

Lesson 12

Joseph Smith—History 1:1–26

The following assignments include various learning activities, such as questions, lists, essays, charts, comparisons, contrasts, and surveys. To receive credit for this lesson, you must complete the number of assignments indicated below and submit them to your institute instructor or administrator. You may submit your work either electronically or on paper, handwritten or typed.

Each lesson should take approximately 60–90 minutes to complete, the same amount of time you would typically spend in a weekly institute class. Since reading the scripture block listed in the lesson heading is expected of all institute students prior to class, the estimated time for each assignment does not include the time you need to spend reading the scripture block.

Complete all of the following assignments:

1. Joseph Smith—History 1:1–10. An Unusual Excitement

- a. Read Joseph Smith—History 1:1–2 and the institute student manual commentary “Joseph Smith—History 1:1: What Were the ‘Many Reports . . . by Evil-Disposed and Designing Persons’?” (pages 53–54). Respond in writing to the following:

- What were Joseph Smith’s reasons for writing this history?
- Briefly explain what you can do to help “disabuse the public mind” and “put all inquirers after truth in possessions of the facts” concerning the mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Restoration of the Church (verse 1).

- b. Read Joseph Smith—History 1:3–4 and study the student manual commentaries “Joseph Smith—History 1:3: What Was Joseph Smith’s Early Life Like?” and “Joseph Smith—History 1:4: Joseph Smith’s Family” (pages 54–55).

Write answers to the following questions:

- What qualities and attributes did Joseph Smith acquire in his early years that would help him in his divine mission and calling?
- How would you summarize Brigham Young’s statement about Joseph Smith and his family?

- In what ways has your family influenced the kind of person you have become?

- c. Read and study Joseph Smith—History 1:5–10 and the student manual commentary “Joseph Smith—History 1:5–10: What Was Going on in Palmyra, New York, Just Before the First Vision?” (page 55). Write answers to the following questions:

- What words and phrases did Joseph Smith use to describe the “unusual excitement on the subject of religion” in Palmyra? (verse 5).
- What were Joseph Smith’s questions during the time of this great excitement?
- How does asking questions prepare the way for receiving revelation? (see also D&C 42:61; 88:63)
- What discussions and experiences have you had with those who do not believe in the restored gospel? How have those experiences affected your faith in the truth?

2. Joseph Smith—History 1:11–20. The First Vision

- a. Read Joseph Smith—History 1:11–16 and the student manual commentary “Joseph Smith—History 1:15–16: The Powers of Darkness” (page 56). Then write answers to the following questions:

- What actions did Joseph Smith take to receive answers to his questions?
- How did Satan try to hinder Joseph Smith from receiving answers to his questions?
- In what ways did Joseph Smith show his determination to “ask of God”? How can you apply what Joseph Smith did to receive answers to your own questions?

- b. Joseph Smith learned many truths from the experience of the First Vision. Read Joseph Smith—History 1:15–20, and fill in the following chart with as many truths as you can find from each of the verses. Then write answers to the following questions:

Truths Learned from Joseph Smith’s First Vision	
Verse 15	
Verse 16	
Verse 17	
Verses 18–19	
Verse 20	

- Why is the First Vision important to your testimony of the truthfulness of the restored gospel?
- Why is it important to share Joseph Smith’s First Vision with prospective converts?

3. Joseph Smith—History 1:21–26. The Beginning of the Persecution of Joseph Smith

- a. Read Joseph Smith—History 1:20–23 and the student manual commentary “Joseph Smith—History 1:21–24: Bitter Persecution” (pages 56–57). Respond in writing to the following questions:
 - Who did Joseph Smith tell about his vision?
 - What were the objections mentioned by the person Joseph told?
 - How did Joseph Smith respond to the increasing prejudice and persecution?
 - What do you learn from Joseph Smith’s experience about sharing your personal spiritual experiences?
 - In what ways has opposition strengthened you?
- b. Read Joseph Smith—History 1:24–26 and Doctrine and Covenants 121:7–8; 127:1–2. Write a short paragraph describing the character traits required to remain faithful to Heavenly Father in the face of opposition.
- c. Review Joseph Smith—History 1:25–26. Make a list of the truths in these verses that Joseph Smith said he learned from his experience. Then write responses to the following:
 - How had Joseph Smith found “the testimony of James to be true”? (verse 26).
 - What words and phrases from these verses describe Joseph’s conviction and desire to follow the Lord at any cost?
 - Write your own testimony and a statement that describes how the strength of your testimony effects your willingness to follow the Lord.