

Indexing's Vital Contribution to the Work of Salvation

This lesson will explain the vital role that indexing plays in helping Church members find their ancestors so that they can take their names to the temple.

If possible, this lesson could be presented by a member of the stake presidency or high council.

Prepare

Prepare for this lesson by taking time to search for your own ancestors' names to take to the temple and by participating in indexing. Become familiar with the doctrine of family history and the blessings that come from participating in it.

Lesson

Indexing Introduction

Introduce indexing, and discuss how indexing helps with the invitation to find, take, and teach. Discuss how indexing helps members fulfill their divinely appointed responsibility to find and take names to the temple and to teach others to do the same (slides 1-7).

- **Finding** occurs after records are indexed and made searchable online. Because of indexing, people are able to find ancestors who are waiting to receive their temple ordinances.
- **Taking** names to the temple blesses the living and the deceased. As names are indexed, the people they represent become real to us, and we desire to take our own family names to the temple.
- **Teach** others the importance of indexing, and allow them to experience the blessings that come from family history.

Review the Message from the First Presidency

Discuss why the Brethren encourage members to participate in indexing and why indexing is so vital to helping the Lord's work progress (slide 8).

- Share the statement by the First Presidency, and ask the class members why indexing is vital.
 - "Members are encouraged to participate in FamilySearch indexing, which is vital to family history and temple work" (First Presidency letter, February 29, 2012).
- Discuss the changes that have occurred in family history over the years. Today we have more information to access and more people participating in family history than ever before. The Lord truly is hastening the work of His children on both sides of the veil.

How Indexing Works

Share the following example to help your class members understand the benefits of indexed information (slides 9-11).

Scenario 1: Ask the group how they would feel if they were asked to find a specific book in an aisle of a library. The books in the aisle are organized by shape, size, and color, not by title, author, or subject. Discuss with class members how long it would take to find a book on a specific subject or by a particular author and what methods they would use.

Scenario 2: Now imagine you have to find the same book, but you are given specific instructions on where to locate it. Discuss how class members would feel about being able to locate this book. Ask why it is beneficial to be able to use the power of computer searching to pinpoint information.

Indexing allows us to find information about our ancestors in a similar way. When we index historical records, the names, dates and other information they contain become searchable online.

Share the video *Indexing Is Vital*. (slide 12)

- [lds.org/media-library/video/2013-03-01-familysearch-indexing-is-vital](https://www.familysearch.org/ids.org/media-library/video/2013-03-01-familysearch-indexing-is-vital)
- Ask the group (slide 13):
 - Who has felt frustrated like the young man at not being able to find information about his ancestors?
 - Who has been able to celebrate like the young man because an ancestor's record was found?
 - Ask the class to imagine being like the young man in the future and the joy they will experience in being able to take a family name to the temple. Discuss how this thought makes class members feel.
 - Ask the class to imagine enabling someone else's joy in taking a family name to the temple because they have indexed a record that person needed. Discuss how this thought makes class members feel.

Ask if any class members have had a discovery experience they would like to share about finding the name of an ancestor by using indexed records on FamilySearch.org. Alternatively, you can share one of your own examples if you have one, or use the quotes below that came from the FamilySearch Indexing Facebook page to illustrate the blessing indexing is to those who are looking for their ancestors. It is best if you can focus your comments on how indexing aids in finding and taking names to the temple (slide 14).

- “I searched for the marriage information on my paternal grandparents for over 50 years, and just this year, at age 92, I finally found the marriage record because of an indexed record by some wonderful person. Thank you indexing program and volunteers!” (Arnold Borgersen)
- “Yesterday when I was researching my own family history, I found one of my family member's records that had been made available through someone's indexing efforts. I was so happy; actually, over-joyed would be a more accurate description.” (Isabella Keen)
- “I can bear testimony that the indexing records that volunteers have done has opened several more generations for me.” (Dan Fine)
- “I am so grateful for being able to do indexing since I want to help someone else to find their ancestors.” (Carol Gibbs)

Show the class where indexing is located on FamilySearch.org (slide 15). Explain that records come from government censuses, church records, birth and death records, and so on. As records are indexed and published, the information becomes available on FamilySearch.org (slide 16).

Show the class the following areas on FamilySearch.org where indexed records are utilized: This includes the search tab (slides 17-18), record hints on a person's page (slides 19-20), and record hints in Descendancy view (slide 21). Show the audience where record hints are located and what the digitized records look like. Because of indexing, the work of finding and taking names to the temple has become much easier.

Indexing Success Stories

Read Alma 37:6, and discuss how indexing is a small and simple thing (slides 22-23).

Share the video *The Chorley Experience*, and ask participants to pay attention to how this stake used indexing as a tool to help Church members. Watch for how the members received blessings by participating in family history (slide 24).

- [lds.org/media-library/video/2014-03-01-the-chorley-experience](https://www.lds.org/media-library/video/2014-03-01-the-chorley-experience)

Discuss what blessings occurred in this stake as they focused on family history.

Possible questions and discussion points include (slide 25):

- What were the spiritual outcomes that occurred after this stake got more involved in family history?
(Possible answers can include sacrament meeting attendance increased, temple attendance increased, and less-active members were reactivated.)
- What were the stake president's objectives for encouraging his members to participate in indexing?
(A possible response could be he wanted to lead more of his members to the temple.)

- What commitments were members of the stake invited to make?
(A possible response could be as part of the stake's "Year of Personal Righteousness," members were invited to index as much as they felt they could.)
- How did indexing help members have a heart-turning experience toward their own ancestors?
(A possible response could be indexing naturally helps volunteers to think about their own ancestors and start to wonder if the records of their lives are available.)
- How did indexing lead members to the temple?
(A possible response could be indexing turned the hearts of stake members and led them to start searching for their own ancestors who needed temple blessings.)
- How did indexing bless the lives of those who participated?
(A possible response could be as their hearts were turned towards their ancestors, they also drew closer to the spirit and to the Lord. As a result, their desire to keep the commandments increased, and their commitment to serving others in the temple increased)

How Can Indexing Strengthen Us?

If handouts are available, suggest that the audience write down their thoughts and impressions, while answering the handout questions, as you discuss how indexing can be used to strengthen individuals.

Possible questions and discussion points include (slide 26):

- Who do I know that could benefit from the kinds of things I have seen today?
- How can I use family history to help these people?

Have participants share stories of how family history helped in resolving spiritual challenges. Have an open dialogue, and ask participants to share their thoughts and ideas regarding the following (slides 27-28):

- What are the blessings of indexing?
- What ideas do you have for getting others excited about indexing?
- What personal experiences have you had from participating in indexing or teaching others about it?
- How do you teach that family history is for everyone?
- Discuss ways that indexing can be used in giving callings?

Invitation

Invite group members to find and take names to the temple and teach the blessings of family history to others (slides 29-30).

Invite group members to help in the work of family history by indexing names. Remind them that when they index, they are helping others find and take names to the temple (slide 31).

