11–16 in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, p. 468).
- Christ will appear in red apparel, having trod the winepress alone. This is symbolic of the Atonement and His Judgment on the wicked (see D&C 133:46–51).
- Christ will rule the earth with a rod of iron, or the word of God (see JST, Revelation 19:15; 1 Nephi 11:25).

Make a menu with foods eaten in your area, or borrow one from a local restaurant. Show students the menu and ask them to imagine that they have been invited to a meal by a rich relative.

- If you could choose anywhere to have this meal, where would you go?
- What would you hope to see on the menu?

Make two columns on the board. Label one *The Marriage Supper of the Lamb* and the other *The Supper of the Great God*. Have students read Revelation 19:5–10 looking for details of the marriage supper of the Lamb. Discuss the following questions and write the answers in the “Marriage Supper” column:

- Who is the Groom for whose wedding the heavens rejoice? (The Lamb, or Christ; see v. 7; see also the commentary for Revelation 19:7–9 in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, p. 467.)
- Who is the bride who “hath made herself ready” (v. 7)? (The Saints.)
- What clothing is necessary to attend this supper? (Clean, white fine linen; see v. 8.)
- What does this clothing represent? (The righteousness of the Saints; see v. 8.)
- What was John asked to write about those invited to this marriage? (“Blessed are they”; v. 9.)
- How can our testimony of Jesus help prepare us to be at the marriage of the Lamb? (One answer is that it helps us to be righteous.)

Have students read Revelation 19:17–21 looking for details of the supper of the great God. Discuss the following questions and write the answers in the “Supper of the Great God” column:

- Who is invited to the supper of the great God? (The fowls of the air; see v. 17; D&C 29:18–20.)
- What will be on the menu? (The wicked people of the earth; see v. 20.)
- According to the Joseph Smith Translation of verse 18, what did the wicked do to get on the menu? (They fought against the Lamb.)
- What phrase indicates whether the fowls will have enough to eat?

Point out to students that it is better to read a menu than to be on one. Testify that those who prepare themselves for the coming of the Lord will be invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Have students silently read Alma 5:27–28 looking for how we can become worthy of the white clothing the Saints will wear at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Revelation 20–22

Introduction

After the destruction of the wicked and the binding of Satan, the earth finally rests during the Lord’s thousand-year reign. But after the Millennium and before the final end, Satan is “loosed out of his prison” (Revelation 20:7) and is allowed once more to “deceive the nations” (v. 8). John sees the destruction of one last demonic army and the final judgment for all of God’s children (see Revelation 20:9–13). He hears Christ deliver a message echoing the ones delivered to the seven churches in Asia: “He that overcometh shall inherit all things” (Revelation 21:7). Finally he sees the faithful Saints who did overcome and are dwelling on the earth in celestial splendor (see Revelation 22).

Prayerfully study Revelation 20–22 and consider the following principles before preparing your lessons.

Some Important Gospel Principles to Look For

- During the Millennium, Satan will be bound and will not have power to tempt or deceive people (see Revelation 20:1–3; see also 1 Nephi 22:24–26).
- In the Judgment, the dead will be judged according to their works (see Revelation 20:12–13; see also Alma 11:43–44).
- Only those who keep the commandments and come unto Christ will be able to dwell in celestial glory (see Revelation 21:23–27; 22:12–17).

Additional Resources

- *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 468–72.

Suggestions for Teaching

Choose from the following ideas, or use some of your own, as you prepare lessons for Revelation 20–22.



Revelation 20–22. The events that occur during and following the Millennium are a part of Heavenly Father’s plan of salvation. (25–30 minutes)

John is one of the few prophets to see the end of the earth whose writings the Lord has allowed to go forth to the world (see 1 Nephi 14:24–27). To teach these events, consider giving students copies of the chart on page 264 as a handout and

discussing it as a class. Or create a similar chart using just the scripture references, and have the students work through it individually or in groups. Correct it as a class, using the version of the chart given on page 264 as a guide. You will likely find that the events of Revelation 20–22 create their own interest. If desired, you can have an enjoyable discussion just reviewing and talking about the Millennium and the end of the world, without using the handouts or other aids.

Have a student read the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson:

“I testify that not many years hence the earth will be cleansed. . . . Jesus the Christ will come again, this time in power and great glory to vanquish His foes [destroy His enemies] and to rule and reign on the earth” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1988, 104; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 87).

Invite students to read Revelation 22:20. Ask: Keeping in mind President Benson’s statement, why do you think John’s prayer at the end of his book of Revelation was “Come, Lord Jesus”?

Revelation 20:1–3. During the Millennium, Satan will be bound and will not have power to tempt or deceive people. (10–15 minutes)

Bring a rope to class. Ask for a volunteer and tie that person up. Ask:

- How does being bound affect this person’s freedom?
- Under what conditions would it be appropriate to bind someone?

Have students read Revelation 20:1–3 and look for a similar situation described by John. Ask:

- Who is “bound” in these verses?
- How long will Satan be bound?
- What will he no longer be allowed to do?
- Do you think this means that Satan will be bound with earthly ropes? If not, how will he be bound?

Invite students to read 1 Nephi 22:26 and look for one way Satan will be bound. To help students see this principle, discuss the following points:

- The wicked will be destroyed when Jesus Christ returns in His glory; only the righteous will survive (see Malachi 4:1; D&C 35:21; 38:8).
- We become righteous through repentance and the redemptive power of Jesus Christ (see 1 Nephi 22:28; Alma 24:10).

During Millennium	End of Millennium	After Millennium
<p>Satan is bound for a thousand years and no longer deceives the nations (see Revelation 20:1–3; 1 Nephi 22:26–28).</p>	<p>Satan is loosed from his prison and once again deceives the nations. He gathers them to battle against God. (See Revelation 20:7–8; D&C 88:110–11.)</p>	<p>The earth receives its celestial glory. God’s holy city is established upon the earth. (See Revelation 21:1–3; 22:1–2; see also the commentaries for Revelation 21:1 and 21:2–3 in <i>The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles</i>, p. 469.)</p>
<p>The righteous rise in the First Resurrection (see Revelation 20:4–6; Mosiah 15:21–23; D&C 88:96–98).</p>	<p>Satan’s armies surround the camp of the Saints. God sends fire that destroys Satan’s armies. Satan and others are cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. (See Revelation 20:9–10; D&C 88:112–14; see also the commentary for Revelation 20:7–10 in <i>The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles</i>, pp. 468–69.)</p>	<p>The righteous Saints live with God in celestial splendor (see Isaiah 60:19–21; Revelation 21:4–7; 22:3–5).</p>
<p>“During that thousand years of peace the great work of the Lord shall be in the temples, and into those temples the people shall go to labor for those who have [died] and who are waiting to have these ordinances . . . performed for them by those who still [live] upon the earth” (Joseph Fielding Smith, <i>Doctrines of Salvation</i>, 3:58; see also Isaiah 2:2–5; D&C 128:15).</p>	<p>Those not in the First Resurrection are resurrected and judged. The wicked are sent away to suffer the second death. (See Revelation 20:11–15; Helaman 14:17–19; D&C 63:17; see also the commentaries for Revelation 20:12 and 20:14 in <i>The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles</i>, p. 469.)</p>	<p>Those who are exalted shall reign as gods (see D&C 132:20). “Every man who reigns in celestial glory is a God to his dominions” (Joseph Smith, <i>Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith</i>, 374).</p>

Have a student read the following statement by Elder Spencer W. Kimball, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve:

“When Satan is bound in a single home—when Satan is bound in a single life—the Millennium has already begun in that home, in that life” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 172).

Ask: How can we bind Satan in our lives?



Revelation 20:12–13 (Scripture Mastery). In the Final Judgment, all will be judged according to their works. (10–15 minutes)

Display a judge’s gavel or draw one on the board. Invite students to read Revelation 20:12–13 looking for what these verses have to do with the drawing. Ask:

- What will this day be like for those who lived wickedly?
- What about for those who lived righteously?

Divide the class into three groups and assign each to read one of the following scripture blocks: John 5:22, 25–29; Alma 5:15–16; 11:43–44; Doctrine and Covenants 128:6–7. Have them share what they learn about the Judgment, and discuss it as a class.

Invite students to reflect on what they can do so that the Day of Judgment will be a happy one for them.



Revelation 22:12–17. Only those who keep the commandments and come unto Jesus Christ will be able to dwell in celestial glory. (10–15 minutes)

Tell students that John closed his book of Revelation with a message that can help us prepare for the coming of Christ and enjoy the blessings God reserves for all His faithful children.

Write the following quotation on the board, but leave a blank in place of the word *obedience*:

“Obedience is the first law of heaven” (Joseph F. Smith, in *Journal of Discourses*, 16:247–48).

Invite students to recommend a word that would make the sentence true. Have them give evidence from the scriptures to support the statement. Read Revelation 22:12–14 to see if they can identify the first law of heaven from these verses. Write

Obedience in the blank and ask: Why would obedience be considered the first law of heaven? (see D&C 130:20–21).

Have a student read the following story told by Elder Russell M. Nelson:

“Early in our married life when Sister Nelson and I lived in Minneapolis, we decided to enjoy a free afternoon with our two-year-old daughter. We went to one of Minnesota’s many beautiful lakes and rented a small boat. After rowing far from shore, we stopped to relax and enjoy the tranquil scene. Suddenly, our little toddler lifted one leg out of the boat and started to go overboard, exclaiming, ‘Time to get out, Daddy!’

“Quickly we caught her and explained, ‘No, dear, it’s not time to get out; we must stay in the boat until it brings us safely back to land.’ Only with considerable persuasion did we succeed in convincing her that leaving the boat early would have led to disaster. . . .

“Similarly, we as children of our Heavenly Father may foolishly want to get ‘out of the boat’ before we arrive at destinations He would like us to reach. . . .

“Blessings bestowed by God are always predicated upon obedience to law [see D&C 130:20–21]. Applied to my analogy, we are first to get ‘on the boat’ with Him. Then we are to *stay* with Him. And if we don’t get ‘out of the boat’ before we should, we shall reach His kingdom, where we will be lifted up to eternal life” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 96; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 70).

Ask some of the following questions:

- What is the destination that Heavenly Father wants us to reach?
- What is the “boat” that God has provided to help carry us there?
- In what ways are people tempted to get out of the boat?
- How can obedience help us reach our destination safely?

Read Revelation 22:17 looking for the Savior’s invitation to each of us. Encourage students to come unto Christ. Conclude by inviting them to share what they learned this year in seminary that will help them be obedient and “stay in the boat.”

METHODS FOR TEACHING THE SCRIPTURES

After you have decided *what* to teach, ask the Lord to help you decide *how* to teach. Use this section, as well as *Teaching the Gospel: A Handbook for CES Teachers and Leaders* (1994), for ideas on methods for teaching the scriptures.

Read

- Read aloud to your students, and ask them to take turns reading aloud. (Note: Though this manual includes frequent instructions in the form “Read Hebrews 1:7 and ask . . .,” it is a good idea to divide reading assignments between yourself and your students.) Have those who are not reading follow along in their scriptures. Be careful not to embarrass students who do not read well.
- As the scriptures are read, pause to explain words and phrases, gospel principles, or other items you feel impressed to discuss.
- If a part of the scripture block is easy to read, you could ask your students to read it silently.
- Identify who is speaking in the scripture block and who the speaker is addressing.

Summarize

- Prepare what you will say about the verses or chapters that will not be read in class. This should help students see how the last verses they read and the next verses they will read go together.
- Use the chapter headings to tell what is in chapters you do not read.
- Use pictures that show the stories or principles in the verses you do not read. For example, as you discuss Matthew 17:10–13, show the picture John Preaching in the Wilderness (Gospel Art Picture Kit, no. 207).

Apply

- Teach your students that they can find answers to their questions and problems if they “feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell [them] all things what [they] should do” (2 Nephi 32:3).
- Invite students to share experiences in which they found help in the scriptures. Tell of such experiences of your own.
- Help students liken the scriptures to themselves (see 1 Nephi 19:23). Ask questions such as: “How is this person in the scriptures like us?” and “How is this story like what happens to us?”

- Ask students how people in the scriptures found solutions to their problems.
- Invite students to answer questions that are in the scriptures. For example, have them answer the question asked in Matthew 16:13–15.
- Use a student’s name in place of a name or pronoun in the scriptures. For example, in James 1:5–6, use the name of a student instead of *any of you* and *him*. (Note: Be cautious about verses that are addressed to specific individuals and might not apply generally. Do not use verses that might associate a student with a sin or otherwise prove embarrassing.)

Cross-Reference

- A cross-reference is a reference to a scripture that explains or adds meaning to a verse you are studying. For example, when you teach Matthew 3:8, you can cross-reference it with Moroni 8:25–26 by having students write *Moroni 8:25–26* in the margin.

Moroni
8:25–26

“baptism, he said unto them, O ^bgeneration of vipers, who hath ^warned you to flee from the wrath to come?^d
8 Bring forth therefore fruits ^ameet for ^repentance:
9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham ^ato our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up

- Teach students how to find and use cross-references in footnotes or other scripture study helps.
- Have students tell how the cross-reference explains or adds meaning to the verse they are studying.
- Have students create scripture chains by cross-referencing the first scripture in a list to the second, the second to the third, and so on to the end, and then cross-referencing the last scripture to the first.

Mark

- Teach students to mark important items in their scriptures so they can find them easily and remember them.

- Teach students how to circle, underline, or shade words or phrases.

7 Be not ^adeceived; God is not ^bmocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

7 Be not ^adeceived; God is not ^bmocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

- Have students circle verse numbers, draw a box around verses, or draw a line in the margin.

5 Blessed are the ^ameek: for they shall inherit the ^bearth.

6 Blessed are they which do ^ahunger and thirst after ^brighteousness; for they shall be filled.

7 Blessed are the ^amerciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

- Draw a line from one word or phrase you have circled to another.

13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:

14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

- Circle the footnote letter by the word or phrase in the scripture and in the footnote. You could connect the reference to the footnote with a line.

^aFORASMUCH as ^bmany have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things ^cwhich are most surely believed among us,

2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were ^aeyewitnesses, and ministers of the word;

3 It seemed good to me also, having

5 (64-73). lost, Gifts s; Signs. .	[ST LUKE] Title: JST entitles this book 'The Testimony of St Luke.'
3; 35: 9. Evil, Un- ge.	1 (1a) JST Luke 1: 1 As I am a messenger of Jesus Christ, and knowing that many have. . . b 2 Tim. 4: 13; 1 Ne. 13: 26 (24-26).

- Write notes in the margin.

15 He saith unto them, But whom say ^aye that I am?

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the ^aChrist, the ^bSon of the ^cliving God.

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon ^aBar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not ^brevealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

Personal Revelation

Use Words of Apostles and Prophets

- Study the words and teachings of the General Authorities, especially those sustained as prophets, seers, and revelators, as you prepare your lessons. Study regularly what they say in general conference. Use these teachings to help your students understand and apply the scriptures.
- Read the words and teachings of the General Authorities to your students. Ask questions such as "How do these words help you understand the verse we are studying?" and "How do they help you understand how you can apply the message of the scripture in your life?"
- Have students write in the margins of their scriptures short quotations by the General Authorities that you read to them or that they find on their own.

Discuss

- Encourage students to tell what they have learned and how they feel about the scriptures. The Lord said, "Let not all be spokesmen at once; but let one speak at a time and let all listen unto his sayings, that when all have spoken that all may be edified of all, and that every man may have an equal privilege" (D&C 88:122).
- Read "Ask Questions," "Compare," "List," and the other methods in this section for ideas on how to start discussions.
- Divide the class into groups, and give each group something in the scriptures they can study and discuss.
- Involve students who do not usually say anything in discussions by asking them to tell how they feel or what they think.
- Always try to keep discussions positive and uplifting. When the teacher and the student seek to have the Holy Ghost, "he that preacheth and he that receiveth, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together" (D&C 50:22).

Ask Questions

- Ask questions that cause your students to search the scriptures for the answers. Have them find the answers in the scriptures. For example, when teaching Matthew 5-7 (the Sermon on the Mount), ask students what they have learned that will help them become more like the Savior.

- Ask questions that students care about and want to know the answers to. For example, when teaching John 7:17, you could ask students what a person can do to know that the gospel is true.
- Ask questions that encourage students to think about and apply the scriptures or a principle of the gospel. Questions with answers that are either too easy or too hard may frustrate students. Questions that can be answered *yes* or *no* usually do not encourage discussion.
- Ask questions that begin with *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, or *how*.
- Ask students to explain why they gave the answers they did.
- Invite students to comment on answers given by other class members.

Compare

- Have students compare things in the scriptures to see how they are alike or different. For example, in Matthew 25:31–46, they could compare the kind of people who will be on the right hand of Jesus with those who will be on His left hand, and what will happen to each.
- Have students compare lists (see “List” below). For example, students could list the “works of the flesh” and the “fruit of the Spirit” in Galatians 5:19–26, and then compare the two lists.
- Have students look for the words *like* or *as*. These words are often used in the scriptures to show how one thing can be like another. For example, in Mark 4:30–32 Jesus compared the kingdom of God to a tiny seed: “It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth” (v. 31).

List

- Sometimes it is helpful to make a list of the events or ideas that you are studying. You can write a list for the students to see, or have the students write the list on a piece of paper, or just have them think of the list in their minds. When you make a list, you should also discuss what you learn from the list.
- Have students find and write down the events in a scripture story, and then discuss what they have written. For example, students could write the events of the story of Simon in Acts 8:9–24. Then the class could discuss the lessons they learned from the story.
- Have students list and discuss things that can influence people toward either righteousness or wickedness. For example, when studying Jesus’ answer to a rich young ruler in Luke 18:18–23, students could list and discuss how they might obtain eternal life.

- List and discuss each part of a principle of the gospel. For example, students could list and discuss what they learn about charity in 1 Corinthians 13.
- Have students mark or number in their scriptures things that can be listed. For example, in Matthew 13, students could number what happened to the seeds in verses 3–8 and then put the same numbers by Jesus’s explanations in verses 18–23.

Memorize

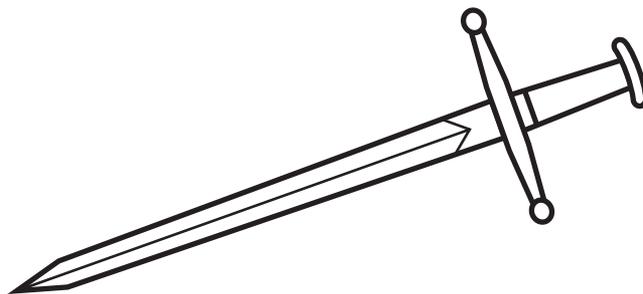
- Have students say the words of the scripture out loud several times.
- Have students write the scripture several times.
- Write the scripture and have the students repeat it several times. Cover or erase a few words each time they repeat it until you have covered or erased all the words.

Use Hymns

- Start or end class by singing a hymn that helps teach something from the scripture block.
- Invite individuals or groups of students to sing or play hymns.
- During your lesson, have students sing or read the words of hymns that help teach something from the scripture block. For example, students could sing or read “Love at Home” (*Hymns*, no. 294) when you teach Colossians 3:18–21.

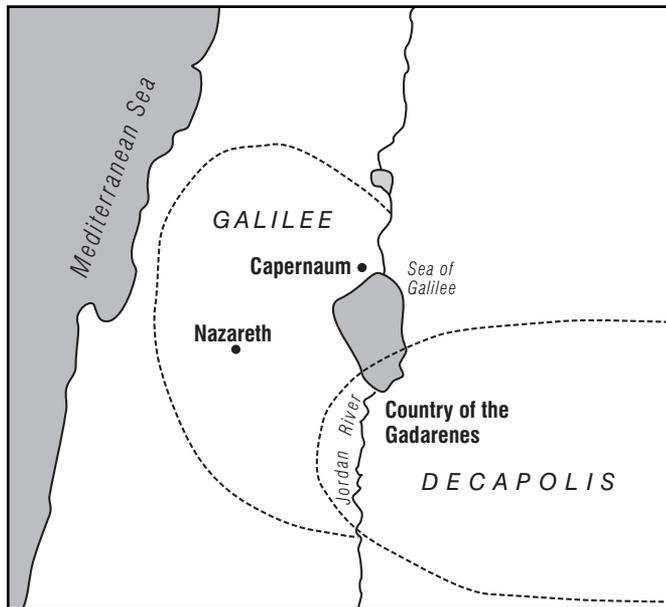
Show Objects

- Show objects mentioned in the scriptures that your students may not have seen before. For example, you could show some yeast and some bread dough rising in a bowl to help students understand Matthew 13:33 or Matthew 16:6–12.
- Show objects that your students have seen before but that will increase their interest and understanding of the scripture block. For example, when teaching Matthew 5:13–16 you could show some salt and a candle.
- Have students draw objects mentioned in the scriptures (see “Draw”). For example, when teaching Hebrews 4:12, have students draw a two-edged sword.



Draw

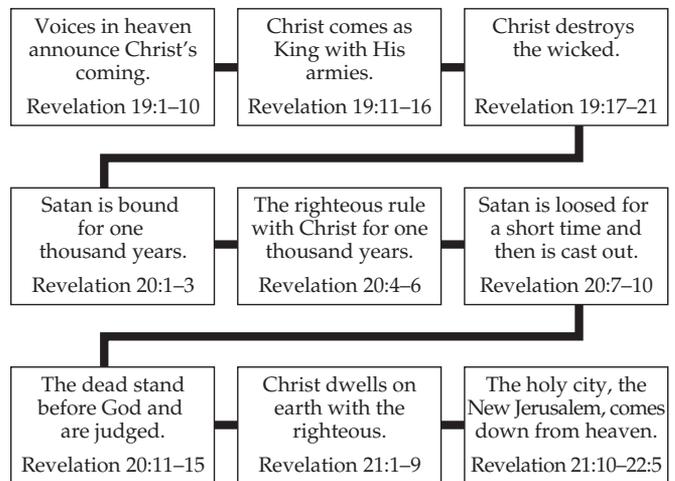
- Draw pictures for your students that will help them understand the scripture block.
- Have students draw pictures that show what they think the people, objects, or events in the scriptures might have looked like. Drawing helps students remember what they read and discuss. Be careful not to embarrass students when you ask them to draw.
- Have students draw maps that show where people in the scriptures lived, where people went, or where events took place. For example, when you study Mark 1–5, have students draw a map showing the places where Jesus went.



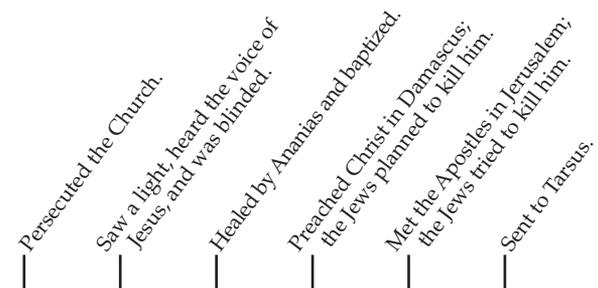
- Have students make charts that explain what happens in a story or that make clear what someone is teaching. For example, make a chart that shows what Jesus, His disciples, and the leaders said and did in Matthew 26:48–75.

Jesus	Disciples	Jewish Leaders
Said, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?"	Judas kissed Jesus.	Laid hands on Jesus and took Him.
Said, "Put up again thy sword."	Peter cut off the ear of the high priest's servant.	Sought false witnesses against Jesus.
Said, "Are ye come out as against a thief?"	They forsook Jesus and fled.	Condemned Jesus to die.
Said that He was the Son of God.	Peter followed Jesus to the high priest's palace.	Hit and spat on Jesus.
	Peter denied knowing Jesus.	Ridiculed Jesus.

- Have students draw charts that show the relationship of concepts or events to each other. The following chart shows what John the Apostle saw in his vision of the end of the world (see Revelation 19:1–22:5).



- Have students make a time line by drawing a line and writing dates and events along the line in the order they happened. For example, as they study Acts 8–9, have them draw a time line showing the things Saul (Paul) did.



Act Out

- Have students act out stories in the scriptures. Have them use the words and actions that the people in the scriptures used.
- Have students tell how they think the people in the scriptures felt. Discuss how students felt or what they learned as they saw the story acted out.

Look For

When you have students read scripture passages, give them something in advance to look for as they read. If they begin reading with a principle or detail in mind, they will pay closer attention and retain more of what they read. You could have students look for:

- Gospel principles illustrated by the lives of people.
- Questions asked in the scriptures.
- Scriptural lists, such as the qualities of charity (see 1 Corinthians 13).
- Definitions of words or concepts, such as *Zion* (see D&C 97:21).

- Difficult words or phrases that students might have trouble understanding.
- Imagery, types, and symbols.
- Prophetic commentary (for example Book of Mormon passages that begin “and thus we see”).
- If-then relationships (see Isaiah 58:13–14).
- Traits that please or displease God.
- Patterns (for example the covenant pattern in the sacrament prayers; see D&C 20:77, 79).

Note: When you see the phrases “look for” or “looking for” in this manual, use the “look for” method as described here.

SCRIPTURE MASTERY

Introduction

Scripture mastery means being able to find scripture verses, understand what they mean, and apply them in our lives. The scripture mastery program includes one hundred scriptures (twenty-five for each seminary scripture course) that students should “master.” As the teacher you should help students learn these verses by reviewing them in class and encouraging students to learn them on their own.

Your success will depend largely on your attitude. For example, your students are more likely to learn these verses if you have learned them, and if they sense that you expect them to do so. Spend enough class time to help your students feast on these words of Christ, search them, and apply them to their lives.

Scripture mastery should supplement your daily sequential scripture study, not take its place. Do not devote so much time to scripture mastery that it overshadows the regular curriculum. Home-study teachers should be especially careful that the weekly class does not turn into a weekly scripture chase.

You could:

- Introduce scripture mastery verses as they come up in the regular lessons.
- Take part of one day each week, or a little time each day, to work on scripture mastery.
- Memorize a scripture mastery verse in class at least twice a semester.
- Work on scripture mastery when a lesson is shorter than planned.
- Have students organize devotionals around scripture mastery verses.
- Put up bulletin boards based on scripture mastery verses.

President Howard W. Hunter, who was then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said, “We would hope none of your students would leave your classroom fearful or embarrassed or ashamed that they cannot find the help they need because they do not know the scriptures well enough to locate the proper passages” (*Eternal Investments* [address to religious educators, 10 Feb. 1989], 2).

Ideas for Helping Students Find Scripture Mastery Verses

- Show students the contents page in the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Pearl of Great Price to help them find scripture mastery verses.
- Have students memorize the references and key words or phrases from scripture mastery verses.

- Give students clues and have them find scripture mastery verses. You could give them words or phrases or show them an object or picture.
- Review the verses your students learned in previous years so that they graduate knowing all 100 scripture mastery scriptures.

Ideas for Helping Students Understand Scripture Mastery Verses

- Read the verses with students and help them understand difficult words or phrases (see the “Understanding the Scriptures” sections in the student study guide).
- Use the teaching suggestions in this manual and the activities in the student study guide to explain scriptures.
- Teach students how to find other verses of scripture that help explain the principles in the scripture mastery scriptures (see “Scripture Study Helps,” pp. 10–11 in this manual). They could write cross-references in the margins of their scriptures.
- Show students ways to mark their scriptures (see “Mark” under “Methods for Teaching the Scriptures” above, pp. 266–67).
- Ask questions about the verses. For example, ask students who was speaking and to whom, what the main idea is, and what the person spoken to might have been feeling.
- Discuss the historical setting (the people, place, and time) of scripture mastery verses.
- Have students look at the surrounding chapters and verses to see scripture mastery verses in context.
- Have students tell how they could use the verses to teach others about the gospel.
- Have students rewrite the verses in their own words, write questions about the verses, or draw pictures about something in the verses.
- Encourage students to memorize scripture mastery verses and to write or say them from memory.

Ideas for Helping Students Apply Scripture Mastery Verses

- Have students write what they think the scripture mastery verses mean. Discuss how the verses can help students find answers to their questions and problems (see “After Reading” on pages 5–6 of the student study guide).
- Help students look for any cause-and-effect relationships.
- Have students give short talks in class using scripture mastery verses. Encourage them to use the verses when they give talks in Church.

- Ask students how they could use a scripture mastery verse to teach someone about the gospel.
- Have students tell how the verses were used in talks they have heard at church or in general conference.
- Suggest to students that they teach scripture mastery verses to their families in family home evening.
- Have students make posters about the verses for their home or the classroom.
- Divide the class into two groups. Have each group write down problems or questions that can be answered by the scripture mastery verses. Have the groups exchange papers and find scripture mastery verses that answer the other group's problems or questions.

Conclusion

Elder A. Theodore Tuttle, who was a member of the Seventy, said:

"Few things sponsor spiritual growth more than studying from the scriptures. The Savior said, 'He that hath the scriptures, let him search them, and see . . . ' (3 Nephi 10:14). The Lord has promised that if you will search, you shall see marvelous spiritual truths that will persuade you to turn to Christ as your great exemplar. You will be strengthened in your desire to make covenants with the Lord, to receive the ordinances, and to serve" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1984, 32; or *Ensign*, May 1984, 24).



TEACHING SCRIPTURE MASTERY

Audiovisual Aids

You could use pictures, sound recordings, and video recordings to help teach scripture mastery. Show a picture or play a recording that relates to a verse, let students find the verse, and then discuss it as a class. Or give students newspapers, and allow them five minutes to find as many headlines, articles, and pictures that relate to the verse as possible. You could do the same activity using sound or video recordings of news, music, and other items.

Note: Do not use visual and audio aids that are suggestive, vulgar, or inappropriate for a seminary classroom. Also be careful to avoid copyright infringement (see “Videocassettes,” *CES Policy Manual: U.S. and Canada* [2001], p. 16).

Bulletin Boards

Bulletin boards or posters allow you to emphasize scripture mastery passages in a daily way. Create a bulletin board on scripture mastery at the first of the year and update it with the scripture mastery passages being emphasized each week. Or create a “mystery” bulletin board and add a clue each day for the scripture being emphasized that week. Have students write down their guesses and turn them in.

Chaining

Help students create a scripture chain by choosing four or five scriptures that relate to a scripture mastery scripture. Cross-reference the first scripture to the second, the second to the third, and so on to the end, and then cross-reference the last scripture to the first. Use scriptures included in the daily or weekly lesson, or find them in the footnotes or Topical Guide. Circle the scripture mastery verse in the Topical Guide to serve as a reminder of the beginning of the chain.

Problem Solving

One way to help students appreciate the scriptures is to help them apply them in their lives. When students ask questions in class or come to you with problems, help them find the answers in the scriptures. If possible use scripture mastery scriptures. Be alert for problems or situations in which specific scriptures apply, and use them as examples in class. Set up a class question box. Divide the questions among students and have them find answers in the scriptures. Write a few scripture mastery references on the board. Have students choose the reference that answers the question and tell why.

Student Talks

Assign students to give talks based on scripture mastery passages. Have them prepare in class or at home. Besides the

scripture mastery verses, they could use the Topical Guide and personal experiences to help them prepare. Each talk should have an introduction, the scripture mastery scripture, a story or example, and a testimony of the principle being taught.

Classroom Thoughts

On a corner of the board, write *Scriptures Have the Answer*. Beneath this each day write a new question and a scripture mastery reference that contains the answer. For example you could write *What could I be doing to prepare for my mission?* (see *Alma 37:35*). As the year progresses, you may want to have students supply the questions and answers.

Scripture of the Week

Pick a scripture and refer to it in various ways throughout the week:

- Read it as a class each day.
- Have a student read it in the devotional.
- Display it on a bulletin board.
- Have students write it each day.
- Have students memorize a portion of it each day.

Role-Playing

Role-playing means having students act out stories or scenes that illustrate a principle. Have students role-play scenes that illustrate scripture mastery verses. You could divide the class into groups, assign them scripture mastery passages, and give them five minutes to plan a role play. Have them present their role plays to the class, and invite the class to guess which scripture mastery passage they are acting out.

Worksheets

Worksheets that students can complete in class or as part of their personal study can be an effective way of mastering the scriptures. These might include questions, word searches, fill-in-the-blank exercises, or self-guided learning activities. Note that many of the teaching methods described in this section could be adapted as worksheets.

Name Substitution

Encourage students to substitute their own names for the names of individuals in scripture mastery verses. This helps students personalize the scripture. (*Note:* Be cautious about verses that are addressed to specific individuals and might not apply generally. Do not use verses that might associate a student with a sin or otherwise prove embarrassing.)

Verse and Word Understanding

Have students summarize scripture mastery verses, being careful not to change the meaning. Or encourage students to look for words or phrases that if left out could change the meaning. Discuss which words would be most essential if the verse were limited to eight words or less.

Chapter or Section Headings

Ask questions about the chapter headings to help students understand scripture mastery verses in context.

Identifying Key Words

Have students circle or underline the words they think are most important in a scripture mastery passage. If warranted, you could state in advance how many key words they should find.

Personal Application

Ask students questions about ways they can apply scripture mastery verses to their lives. Choose questions that help your students identify how they feel about the teachings. Ask them about specific principles, as well as what impresses them about the verses. Invite them to write on a piece of paper what they can do to better live the principles being taught.

Writing Questions

Have students read scripture mastery verses and write questions about concepts they do not understand.

Crossword Puzzle

Make a crossword puzzle or word search using key words or concepts from scripture mastery verses. You could use references or summaries as clues. If you have second-, third-, or fourth-year students, you may want to include scripture mastery verses from previous years.

True-or-False Exercise

Give students a statement that is either true or false. Have them prove the statement true or false using the appropriate scripture mastery passage. For example you could say, "The Holy Ghost has a body of flesh and bones." (False; see D&C 130:22–23.)

Stump the Teacher

Have students try to stump you as a teacher. Give each student a card with a scripture mastery scripture. You could include the words to the scripture or a historical, doctrinal, missionary, or personal application. Have students read their cards, and then you name the reference. If you do so correctly, you get a

point. If not, the class gets a point. You could keep a running total for the year.

Scripture Chase

Name a scripture mastery verse and see how quickly students can find it in their scriptures. Give students the reference, key phrases, or a description of the verse. You could also teach students the order of the books by naming a book and having them find it in their scriptures. *Note:* Not every student learns well in a competitive setting. Do not allow competition to detract from the spirit of your gospel teaching.

Scripture Charades

Divide students into groups and assign each group a different scripture mastery scripture. Have each group think of a situation that relates to their verses. After an appropriate amount of preparation time, have them act out their situations without speaking. Have the class try to guess the scripture that applies to each situation.

Choral Recitation

Read a scripture over and over out loud as a class. Have students close their scriptures when they feel they can recite it without looking. Invite individuals to recite the scripture to the class when they have it memorized.

Tests

Use tests to motivate students to memorize scripture mastery scriptures. Consider using their test scores as part of their grades or as extra credit. You could:

- Have students write out the scripture from memory.
- Have them recite the scripture to you or to another student.
- Give them copies of the verse with words missing, and have them fill in the blanks.
- Mix up the words in the verse, and have them arrange the words in the correct order.
- Give them the first letter of each word and have them complete the scripture.
- Give the class an oral exam. Have a student give the first word (or phrase) of the verse, and then choose another student to give the next word, and so on.

Line upon Line

Divide a scripture passage into phrases. Have the class repeat the first phrase until they can recite it. Add the second phrase, and have them repeat the phrases until they can recite them both. Add the third phrase, and so on. Have them speed up as they recite the phrases they have already learned, and slow down as they recite new phrases.

Word Erase

Write the scripture mastery scripture on the board. Have the class recite it several times. Erase two or three words, and have the class recite it again. Repeat the process until you have erased all the words and the class can recite the entire scripture.

**"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee,
Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit,
he cannot enter into the kingdom of God"
(John 3:5).**

**"Jesus Verily, say thee,
Except man born water Spirit,
cannot enter kingdom God"
(John 3:5).**

First Letter

Write the scripture mastery scripture on the board. Have the class recite it several times. Erase all but the first letter of each word, and have the students recite the scripture using the letters for reminders. When they have memorized it, erase all the letters and have them recite it one last time.

**"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee,
Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit,
he cannot enter into the kingdom of God"
(John 3:5).**

**"J a , V , v , I s u t ,
E a m b b o w a o t S ,
h c e i t k o G "
(John 3:5).**

SCRIPTURE MASTERY LISTS

Old Testament	New Testament	Book of Mormon	Doctrine and Covenants
Moses 1:39	Matthew 5:14–16	1 Nephi 3:7	Joseph Smith—History 1:15–20
Moses 7:18	Matthew 6:24	1 Nephi 19:23	D&C 1:37–38
Abraham 3:22–23	Matthew 16:15–19	2 Nephi 2:25	D&C 8:2–3
Genesis 1:26–27	Matthew 25:40	2 Nephi 2:27	D&C 10:5
Genesis 39:9	Luke 24:36–39	2 Nephi 9:28–29	D&C 14:7
Exodus 20:3–17	John 3:5	2 Nephi 28:7–9	D&C 18:10, 15–16
Exodus 33:11	John 7:17	2 Nephi 32:3	D&C 19:16–19
Leviticus 19:18	John 10:16	2 Nephi 32:8–9	D&C 25:12
Deuteronomy 7:3–4	John 14:15	Jacob 2:18–19	D&C 58:26–27
Joshua 1:8	John 17:3	Mosiah 2:17	D&C 58:42–43
Joshua 24:15	Acts 7:55–56	Mosiah 3:19	D&C 59:9–10
1 Samuel 16:7	Romans 1:16	Mosiah 4:30	D&C 64:9–11
Job 19:25–26	1 Corinthians 10:13	Alma 32:21	D&C 64:23
Psalms 24:3–4	1 Corinthians 15:20–22	Alma 34:32–34	D&C 76:22–24
Proverbs 3:5–6	1 Corinthians 15:29	Alma 37:6–7	D&C 82:3
Isaiah 1:18	1 Corinthians 15:40–42	Alma 37:35	D&C 82:10
Isaiah 29:13–14	Ephesians 4:11–14	Alma 41:10	D&C 84:33–39
Isaiah 53:3–5	2 Thessalonians 2:1–3	Helaman 5:12	D&C 88:123–24
Isaiah 55:8–9	2 Timothy 3:1–5	3 Nephi 11:29	D&C 89:18–21
Jeremiah 16:16	2 Timothy 3:16–17	3 Nephi 27:27	D&C 121:34–36
Ezekiel 37:15–17	Hebrews 5:4	Ether 12:6	D&C 130:18–19
Daniel 2:44–45	James 1:5–6	Ether 12:27	D&C 130:20–21
Amos 3:7	James 2:17–18	Moroni 7:16–17	D&C 130:22–23
Malachi 3:8–10	Revelation 14:6–7	Moroni 7:45	D&C 131:1–4
Malachi 4:5–6	Revelation 20:12–13	Moroni 10:4–5	D&C 137:7–10

TEACHING THE GOSPELS AS A HARMONY

“In the CES weekday setting, . . . the scriptures should be taught in a sequential manner” (*Teaching the Gospel: A Handbook for CES Teachers and Leaders* [1994], 20). However, because the Gospels treat the same events from the perspective of the four different writers, teachers who wish are authorized to make an exception. The following options can help you teach the Gospels as a harmony.

Use these tables to identify the scripture blocks to teach. Teaching ideas for the various blocks can be found in the teacher resource manual and the video guide. *Note:* Students should be encouraged to read the four Gospels straight through.

Option 1

Teach the four Gospels as a harmony.

Week	Day	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Latter-day Revelation
1	Day 1 Days 2–3 Day 4	“An Introduction to the New Testament” and “Scripture Study Helps” “Plan of Salvation Overview” “The Time between the Old and New Testaments”				
2	Days 1–2 Day 3 Day 4	1 2		1:1–2:20 2:40–52	1:1–3	
3	Day 1 Day 2 Day 3 Day 4	3:13–17 4:1–11		3:1–22 4:1–13	1:29–2:25 3	
4	Day 1 Day 2 Day 3 Day 4	10 5–7		4:14–32; 5:1–6:49 9:1–6	4–5	
5	Days 1–2 Days 3–4	5–7 (cont.) 8–9	1:23–2:12; 5:21–6:6	7–8		
6	Days 1–2 Days 3–4	8–9 (cont.) 11–12	1:23–2:12; 5:21–6:6 (cont.) 2:23–3:6	7–8 (cont.)		
7	Days 1–2 Days 3–4	13 14:3–33	4 6:14–44			
8	Days 1–2 Days 3–4	16	7–8		6	
9	Days 1–2 Days 3–4	17 18:1–10	9:14–50	15		
10	Days 1–2 Days 3–4			9:1–10:42	7–8	
11	Day 1 Day 2 Days 3–4			11–13 14 16–17		
12	Days 1–2 Days 3–4	19–20	10		9–10	
13	Days 1–2 Day 3 Day 4	21:1–16	11:1–11, 15–19	19:1–27 19:28–48	11:1–12:12 12:13–50	
14	Days 1–2 Days 3–4	21:17–22:46 23–24	11:12–14, 20–33; 12:1–31, 35–37 12:38–44; 13	20:1–44 20:45–21:38		JS—Matthew
15	Day 1 Day 2 Day 3 Day 4	25 26:2–16 26:17–29	14:1–11 14:12–25	22:1–6 22:7–23	13:1–2, 18–30 13:2–17, 31–35	D&C 45:56–59 JST, John 13:10–11
16	Day 1 Day 2 Day 3 Day 4	26:26–32 26:35	14:27 14:26, 29–31	22:31–39	14 15 16–17 13:36–38; 18:1	
17	Day 1 Day 2 Day 3 Day 4	26:36–46 26:47–68 26:69–75 27:1–34	14:32–34 14:43–65 14:66–72 15:1–23	22:40–46 22:47–54 22:55–65 22:66–23:31	18:2–13, 19–24 18:15–18, 25–27 18:28–19:17	2 Nephi 9:21–22; Mosiah 3:5–12; D&C 19:1–24
18	Day 1 Days 2–3 Day 4	27:1–34 (cont.) 27:35–66 28:1–15	15:1–23 (cont.) 15:24–47 16:1–11	22:66–23:31 (cont.) 23:32–56 23:55; 24:1–12, 24	18:28–19:17 (cont.) 19:18–42 20:1–18	
19	Day 1 Day 2 Days 3–4	28:1–15 (cont.) 28:16–20	16:1–11 (cont.) 16:12–14 16:15–20	23:55; 24:1–12, 24 (cont.) 24:13–49 24:50–53	20:1–18 (cont.) 20:19–31 21	3 Nephi 28:6; D&C 7; Mormon 9:22–24

Option 2

Teach each Gospel sequentially up to the last week of the Savior's life, and then teach a harmony.

Week	Day	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Latter-day Revelation
13	Day 4	21:1–16	11:1–11, 15–19	19:28–48	12:13–50	
14	Days 1–2	21:17–22:46	11:12–14, 20–33; 12:1–31, 35–37	20:1–44		
	Days 3–4	23–24	12:38–44; 13	20:45–21:38		JS—Matthew
15	Day 1	25	14:1–11	22:1–6		D&C 45:56–59
	Day 2	26:2–16	14:12–25	22:7–23	13:1–2, 18–30	
	Day 3	26:17–29			13:2–17, 31–35	JST, John 13:10–11
	Day 4					
16	Day 1				14	
	Day 2				15	
	Day 3	26:26–32	14:27		16–17	
	Day 4	26:35	14:26, 29–31	22:31–39	13:36–38; 18:1	
17	Day 1	26:36–46	14:32–34	22:40–46		2 Nephi 9:21–22; Mosiah 3:5–12; D&C 19:1–24
	Day 2	26:47–68	14:43–65	22:47–54	18:2–13, 19–24	
	Day 3	26:69–75	14:66–72	22:55–65	18:15–18, 25–27	
	Day 4	27:1–34	15:1–23	22:66–23:31	18:28–19:17	
18	Day 1	27:1–34 (cont.)	15:1–23 (cont.)	22:66–23:31 (cont.)	18:28–19:17 (cont.)	
	Days 2–3	27:35–66	15:24–47	23:32–56	19:18–42	
	Day 4	28:1–15	16:1–11	23:55; 24:1–12, 24	20:1–18	
19	Day 1	28:1–15 (cont.)	16:1–11 (cont.)	23:55; 24:1–12, 24 (cont.)	20:1–18 (cont.)	
	Day 2		16:12–14	24:13–49	20:19–31	
	Days 3–4	28:16–20	16:15–20	24:50–53	21	3 Nephi 28:6; D&C 7; Mormon 9:22–24

Option 3

Teach a harmony of the Savior's birth and the last week of his life. Teach all the other scripture blocks sequentially.

Week	Day	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Latter-day Revelation
The Savior's Birth						
2	Days 1–2	1		1:1–2:20	1:1–3	
	Day 3	2				
	Day 4			2:40–52		
The Savior's Last Week						
14	Days 1–2	21:17–22:46	11:12–14, 20–33; 12:1–31, 35–37	20:1–44		
	Days 3–4	23–24	12:38–44; 13	20:45–21:38		JS—Matthew
15	Day 1	25	14:1–11	22:1–6		D&C 45:56–59
	Day 2	26:2–16	14:12–25	22:7–23	13:1–2, 18–30	
	Day 3	26:17–29			13:2–17, 31–35	JST, John 13:10–11
	Day 4					
16	Day 1				14	
	Day 2				15	
	Day 3	26:26–32	14:27		16–17	
	Day 4	26:35	14:26, 29–31	22:31–39	13:36–38; 18:1	
17	Day 1	26:36–46	14:32–34	22:40–46		2 Nephi 9:21–22; Mosiah 3:5–12; D&C 19:1–24
	Day 2	26:47–68	14:43–65	22:47–54	18:2–13, 19–24	
	Day 3	26:69–75	14:66–72	22:55–65	18:15–18, 25–27	
	Day 4	27:1–34	15:1–23	22:66–23:31	18:28–19:17	
18	Day 1	27:1–34 (cont.)	15:1–23 (cont.)	22:66–23:31 (cont.)	18:28–19:17 (cont.)	
	Days 2–3	27:35–66	15:24–47	23:32–56	19:18–42	
	Day 4	28:1–15	16:1–11	23:55; 24:1–12, 24	20:1–18	
19	Day 1	28:1–15 (cont.)	16:1–11 (cont.)	23:55; 24:1–12, 24 (cont.)	20:1–18 (cont.)	
	Day 2		16:12–14	24:13–49	20:19–31	
	Days 3–4	28:16–20	16:15–20	24:50–53	21	3 Nephi 28:6; D&C 7; Mormon 9:22–24



THE GREAT PLAN OF HAPPINESS

Introduction

In 1993 Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, told teachers in the Church Educational System that, along with a brief overview of the subject to be studied, they should give an overview of the plan of salvation at the beginning of every school year:

“A brief overview of the ‘plan of happiness’ (which is my choice, my favorite title, in talking of the plan), if given at the very beginning and revisited occasionally, will be of immense value to your students.

“I have an assignment for you. . . . You are assigned to prepare a brief synopsis or overview of the plan of happiness—the plan of salvation. Design it as a framework on which your students can organize the truths you will share with them.

“At first you may think that a simple assignment. I assure you, it is not. Brevity and simplicity are remarkably difficult to achieve. At first you will be tempted to include too much. The plan in its fulness encompasses every gospel truth. . . .

“This may be the most difficult, and surely the most rewarding, assignment of your teaching career.

“Your overview of the plan of happiness should be but a sweeping glance across the unfolded scroll of scriptural truths. Your students can thereafter locate themselves in respect to the plan. . . .

“I will give you the barest outline of the plan as a beginning, but you must assemble your framework yourself.

“The essential components of the *great plan of happiness, of redemption, of salvation*, are these:

- “Premortal existence
 - Spiritual creation
 - Agency
 - War in heaven
- Physical creation
- The Fall and mortality
 - Principles and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ (first principles: faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism, . . .)
- The Atonement
- Life beyond the grave
 - Spirit world
 - Judgment
 - Resurrection”

(*The Great Plan of Happiness* [address to religious educators at a symposium on the Doctrine and Covenants/Church history, Brigham Young University, 10 Aug. 1993], 2–3; or *Charge to Religious Educators*, 3rd ed. [1994], 113–14).

The following information is included to help you further understand that great plan of happiness and develop your overview. You may be tempted to teach more about the plan of salvation than the brief overview Elder Packer recommended. Please resist, keeping in mind that many of the details of the plan will be discussed in the course of your study of the New Testament. As you teach these during the school year, consider referring back to your plan of salvation overview.

The Plan of Salvation Is Like a Three-Act Play

In a 1995 fireside address to young adults, President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve, said:

“The course of our mortal life, from birth to death, conforms to eternal law and follows a plan described in the revelations as the great plan of happiness. The one idea, the one truth I would inject into your minds, is this: There are three parts to the plan. You are in the second or the middle part, the one in which you will be tested by temptation, by trials, perhaps by tragedy. Understand that and you will be better able to make sense of life and to resist the disease of doubt and despair and depression.

“The plan of redemption, with its three divisions, might be likened to a grand three-act play. Act 1 is entitled ‘Premortal Life.’ The scriptures describe it as our first estate (see Jude 1:6; Abraham 3:26, 28). Act 2, from birth to the time of resurrection, is the ‘Second Estate.’ And act 3 is called ‘Life After Death’ or ‘Eternal Life.’

“In mortality, we are like actors who enter a theater just as the curtain goes up on the second act. We have missed act 1. The production has many plots and subplots that interweave, making it difficult to figure out who relates to whom and what relates to what, who are the heroes and who are the villains. It is further complicated because we are not just spectators; we are members of the cast, on stage, in the middle of it all!” (*The Play and the Plan* [address to young adults, 7 May 1995], 1–2).

Premortal Existence

Before our mortal birth we lived with our Heavenly Father (see Job 38:4–7; Jeremiah 1:5; Abraham 3:21–23). Heavenly Father is a glorified, perfected, celestial being with a body of flesh and bones (see D&C 130:22). The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens!” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 345).

Heavenly Father is the father of our spirit bodies (see Numbers 16:22; Acts 17:29; Hebrews 12:9; Moses 3:5). He possesses a fulness of all godly attributes and joy, and He desires that His children become like Him (see Matthew 5:48; 2 Nephi 9:18; Moses 1:39).

Spiritual Creation

Abraham saw that all of Heavenly Father's children were "intelligences" or spirits that were organized before the world was (see Abraham 3:18–23). President Packer taught: "The spirits of men and women are eternal (see D&C 93:29–31; see also Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* . . . , 158, 208). All are sons and daughters of God and lived in a premortal life as His spirit children (see Numbers 16:22; Hebrews 12:9; D&C 76:24). The spirit of each individual is in the likeness of the person in mortality, male and female (see D&C 77:2; 132:63; Moses 6:9–10; Abraham 4:27). All are in the image of heavenly parents" (*The Play and the Plan*, 3).

In "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," the First Presidency stated: "All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose" (*Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102; see also D&C 29:31–32; Moses 3:5; *Old Testament Student Manual: Genesis–2 Samuel* [religion 301, 2003], p. 32).

Agency

- "1. All beings are subject to divine law, obedience to which brings blessings. Disobedience results in suffering and damnation.
- "2. Each person has the divine gift of agency to choose good or evil. A person may worship how, where, or what he or she may, but only by learning and obeying celestial laws can he or she be exalted.
- "3. Each person can choose and act for him- or herself only as he or she gains knowledge of good and evil and is influenced by one or the other" ("Basic Doctrine," *Charge to Religious Educators*, 3rd ed. [1994], 85).

The proper exercise of our moral agency is essential to becoming like God (see 2 Nephi 2:14–16). There are, however, some consequences to granting us the opportunity to choose. As essential as agency is to our growth, it was inevitable that we would not always choose correctly. As the Apostle Paul wrote, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). This consequence was anticipated and provided for in the plan the Father presented to His children in a premortal council.

The Grand Council and the War in Heaven

After our Heavenly Father provided us with spirit bodies in that premortal world, we were more like Him, but we still lacked many essential attributes. He is an exalted and perfected being with a glorified physical body; we were not. The Father called His children together in a grand council in heaven and presented His plan for helping us become like Him (see Moses 4:1–4; Abraham 3:22–27).

President Packer said:

"In the council of the Gods, the plan of the Eternal Father was sustained (see Alma 34:9; see also *Teachings [of the Prophet Joseph Smith]*, 349–50). The plan provided for the creation of an earth whereupon his children would receive physical bodies and would be tested according to his commandments (see Moses 6:3–10, 22, 59; Abraham 3:24–25; 4:26–27). Each spirit in premortal life was provided opportunities for learning and obedience. Each was given agency (see Alma 13:3–5).

"A grand council in heaven was convened (see *Teachings*, 349–50, 357). The divine plan required one to be sent as a savior and redeemer to fulfill the plan of the Father. The Firstborn of the Eternal Father, Jehovah, willingly volunteered and was chosen (see Moses 4:1–2; Abraham 3:19, 22–27).

"Most sustained this choice. Others rebelled, and there was a war in heaven. Satan and those who followed him in rebellion against the Father's plan were cast out and denied mortality (see Revelation 12:7–13; D&C 29:36; 76:28; Moses 4:3).

"Those who kept the first estate (you are among them) were to be added upon with a physical body and were permitted to live upon the earth in this planned second estate (see Abraham 3:26). Each was appointed the times and the bounds of his or her habitation (see Deuteronomy 32:8; Acts 17:26). Some were foreordained to be prophets (see Alma 13:7–9; Abraham 3:23; see also *Teachings*, 365)" (*The Play and the Plan*, 3; see also Bible Dictionary, "War in Heaven," p. 788).

Physical Creation

The physical creation of the heavens, the earth, and all things thereon was another essential step in helping us become like our Father in Heaven (see Moses 1:33–39; Abraham 3:24–26). When God created the earth it was "very good" (Moses 2:31) and a place of beauty and abundance (see Genesis 1–2; Moses 2; 3:7–25; Abraham 4–5; see also D&C 59:16–20; *Old Testament Student Manual: Genesis–2 Samuel*, pp. 27–36).

President Packer taught: "An earth was then organized (see Abraham 5:4). Adam and Eve, in a paradisiacal state, were the first man and first woman (see Moses 1:34; 3:7; 4:26; 6:3–10, 22, 59). They were married eternally and were given commandments (see Moses 3:23–25). They were in a state of innocence and knew no sin (see 2 Nephi 2:23)" (*The Play and the Plan*, 3).

The Fall and Mortality

The Fall of Adam and Eve was the next step in the great plan of happiness. The Fall brought about the conditions of mortality, including spiritual and physical death (see 2 Nephi 2:19–25; Alma 42:1–10). Mortal life on earth is essential to becoming like God. It provides us with the opportunity to gain a physical body and to be able to continue to grow and learn by having the freedom to choose to follow the counsel of God or the enticements of Satan (see Alma 42:1–12; D&C 29:36–43; Moses

5:9–12). It is by the choices we make that we “prove” ourselves (see Abraham 3:25; see also *Old Testament Student Manual: Genesis–2 Samuel*, pp. 39–43).

Referring to his metaphor of existence as a three-act play (see p. 279), President Packer gave the following counsel about our mortal condition:

“As part of the eternal plan, the memory of our premortal life, act 1, is covered with a veil. Since we enter mortality at the beginning of act 2 with no recollection of act 1, it is little wonder that it is difficult to understand what is going on.

“That loss of memory gives us a clean start. It is ideal for the test; it secures our individual agency and leaves us free to make choices. Many choices must be made on faith alone. Even so, we carry with us some whispered knowledge of our premortal life and our status as offspring of immortal parents.

“You were born in innocence, for ‘every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning’ (D&C 93:38), and you have an inborn sense of right and wrong, for the scriptures tell us in the Book of Mormon that we ‘are instructed sufficiently that [we] know good from evil’ (2 Nephi 2:5). . . .

“If you expect to find only ease and peace and bliss during act 2, you surely will be frustrated. You will understand little of what is going on and why things are permitted to be as they are.

“Remember this! The line ‘And they all lived happily ever after’ is never written into the second act. That line belongs in the third act, when the mysteries are solved and everything is put right. . . .

“Until you have a broad perspective of the eternal nature of this great drama, you won’t make much sense out of the inequities in life. Some are born with so little and others with so much. Some are born in poverty, with handicaps, with pain, with suffering. Some experience premature death, even innocent children. There are the brutal, unforgiving forces of nature and the brutality of man to man. We have seen a lot of that recently.

“Do not suppose that God willfully causes that which, for his own purposes, he permits. When you know the plan and purpose of it all, even these things will manifest a loving Father in Heaven.

“There exists something of a script for this great play, the drama of the ages. . . .

“That script, as you should already know, is the scriptures—the revelations. Read them. Study them. . . .

“The scriptures speak the truth. From them you can learn enough about all three acts to get your bearings and get direction in your life. They reveal that ‘ye were also in the beginning with the Father; that which is Spirit, even the Spirit of truth;

“‘And truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come’ (D&C 93:23–24).

“Act 1, act 2, and act 3” (*The Play and the Plan*, 2).

The Mission of the Church and the Principles and Ordinances of the Gospel

The Fall of Adam and Eve was not a mistake or a surprise. Had they not chosen to become mortal, neither they nor the rest of Heavenly Father’s children could progress to become like God (see 2 Nephi 2:22–25). The Fall was a necessary part of the plan, but there are some negative consequences from which we need to be saved (see the commentary for Genesis 3:19 in *Old Testament Student Manual: Genesis–2 Samuel*, p. 42).

The gospel of Jesus Christ provides the way for all mankind to be saved in the presence of God and to become like Him if they will (see 2 Nephi 31:10–21; Mosiah 3:19; Alma 7:14–16; 3 Nephi 27:13–22; Moses 5:9; Articles of Faith 1:4; see also the commentary for Genesis 4:1 in *Old Testament Student Manual: Genesis–2 Samuel*, pp. 51–52). If we refuse to follow the plan and do not accept the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we cannot be redeemed from our sins and perfected (see Mosiah 2:36–39; 4:1–12; Alma 11:40–41; D&C 29:43–44).

In every dispensation, prophets have been sent to teach the gospel to God’s children on earth. The Church of Jesus Christ has been established in these latter days to invite all to come unto Christ by proclaiming the gospel to the world, perfecting the Saints, and redeeming the dead (see Amos 3:7; Ephesians 4:11–15; D&C 1:4–23; 138; Articles of Faith 1:5–6).

The Atonement

Because of the Fall of Adam we will all die (physical death), we are all cut off from the presence of God and cannot get back to Him on our own (spiritual death), and we all live in a world of toil, sin, and sorrow. The Atonement of Jesus Christ provides for the resurrection of all mankind, with immortal physical bodies, thus overcoming physical death. The Atonement ensures too that all mankind will be redeemed from the Fall and brought back into the presence of God in their resurrected state for the Judgment, thus overcoming the first spiritual death (see 2 Nephi 9:15, 21–22; Helaman 14:16–18; Bible Dictionary, “Atonement,” p. 617; “death,” p. 655). Through the Atonement, if we repent we can also be cleansed from personal sins and changed from our fallen condition to become like God our Father (see 2 Nephi 2:5–10; 9:4–14, 19–27; Alma 7:11–13; 12:32–34; 34:8–16; 42:11–28; D&C 19:16–19; Articles of Faith 1:3; see also “The Grand Council and the War in Heaven,” p. 280).

No ordinary man could have brought about the Resurrection and atoned for the sins of all mankind. Only one who had power over death and the power of a sinless life could have done so. It required the sacrifice of a God (see John 10:17–18; Alma 34:9–14; D&C 45:4).

Life beyond the Grave

The Spirit World

Physical death is the separation of the body and the spirit. At death the spirits of all of Heavenly Father's children go to a spirit world to await the Resurrection. In the spirit world there is a separation between those who accepted the gospel and kept the commandments and those who did not. As President Packer explained, "It is happiness, a paradise, for the righteous. It is misery for the wicked (see 2 Nephi 9:10–16; Alma 40:7–14). In either state, we continue to learn and are accountable for our actions (see D&C 138:10–22)" (*The Play and the Plan*, 3). For more information about the spirit world, see Doctrine and Covenants 138—President Joseph F. Smith's account of the remarkable vision given to him of the work that goes on there.

Judgment

When the Father presented His plan and proposed the creation of an earth, His purpose was to "prove" His children to see if they would keep His commandments (see Abraham 3:25). Through the Prophet Joseph it was revealed that we will be judged not only on the basis of what we do but also on what we desire in our hearts (see Alma 41:3–6; D&C 137:9).

The Judgment and the Resurrection are closely intertwined, and part of our final judgment will take place as we are resurrected. All will come forth in the Resurrection with perfect bodies, but they will differ in glory. All will be raised with a body appropriate to the kingdom they will inherit, be that celestial, terrestrial, or telestial. Sons of perdition will be resurrected but will not be given any degree of glory; they will be cast into outer darkness (see 1 Corinthians 15:35, 39–42; D&C 88:28–32).

President Packer said:

"After all have been dealt with equally, a judgment will be rendered (see Mosiah 3:18; see also *Teachings*, 218–19). Each will be resurrected in his or her own order (see 1 Corinthians 15:21–23). The glory one receives, however, will depend on obedience to the laws and ordinances of our Father's plan (see 1 Corinthians 15:40–42).

"Those who have become pure through repentance will obtain eternal life and return to the presence of God. They will be exalted as 'heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ' (Romans 8:17; see also D&C 76:94–95; 84:35; 132:19–20; see also *Teachings*, 374).

"Provision is made in the plan for those who live in mortality without knowing of the plan: 'Where there is no law given there is no punishment; and where there is no punishment there is no condemnation . . . because of the atonement; for they are delivered by the power of him' (2 Nephi 9:25).

"Without that sacred work of the redemption of the dead, the plan would be incomplete and would really be unfair. The ordinances of the temple—the endowments, the sealing in eternal marriage—are worth all the preparation required. Do not do anything that may make you unworthy to receive them or act 3 of this eternal drama will be less than you are now free to make it" (*The Play and the Plan*, 3–4).

Resurrection

Everyone who has ever lived on this earth, righteous or not, will be resurrected with an immortal physical body. This is a gift because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ (see 1 Corinthians 15:19–22; 2 Nephi 9:6–15, 19–22). Not all are resurrected at the same time, "but every man in his own order" (1 Corinthians 15:23; see also Mosiah 15:20–26; Alma 40:1–2; D&C 76:15–17).

THE INTERTESTAMENTAL PERIOD

The Last Recorded Prophet

For years, many in Israel denied, dishonored, persecuted, fought, and rebelled against the prophets. Malachi was the last of the true prophets in Israel in the Old Testament period of which we have a record. Without prophets, Israel could only yearn for the oracles with which they were once blessed.

God wanted Israel to be a holy nation, His peculiar treasure (see Exodus 19:5–6). He had promised her riches, glory, and power:

“I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread.

“I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy” (Psalm 132:15–16).

But He desired to have Israel pure so that He could dwell in her cities. Israel was to become Zion, in which the Lord declared He would make His abode forever (see Psalm 132:13–14). After the ministry of Malachi (around 430 B.C.) Israel entered a period in which the learning of scribes gained precedence over revelation. Though some of the priests and Levites continued to honor the priesthood, corruption crept into the religious, social, and political life of Judea. This was a time when the people mourned the loss of the prophets and yearned for their authoritative voice. They began to gather, preserve, and reproduce the words of the prophets who had died.

The Rise of the Scribes

When the Jews returned from exile in Babylon (around 537 B.C.) a number of changes in their society became evident. One of these was the increased use of scribes. Scribes originally were educated men who made their livelihood as record keepers and as copyists of the scriptures. These they studied diligently, both to understand their meaning and to detect scribal errors. The scribes supplied copies of the scriptures to the growing number of synagogues and also became teachers of the law. While Israel had prophets, the scribes remained copyists and teachers. But when the prophetic voice ceased in Israel, these experts in the law of Moses began to fill the vacuum.

Ezra, one such scribe, brought back part of the exiles from captivity and taught Israel “statutes and judgments” (Ezra 7:10; see also Nehemiah 8:9–12). Along with Nehemiah he took steps to teach, not just the priests and Levites, but all the people in the Mosaic law. This new emphasis on the open reading of the scriptures came to be one of the most distinguishing features of Jewish national life.

A major factor contributing to the rising power of the scribes was the shift of the common language of the people from Hebrew to Aramaic. Though sister tongues, the languages were different enough that Jews who spoke only Aramaic had

trouble understanding the scriptures. So the people had to rely on the scholars to interpret and explain them. It should not be surprising that there was no unity of interpretation among these scholars, nor that they worked to bring others to their different viewpoints.

The Hellenization of Judea

In the closing years of the fourth century B.C., a new power emerged: the Greeks. King Philip of Macedonia united the whole Greek peninsula and prepared to challenge the supremacy of the Persians. In 334 B.C., Philip’s son Alexander attacked the Persian empire and defeated it. From there he quickly swept through the entire Middle East, conquering all the nations that lay before him, including Judea. Behind him came Greek colonists—merchants, craftsmen, laborers—eager to impose Greek culture. Within a few years Alexander died, but the Hellenic, or Greek, influence was felt in Judea for centuries.

Judea under the Hellenistic Kingdoms

After the death of Alexander (323 B.C.), his generals fought to gain control of his empire. Seleucus (pronounced se-Lu-kas) conquered Syria and the northern part of the Middle East. Ptolemy (Toll-ah-mee) took Egypt. Judea lay directly between the two rivals. It changed hands several times during the next few years, with disastrous results for the population of Judea. In 302 B.C. Judea finally fell to the Ptolemies of Egypt, to whom it belonged for one hundred years. In 198 B.C. the Seleucids (se-Lu-sids) were able to capture and hold Judea.

During this period the Jewish population continued to increase. Many Jews lived outside of Judea. The city of Alexandria in Egypt, for example, had a large Jewish community. There were also large colonies in Babylon and other cities. The Jews of the Diaspora (scattering or dispersion) outnumbered the Jews of Judea.

When Antiochus Epiphanes, a Seleucid king, came to power in 175 B.C., he decided the Greeks had been tolerant long enough of what he saw as Jewish narrowness and superstition. He attempted to destroy the religion of the Jews by imposing Greek religion upon them. In 169 B.C., the temple was plundered under his orders. Shortly thereafter Jerusalem’s walls were knocked down, and a garrison was established in a fortress built near the desecrated Temple Mount. The limited temple worship that had taken place was soon suspended. Sabbath observance, celebrations, and circumcision were forbidden on penalty of death. Pigs, unclean under the Mosaic law and viewed by the Jews as a great abomination, were offered in sacrifice as the troops of Antiochus stood watch. The people were forced to worship idols of Zeus and other false gods.

The Hasmoneans and the Maccabean Revolt

The efforts of Antiochus to stamp out Judaism became more and more brutal. Instead of obediently submitting, the Jews stiffened their resistance, and hatred for Antiochus and his Greek soldiers spread. In 167 B.C., in the small village of Modin, Syrian soldiers gathered the people and demanded that Mattathias, an old priest, offer a sacrifice to the pagan god. Even though threatened with death, Mattathias refused. Another priest stepped forward and agreed to do as the soldier demanded. As this weaker priest lifted the knife, an enraged Mattathias grabbed a sword and killed both the priest and the Syrian officer. Mattathias and his five sons then fled to the hills and called on all of Judah to join them (see 1 Maccabees 2:1–30). The revolt had begun. It raged through the land, gathering support on every side as the Jews turned on the hated Syrians. By the time Antiochus took the revolt seriously, he faced an entire nation thirsting for freedom.

Since Mattathias was a priest seeking to defend the Mosaic code, the Jews threw their support behind his family, the Hasmoneans. Mattathias died shortly after the revolt began, but his son Judas took over. Judas was a military genius and repeatedly exhorted his vastly outnumbered and poorly equipped troops to have faith in God and the righteousness of their cause. Again and again he devastated enemy forces two to four times the size of his own.

By 165 B.C. the Jews had recaptured Jerusalem, cleansed the temple of its impurities, and rededicated it to the worship of Jehovah. Judea was independent of foreign domination for the first time in over four hundred years. The Hasmonean revolt is more commonly known as the Maccabean revolt because Mattathias's son was called Judas Maccabees, which means "Judas the Hammerer." The hard-won victories of Mattathias and his sons were short-lived, however. Very quickly, the descendants of the Hasmoneans forgot that it was the Lord who had delivered them. Like Saul and David and Solomon, the members of the new dynasty were corrupted by the power and glory of the courts of power. The sons and grandsons of the Maccabees degenerated into a mode of politics as usual, and just over a hundred years later, in 63 B.C., Israel was conquered by the Roman general Pompey.

Pharisees and Sadducees

During the second century B.C., two important Jewish groups emerged: the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Pharisees promoted the observance of Jewish rituals and the study of the Torah (the five books of Moses). Some of them took vows to separate themselves from the impurities of the Hellenistic influences that had crept into Jewish life and to strictly follow their interpretation of the law. They not only maintained the validity of the Torah as the source of their religion, but they enlarged on this background, trying to adapt old codes to new conditions. This interpretation became known as the oral law, since for the most part it was memorized and passed on by word of mouth. The Pharisees believed in a combination of free

will and predestination, in the Resurrection, and in a judgment resulting in reward or punishment in the life to come.

The Pharisees were dedicated to the preservation of the Mosaic code. To counteract the Greek influences, they turned to strict obedience to the law. Because of their attempts to keep themselves separate from the worldly taint of false ideas, they were called *Perushim*, a Hebrew word meaning "separated ones." The name *Pharisees* comes from the Greek transliteration of *Perushim*. In a time of growing alarm over the abandonment of the traditional values of Judaism, the Pharisees increased in popularity until they came to represent the religious views of the majority of the Jewish people.

While the Pharisees were primarily from the common people, the Sadducees were from the upper level of society: priests, merchants, and aristocrats. The name of the sect (*Zedukim* in Hebrew) is probably derived from Zadok, the high priest in the days of King David. Ezekiel entrusted Zadok's family with control of the temple (see Ezekiel 40:46; 43:19; 44:10–15), and the descendants of this family controlled the temple hierarchy until about 200 B.C. The name *Sadducees* may have referred to those who were sympathetic with the Zadokites.

The Sadducees, on the whole, were conservative. Unlike the Pharisees, the Sadducees rejected the oral law as binding except for that part based on the Torah. They placed emphasis on the sacrifices in the temple and rejected a belief in angels and the Resurrection. The Sadducees generally represented the wealthy class that accepted Greek culture; thus, the Sadducees were not popular with the majority of the people.

The Essenes

The Essenes attempted to avoid religious impurity by completely separating from society. The name probably means "the pious ones." Interest in this group was aroused in the late 1940s with the discovery at Qumran of what most scholars believe to be their sacred writings, known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Qumran group believed in strict separation from the world. They followed a "teacher of righteousness" who they believed received revelation. They practiced a communal order, strictly followed the law of Moses, and devoutly studied the scriptures. They believed that a Messiah was soon coming who would lead them in a last great battle against the sons of darkness.

Judea under the Romans

When Pompey took Judea for Rome, he appointed one of the Hasmoneans to be king. Antipater (an-Tip-i-ter), an adviser to the Jewish puppet-king, quickly ingratiated himself with Rome and took over power. Antipater was an Idumean, a people the Jews hated. He consolidated his power by helping Rome in their struggle against the Parthians, an enemy from the east that constantly threatened Rome's interests. For this aid, Antipater was granted the right to have his son appointed king of Judea. Thus came on the scene Herod the Great, a man

who profoundly affected the history of the Jews. Herod the Great was brutal and vicious (this was the Herod who ordered infanticide in an attempt to kill Jesus) but was an able administrator. The Romans were pleased, for he kept control in what was well known to be a troublesome province, and he was completely loyal to Rome. The Jews were given very limited political power through the Sanhedrin, a religious and political body traditionally composed of seventy-one men and presided over by the high priest.

Herod was a supporter of Hellenic and Roman culture and reinstated it in Judea. In conjunction with this Hellenization, he undertook great building programs throughout his province. In order to gain favor with his subjects, he began an elaborate expansion program on the temple mount, eventually making the temple into one of the marvels of the ancient world. This building program was still in progress in Christ's day. Herod the Great died shortly after the birth of Jesus, and the Romans divided the kingdom among Herod's three sons. Philip ruled north and east of Galilee; Herod Antipas ruled Galilee and Perea; and Archelaus ruled Judea, Samaria, and Idumea. Because of his ineptitude, Archelaus was removed by Rome in A.D. 6. His territory became a Roman province ruled by prefects appointed by Rome.

The Herodians and the Zealots

A group of Jews favored the reign of Herod Antipas and urged the people to support his sovereignty. For that reason they were called Herodians. The Herodians saw Herod Antipas's rise to power as the fulfillment of certain messianic ideas then current. They preached their ideas and opposed any whom they felt might upset the status quo. This political party joined forces with the religious sect of the Pharisees to oppose Jesus (see Matthew 22:16) since they saw Him as a threat to their political aims.

In opposition to the Herodians stood the Zealots. They opposed gentile rule and influence and desired to keep Judea free. Some Zealots reasoned that violence was justified in seeking to overthrow Rome. Their rebellion in A.D. 6 was successfully suppressed by Herod Antipas on behalf of the Romans. After the death of Jesus, it was primarily the Zealots who led the revolt against Rome that resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Conclusion

At times during the intertestamental period temple services were interrupted, but the rites continued during most of that period. Priests made the proper sacrifice on the great altar, and the people continued to pray daily as a priest offered incense upon the altar in the holy place. Then one day a priest named Zacharias did not reappear as quickly as he should have from the holy place after his service. The people began to marvel, and well they might, for once again the veil had been lifted. The humble and aged Zacharias stood in the presence of an angel. "Thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son. . . .

"And he shall go . . . in the spirit and power of Elias . . . to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:13, 17). This child would be John the Baptist, whose name in Hebrew means "gift of God." Israel had a prophet once again, a forerunner who would prepare the way for Jehovah's coming to earth as the Son of God and the Messiah Judah had awaited for so long. (For additional material see enrichment section K in *Old Testament Student Manual: 1 Kings–Malachi* [religion 302, 2003], pp. 359–65.)

A MAN BORN BLIND

Statement in the Scriptures	Pharisees	Blind Man	Parents
1. "A man . . . called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said . . . wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight" (John 9:11).			
2. "This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath" (v. 16).			
3. "How can . . . a sinner do such miracles?" (v. 16).			
4. "He is a prophet" (v. 17).			
5. "Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? How then doth he now see?" (v. 19; they did not believe he had been born blind).			
6. "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind" (v. 20).			
7. "They feared the Jews" (v. 22).			
8. "We know that this man [Jesus] is a sinner" (v. 24).			
9. "I have told you already, and ye did not hear" (v. 27).			
10. "Thou art his [Jesus'] disciple; but we are Moses' disciples" (v. 28).			
11. "Ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes" (v. 30).			
12. "If this man were not of God, he could do nothing" (v. 33).			
13. "Lord, I believe" (v. 38).			
14. "Are we blind also?" (v. 40).			

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

Scripture References	Significance
<p>“A colt tied, whereon yet never man sat” (Luke 19:30; see vv. 30–35; see also Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 21:2–7; Mark 11:2–7; John 12:14–15).</p>	<p>“He came riding on an ass, in token of peace, acclaimed by the Hosanna shouts of multitudes; not on a caparisoned steed with the panoply of combat and the accompaniment of bugle blasts and fanfare of trumpets. . . . The ass has been designated in literature as ‘the ancient symbol of Jewish royalty,’ and one riding upon an ass as the type of peaceful progress” (James E. Talmage, <i>Jesus the Christ</i>, 3rd ed. [1916], 516–17).</p>
<p>“They spread their clothes in the way” (Luke 19:36; see also Matthew 21:8; Mark 1:8).</p>	<p>“Only kings and conquerors received such an extraordinary token of respect as this. (2 Kings 9:13.) In every part of this triumphal entry to Jerusalem, Jesus seems not only to permit but to court the adulation and homage normally reserved for kings and great rulers” (Bruce R. McConkie, <i>Doctrinal New Testament Commentary</i>, 3 vols. [1966–73], 1:578).</p>
<p>“Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him” (John 12:13; see also Matthew 21:8; Mark 11:8).</p>	<p>“Amid shouts of praise and pleas for salvation and deliverance, we see the disciples strewing our Lord’s course with palm branches in token of victory and triumph. This whole dramatic scene prefigures that yet future assembly when ‘a great multitude,’ which no man can number, ‘of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,’ shall stand ‘before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands,’ crying with a loud voice, ‘Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.’ (Rev. 7:9–10.)” (<i>Doctrinal New Testament Commentary</i>, 1:578).</p>
<p>“Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Matthew 21:9; see also Mark 11:9–10; Luke 19:38; John 12:13).</p>	<p>“No other man ever lived to whom such inspired acclamations of adulation, reverence, and worship have been or could properly be made. Here we see great multitudes bearing testimony of our Lord’s divine Sonship. In plain language they are hailing Jesus as the Son of David, the Deliverer of Israel, their Savior and Redeemer, the promised Messiah, the Son of God. And they are doing it wittingly, deliberately using the sacred expression, <i>Hosanna</i>, and quoting from the Messianic prophecy which ascribes salvation and triumph to the promised Son of David.</p> <p>“<i>Hosanna</i> means literally, <i>save now</i>, or <i>save we pray</i>, or <i>save we beseech thee</i>, and is taken from the Messianic prophecy which foretold that such would be the entreaty of Israel to their Messiah in the day of his coming [see Psalm 118:22–26]” (<i>Doctrinal New Testament Commentary</i>, 1:578–79).</p>
<p>“If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out” (Luke 19:40; see also John 12:19).</p>	<p>“The purpose of Christ in thus yielding Himself for the day to the desires of the people and accepting their homage with kingly grace may not be fully comprehended by us of finite mind. That the occasion was no accidental or fortuitous happening, of which He took advantage without preconceived intention, is evident. He knew beforehand what would be, and what He would do. It was no meaningless pageantry; but the actual advent of the King into His royal city, and His entry into the temple, the house of the King of kings” (<i>Jesus the Christ</i>, 517).</p>

THE LAST WEEK OF THE SAVIOR'S LIFE

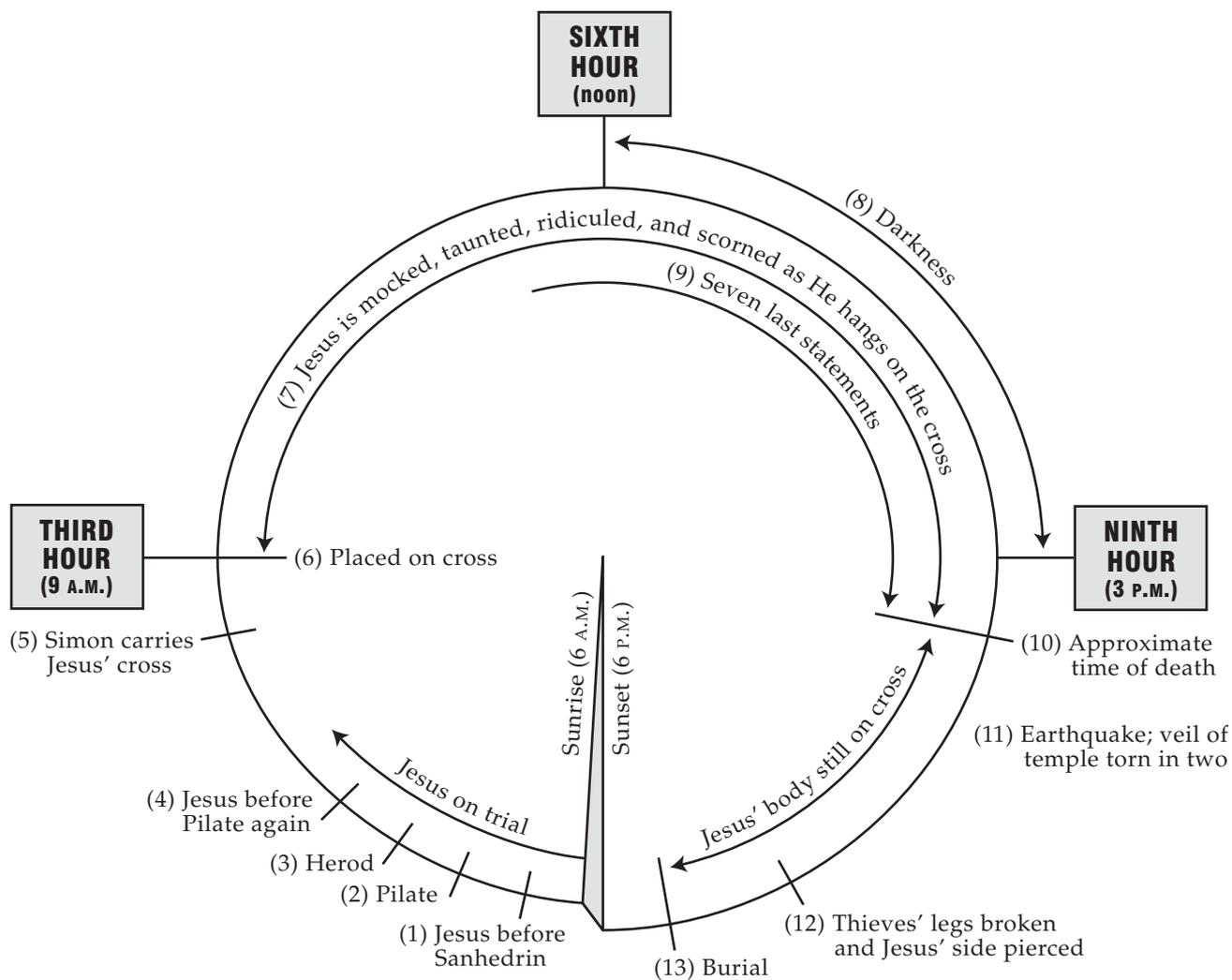
Event	Location	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Latter-day Revelation
The sixth day before Passover	Bethany, Bethphage				12:1	
A supper at Martha and Mary's	Bethany				12:2	
Jesus anointed by Mary	Bethany				12:3	
Judas's protest	Bethany				12:4–8	
People gather to Jesus, Lazarus	Bethany?				12:9	
Conspiracy against Lazarus	Jerusalem				12:10–11	
The fifth day before Passover					12:12	
Prophecy fulfilled	Mount of Olives	21:1–5	11:1–6	19:28–34		
Triumphal entry	Jerusalem	21:6–11	11:7–11	19:35–38	12:12–18	
Pharisees disapprove	Jerusalem			19:39–40	12:19	
Jesus weeps over Jerusalem	Near Jerusalem			19:41–44		
Greeks wish to see Jesus	Jerusalem				12:20–22	
Discourse: Jesus sent by the Father	Jerusalem				12:23–50	
Moneychangers cast out	Jerusalem	21:12–16	11:15–19	19:45–48		
The fourth day before Passover		21:17–18	11:12			
Fig tree cursed, withers	Near Bethany	21:18–22	11:12–14, 20–26	see 13:6–9		
Priests challenge Jesus' authority	Temple	21:23–46	11:27–33	20:1–8		
Parable: Two sons	Temple	21:28–32				
Parable: Wicked husbandmen	Temple	21:33–46	12:1–12	20:9–20		
Parable: Wedding of a king's son	Temple	22:1–14		see 14:1–24		
Tribute to Caesar: Pharisees and Herodians	Temple	22:15–22	12:13–17	20:21–26		
Marriage, seven husbands: Sadducees	Temple	22:23–33	12:18–27	20:27–38		
Great commandment: Pharisees	Temple	22:34–40	12:28–31	10:25–37		
Pharisees put to silence	Temple	22:41–46	12:35–37	20:39–44		
Widow's mite	Temple		12:41–44	21:1–4		
Denunciation of hypocrisy	Temple	23:1–36	12:38–40	11:37–54; 18:9–14; 20:45–47		
Jesus' lament over Jerusalem	Near Jerusalem	23:37–39		13:34–35		
Discourse: Signs of Second Coming	Mount of Olives	24	13	12:37–48; 17:20–37; 21:5–38		Joseph Smith—Matthew 1

Event	Location	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Latter-day Revelation
Parable: Ten virgins	Mount of Olives	25:1–13		see 12:35–36		D&C 45:56–59
Parable: Talents	Mount of Olives	25:14–30				
Parable: Sheep, goats	Mount of Olives	25:31–46				
The third day before Passover						
(No actions or sermons recorded)						
The second day before Passover		26:2	14:1			
Jesus' prophecy of Passover Crucifixion	Near Jerusalem	26:2				
Conspiracy at Caiaphas's palace	Jerusalem	26:3–5	14:1–2			
Feast with Simon the Pharisee	Bethany	26:6	14:3	7:36		
Jesus anointed by a woman	Bethany	26:7–13	14:3–9	7:37–50		
Judas's conspiracy to betray Jesus	Jerusalem	26:14–16	14:10–11	22:1–6		
The first day of unleavened bread	Jerusalem	26:17–19	14:12–16	22:7–13		
Eve of the Passover	Jerusalem	26:20	14:17	22:13–14	13:1–2	
"One of you shall betray me"	Jerusalem	26:21–24	14:18–21	22:21–23	13:18–22	
Betrayer identified	Jerusalem	26:25			13:23–30	
Sacrament instituted	Jerusalem	26:26–29	14:22–25	22:15–20		
Jesus washes disciples' feet	Jerusalem				13:2–5	
Peter's protest	Jerusalem				13:6–12	JST, John 13:10–11
Jesus' example	Jerusalem				13:13–17	
A new commandment	Jerusalem				13:31–35	
Jesus comforts the disciples	Jerusalem				14:1–15	
Another Comforter	Jerusalem				14:16–31	
The True Vine	Jerusalem				15:1–8	
Love one another	Jerusalem				15:9–17	
Hatred of the world	Jerusalem				15:18–25	
The Spirit of truth testifies	Jerusalem				15:26–27	
Warnings to the Apostles	Jerusalem				16:1–6	
The Comforter	Jerusalem				16:7–16	
Opposition: Joy and sorrow	Jerusalem				16:17–30	
Prophecy: Flock to be scattered	Jerusalem	26:31–32	14:27		16:31–33	
Jesus' intercessory prayer	Jerusalem				17	
Retirement to Gethsemane	Mount of Olives	26:30	14:26	22:39	18:1	
Peter: "When thou art converted . . ."	Jerusalem			22:31–32		

Event	Location	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Latter-day Revelation
Prophecy: "Before the cock crow"	Jerusalem	26:33–35	14:29–31	22:33–34	13:36–38	
"Reckoned among the transgressors"	Jerusalem			22:35–38		
Jesus' suffering and prayers	Gethsemane	26:36–46	14:32–42	22:40–46		2 Nephi 9:21–22; Mosiah 3:5–12; D&C 19:1–24
Judas's betrayal	Gethsemane	26:47–50	14:43–46	22:47–48	18:2–3	
Arresting officers fall	Gethsemane				18:4–9	
Peter defends Jesus with a sword	Gethsemane	26:51–54	14:47	22:49–53	18:10–11	
Disciples flee	Gethsemane	26:56	14:50			
Jesus arrested	Gethsemane	26:55–57	14:46–52	22:52–54	18:12	
Hearing before chief priests	Caiaphas's palace	26:57–68	14:53–65	22:54	18:13, 19–24	
Peter's denial	Caiaphas's palace	26:69–75	14:66–72	22:55–62	18:15–18, 25–27	
Soldiers mock Jesus	Caiaphas's palace			22:63–65		
The next morning	Jerusalem	27:1	15:1	22:66	18:28	
Hearing before Caiaphas	Jerusalem	27:1	15:1	22:66–71	18:24, 28	
Hearing before Pilate	Jerusalem	27:2, 11–14	15:1–5	23:1–6	18:28–38	
Judas's remorse and death	Temple	27:3–10				
Hearing before Herod	Jerusalem			23:7–10		
Herod and soldiers mock Jesus	Jerusalem			23:11–12		
Second hearing before Pilate	Antonia	27:15–31	15:6–15	23:11–17		
A murderer released	Jerusalem	27:15–21, 26	15:6–15	23:18–25	18:39–40	
Blood guiltiness	Jerusalem	27:24–25		see 23:4, 14, 22	see 19:4	
Jesus scourged and mocked	Jerusalem	27:27–31	15:15–20		19:1–12	
Jesus taken to Golgotha	Near Jerusalem	27:32–34	15:20–23	23:26–31	19:13–17	
The Crucifixion	Calvary	27:35–44	15:24–33	23:32–43	19:18–22	Helaman 14:20–27; 3 Nephi 8:5–22; 10:9
Soldiers cast lots for Jesus' robe	Calvary near Jerusalem	27:35	15:24	23:34	19:23–24	
The sign: King of the Jews	Calvary near Jerusalem	27:37	15:26	23:38	19:19–22	
Darkness: Sixth to ninth hour	Jerusalem	27:45	15:33–36	23:44–45		
Jesus' mother put in John's care	Calvary				19:25–27	

Event	Location	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Latter-day Revelation
Death of Jesus Christ	Calvary	27:46–50	15:37	23:46	19:28–30	
Earthquake: Veil of temple rent	Jerusalem	27:51–53	15:38	23:45		
Pierced by a spear	Calvary				19:31–34	
Passover scripture fulfilled	Calvary				19:35–37	
Watchers near the cross	Calvary	27:54–56	15:39–41	23:47–49		
Jesus' burial	Near Jerusalem	27:57–61	15:42–47	23:50–56	19:38–42	
Chief priests and Pharisees seal the tomb	Near Jerusalem	27:62–66				
First day: Earthquake, angels open tomb	Near Jerusalem	28:1–2		24:1–2		JST, Matthew 28:1–2
Mary Magdalene comes to the open tomb	Near Jerusalem				20:1–2	
Peter and John run to the tomb	Near Jerusalem			24:12, 24	20:3–10	
“Woman, why weepest thou?”	Near Jerusalem				20:11–13	
“Touch me not”	Near Jerusalem				20:14–17	
Disciples told but disbelieve	Near Jerusalem		16:10–11	24:9–11	20:18	
Two Marys come to the tomb	Near Jerusalem	28:1	16:1–4	23:55; 24:3		
Angels: “He is risen”	Near Jerusalem	28:2–8	16:5–8	24:4–8		
Women meet Jesus	Near Jerusalem	28:9–10	16:9			
Officials bribe soldiers	Near Jerusalem	28:11–15				
Jesus appears to two disciples	Emmaus		16:12	24:13–32		
Two tell others who disbelieve	Jerusalem		16:13	24:33–35		
Evening: Jesus appears to disciples	Jerusalem		16:14	24:36–49	20:19–23	
Thomas, absent, does not believe	Jerusalem				20:24–25	
Eight days later: With Thomas	Jerusalem				20:26–29	
Purpose of John's Gospel					20:30–31	
Peter: “I go a fishing”	Sea of Galilee				21:1–19	
Peter inquires about John	Jerusalem				21:20–22	
Testimony about John	Jerusalem				21:23–25	3 Nephi 28:6; D&C 7
The great commission to the Twelve	A mountain of Galilee	28:16–20	16:15–18			Mormon 9:22–24
Ascension, proclamation	Near Jerusalem		16:19–20	24:50–53		

THE LAST DAY OF CHRIST'S LIFE



1. Matthew 26:57-68; 27:1-2

2. John 18:28-38

3. Luke 23:7-12

4. John 18:39-19:16

5. Matthew 27:31-32

6. Mark 15:22-28

7. Matthew 27:39-44

8. Luke 23:44-45

9. Luke 23:34, 43; John 19:26-27;
Matthew 27:46; John 19:28;
Luke 23:46; John 19:30

10. Luke 23:44-46

11. Matthew 27:50-51

12. John 19:31-37

13. Mark 15:42-47; John 19:38-42

THE EXODUS AND JOHN 6

Exodus of Israel from Egypt	A New Exodus
God led the children of Israel through the wilderness by the Red Sea (see Exodus 13:18).	(John 6:1–2)
Moses “came to the mountain of God” (Exodus 3:1; see also v. 12; 19:1–3).	(John 6:3, 15)
Jehovah multiplied signs and wonders (see Exodus 7:3; see also Exodus 7–11).	(John 6:2, 26, 30)
The Lord instituted the Feast of the Passover (see Exodus 12).	(John 6:4)
God gave Israel manna or “bread from heaven” (Exodus 16:4; see vv. 3–35; Deuteronomy 8:3).	(John 6:5–14, 31–58)
The Lord told the people to gather only what they needed each day so nothing was wasted (see Exodus 16:16–30).	(John 6:12)
The Lord promised to raise up a Prophet like Moses (see Deuteronomy 18:15–18).	(John 6:14)
The Lord saved the Israelites by parting the Red Sea; they walked through on dry ground (see Exodus 14). The account emphasizes darkness and wind (see vv. 20–21).	(John 6:16–21)
Israel murmured against the Lord (see Exodus 15:24; 16:8; 17:3; Numbers 11:4–6).	(John 6:43, 61, 66)
Prophets testified concerning the significance of the Exodus (see Exodus 14:31–15:21; Numbers 20:12; Deuteronomy 4:33, 35; 6; 26:5–9; Isaiah 51:9–16; 52:1–6; 1 Nephi 17; 2 Nephi 25:20; see also D&C 136:22).	(John 6:66–69)

EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF PETER

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| ___ 1. Acts 2:14–40 | A. Peter is arrested, is saved by an angel, returns to preach in the temple, and is arrested again. |
| ___ 2. Acts 3:1–11 | B. Jewish leaders ask Peter to discontinue preaching; Peter boldly testifies of Jesus Christ. |
| ___ 3. Acts 3:12–26 | C. Peter sees a vision of clean and unclean animals, which leads to the gospel being taken to all the world. |
| ___ 4. Acts 4:1–22 | D. Peter heals a lame man at the gates of the temple. |
| ___ 5. Acts 5:1–11 | E. Peter confronts a couple about breaking their covenant of consecration; both the man and the woman die. |
| ___ 6. Acts 5:12–16 | F. Peter and John go to Samaria to give the gift of the Holy Ghost; Peter rebukes Simon for wanting to purchase priesthood power. |
| ___ 7. Acts 5:17–42 | G. On the day of Pentecost, Peter delivers his first recorded public discourse. |
| ___ 8. Acts 8:14–25 | H. Peter heals Aeneas and raises Dorcas from the dead. |
| ___ 9. Acts 9:32–41 | I. Peter delivers his second recorded discourse, calling the Jewish leaders to repent and believe in Jesus Christ whom they had killed. |
| ___ 10. Acts 10 | J. Peter’s power is so well respected that people flock to fall under his shadow and be healed. |

THE MEDITERRANEAN WORLD IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES



THE MISSIONS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

(Note: Dates are approximate.)

Journey	Companions	Cities/Countries	Significant Events	Epistles Written
First missionary journey (A.D. 47–49); Acts 13–14; see Bible map 13	Barnabas, John Mark (see Acts 13:2, 5, 13)	Antioch and Seleucia in Syria; Salamis and Paphos on Isle of Cyprus; Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe in Galatia	Confronted by Elymas, a sorcerer; preached and healed on Sabbath; was persecuted and expelled from Antioch; stoned and thought to be dead; revived and preached again	None known
Jerusalem conference (A.D. 49–50); Acts 15; Galatians 2:1–10	Barnabas, Titus (see Acts 15:2; Galatians 2:3)	Jerusalem	Honored by Church leaders as a champion of the Gentiles in the gospel cause	None known
Second missionary journey (A.D. 50–53); Acts 15:36–18:22; see Bible map 13	Silas (see Acts 15:40), Timothy (see Acts 16:1–3), Luke (see Acts 16:10)	Antioch in Syria; Tarsus, Derbe, Iconium, Lystra, and Antioch in Galatia; Troas; Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea in Macedonia; Athens and Corinth in Greece; Ephesus in Lydia; Jerusalem	Directed in vision to teach in Macedonia; cast evil spirit out of damsel in Philippi; beaten and imprisoned with Silas; converted jailor; preached at Mars' Hill	1 Thessalonians (A.D. 50–51); 2 Thessalonians (A.D. 50–51); both Epistles written from Corinth (see Bible Dictionary, "Pauline Epistles," p. 743)
Third missionary journey (A.D. 54–58); Acts 18:23–21:15; see Bible map 13	Timothy, Erastus (see Acts 19:22); Gaius of Macedonia, Aristarchus (see Acts 19:29); Sopater, Secundus, Gaius of Derbe, Tychicus, Trophimus (see Acts 20:4); Luke (see Acts 20:5–6)	Antioch in Syria; Tarsus, Iconium, and Antioch in Galatia; Ephesus, Troas; Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea in Macedonia; Corinth; Miletus, Patara; Tyre, Caesarea, and Jerusalem	Conferred gift of Holy Ghost by laying on of hands; special miracles wrought of God through Paul; confronted worshipers of Diana; raised Eutychus from dead; foretold his own arrest and death	A lost epistle (see 1 Corinthians 5:9); 1 Corinthians (A.D. 55 from Ephesus); 2 Corinthians (A.D. 56 from Macedonia); Galatians (A.D. 56 from Macedonia); Romans (A.D. 57 from Corinth)

Journey	Companions	Cities/Countries	Significant Events	Epistles Written
Arrest at Jerusalem and imprisonment at Caesarea (A.D. 58–59); Acts 21:16–26:32	Unknown	Jerusalem and Caesarea	Persecuted, arrested, bound; recounted story of his conversion; was tried before Ananias and Sanhedrin; the Lord appeared to him; brought before Felix, Festus, and King Agrippa; appealed to Caesar	None known
Journey to Rome (A.D. 59–60); Acts 27:1–28:16; see Bible map 13	Aristarchus, Luke (see Acts 27:2)	Caesarea and Sidon; Islands of Crete, Malta, and Sicily; Puteoli to Rome along the Appian Way	Perilous voyage to Rome; comforted by an angel; prophesied of danger; shipwrecked at Malta; bitten by viper but unharmed	None known
First Roman imprisonment (house arrest; A.D. 60–62); Acts 28:16–31	Epaphroditus (see Philippians 4:18), Epaphras (see Philemon 1:23), Timothy (see Philippians 1:1), Tychicus (see Ephesians 6:21), Justus (see Colossians 4:11)	Rome	Guarded daily by Roman soldier; preached to many visitors	Philippians; Colossians; Ephesians; Philemon; Hebrews; all written from Rome between A.D. 60–62
Between Roman imprisonments (A.D. 62–65)	Unknown	Asia, Macedonia, Crete, and perhaps Spain (see Bible Dictionary, “Paul,” pp. 742–43)	Sent counsel to priesthood leaders in letters	1 Timothy (A.D. 64 from Macedonia); Titus (A.D. 65 from Ephesus)
Second Roman imprisonment (A.D. 65)	Luke (see 2 Timothy 4:11)	Rome	Wrote final testimony in 2 Timothy	2 Timothy (A.D. 65 from Rome)

THE SEVEN CHURCHES IN ASIA (REVELATION 2–3)

City	Description of Christ	What They Did Right	What They Did Wrong	The Lord's Correction	The Lord's Promise
Ephesus (2:1–7)	"He that holdeth the seven stars [the leaders of the seven churches] in his right hand" (2:1).	"I know thy _____, and thy _____, and thy _____" (2:2; see vv. 2–3, 6).	"Thou hast left thy first love [Christ]" (2:4).	"Repent, and do the first _____" (2:5).	"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the _____" (2:7).
Smyrna (2:8–11)	"The _____ and the _____, which was dead, and is alive" (2:8).	"I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty" (2:9).	None given	"Fear none of those things . . . : be thou _____ unto death" (2:10).	"I will give thee a _____ of _____." ". . . He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the _____" (2:10–11).
Pergamos (2:12–17)	"He which hath the sharp sword with two edges" (2:12).	"Thou holdest fast my _____, and hast not denied my _____" (2:13).	Some had accepted false teachers and were following false doctrines (see 2:14–15).	"Repent" (2:16).	"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna" (2:17). Manna, or the bread of life, symbolizes Jesus Christ (see John 6:31–35, 48).
Thyatira (2:18–29)	"The Son of God, who hath . . . eyes like unto a flame of _____, and his feet are like _____" (2:18).	"I know thy _____, and _____, and _____, and faith, and thy patience" (2:19).	Some were suffering (allowing) false doctrines to be taught and were committing fornication (see 2:20–23).	"I will give unto every one of you according to your works" (2:23).	"To him who overcometh . . . will I give power over many kingdoms." "And he shall rule them with the _____" (JST, 2:26–27).

City	Description of Christ	What They Did Right	What They Did Wrong	The Lord's Correction	The Lord's Promise
Sardis (3:1–6)	"He who hath the seven stars, which are the seven servants of God" (JST, 3:1).	"Thou hast a few . . . which have not defiled their _____ [were not spiritually filthy]" (3:4).	"I have not found thy works perfect before God" (3:2).	"Hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not _____, I will come on thee as a _____ [suddenly]" (3:3).	"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in _____; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels" (3:5).
Philadelphia (3:7–13)	"He that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the _____ " (3:7).	"Thou . . . hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name" (3:8; see also v. 10).	Those "which say they are Jews, and are not" become "the synagogue of _____" (3:9).	"Hold that fast which thou hast" (3:11).	They will become _____ in the temple of God and will have the names of God and of the New Jerusalem written on them (see 3:12–13).
Laodicea (3:14–22)	"The _____, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God" (3:14).	None given	They were "neither _____ nor _____." They were "_____ " (3:15–16).	Buy gold from Christ (obtain treasure in heaven), clothe themselves with _____ (become pure), and anoint their eyes (so they could see spiritually; see 3:18).	"If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him. . . . "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne" (3:20–21).

WHERE THE EMPHASIS IS

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Events before the Fall	First Seal	Second Seal	Third Seal	Fourth Seal	Fifth Seal	Sixth Seal	Seventh Seal	Earth Becomes Celestial Kingdom
5 verses: The War in Heaven (12:7-12)	11 verses: First through fifth seals (6:1-11)	14 verses: Sixth seal (6:12-7:8)	211 verses: From the opening of the seventh seal to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (chapters 8-19)			6 verses: Millennium (20:1-6)	9 verses: Final scenes (20:7-15)	33 verses: Celestial earth (21:1-22:6)

Adapted from Gerald N. Lund, "The Book of Revelation—Three Keys for Making It a Book of Revelation," in *A Symposium on the New Testament* (1980), 120.

THE SEVEN TRUMPS OF THE SEVENTH SEAL



1. What happened as a result of the hail and fire that came when the first angel sounded his trumpet? (see Revelation 8:7).



2. What three things were changed by a third when the next angel sounded? (see Revelation 8:8–9).



3. After the third angel sounded, a star fell (see Revelation 8:10–11).

- A. What was the name of the star?
- B. What did the star cause to happen?



4. Following the sounding of the fourth trumpet, what three things were darkened? (see Revelation 8:12).



5. What arose out of the bottomless pit when the fifth angel opened it? (see Revelation 9:1–3).

6. What might John have been describing in Revelation 9:7–10?



7. How many soldiers were involved in this great battle John saw after the sixth trumpet had sounded? (see Revelation 9:16).

8. What portion of mankind will be killed in this battle? (see Revelation 9:18).

9. Who are the two witnesses referred to in Revelation 11:3? (see D&C 77:15).

10. How long will these two prophets preach in Jerusalem? (see Revelation 11:2–3). Circle all the correct answers.

- A. About 3½ years
- B. 1,260 days
- C. 42 months

11. What miraculous thing will happen to these two prophets following their ministry? (see Revelation 11:7–12).

12. True or false. Just before the seventh angel will sound his trumpet, a great tornado will strike all the earth (see Revelation 11:13–14).



13. At some time following the sounding of the seventh trumpet, whose will the kingdoms of this world have become? (see Revelation 11:15).

14. Before the kingdoms of the earth become the kingdoms of Jesus Christ, which two of the following will occur? (see Revelation 11:19).

- A. A hurricane
- B. A hailstorm
- C. A flood
- D. An earthquake

A PROCLAMATION TO THE WORLD

THE FIRST PRESIDENCY AND COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

WE, THE FIRST PRESIDENCY and the Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly proclaim 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.

ALL HUMAN BEINGS—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.

IN THE PREMORTAL REALM, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshiped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize his or her divine destiny as an heir of eternal life. The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally.

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. We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife.

WE DECLARE the means by which mortal life is created to be divinely appointed. We affirm the sanctity of life and of its importance in God's eternal plan.

HUSBAND AND WIFE have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. "Children are an heritage of the Lord" (Psalms 127:3). Parents have a

sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, to teach them to love and serve one another, to observe the commandments of God and to be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. Husbands and wives—mothers and fathers—will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations.

THE FAMILY is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. 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. Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities. 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. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation. Extended families should lend support when needed.

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

WE CALL UPON responsible citizens and officers of government everywhere to promote those measures designed to maintain and strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society.

This proclamation was read by President Gordon B. Hinckley as part of his message at the General Relief Society Meeting held September 23, 1995, in Salt Lake City, Utah.

THE LIVING CHRIST

THE TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTLES
THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

As we commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ two millennia ago, we offer our testimony of the reality of His matchless life and the infinite virtue of His great atoning sacrifice. None other has had so profound an influence upon all who have lived and will yet live upon the earth.

He was the Great Jehovah of the Old Testament, the Messiah of the New. Under the direction of His Father, He was the creator of the earth. "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3). Though sinless, He was baptized to fulfill all righteousness. He "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38), yet was despised for it. His gospel was a message of peace and goodwill. He entreated all to follow His example. He walked the roads of Palestine, healing the sick, causing the blind to see, and raising the dead. He taught the truths of eternity, the reality of our premortal existence, the purpose of our life on earth, and the potential for the sons and daughters of God in the life to come.

He instituted the sacrament as a reminder of His great atoning sacrifice. He was arrested and condemned on spurious charges, convicted to satisfy a mob, and sentenced to die on Calvary's cross. He gave His life to atone for the sins of all mankind. His was a great vicarious gift in behalf of all who would ever live upon the earth.

We solemnly testify that His life, which is central to all human history, neither began in Bethlehem nor concluded on Calvary. He was the Firstborn of the Father, the Only Begotten Son in the flesh, the Redeemer of the world.

He rose from the grave to "become the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:20). As Risen Lord, He visited among those He had loved in life. He also ministered among His "other sheep" (John 10:16) in ancient America. In the modern world, He and His Father appeared to the boy Joseph Smith, ushering in the long-promised "dispensation of the fulness of times" (Ephesians 1:10).

Of the Living Christ, the Prophet Joseph wrote: "His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying:

"I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father" (D&C 110:3-4).

Of Him the Prophet also declared: "And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

"For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

"That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God" (D&C 76:22-24).

We declare in words of solemnity that His priesthood and His Church have been restored upon the earth—"built upon the foundation of . . . apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Ephesians 2:20).

We testify that He will someday return to earth. "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together" (Isaiah 40:5). He will rule as King of Kings and reign as Lord of Lords, and every knee shall bend and every tongue shall speak in worship before Him. Each of us will stand to be judged of Him according to our works and the desires of our hearts.

We bear testimony, as His duly ordained Apostles—that Jesus is the Living Christ, the immortal Son of God. He is the great King Immanuel, who stands today on the right hand of His Father. He is the light, the life, and the hope of the world. His way is the path that leads to happiness in this life and eternal life in the world to come. God be thanked for the matchless gift of His divine Son.

THE FIRST PRESIDENCY

Joseph Smith
Thomas M. Monson
James E. Faust

January 1, 2000

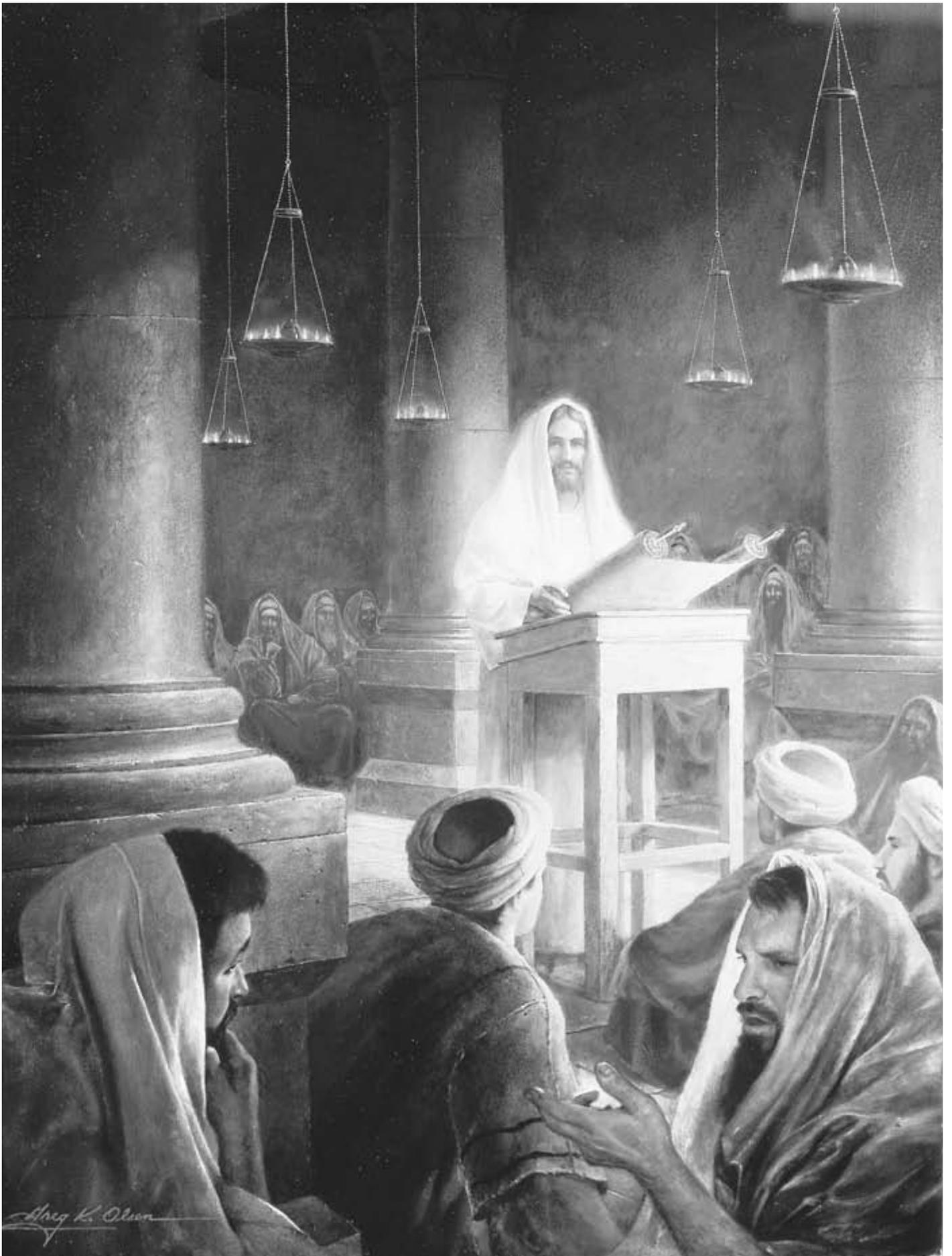
THE QUORUM OF THE TWELVE

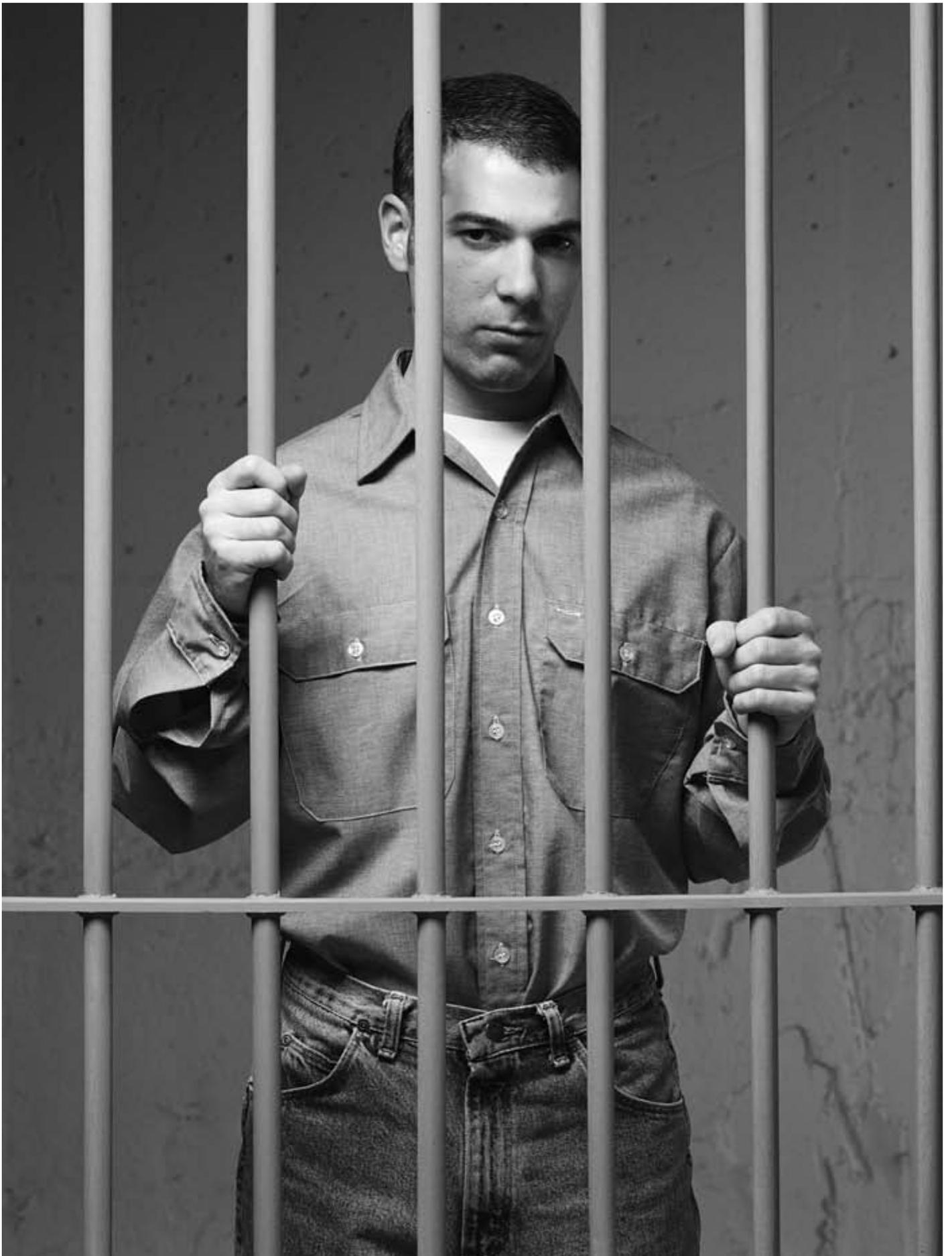
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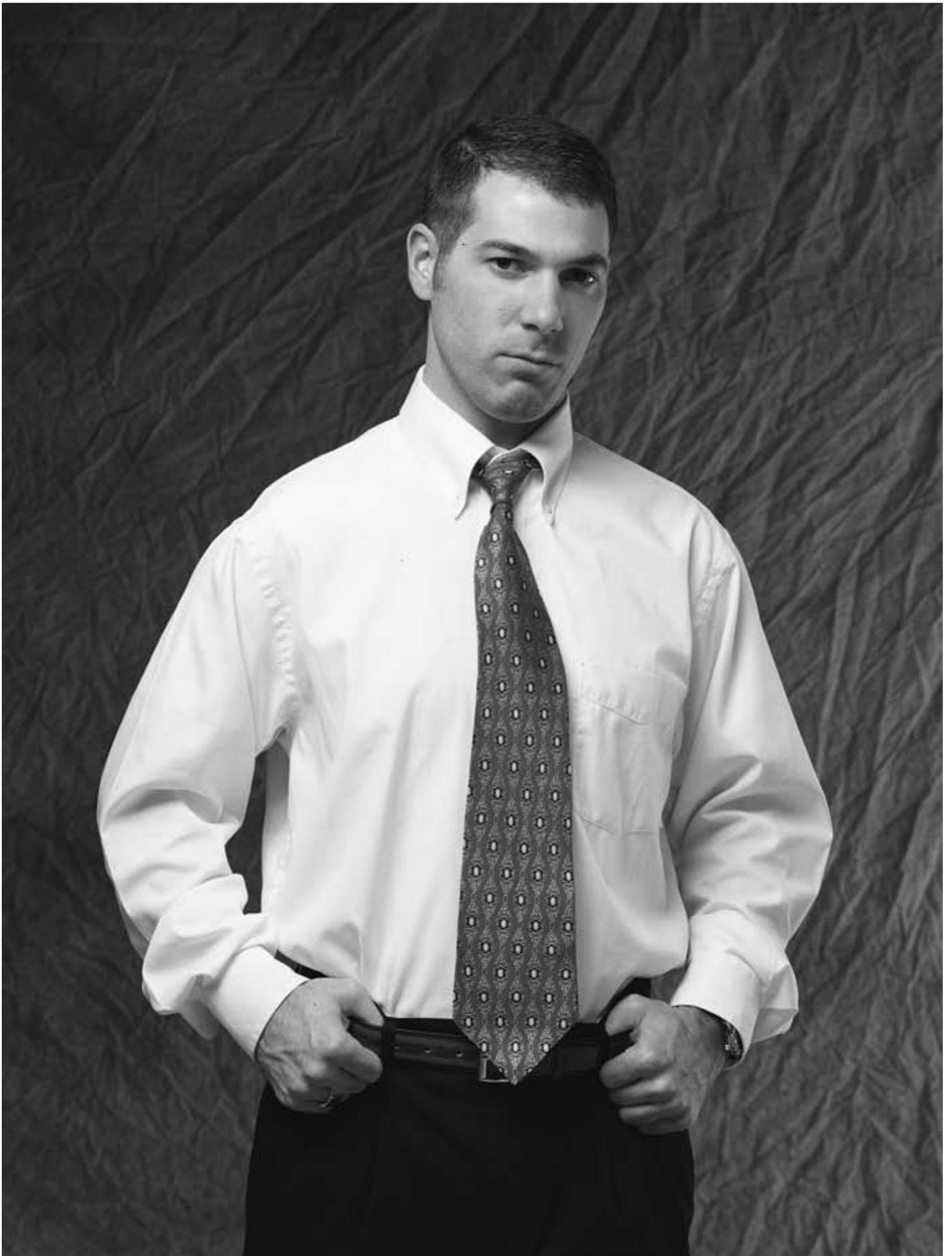
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THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
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