



# Teaching in the Savior's Way

The goal of every gospel teacher—every parent, every formally called teacher, every home teacher and visiting teacher, and every follower of Christ—is to teach the pure doctrine of the gospel, by the Spirit, in order to help God's children build their faith in the Savior and become more like Him.



# Teaching in the Savior's Way

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## Preface

The principles described in this resource can help every gospel teacher teach in the Savior’s way. This resource is intended especially for those whose Church callings give them opportunities to teach—including teachers in Primary, Sunday School, Relief Society, Young Women, and Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood quorums, as well as priesthood and auxiliary leaders. The principles described here can also help parents,

teachers, and auxiliary leaders as they teach in their families.

Teachers can study this resource on their own to learn how to more effectively teach in the Savior’s way. They can also use the resource to guide discussions in family home evenings, presidency meetings, ward or stake council meetings, and monthly teacher council meetings.

Teacher council meetings are described in the section titled “Teacher

Council Meetings.” The ward council oversees these meetings, with assistance from the Sunday School presidency. A member of the Sunday School presidency usually leads the meetings. The material in this resource should be used as the basis for teacher council meetings.

*Note:* In this resource, references to wards and stakes apply also to branches, districts, and missions.



## Teacher Council Meetings

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Each ward should hold monthly teacher council meetings in which teachers can counsel together about principles of Christlike teaching.

### WHEN SHOULD THESE MEETINGS BE HELD?

Teacher council meetings should normally take place during the three-hour schedule of Sunday meetings.

- Sunday School teachers meet during priesthood quorum, Relief Society, and Young Women meetings.
- Priesthood quorum, Relief Society, and Young Women teachers meet during Sunday School.
- Primary teachers attend either of the meetings described above, as directed by the Primary president. (*Note:* As needed, the Primary presidency assigns substitute teachers, combines classes, or makes other arrangements to allow Primary teachers to attend teacher council meetings.)

### WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

Everyone who teaches a quorum or class in the ward should attend, along with at least one of the priesthood or auxiliary leaders responsible for those teachers. If necessary, participants may be divided into groups according to the needs of those they teach. For example, teachers of youth or children may benefit from meeting separately on occasion to discuss issues specifically related to teaching youth or children.

### WHO LEADS THESE MEETINGS?

The ward council, with assistance from the Sunday School presidency, oversees teacher council meetings. In most cases, a member of the Sunday School presidency acts as discussion leader for the meetings; other ward

members may be assigned to lead meetings on occasion.

### WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN IN A TEACHER COUNCIL MEETING?

(*Note:* These instructions are for discussion leaders.) After an opening prayer, the teacher council meeting should follow this format:

- *Share and counsel together.* Invite teachers to share recent teaching experiences, ask questions related to teaching, and share ideas for overcoming challenges. This part of the meeting could include a review of principles discussed in previous meetings.
- *Learn together.* Invite teachers to discuss one of the principles presented in this resource. The principles may be addressed in any order, and unless otherwise directed by the ward

council, the participants in the meeting may choose the next principle to be discussed. It is not necessary to cover every aspect of the principle in one teacher council meeting—you can spend more than one meeting on a principle if needed.

- *Practice and invite.* As appropriate, help teachers practice the principle they have discussed. Invite them to record and act upon any impressions they receive about how to apply the principle in their teaching—including in their efforts to teach in their homes. Encourage them to begin studying the next principle to be discussed.

As much as possible, teacher council meetings should model the principles being discussed.



## Teaching in the Savior's Way

When you think about the Savior's way of teaching, what comes to mind? Can you see Him teaching the multitudes by the sea, speaking privately with the woman at the well, or blessing a little child? As you read about Him in the scriptures, what do you notice about His way of helping others learn and grow? What does teaching in the Savior's way mean to you?

### THE SAVIOR'S WAY OF TEACHING

Jesus Christ declared, "I am the way" (John 14:6). As you ponder His life and your own opportunities to teach, you will find that the way to become an effective teacher is to become more like the Savior. The Savior's way of teaching came from who He was and the "power of the Spirit" that He carried with Him (Luke 4:14). The key to teaching as the Savior taught is to live as the Savior lived.

And how did He live?

The Savior was full of love. Whether He was encouraging a penitent sinner, tutoring His disciples, or rebuking the Pharisees, everything the Savior did was an expression of love. This love and compassion for people and their needs led Him to teach in ways that were meaningful to them. When the Savior taught, familiar, real-life experiences like fishing, childbirth, and herding sheep became spiritual lessons.

The Savior sought and obeyed His Father's will and taught His Father's doctrine. From His childhood Jesus

was "about [His] Father's business," seeking to do "always those things that please him." "My doctrine is not mine," He said, "but his that sent me" (Luke 2:49; John 8:29; 7:16).

The Savior was completely committed to His sacred mission—to bring God's children back to Him. So Jesus did more than just impart information; He gave His followers important responsibilities that strengthened their faith and helped them grow. He trusted them, prepared them, and sent them into all the world to teach, bless, and serve others (see Matthew 10:1, 5–8).

The Savior loved the scriptures and used them to teach and testify of His mission. He taught people to search the scriptures to find their own answers to questions. As He taught the word of God with power, people came to know for themselves that the scriptures were true (see Luke 24:32).

The Savior lived what He taught. In every setting, He was the perfect example. He taught His followers to pray by praying with them (see Luke 11:1–4). He taught them to love and

serve by the way He loved and served them. He taught them how to live His gospel by the way He lived. He was always teaching—often in formal settings but just as often in homes and in personal, informal conversations (see Matthew 4:23; Mark 14:3–9).

There is so much more for you to discover about the Savior's way of teaching. But this much is certain: power to truly teach in His way will come as you learn of Him and follow Him. The invitation to teach in the Savior's way truly is a key part of His invitation to "come, follow me" (Luke 18:22).

### YOU CAN TEACH IN THE SAVIOR'S WAY

You are a disciple of Jesus Christ. This means that you are a teacher, because discipleship includes teaching, blessing, and lifting others. You may, for a time, be given a formal calling to teach, but the responsibility to teach will always be with you, especially if you are a parent. At times the responsibility to teach may seem overwhelming. Perhaps you worry that you do not know enough, that you do

### VIDEO EXAMPLE

Watch the video "Teaching the Gospel in the Savior's Way" ([LDS.org](https://www.LDS.org)).





not have enough teaching experience, or that you simply are not the “teacher type.” But your Heavenly Father, who knows you perfectly, called you to teach because of what you can offer as a committed follower of Jesus Christ. He will not forsake you.

Here are just some of the many sources of power and support that He has made available to help you teach in His way.

*The power of the Holy Ghost.* As you strive to live the gospel worthily, the Holy Ghost will reveal God’s will to you. He will give you thoughts, impressions, and creative ideas about how to help others learn. He will help you know which gospel principles to focus on. And He will touch the hearts of those you teach and inspire them to change. The Holy Ghost will make it possible for you to be “a teacher come from God,” because the Spirit is the real teacher, and when the Spirit is with you, you will teach with God’s power and help bring about the miracle of conversion (John 3:2; see also 2 Nephi 33:1).

*The promise of your calling and setting apart.* Your calling to teach comes

from the Lord, not from man, and as President Thomas S. Monson has promised, “whom the Lord calls, the Lord qualifies.”<sup>1</sup> In addition, you have been set apart under the direction of those who hold priesthood keys; therefore, you have the right to the personal revelation you need to succeed. These blessings are yours as you seek them, remain faithful, and strive to be worthy.

*The power of prayer.* Your Heavenly Father is always available. You can speak to Him directly through prayer. “Ask the Father in my name,” the Savior said, “and you shall have the Holy Ghost” (D&C 18:18; see also D&C 42:14).

*Your love, talents, and experiences.* You can bless God’s children by drawing on the love you have for others, the gifts God has given you, and your life experiences. As you serve faithfully and seek God’s help, He will magnify you, and you will grow in your capacity to teach the gospel in the Savior’s way.

*The power of the word of God.* The doctrine found in the scriptures and in the words of latter-day prophets has the power to change hearts and

increase faith. As you and those you teach “try the virtue of the word of God,” you will find that it has “a great tendency to lead the people to do that which [is] just” (Alma 31:5).

*Loving leaders.* Your priesthood and auxiliary leaders want to help you succeed. Ask for their counsel as you strive to improve as a teacher and as you ponder the needs of those you teach.

*The contributions of those you teach.* Each individual in your class is a rich source of testimony, insights, and experiences with living the gospel. Invite them to share with and lift each other.

Remember, God has called you, and He will qualify you. Teaching the gospel is an essential part of His great work of salvation, and “when we are on the Lord’s errand, we are entitled to the Lord’s help.”<sup>2</sup>

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Duty Calls,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 44.

2. Thomas S. Monson, “To Learn, to Do, to Be,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 62.

## FOR THE DISCUSSION LEADER

**Share and counsel together.** Begin by inviting teachers to share recent teaching experiences and ask questions related to teaching.

**Learn together.** Invite teachers to discuss one or more of the ideas in this section. Do not try to cover everything in one meeting.

**Practice.** Invite teachers to complete the evaluation titled “Improving as a Christlike Teacher” in this resource.

**Prepare.** Decide together on a topic for the next meeting, and invite teachers to prepare.

## Love Those You Teach

(*Handbook 2: Administering the Church* [2010], 5.5.4)

Everything the Savior did throughout His earthly ministry was motivated by love—His love for His Father and His love for all of us. Through the power of the Holy Ghost, we can be filled with this same love as we strive to be true followers of Christ (see John 13:34–35; Moroni 7:48; 8:26). With Christlike love in our hearts, we will seek every possible way to help others learn of Christ and come unto Him. Love will be the reason and motivation for our teaching.

### PRAY BY NAME FOR THOSE YOU TEACH

“I have prayed for thee,” the Savior said to Peter, “that thy faith fail not” (Luke 22:32). Think about what happens inside you when you pray for someone—how does your prayer affect the way you feel about that person? Following the Savior’s example, pray by name for the people you teach who have the greatest needs. Pray to know and understand their specific needs, and ask Heavenly Father to “prepare their hearts” (Alma 16:16) to learn the things that will help meet those needs.

**Question to ponder.** As I pray for those I teach, what impressions do I receive?

**Scriptural example.** What does Alma’s prayer on behalf of the Zoramites teach me about loving others? (see Alma 31:24–36).

### SEE OTHERS AS GOD SEES THEM

Because God looks on a person’s heart, what He sees may be different from what we see on the outside (see

1 Samuel 16:7). As you strive to see those you teach as God sees them, you will recognize their divine worth, and the Spirit will teach you what to do to help them achieve their potential.

**Questions to ponder.** How has the love and confidence of a parent, teacher, or other mentor made a difference in my life? How could my love make a difference for someone I am trying to teach?

**Scriptural example.** In Luke 19:1–10, the Savior saw the publican Zacchaeus differently from the way others saw him. What other examples from the scriptures show how God sees us?

### FIND SIMPLE, APPROPRIATE WAYS TO EXPRESS YOUR LOVE

Depending on your circumstances, expressing love to those you teach may mean giving them sincere compliments, taking an interest in their lives, listening carefully to them, involving them in the lesson, performing acts of service for them, or simply greeting them warmly when you see them. The

way you treat people is just as important as what you teach them.

Sometimes our preoccupation with presenting a lesson can prevent us from expressing our love for those we teach. If this happens to you, consider how you could focus on what matters most. For example, before class you could ask a class member or a member of your auxiliary presidency to set up your classroom and prepare audio-visual equipment so that you will have more time to greet class members as they enter the room. You may also find that working with class members to prepare the room is an excellent way to interact with them before class begins.

**Questions to ponder.** Do those I teach know that I love them? What evidence have I given them? What can I do to reach out in love to someone who seems unresponsive in class?

**Scriptural example.** How did the Savior show love for those He taught? (see John 13:3–16; 3 Nephi 17). How can I follow His example as I teach?

► See also the video “Love Those You Teach” ([LDS.org](https://www.LDS.org)).

### FOR THE DISCUSSION LEADER

**Share and counsel together.** Begin by inviting teachers to share recent teaching experiences and ask questions related to teaching.

**Learn together.** Invite teachers to discuss one or more of the ideas in this section.

**Invite.** Ask the teachers to ponder what they feel inspired to do because of their discussion about loving those they teach. Perhaps the name of someone who needs to feel loved has come to

mind—a family member, a friend, or a class member. How will they act on these promptings?

**Prepare.** Decide together on a topic for the next meeting, and invite teachers to prepare.

## Focus on People, Not Lessons

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"A gospel teacher, like the Master we serve, will concentrate entirely on those being taught," said Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. "His or her total concentration will be on the needs of the sheep—the good of the students. A gospel teacher does not focus on himself or herself. One who understands that principle will not look upon his or her calling as 'giving or presenting a lesson,' because that definition views teaching from the standpoint of the teacher, not the student. Focusing on the needs of the students, a gospel teacher will never obscure their view of the Master by standing in the way or by shadowing the lesson with self-promotion or self-interest."<sup>1</sup>

### SEEK TO UNDERSTAND THOSE YOU TEACH

The gospel is for everyone, but no two people are exactly alike. Look for ways to understand the backgrounds, interests, talents, and needs of the people you teach. Ask questions, listen carefully, and observe what learners say and do in different situations. If you are teaching youth or children, ask their parents for insights. Above all, pray for the understanding that only the Spirit can give. The more you understand those you teach, the better you can help them see how the gospel applies to their individual lives.

**Questions to ponder.** Who among those I teach do I need to understand better? What can I do to better understand him or her?

**Scriptural example.** What does John 21:1–17 teach about the way the Savior understood Peter and taught him what he needed to know?

► See also the video "Know and Love Us" (LDS.org).

### PREPARE WITH PEOPLE IN MIND

Sometimes, in preparing to teach, teachers may want to reuse a lesson or activity they have used in the past without thinking about how it applies to the current group of learners. This approach often does not take into account the unique needs of class members. When you prepare, let your understanding of the people you teach guide your plans. To reach different learners, you may be led to use music, make an assignment in advance, or share an analogy about something a class member is interested in, such as sports. Christlike teachers are not committed to a particular style or method; they are committed to helping people build faith in Jesus Christ and become more like Him.

**Question to ponder.** How could I change my teaching plans to meet the unique needs of someone in my class?

**Scriptural example.** How did the Savior's teaching approach meet the particular needs of the people He taught? (see, for example, Mark 10:17–22).

### DON'T TRY TO COVER EVERYTHING

There is much to discuss in each lesson, but it is not necessary to cover everything in one class period in order to touch someone's heart—often one or two key points are enough. As you ponder learners' needs, the Spirit will help you identify which principles, stories, or scriptures will be especially meaningful to them. He may also inspire you during class to alter your plans, leaving some points for a later time in order to discuss principles that are more important to class members now.

**Question to ponder.** How can I show those I teach that I am more interested in their learning than in completing a lesson?

**Scriptural example.** What do I learn about teaching from the pattern described in Doctrine and Covenants 98:11–12? (see also D&C 78:17–19).

1. Dallin H. Oaks, "Gospel Teaching," *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 79.

### FOR THE DISCUSSION LEADER

**Share and counsel together.** Begin by inviting teachers to share recent teaching experiences and ask questions related to teaching. Make sure that everyone who wants to share has an opportunity to do so; this is more important than covering all the material in each lesson.

**Learn together.** Invite teachers to discuss one or more of the ideas in this section.

**Practice.** Ask one teacher to come to the front of the room. Invite the others to ask questions that will help them learn about the interests and talents of that person. Then discuss with the teachers how this

information might influence the way they would teach the person at the front of the room. Ask the teachers how they could apply this exercise to their preparation and teaching.

**Prepare.** Decide together on a topic for the next meeting, and invite teachers to prepare.

## Reach Out to Those Who Do Not Attend

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While the Savior often spoke to multitudes, He was deeply interested in individuals—including those who were forgotten, overlooked, rejected, or misunderstood. Just as the shepherd in the Savior’s parable left the ninety and nine who were safely in the fold to seek after the one (see Luke 15:4), you can reach out to those who are missing from your class. Your opportunities to teach and lift class members and help them come unto Christ extend beyond the classroom and beyond those who attend your formal lessons.

### TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

Reaching out to less-active members is not only the duty of a home teacher, a visiting teacher, or a priesthood or auxiliary leader—teachers can help with this work as well. Teaching is much more than presenting a lesson on Sunday. It involves ministering with love and helping others receive the blessings of the gospel, and this help is often exactly what a less-active class member needs. We all need to work together to reach out to those who struggle, and as a teacher you may be in a unique position to help.

President David O. McKay recalled the story of a boat full of young men floating down a river toward a dangerous waterfall. Noticing the dangerous situation, a man standing on the shore shouted at the young men to turn around, but they could not see the waterfall and ignored him. Again he shouted a warning, and again they laughingly dismissed his warning. Soon, however, they were in the midst of the rapids. They tried desperately

to turn the boat around, but it was too late. President McKay taught, “It is one thing to stand on the shore and cry: ‘Young men, ahoy! There is danger ahead!’ It is another thing to row into the stream and, if possible, get into the boat with the young men, and by companionship, by persuasion, . . . turn the boat from the rapids. . . . Let us get into their lives.”<sup>1</sup>

**Questions to ponder.** Who among those I teach seems to be struggling or is not attending class? What can I do to reach out to him or her? How could other class members help?

**Scriptural example.** As I read about ways the Savior reached out to people (see, for example, Luke 8:43–48; John 4:6–30), what does the Spirit teach me about how I can reach out to the people I teach?

### SEEK INSPIRATION

As you seek inspiration about your class members’ individual needs, remember those who are struggling or who do not attend regularly (your

leaders can help you know who needs the most attention). A person may withdraw from Church participation for a variety of reasons—many of them hard to detect. But Heavenly Father knows and loves His children, and if you do your part, He will help you know the best way to reach out to your class members who struggle with the gospel and invite them to return.

**Questions to ponder.** Do I know the names of all those I am assigned to teach? Do I pray for those who are struggling? How can I become more aware of their needs?

**Scriptural example.** What do I learn from John 10:14–15, 27–29 about how the Savior feels about the people I teach?

### SUPPORT FAMILIES

The people who have the most powerful influence on an individual—for good or ill—are usually those in his or her home. Because the home is the center of gospel living and learning, your efforts to strengthen a class

### FOR THE DISCUSSION LEADER

**Share and counsel together.** Begin by inviting teachers to share recent teaching experiences and ask questions related to teaching.

**Learn together.** Invite teachers to discuss one or more of the ideas in this section. Do not try to cover everything in one meeting.

**Practice.** Invite teachers to share ideas with each other (in small groups or all together) about

ways they have reached out to people who were not attending their classes.

**Prepare.** Decide together on a topic for the next meeting, and invite teachers to prepare.

member will be most effective when you work together with a supportive spouse, children, or extended family members. When trying to help a young person or a child, for example, talk to his or her parents; they can help you understand their child's needs and how to address them.

**Question to ponder.** What can I do to support the efforts of the families of those I teach?

**Scriptural example.** What do I learn from Enos 1:1–3; Mosiah 27:14; and Alma 36:17 about how faithful family members can help those who are struggling?

### INVITE WITH LOVE

Sincere expressions of Christlike love have great power to soften the hearts of class members who are struggling with the gospel. Often these individuals simply need to know they are needed and loved. As President Thomas S. Monson has taught, “Asking them to serve in some capacity may be just the incentive they need to return to full activity.”<sup>2</sup> It could be something as simple as asking them to participate in an upcoming lesson—to share an experience or feelings about a scripture. You could ask other class members to show their concern for these individuals by visiting them,

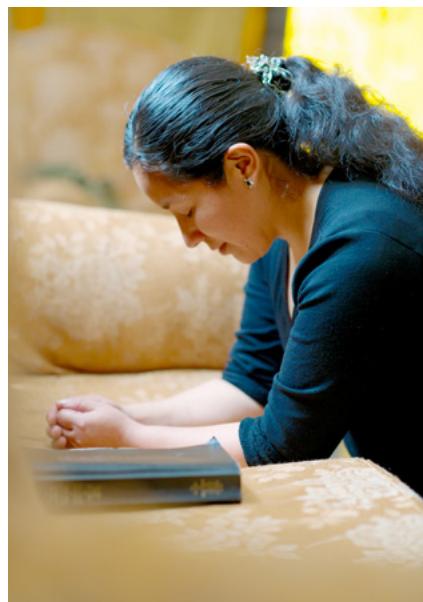
inviting them to class, or even providing transportation if needed.

**Questions to ponder.** How have I been strengthened spiritually by an invitation to serve others? Could I help a member of my class grow spiritually by asking him or her to serve in some way?

**Scriptural example.** How did an invitation to serve help change Amulek’s commitment to the gospel? (see Alma 10:1–11).

### BE PATIENT AND PERSISTENT

The shepherd in the Savior’s parable kept looking for the lost sheep “until he [found] it” (Luke 15:4). Not everyone will respond immediately to your efforts. But the Savior urged us to never give up: “Unto such shall ye continue to minister; for ye know not but what they will return . . . , and I shall heal them” (3 Nephi 18:32). Trusting in the Lord’s timing, keep looking for appropriate ways to show those who do not attend that you love and miss them. You could use personal visits, phone calls, text messages, or other ways. You may be surprised at the long-term influence of your patient, persistent efforts to reach out with love.



**Questions to ponder.** How has the Savior shown patience with my weaknesses and struggles? How can I follow His example with those I teach?

**Scriptural example.** What do I learn about patience and persistence from Luke 15:8–10; Alma 37:7–8; and Doctrine and Covenants 64:33?

1. David O. McKay, in Conference Report, Oct. 1968, 7–8.

2. Thomas S. Monson, “See Others as They May Become,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 68.

### VIDEO EXAMPLE

For an inspiring example of a leader reaching out to a young man who was not attending quorum meetings, see the story of José de Souza Marques in the first few minutes of the video of Elder Mervyn B. Arnold’s general conference talk “Strengthen Thy Brethren” ([LDS.org](#)). (See also “Strengthen Thy Brethren,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2004, 46–48.)



## Teach by the Spirit

(*Handbook 2: Administering the Church* [2010], 5.5.4)

The Savior promised His disciples, “The Holy Ghost . . . shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26). Only through the Holy Ghost can we accomplish the ultimate goal of gospel teaching—to build faith in Jesus Christ and help others become more like Him. The Holy Ghost bears witness of the truth, He testifies of Christ, and He changes hearts. No mortal teacher, no matter how skilled or experienced, can replace the Spirit. But we can be instruments in God’s hands to help His children learn by the Spirit. To do this, we invite the influence of the Spirit into our lives and encourage those we teach to do the same.

### INVITE THE SPIRIT INTO YOUR TEACHING

The ultimate purpose of everything a gospel teacher does—every question, every scripture, every activity—is to invite the Spirit to build faith and to invite all to come unto Christ. Do all you can to invite the influence of the Holy Ghost. The Lord has promised, “The Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith” (D&C 42:14). In addition, sacred music, the scriptures, words of latter-day prophets, expressions of love and testimony, and moments of quiet contemplation can all invite the presence of the Spirit. For example, you might arrange to have soft prelude music playing as class begins.

**Questions to ponder.** What brings the Spirit into my life? into my home? into my class? What drives Him away? How can I help class members invite the Spirit into their gospel learning?

**Scriptural example.** What do I learn about the Holy Ghost from John 14:26; Helaman 5:29–30; and Doctrine and Covenants 11:12–13? How could this principle help me teach more like the Savior?

### BE A HUMBLE INSTRUMENT OF THE SPIRIT

Sometimes teachers may be tempted to think that it is their knowledge or methods or personality that inspires those they teach. This attitude prevents them from inviting the Holy Ghost to teach class members and change their hearts. Your purpose as a teacher is not to make an impressive presentation but rather to help others receive the influence of the Holy Ghost, who is the true teacher.

**Question to ponder.** What changes should I make so that I can have the Holy Ghost with me more fully as I teach? (see, for example, D&C 112:10). For a personal evaluation exercise, see

“Improving as a Christlike Teacher” in this resource.

**Scriptural example.** What does the Spirit teach me as I read about how Alma and the sons of Mosiah became “instruments in the hands of God”? (Mosiah 27:32–37; Alma 17:1–12; 26; 29).

### BE FLEXIBLE

Often the best teaching moments are unexpected—for example, when someone shares an experience or asks a question that leads to a meaningful discussion. Allow time for such moments. Listen for promptings—both as you plan and as you teach—and be willing to change your plans if necessary to follow the promptings you receive. If you are spiritually prepared, the Lord can give you “in the very moment, what ye shall say” (D&C 100:6). Remember that it is more important to follow the impressions of the Spirit than to cover a certain amount of material.

**Questions to ponder.** When have I felt the Spirit guiding me as a teacher? What can I do to receive His guidance more often?

**Scriptural example.** As I read 3 Nephi 17:1–9, what do I learn from the Savior’s example as He responded to the needs of those He taught?

### INVITE LEARNERS TO ACT

True conversion involves more than just feeling the Spirit confirming truth to our souls; we must also act on those truths. In addition to helping learners feel and recognize

the Spirit, help them act on the promptings they receive. To learn more about inviting learners to act, see “Invite Learners to Act” in this resource.



## BEAR YOUR TESTIMONY OFTEN

Your simple, sincere witness of spiritual truth can have a powerful influence on those you teach. A testimony is most powerful when it is direct and heartfelt. It need not be eloquent or lengthy and need not begin with “I’d like to bear my testimony.” Bear testimony often of the specific principles you are teaching. President Joseph F. Smith taught that “such a testimony is as a seal attesting the genuineness” of the principle.<sup>1</sup>

**Questions to ponder.** What opportunities do I have to bear my testimony while teaching—both in my class and in my home? How can I better use these opportunities?

**Scriptural example.** What do I learn from the way Alma bore his testimony, as recorded in Alma 5:45–48; 36:3–4?

► See also the video “A Man without Eloquence” ([LDS.org](#)).

## INVITE OTHERS TO BEAR TESTIMONY

To invite the Spirit into your teaching, encourage others to share their personal witness of the truth you are discussing. Simply ask class members to share their feelings or experiences about a gospel principle. For example, you could ask, “How do you feel about the Book of Mormon?” or “How has following the prophet blessed your family?” Even small children can bear testimony when prompted in this way.

**Question to ponder.** As I think about those I teach, whom do I feel prompted to invite to bear testimony?

**Scriptural example.** As recorded in Matthew 16:15–17 and John 11:20–27, how did the Savior invite Peter and Martha to bear their testimonies?

► See also the videos “Thou Art the Christ” and “Invite Us to Testify” ([LDS.org](#)).

## HELP OTHERS RECOGNIZE THE SPIRIT’S INFLUENCE

One of the most important things you can do as a teacher is to help those you teach recognize the influence of the Holy Ghost. This is especially true when teaching children, youth, and new members—you are preparing them to receive personal revelation, avoid deception, and develop spiritual self-reliance. As prompted by the Holy Ghost, ask learners what they are feeling and what they feel prompted to do. Help them associate their spiritual feelings with the influence of the Holy Ghost.

**Question to ponder.** How do I know when the Spirit is present as I teach?

**Scriptural example.** How can I use Galatians 5:22–23; Moroni 7:13; and Doctrine and Covenants 8:2–3 to help class members recognize the influence of the Holy Ghost?

1. *Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. (1939), 206.

## FOR THE DISCUSSION LEADER

**Share and counsel together.** Begin by inviting teachers to share recent teaching experiences and ask questions related to teaching.

**Learn together.** Invite teachers to discuss one or more of the ideas in this section. Do not try to cover everything in one meeting.

**Practice.** As appropriate, ask teachers to share any spiritual impressions they received during this discussion. What will they do to be guided by the Spirit the next time they teach? In the next teacher council meeting, invite them to share their experiences.

**Prepare.** Decide together on a topic for the next meeting, and invite teachers to prepare.

## Prepare Yourself Spiritually

In preparation for His earthly ministry, the Savior was “led up of the Spirit” to fast, to pray, and “to be with God” (Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 4:1 [in Matthew 4:1, footnote b]). Powerful gospel teaching means not just preparing a lesson but preparing ourselves. Because the Spirit is the real teacher and the true source of conversion, effective gospel teachers—before they think about filling class time—focus on filling their hearts with the Holy Ghost.

### **“TREASURE UP . . . THE WORDS OF LIFE”**

Prayerfully studying the word of God puts us in tune with the Holy Ghost. He can then inspire us to draw upon what we have studied as we teach and lift others. For this reason, it is best to diligently study the scriptures and the words of the prophets *before* going to supplementary materials to plan a lesson. The Lord promises that if we “treasure up in [our] minds continually the words of life, . . . it shall be given [us] in the very hour” what we should say and how we should teach (D&C 84:85).

**Questions to ponder.** What does it mean to “treasure up” the scriptures in my mind? When have I felt that a scripture was a treasure to me?

**Scriptural example.** When Hyrum Smith wanted to know how he could participate in the work of the Restoration, the Lord responded with the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 11 (see also D&C 23:3). What counsel do I find there that applies to me as a teacher?

### **SEEK REVELATION DAILY**

Revelation often comes “line upon line” (2 Nephi 28:30), not all at once. So it is best to begin preparing to teach at least a week in advance. As you ponder how the gospel principles you are teaching will bless your class members, ideas and impressions will come throughout your daily life—as you travel to work, do household chores, or interact with family and friends. Don’t think of spiritual preparation as something you make time for but as something you are always doing.

**Question to ponder.** What can I do to be more receptive to spiritual guidance each day?

**Scriptural example.** What gospel lessons did the Savior find in everyday activities? (see, for example, Matthew 13:1–23; John 4:6–14).

See also David A. Bednar, “Quick to Observe,” *Ensign*, Dec. 2006, 30–36.

### **RECORD IMPRESSIONS**

When insights and impressions about a lesson come, find a way to record them so that you can remember them

and refer to them later. You might carry a notebook, small cards, or an electronic device so that you can record impressions right away, while “yet in the Spirit” (D&C 76:80, 113). When you record spiritual impressions, you show the Lord that you value His direction, and He will bless you with more frequent revelation.

Encourage those you teach to write down their impressions as well. Young children could be encouraged to share their insights and experiences with their parents or siblings. Elder Richard G. Scott has promised: “Knowledge carefully recorded is knowledge available in time of need. . . . [Recording spiritual direction] enhances the likelihood of your receiving further light.”<sup>1</sup>

**Question to ponder.** What methods for recording spiritual impressions work best for me?

**Scriptural example.** When the Savior visited the Nephites, He asked to see their records. What do I learn from His words in 3 Nephi 23:7–14 about the importance of recording the inspiration I receive?

1. Richard G. Scott, “Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 88.

### **FOR THE DISCUSSION LEADER**

**Share and counsel together.** Begin by inviting teachers to share recent teaching experiences and ask questions related to teaching.

**Learn together.** Invite teachers to discuss one or more of the ideas in this section. For example, you could

invite them to share any impressions they received as they studied the scriptural examples.

**Invite.** Invite teachers to record spiritual impressions they receive as they prepare for their next teaching opportunity—including opportunities in their homes and with their

families. In the next teacher council meeting, ask them to share with each other what they recorded, as appropriate.

**Prepare.** Decide together on a topic for the next meeting, and invite teachers to prepare.

## Live the Gospel of Jesus Christ

The Savior, the Master Teacher, is the perfect example of obedience to His Father. To be a Christlike teacher, perhaps the most important thing you can do is to follow the Savior’s example of obedience and live the gospel with all your heart—at home, at Church, and everywhere else. This is the principal way to qualify for the companionship of the Holy Ghost. You don’t have to be perfect, just diligently trying—and seeking forgiveness through the Savior’s Atonement whenever you stumble. President Boyd K. Packer 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.”<sup>1</sup>

### EMULATE THE SAVIOR’S LIFE

It is helpful to study the ways the Savior taught—the methods He used and the things He said. But the Savior’s power to teach and lift others came from the way He lived and the kind of person He was. The more diligently you strive to *live* like Jesus Christ, the more you will be able to *teach* like Him.

**Questions to ponder.** As I think about influential teachers in my life, what Christlike qualities do I notice in them? What Christlike qualities do I feel I should develop more fully? (For a self-evaluation activity, see “Improving as a Christlike Teacher” in this resource.)

**Scriptural example:** Doctrine and Covenants 4:5–6 lists attributes that qualify us for service in the Lord’s work. How did the Savior exemplify these attributes? How can I develop them?

### BE A LIVING TESTIMONY

“You teach what you are,” Elder Neal A. Maxwell taught. “Your traits will be more remembered . . . than a

particular truth in a particular lesson. This is as it should be, for if our discipleship is serious, it will show.”<sup>2</sup> When you want to teach about



### FOR THE DISCUSSION LEADER

**Share and counsel together.** Begin by inviting teachers to share recent teaching experiences and ask questions related to teaching.

**Learn together.** Invite teachers to discuss one or more of the ideas in

this section. For example, you might ask, “What do you feel it means to be a living testimony?”

**Invite.** Ask teachers to pay attention to the spiritual impressions they receive during this discussion. Ask them to consider what the Spirit is

telling them they should do to live the gospel of Jesus Christ more fully. Encourage them to record and act on those promptings.

**Prepare.** Decide together on a topic for the next meeting, and invite teachers to prepare.



forgiveness, make a special effort to forgive those who have offended you. When you want to teach about prayer, make sure that your own prayers are consistent and meaningful. Your personal experience will enable you to bear powerful witness of the principles you teach. Because you are living them, the Holy Ghost can witness that what you are teaching is true. And the people you teach will see in your life the blessings of living the gospel.

**Questions to ponder.** What gospel principles will I be teaching in the next few weeks? What could I do to live those principles more fully?

**Scriptural example.** During the Last Supper, the disciples argued about

who among them was the greatest (see Luke 22:14, 24–27). How did the Savior teach them about true greatness? (see John 13:1–17).

► See also the video “Living the Gospel Brings Power” ([LDS.org](https://www.lds.org)).

#### REPENT

In your efforts to live and teach more like the Savior, you will inevitably fall short at times. Do not become discouraged; rather, let your mistakes and weaknesses turn you to Heavenly Father and the Savior. Draw strength from Christ’s Atonement. Remember that repentance is not only for correcting major sins. It is the process of making the changes necessary to become more like Heavenly Father

and the Savior each day. After all, this is the very thing you are trying to inspire your class members to do.

**Question to ponder.** As I examine my life, what changes does the Spirit prompt me to make in order to be more like Jesus Christ?

**Scriptural example.** What do I learn about the connection between repentance and teaching from Ammon’s words in Alma 26:21–22?

1. Boyd K. Packer, *Teach Ye Diligently* (1975), 306.
2. Neal A. Maxwell, “But a Few Days” (address to Church Educational System religious educators, Sept. 10, 1982), 2, [si.lds.org](https://www.lds.org).

## Create an Environment That Invites the Spirit

Think about some of the places where the Savior taught—the Sea of Galilee, the Mount of Transfiguration, the temples at Jerusalem and Bountiful. What made these settings appropriate for the teaching that the Savior did there? As a teacher of Sunday classes or quorum meetings, you may feel that you have little control over the setting in which you teach. But there are many things you can do—both with the physical setting and the spiritual atmosphere—to invite the Spirit into your classroom.

### **PREPARE THE PHYSICAL SURROUNDINGS**

Though the Spirit can teach us no matter where we are, our surroundings can profoundly affect our ability to learn and feel truth. Pay attention to the way you feel when you walk into your classroom. Is it neat and clean? Does the seating arrangement allow learners to interact easily with you and with each other? Is everyone able to hear you and the other class members? Are there any distractions in the room that may make it more difficult for learners to feel the Spirit?

In addition to removing potential distractions, consider what you might add to the room to invite the Spirit. For example, prelude music (including recorded hymns or other reverent music) can encourage a reverent attitude as class members arrive. Pictures and visual displays—besides being effective teaching aids—can create a friendly, welcoming atmosphere.

You may want to ask a member of the Sunday School presidency or another

auxiliary leader to help you make such arrangements in your classroom. This can allow you to focus your attention on class members.

After you have done all you can to create the right environment for teaching, remember that teaching pure doctrine can make any physical environment into a place of powerful spiritual learning.

**Questions to ponder.** Which features of my classroom help create an environment where the Spirit can be present? What changes might I need to make in my classroom?

**Scriptural example.** How might the Lord’s instructions to establish “a house of learning” and “a house of order” (see D&C 88:119–20) apply to my calling as a teacher?

### **NURTURE A LOVING ATMOSPHERE**

Some factors that invite the Spirit are less tangible—the attitudes of the learners, the way they treat each other, and the way they feel about

the gospel. Help your class members understand that each of them affects the spirit of the class. Encourage them to help you establish an open, loving, and respectful environment so that everyone feels safe sharing their experiences, questions, and testimonies.

Your example has a powerful influence on the attitudes of the learners, especially if you are teaching youth and children. Greet class members with a genuine smile and handshake as they arrive. With your words and your actions, show them that you love the gospel and that you care about their spiritual growth.

**Questions to ponder.** What can members of my class do to make sure that everyone feels welcome and comfortable in our learning environment? Is there anything I need to do to be a better example?

**Scriptural example.** What did the Savior do to help His disciples learn to “love one another”? (John 13:34).

### **FOR THE DISCUSSION LEADER**

**Share and counsel together.** Begin by inviting teachers to share recent teaching experiences and ask questions related to teaching.

**Learn together.** Invite teachers to discuss one or more of the ideas in this section.

**Practice.** Invite teachers to apply ideas such as those in this section to create a warm, inviting atmosphere in the room where you are meeting. You might assign one teacher to be in charge of preparing the room for the next teacher council meeting.

**Prepare.** Decide together on a topic for the next meeting, and invite teachers to prepare.

## Take Advantage of Spontaneous Teaching Moments

Most of the Savior’s teaching did not happen in a synagogue but in informal, everyday settings—while eating a meal with His disciples, drawing water from a well, or walking past a fig tree. Even if your only opportunities to interact with class members come on Sunday, watch for signs that they are ready to learn—even if they are ready to learn something you had not planned to teach.

### BE READY ALWAYS

Informal teaching moments pass quickly, so it is important to take advantage of them when they arise. For example, a class member’s comment about a new movie with a harmful message could be an opportunity, as the Spirit directs, to contrast the Lord’s standards with the world’s ways. A rainstorm could be a chance to talk about how the gospel shelters us from many of life’s storms. These conversations are most effective at the time the opportunity arises, not the next time the topic comes up in a manual. Because such moments are unexpected, you can’t prepare for them as you would prepare for a lesson. However, you can prepare *yourself* by being “ready always” (1 Peter 3:15) and sensitive to the Spirit. The Savior did not see teaching as a role He took on once a week; instead, being a teacher was part of who He was. If you see yourself as a gospel teacher at all times, you can turn any moment into a teaching moment.

**Questions to ponder.** What opportunities do I have to teach that may be

outside of a planned lesson? What can I do to ensure that I am always ready to take advantage of such moments?

**Scriptural example.** How do Alma’s words about standing as a witness “at all times” and “in all places” (Mosiah 18:9) apply to me as a teacher? (see also D&C 84:85).

### BE OBSERVANT

As you pay attention to what is happening in your class members’ lives, you will find excellent teaching opportunities. For example, a teenager with a difficult decision to make may be ready to learn about how to receive personal revelation, or a child facing fears may be ready to learn about the Holy Ghost as the Comforter. Comments that learners make or questions they ask can also lead to teaching moments.

**Question to ponder.** When have I been blessed by a family member or teacher who noticed that I was ready to learn something?

**Scriptural example.** What did the Savior observe about the Pharisees

and scribes that led Him to teach them the parables in Luke 15? (see verses 1–2).

### BE AVAILABLE AND ACCESSIBLE

Some of the best teaching moments start as a question or concern in the heart of a class member. However, if you seem too busy, too judgmental, or too focused on covering your prepared material, those you teach may not feel comfortable sharing their questions or concerns with you. Be willing to set aside what you have planned, as prompted by the Spirit, and listen to class members’ concerns. Let them know through your words and actions that you are eager to hear them.

**Questions to ponder.** Do those I teach know that I am interested in their questions? How can I better communicate my interest?

**Scriptural example.** What do I learn from Mark 5:22–34; 6:30–44; and 3 Nephi 17 about the Savior’s willingness to teach and bless people when they needed His help?

### FOR THE DISCUSSION LEADER

#### Share and counsel together.

Begin by inviting teachers to share recent teaching experiences and ask questions related to teaching. Some of the best teaching moments may come during this part of the meeting.

**Learn together.** Invite teachers to discuss one or more of the ideas in this section.

**Practice.** Ask teachers to make a list of commonplace activities they did during the past week (such as completing household chores, playing a game with family members,

watching a movie or sporting event, or going grocery shopping). Invite them to discuss how these activities could be used as teaching opportunities.

**Prepare.** Decide together on a topic for the next meeting, and invite teachers to prepare.

## Make a Plan

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The Lord commanded, “Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing” (D&C 88:119). Organizing a teaching plan before you teach can help you identify the gospel principles you feel will best meet your learners’ needs and identify resources to support those principles. It can also allow the Spirit to direct you in an unhurried environment. Having done this work in advance, you will be able to focus on your learners while you are teaching, rather than on what you will say next. You will also be better prepared to respond to spiritual promptings to adapt your plans if needed.

### **FOCUS ON PRINCIPLES THAT WILL BLESS YOUR LEARNERS**

The central focus of your teaching plan should be the needs of the people you are teaching and the gospel principles that will meet those needs. As you prayerfully study the scripture passages and prophetic teachings that you are assigned to teach, ask yourself, “What do I find here that will be especially meaningful to my class members?” For example, if you are teaching about the Atonement of Jesus Christ, you may feel that some class members have trouble forgiving themselves even after they have repented. You may feel prompted to

share with them this promise in Isaiah 1:18: “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.”

Let the Spirit guide your planning. He can lead you to scripture passages, prophetic teachings, and ideas in the lesson manual that will be meaningful to class members in ways that you may not have anticipated.

**Questions to ponder.** What principles will I be teaching in upcoming lessons? Which of these principles do I feel could best meet the needs of my class members?

**Scriptural example:** Alma 39–42 contains Alma’s counsel to his son

Corianton. What needs did Alma perceive in his son? What principles did he feel impressed to teach? What can I learn from Alma’s example?

### **FIND RESOURCES THAT SUPPORT THE PRINCIPLES**

As you make your teaching plan, look for ways to help learners understand the gospel principles you plan to discuss. The scriptures and the words of living prophets are your primary resources—read them before going to supplementary material. What scriptures help teach the principle? Was the principle addressed in a recent general conference talk? What questions could you ask that would help





learners ponder and apply the principle? Are there any other resources that could help support the principle—stories, object lessons, pictures, videos, hymns, or children’s songs? Many such resources are suggested in Church curriculum materials, in Church magazines, or on LDS.org. For each principle you will teach, list a few questions and supporting resources you could use. It may not be necessary—or possible—to use all of them, but it is good to be prepared to use them just in case.

**Questions to ponder.** What resources have I seen other teachers use to effectively teach a gospel principle? What resources could I use?

**Scriptural example.** What impresses me about the way the Savior clarified a principle in Luke 10:25–37?

See also the section “Use Music, Stories, and Art to Teach Doctrine” in this resource.

### **BE WILLING TO ADAPT**

Prayerful preparation and organized lesson plans can greatly bless your students, but you should be willing to adapt your lesson plan during class time as the Spirit instructs. Pay careful attention to the comments and questions of those you teach; the Spirit may prompt you to spend more time on a certain principle than you had

planned or to address a concern that is not part of your lesson plan.

Remember that the spiritual growth of the individuals you are teaching is more important than presenting everything you have planned. And much of that spiritual growth will happen outside the classroom. Plan questions that encourage learners to share what they are learning on their own and in their families. The more diligently you have studied in advance, the more prepared you will be to adapt to and support the needs of individuals.

**Question to ponder.** What can I do to make sure I heed the Spirit’s promptings as I am teaching?

**Scriptural example.** What do I learn from Doctrine and Covenants 11:21 about the role of the Spirit in teaching?

### **IDEAS FOR TEACHING**

As you make your plan, consider what you will invite class members to do to help them learn from the scriptures and the words of latter-day prophets. Below are some ideas that you can apply to almost any scripture or topic. Other ideas can be found in Church curriculum materials. The best ideas, however, will often come to you by the Spirit as you consider the needs of those you teach.

Class members could:

- Make a list of principles or truths they find in a scripture passage. What words, phrases, and examples in the verses help them understand these principles?
- Look for answers to questions in a scripture passage or general conference talk.
- Share how they would teach a principle to their family or friends. How would they teach the principle to a child? To someone of another faith?
- Compare two or more scripture stories or scripture passages. What insights do they gain from this comparison?
- Find and sing hymns about a gospel principle.
- Summarize a scripture passage in their own words.
- Match verses to related pictures. How do these pictures help them better understand the scripture passage?
- Role-play a situation related to a gospel principle.
- View Church-produced media related to the principle, such as DVDs or video clips found on LDS.org.
- Explain how a picture or object relates to a gospel principle.

## SAMPLE TEACHING PLAN

There are many ways to organize a teaching plan. Use what works best for you and the individuals you are teaching. Below is one possible approach.

**Invite sharing:** You could begin by encouraging class members to share thoughts and experiences with each other. They might share insights they have had while reading the scriptures, experiences they have had with applying principles taught in the scriptures, or questions they have about this week's topic.

**Teach the doctrine:** Think of ways you can help class members discover the truths of the gospel for themselves. It will help to organize your thoughts and materials in advance. For example, if your topic was the restoration of the priesthood, you could approach it as follows:

Principles	Supporting scriptures	Questions	Teaching aids
When He established His Church, Jesus Christ gave priesthood authority to His Apostles.	Matthew 10:1; Acts 2:37–47; Hebrews 5:4	What do these scriptures teach you about the importance of priesthood authority?	Picture of Christ ordaining His Twelve Apostles
Because of widespread wickedness, including the killing of many of the Apostles, the Lord took priesthood authority from the earth.	Amos 8:11–12; Matthew 24:9–11; Acts 20:29–30; 2 Thessalonians 2:1–4; Mormon 1:13–14	What evidences of the Apostasy have you seen in the world?	Analogy: Suppose you are in a room that is illuminated by 12 lights and the lights are turned off one at a time. How does this relate to the Apostles and the loss of priesthood authority?
The priesthood was restored to Joseph Smith by those who held it anciently.	D&C 13:1; 27:12–13; 110; Joseph Smith—History 1:68–72	As you have studied the restoration of the priesthood, what has the Spirit taught you?	Video: "Restoration of the Priesthood" (LDS.org)
Today the blessings of the priesthood are available to all.	D&C 1:20; 84:19–20	How has the priesthood blessed you and your family?	"Hark, All Ye Nations!" <i>Hymns</i> , no. 264

**Encourage application:** At some point during the lesson, encourage class members to reflect on the spiritual feelings they have had during class and what they feel inspired to do because of what they have learned.

**Encourage further learning:** It is often helpful to let class members know what they will be discussing the following week and invite them to prepare in advance at home.

## FOR THE DISCUSSION LEADER

**Share and counsel together.** Begin by inviting teachers to share recent teaching experiences and ask questions related to teaching.

**Learn together.** Invite teachers to discuss one or more of the ideas in this section.

**Practice.** As a group, work together to prepare a sample plan for an upcoming lesson, referring to the relevant teaching manual as appropriate. You could use the sample plan in this section or another plan. Invite teachers to make a lesson

plan for their next lesson and bring it to the next teacher council meeting to receive feedback from the other teachers.

**Prepare.** Decide together on a topic for the next meeting, and invite teachers to prepare.

## Teach the Doctrine

(*Handbook 2: Administering the Church* [2010], 5.5.4)

The Savior said, “My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me” (John 7:16). The Father’s doctrine consists of eternal truths that, when consistently applied, lead to exaltation. Central among these truths is the Savior’s Atonement and its essential role in the plan of salvation. The Savior has commanded us to “teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom” (D&C 88:77). As we do, the Holy Ghost bears witness of the truthfulness of the doctrine and inspires people to live it. Doctrine does not change—rather, it changes us, and it changes those we teach.

### CENTER YOUR TEACHING ON THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

President Boyd K. Packer taught, “True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior.”<sup>1</sup> As a gospel teacher, you can trust that “the virtue of the word of God” has a “more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than . . . anything else” (Alma 31:5). If you focus on simply entertaining learners or keeping them occupied, you may miss out on teaching eternal truths that will help learners make meaningful changes in their lives.

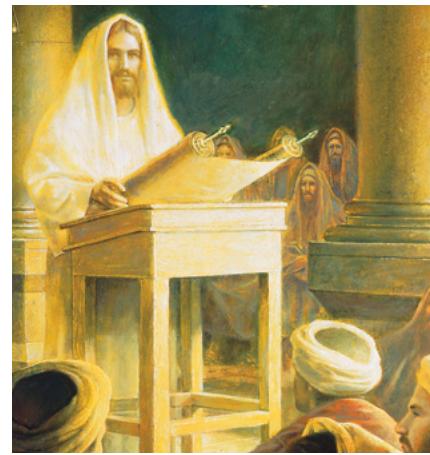
One way to ensure that you are teaching true doctrine is to consider how what you are teaching relates to the doctrine of Christ, which is summarized in 2 Nephi 31 and 3 Nephi 27:16–21 and found throughout the scriptures. Continually ask yourself, “How will what I am teaching help my class members build faith in Christ, repent, make and keep covenants with God, and receive the Holy Ghost?”

**Questions to ponder.** How will those I teach be blessed as they live the doctrine of Christ? (see 3 Nephi 27:16–21). What will be the eternal consequences if they do not live the doctrine of Christ?

**Scriptural example.** According to Mosiah 5:2–5, what caused King Benjamin’s people to change? What did King Benjamin teach them? (see Mosiah 2–5). How do the things that King Benjamin taught relate to the doctrine of Christ?

### TEACH WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE PLAN OF SALVATION

Sometimes learners—especially youth—wonder how gospel principles relate to them or why they should obey certain commandments. However, if they understand Heavenly Father’s eternal plan for the happiness of His children, the reasons for gospel principles and commandments become clearer and the motivation to obey increases. For example, someone who understands the doctrine of eternal marriage and our potential



to become like Heavenly Father has reasons to obey the law of chastity that are more powerful than the desire to avoid unwanted pregnancy or diseases.

**Questions to ponder.** What principles will I be teaching in upcoming lessons? How can I help class members understand those principles in the context of the plan of salvation?

**Scriptural example.** Alma taught that God gave His people commandments

### SUPPORT GOSPEL LEARNING IN THE HOME

If the people you teach learn gospel doctrines only in your class, they will not have the spiritual nourishment they need. The most important

thing you can do to help learners build their faith and become more Christlike is inspire them to learn from the scriptures on their own

and in their families. For ideas, see “Support Gospel Learning in the Home” in this resource.

after teaching them the “plan of redemption” (see Alma 12:32). How can I apply this pattern as I teach?

### USE THE SCRIPTURES AND THE WORDS OF LATTER-DAY PROPHETS

The Lord has commanded us to “teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom” (D&C 88:77) and to use the scriptures to “teach the principles of [His] gospel” (D&C 42:12). The scriptures and words of latter-day prophets and apostles are the source of the truths we teach. At every opportunity, inspire those you teach to turn to the word of God for guidance, answers to questions, and support. If learners will “feast upon the words of Christ,” the doctrine they find there will “tell [them] all things what [they] should do” (2 Nephi 32:3).

**Questions to ponder.** How can I inspire those I teach to “feast upon” the word of God? How can I help them use footnotes, the Topical Guide, and other study aids to better understand the scriptures?

**Scriptural example.** What examples can I find of the Savior using the scriptures to teach and testify of gospel truths? (see, for example, Matthew 12:1–8 and Luke 4:16–21).

### HELP LEARNERS LIKEN THE SCRIPTURES TO THEMSELVES

Nephi said, “I did liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit

and learning” (1 Nephi 19:23). The same gospel truths that inspired and sustained Abraham, Esther, Lehi, and Joseph Smith can help those you teach face modern challenges. To help learners liken scriptures to themselves, invite them to insert their names into a verse or ponder how an account in the scriptures relates to their lives.

**Question to ponder.** What scripture passages have given me insight into a struggle I have faced?

**Scriptural example.** How did the Savior liken the scriptures to the people He taught? (see, for example, Luke 4:24–32).

### HELP LEARNERS FIND SCRIPTURAL TRUTHS

Before learners read a scripture passage in class, consider asking them to look for specific truths taught in the passage. Sometimes such truths are stated clearly, and sometimes they are implied. For example, you could say, “As you read Doctrine and Covenants 11:12–14, look for truths you learn about the Holy Ghost.”

**Question to ponder.** What can I do to help class members learn how to find gospel truths in the scriptures?

**Scriptural example.** Why did the Savior want the Nephites to search the scriptures and read the words of the prophets? (see 3 Nephi 23:1–5).



► See also the video “Searching the Scriptures” (LDS.org).

### TESTIFY OF TRUE DOCTRINE

The Savior taught “as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (Matthew 7:29). The Savior’s personal testimony gave authority to His words and helped those He taught recognize that He was teaching eternal truths. As you bear testimony of true doctrine, the Spirit will confirm the truth of the doctrine in the hearts of those you teach.

**Question to ponder.** How has my testimony been strengthened by another person’s powerful witness?

**Scriptural example.** What do I learn from Alma’s example of bearing testimony of truth? (see Alma 5:43–48).

1. Boyd K. Packer, “Do Not Fear,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2004, 79.

### FOR THE DISCUSSION LEADER

**Share and counsel together.** Begin by inviting teachers to share recent teaching experiences and ask questions related to teaching.

**Learn together.** Invite teachers to discuss one or more of the ideas in this section. Do not try to cover everything in one meeting.

**Practice.** Invite teachers to share a few of their favorite scriptures.

Discuss various ways in which each scripture could be likened to the lives of learners.

**Prepare.** Decide together on a topic for the next meeting, and invite teachers to prepare.

## Use Music, Stories, and Art to Teach Doctrine

When God created the earth, He filled it with a variety of animals, plants, and landscapes to give our lives richness and beauty. Look for ways you can add variety to your efforts to teach the gospel. Doing so will add richness and beauty to the experience of learners, and it will also help you reach learners with varying needs. Consider how using music, stories, pictures, and other forms of art can invite the Spirit, clarify gospel principles in memorable ways, and help learners relate the gospel to their everyday lives. Remember that such resources should not be the focus of the lesson, but only tools to help you teach the doctrines of the gospel more effectively.

### USE MUSIC TO INVITE THE SPIRIT AND TEACH DOCTRINE

The First Presidency has said, “Music has boundless powers for moving [us] toward greater spirituality and devotion to the gospel.”<sup>1</sup> Listening to or singing a hymn can create a reverent feeling and invite the Spirit. Hymns can also teach gospel principles. For example, “I Believe in Christ” (*Hymns*, no. 134) or the Hallelujah Chorus by George Frideric Handel could inspire a discussion of the Savior’s divine roles and titles. Consider how you can make music part of your lessons; for example, you could play a recording of a hymn or invite a family or some Primary children to sing in your class.

**Questions to ponder.** How has sacred music affected my testimony? How might it bless those I teach?

**Scriptural example.** What are some possible reasons Jesus and His disciples sang a hymn before they departed for Gethsemane? (see Matthew 26:30; see also Colossians 3:16; D&C 25:12).

### USE STORIES AND EXAMPLES TO TEACH GOSPEL PRINCIPLES

The Savior often told stories and parables to help His listeners understand how gospel principles applied to their everyday lives. His teachings are rich with references to fish, seeds, keys, cups, and many other everyday objects. As you prepare to teach, think of examples and stories from your own life and from the everyday lives of your class members that can make gospel principles come alive. You might discuss, for example, how the Holy Ghost is like a compass, a flashlight, or a warm blanket. Uplifting quotations from wholesome literature can also enrich a lesson. As often as possible, invite learners to share their own stories and experiences.

**Questions to ponder.** What experiences from my life have helped me to understand gospel principles? How can I encourage learners to share their experiences?

**Scriptural example.** Why did the Savior use parables such as those found in Matthew 13:44–48?

### USE ART TO ENGAGE LEARNERS

Art, including pictures, videos, and dramatizations, can help engage learners—especially visual learners—and make scriptural accounts more memorable. The art you use should be more than decoration; it should help learners understand gospel doctrines. The *Gospel Art Book* and the LDS Media Library on LDS.org contain many images and videos that can help learners visualize concepts or events. The painting *The Second Coming* by Harry Anderson, for example, can help learners ponder how they will feel when the Savior returns. Dramatizing the parable of the prodigal son can help learners understand what it means to forgive someone who has strayed.

**Question to ponder.** How can I use art to enhance the learning experience for class members in upcoming lessons?

**Scriptural example.** How did the Savior use visual images as He taught? (see, for example, Matthew 6:28–30; 22:16–21; Mark 12:41–44).

1. “First Presidency Preface,” *Hymns*, x.

### FOR THE DISCUSSION LEADER

**Share and counsel together.** Begin by inviting teachers to share recent teaching experiences and ask questions related to teaching.

**Learn together.** Invite teachers to discuss one or more of the ideas in this section.

**Practice.** To model the principles taught in this section, look for ways to include music, stories, and art in your discussion. For example, before the meeting, you could invite teachers to come prepared to share music, stories, or artwork that they have used or could use to teach a gospel principle. After the

teachers have shared, ask them to discuss how what they have shared might support the principle they are teaching and enhance the learning experience for those they teach.

**Prepare.** Decide together on a topic for the next meeting, and invite teachers to prepare.

## Respond to Difficult Questions with Faith

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A good teacher encourages learners to ask questions, but sometimes a question may arise that is difficult to answer. The Lord has commanded, “Treasure up in your minds continually the words of life,” and “declare whatsoever thing ye declare . . . in the spirit of meekness.” His promise is that when you do these things, you will receive “in the very moment, what ye shall say” (D&C 84:85; 100:6–7).

### PREPARE IN ADVANCE

As you prepare to teach, pray for help to identify questions that might arise in the minds of class members. Search the scriptures and other Church resources, and consider how you might respond. Remember that the best preparation comes from seeking the Lord’s help.

**Questions to ponder.** As I think about my next teaching opportunity, what difficult questions might learners have? What can I do to prepare?

**Scriptural example.** How does the promise in 2 Nephi 32:3 relate to me as a teacher?

### REFER TO OFFICIAL CHURCH RESOURCES

The best sources for answers to difficult gospel questions are the scriptures, the words of living prophets, and other official Church publications. For example, the Church has published Gospel Topics essays to help answer questions about Church history and controversial issues (see lds.org/topics). Become familiar with official Church resources, and encourage



### FOR THE DISCUSSION LEADER

**Share and counsel together.** Begin by inviting teachers to share recent teaching experiences and ask questions related to teaching. Strive to create an environment where teachers feel comfortable and safe when asking questions.

**Learn together.** Invite teachers to discuss one or more of the ideas in this section.

**Practice.** Before the meeting, invite teachers to bring difficult gospel questions they have heard from

those they teach. As a group, discuss appropriate ways to respond to these questions.

**Prepare.** Decide together on a topic for the next meeting, and invite teachers to prepare.



those who have questions to study them as well.

**Questions to ponder.** What questions have my class members asked in the past? What Church resources can help them?

**Scriptural example.** How can I follow the counsel in Doctrine and Covenants 88:118?

#### **INVITE LEARNERS TO HELP ANSWER QUESTIONS**

In many cases, it may be appropriate to invite learners to help each other find answers to their questions. When prompted by the Spirit, you may decide to do this even if you feel that you know the answer. When you ask learners to search the scriptures and other Church resources for answers to gospel questions, you provide them with excellent learning opportunities.

**Question to ponder.** Who in my class could provide helpful insights if a difficult question arose?

**Scriptural example.** How can I follow the pattern in Doctrine and Covenants 88:122 as I help learners find answers to questions?

► See also the video “Answering a Class Member’s Question” ([LDS.org](https://www.lds.org)).

#### **ADMIT WHEN YOU DO NOT KNOW**

It should not surprise you that there are some unanswered gospel questions; the answers to some difficult questions have yet to be revealed. While it is natural to want to answer every question, in some situations it is appropriate to simply say, “I don’t know. Let’s study that question on our own this week, and we can discuss it next time.” In such situations, point learners back to the more important

gospel truths that we do know, such as the Savior’s Atonement, the plan of salvation, and priesthood power. Bear your testimony of the essential principles of the gospel. Help learners understand Elder Jeffrey R. Holland’s declaration, “In this Church, what we know will always trump what we do not know.”<sup>1</sup>

**Question to ponder.** What can I do to build faith in those who have unanswered gospel questions?

**Scriptural example.** What do I learn from the following scriptures about unanswered gospel questions? Isaiah 55:8–9; John 16:12; 2 Corinthians 5:7; 1 Nephi 11:16–17; Doctrine and Covenants 101:32–33; Moses 5:6; Articles of Faith 1:9.

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Lord, I Believe,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 94.

## Teach the Children

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When the resurrected Savior visited the Nephites, “he did teach and minister unto the children . . . , and he did loose their tongues, and they did speak unto their fathers great and marvelous things, even greater than he had revealed unto the people” (3 Nephi 26:14). The Savior’s actions set an example for you as you teach, care for, and influence the faith and conversion of children (see 3 Nephi 17:23).

### SUPPORT PARENTS

Parents are the most important gospel teachers for their children—they have both the main responsibility and the greatest power to influence their children (see Deuteronomy 6:6–7). As you teach children at church, prayerfully seek ways to support their parents in their essential role. For example, you could talk to parents about the needs and interests of their children, you could share with them what their children are learning in your class, and you could find out how you might support parents’ efforts as you teach.

**Question to ponder.** In my efforts to teach children at church, how could I build on the experiences they are having at home?

**Scriptural example.** What does the Spirit teach me as I consider the examples of faithful parents in the Book of Mormon? (see, for example, 1 Nephi 1:1; Enos 1:1–3; Alma 56:45–48).

### USE A VARIETY OF TEACHING METHODS

Not all children are alike, and each child is developing rapidly. Your

#### USING ALL THE SENSES

Most children (and adults) learn best when multiple senses are involved. Find ways to help the children use their senses of sight, hearing, and touch as they learn. In some situations, you may even find ways to include their senses of smell and taste!

efforts to teach children will be most effective as you use a variety of teaching methods, such as the following:

- **Stories.** Gospel principles are easier for children to understand when the principles are taught using a story. Stories help children see how the gospel applies to everyday life. The stories in the scriptures, in particular, teach doctrine powerfully—you could use Joseph Smith’s account of his First Vision, for example, to teach about prayer, revelation, overcoming opposition, and the nature of the Godhead. You could use stories from your own life or from Church magazines. When teaching young children, plan ways to involve them in the story; for example, they could hold pictures, repeat phrases, or act out parts.

- **Visual aids.** Visuals such as pictures, videos, and objects can help children better understand and remember scripture stories and the principles they teach. Many pictures and videos can be found in the LDS Media Library on LDS.org.

- **Music.** Hymns and songs can help children feel God’s love, feel the Spirit, and learn gospel truths. The melodies, rhythms, and simple rhymes can help children remember gospel truths for years to come. As you sing with children, help them discover and understand the principles taught in the songs. Most of the songs in the *Children’s Songbook* and the Church hymnbook include scripture references that you can use to connect the song to doctrine taught in the scriptures.

**Question to ponder.** What stories, objects, or songs can I use to make a gospel principle easier for a child to understand?

**Scriptural example.** What do I learn about the Savior’s way of teaching in Matthew 18:1–5?

► See also the video “Primary Music Leader” (LDS.org).

### GIVE THE CHILDREN OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPRESS THEIR CREATIVITY

As sons and daughters of God, children are born to create. When you invite children to create something related to a gospel principle, you help them better understand the principle, and you give them a tangible reminder of what they have learned. They can also use their creation to share what they learned with others. As you teach children, allow them to build, draw, color, write, and create. These things are more than fun activities—they are essential to learning. Each issue of the *Liahona* or *Friend* magazine includes creative activities for children.

**Question to ponder.** How could I include creative activities as I teach?

### ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO ASK QUESTIONS

Children are naturally curious, and they have many questions. Strive to see their questions as opportunities, not as distractions or impediments to your lesson. Children’s questions are an indication that they are ready to learn. Such questions give you valuable insights into what the children are thinking, what concerns they



have, and how they are responding to the things they are learning. Help them see that the answers to their questions can be found in the scriptures and the words of living prophets.

**Question to ponder.** How can I show the children in my class that I value their questions and curiosity?

**Scriptural example.** How was young Joseph Smith blessed by an invitation to ask questions? (see Joseph Smith—History 1:10–20).

#### INVITE CHILDREN TO SHARE WHAT THEY KNOW

When children learn something new, they naturally want to share it with others. Encourage this desire by giving children opportunities to teach gospel principles to each other, their family members, and their friends. Also ask them to share with you their thoughts,

feelings, and experiences related to the principles you are teaching. You will find that they have insights that are simple, pure, and powerful.

**Question to ponder.** What gospel truths have I learned from a child?

**Scriptural example.** What do I learn from the Savior’s example in 3 Nephi 26:14?

#### ADDRESS DISRUPTIONS WITH LOVE

Sometimes a child acts in ways that disrupt the learning of others in the class. When this happens, be patient, loving, and understanding about the challenges the child may be facing. He or she may just need more opportunities to participate in the lesson in positive ways—holding a picture, drawing something on the board, or reading a scripture.

If a child continues to be disruptive, it may be helpful to speak to him or her privately. In a spirit of love and patience, explain your expectations and your confidence that he or she can meet them. You might want to invite the child’s parents or a member of the Primary presidency to join you in this conversation.

If the child causing disruptions has special needs, talk to the ward or stake disability specialist or visit [disabilities.lds.org](https://www.lds.org) to find out how you can better meet those needs.

**Question to ponder.** Are there any changes I could make to my teaching approach that might help a disruptive child feel loved?

**Scriptural example.** What do Proverbs 15:1; Doctrine and Covenants 18:10; and 121:41–44 teach me about addressing disruptions?

#### FOR THE DISCUSSION LEADER

**Share and counsel together.** Begin by inviting teachers to share recent teaching experiences and ask questions related to teaching.

**Learn together.** Invite teachers to discuss one or more of the ideas

in this section. Do not try to cover everything in one meeting.

**Practice.** Invite teachers to role-play teaching a gospel principle to a child, using the suggestions in this section. You might consider inviting some

Primary children into the meeting to be taught. Afterward, give teachers time to share feedback.

**Prepare.** Decide together on a topic for the next meeting, and invite teachers to prepare.

## Teach the Youth

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Many experiences recorded in the scriptures make clear that God has confidence in the spiritual abilities of young people. Samuel was just a boy when he heard the Lord's voice in the temple. Mormon was only 10 years old when he demonstrated the spiritual gifts that qualified him for his sacred mission. Joseph Smith was 14 when he was trusted with the revelation that initiated the Restoration. And the Savior Himself was 12 when He was found in the temple, teaching and engaging in His Father's work. If you are a teacher of youth, you have the opportunity to help them fulfill the great work that Heavenly Father has prepared them to do.

### SUPPORT PARENTS

The Lord has given parents the primary responsibility for teaching their children. Therefore, as you strive to teach youth in the Savior's way, your efforts should support the efforts of parents. Share with parents of youth what you are teaching. Counsel with them to learn about the needs of the young people in your class and the best ways to help meet those needs. You could communicate with parents through regular emails or text messages, or you may want to meet with them from time to time.

Do what you can to strengthen the relationships between youth and their parents. Young people may sometimes feel most comfortable coming to you when they need advice, but as much as possible, encourage them to also seek counsel from the most important teachers in their lives—their parents.

**Question to ponder.** What are some appropriate ways in which I could work together with the parents of the youth I teach?



**Scriptural example.** What impressions do I have concerning the youth I teach as I read about Helaman's 2,000 young soldiers? (see Alma 53:17–21; 56:47; 57:21).

► See also the teaching demonstration in the video "Strengthen Our Families" (LDS.org).

### SET HIGH EXPECTATIONS, AND PATIENTLY HELP THE YOUTH FULFILL THEM

In some ways, teaching youth is different from teaching adults. Youth often have less experience with the

gospel and may feel less comfortable making comments in class. They may have short attention spans and require a greater variety of teaching methods, such as object lessons, real-life stories, and visual aids. Some youth are still learning what is acceptable in class and may try to push the limits of good behavior. Sometimes they are unsure of their beliefs and unsure of themselves.

However, youth also have the potential to do remarkable things in the Lord's service. Elder David A. Bednar said: "I believe this generation of

### FOR THE DISCUSSION LEADER

**Share and counsel together.** Begin by inviting teachers to share recent teaching experiences and ask questions related to teaching.

**Learn together.** Invite teachers to discuss one or more of the ideas

in this section. Do not try to cover everything in one meeting.

**Practice.** Invite teachers to role-play helping young people discover truth for themselves in the scriptures. How would they inspire the youth to

find truth without giving them all the answers? What counsel or advice can teachers give each other?

**Prepare.** Decide together on a topic for the next meeting, and invite teachers to prepare.

youth is more immersed in the scriptures, more deeply acquainted with the words of the prophets, and more prone to turn to the revelations for answers than any previous generation.<sup>1</sup> And President J. Reuben Clark Jr. shared similar confidence in the youth: “The youth of the Church are hungry for things of the Spirit; they are eager to learn the gospel, and they want it straight, undiluted.”<sup>2</sup>

If the youth sense that you trust them, their confidence in their divine potential will grow, and they will surprise you with what they can accomplish. Lovingly communicate that you know they can be responsible for their own learning and committed to keeping the Lord’s standards. Help them see a vision of what Heavenly Father knows they can become.

Of course, youth still have a lot to learn—just as we all do. Follow the Savior’s example by continuing to love and encourage them, patiently working with them, and never giving up on them.

**Questions to ponder.** What expectations do I have for the youth I teach? How do I express my confidence in them?

**Scriptural example.** What scriptures teach me about the Savior’s expectations for His disciples? (see, for example, Matthew 5:48; John 13:34–35; 14:12).

See also “Love Those You Teach” in this resource.

## GIVE YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES TO TEACH EACH OTHER

Youth teach each other all the time—they share experiences, help a friend understand a gospel principle, or set an example through their actions. Give them many opportunities to teach each other in class, for they often learn best from each other and from the experience of teaching. When you invite youth to teach, take the time to help them prepare appropriately. Share with them some of the principles in this resource, and explain what you do to prepare to teach. Consider this pattern: *explain* a principle that you want them to understand, *demonstrate* how to apply it, let them *practice* it, *evaluate* their efforts, and give them a chance to *practice again*.

In this way you will be helping the youth not just for one lesson but for a lifetime of teaching the gospel in the Savior’s way.

**Question to ponder.** Who in my class would benefit from an opportunity to teach? How can I help him or her to have a positive experience?

**Scriptural example.** As I read Luke 2:40–52, what does the Spirit teach me about the youth in my class?

► See also the video “Let Us Teach” (LDS.org).

## HELP YOUTH DEVELOP SPIRITUAL SELF-RELIANCE

To survive spiritually in these perilous times and to fulfill the Lord’s mission for them, the youth you teach will



need their own reserves of faith and testimony. They will need to know how to find strength during their trials and answers to their questions. They will not be able to rely on you or their parents.

As you teach, rather than simply imparting information, help the youth discover gospel truths for themselves in the scriptures and the words of the prophets. When they have questions, sometimes it is better to teach them how to find answers themselves, rather than answering the questions right away. For example, you could show them how to use the study aids in the scriptures or the Gospel Topics section of LDS.org. You could also share how you have sought and received personal revelation. Encourage them to develop a habit of daily prayer and meaningful scripture study. Through your words and example, teach them about the pure joy that comes from learning and living the gospel.

**Questions to ponder.** Do the youth I teach know what to do when they have questions or concerns about the gospel? How can I help them be more spiritually self-reliant?

**Scriptural example.** What does it mean to “build your foundation” on Jesus Christ? (Helaman 5:12). How can I help the youth do this?

## MAKE GOOD USE OF TECHNOLOGY

If the youth you teach have their own electronic devices, remember that these devices don’t have to be a distraction—they can actually be tools to enhance learning. Encourage the youth to look up scriptures and other Church resources on these devices in order to answer questions. You can also send messages and links to the youth during the week to help them prepare for upcoming lessons.

1. David A. Bednar, “A Reservoir of Living Water” (Church Educational System fireside for young adults, Feb. 4, 2007), 2, LDS.org.

2. J. Reuben Clark Jr., *The Charted Course of the Church in Education*, rev. ed. (1994), 3; see also lds.org/bc/content/ldsorg/manual/seminary/32709\_000.pdf, p. 3.

## Invite Diligent Learning

(*Handbook 2: Administering the Church* [2010], 5.5.4)

A true gospel teacher is not satisfied when learners simply listen to what he or she has to say. Learning the gospel is not meant to be a passive experience. It is an act of faith and diligent effort. When you prepare to teach, instead of thinking, “What will I do to teach?” ask yourself, “What will my class members do to learn? How will I help them discover the gospel for themselves? How will I inspire them to act?” Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shared the familiar saying, “Giving a man a fish feeds him for one meal. Teaching a man to fish feeds him for a lifetime.” He then taught, “As parents and gospel instructors, you and I are not in the business of distributing fish; rather, our work is to help [those we teach] learn ‘to fish’ and to become spiritually steadfast.”<sup>1</sup>

### ENCOURAGE LEARNING OUTSIDE OF CLASS

Gospel study once a week is not enough to fortify class members against the temptations and deceptions of the adversary. Gospel learning must be centered in daily efforts at home, including personal and family study. The things you say and do as a teacher can reinforce this principle. Give learners specific invitations to study the gospel outside of class, and regularly ask them to share what they are learning. For instance, you might invite all class members to come to class prepared to share a meaningful passage from an assigned reading. Or you could invite one class member to prepare to teach a portion of the lesson. Even young children can be given invitations to learn, with support of parents, outside of class.

An encouragement to learn at home should be more than just a reminder about a reading assignment. It should be motivating and inspiring. For example, you might say, “If you would like to improve your ability to

recognize the promptings of the Spirit, you will find valuable insights in Doctrine and Covenants 8–9. I invite you to read these sections before our next class.”

**Question to ponder.** How might I use class time differently because I see the home as the center of gospel learning?

**Scriptural example.** When Jesus taught the Nephites after His Resurrection, why do you think He instructed them to return home to ponder and pray about His words? (see 3 Nephi 17:2–3).

See also “Support Gospel Learning in the Home” in this resource.

### PUT RESPONSIBILITY ON LEARNERS

While a teacher’s role is important, learners are ultimately responsible for their own learning. Consider how you can help learners accept and fulfill this responsibility. For example, when a scripture is read in class, before sharing your insights, you could ask class members what they learn from the passage. Let them know that you aren’t looking for a specific answer but that you are sincerely interested in

### SCRIPTURE STUDY HELPS

The scripture footnotes, Topical Guide, and Bible Dictionary are valuable resources for helping us understand the scriptures. Consider this doctrinal insight from the entry on prayer in the Bible Dictionary: “The object of prayer is not to change the will of God but to secure for ourselves and for others blessings that God is already willing to grant but that are made conditional on our asking for them” (Bible Dictionary, “Prayer”).

what they are learning. You may find that the questions and insights that invite the Spirit come just as often from a diligent learner as from the teacher.

**Question to ponder.** What are some things I can do to help my class members take responsibility for their own learning?

**Scriptural example.** How did the Savior encourage His followers to take responsibility for their own learning? (see, for example, Luke 10:25–28; Ether 2:22–25).

### EXPRESS CONFIDENCE THROUGH HIGH EXPECTATIONS

Some learners are not confident in their ability to learn the gospel on their own. Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught, “Each [person] has access to the same scriptures and is entitled to the guidance of the same Holy Spirit.”<sup>2</sup> When you express confidence in your class members and testify that the Holy Ghost will teach them, you help them rise to the high expectations that the Lord has for gospel learners. Many of them will never know what they can achieve unless they receive invitations and encouragement from you to stretch themselves. Share with them this inspiring invitation from President Dieter F. Uchtdorf: “I invite you to . . . become experts in the doctrines of the gospel.”<sup>3</sup>

**Question to ponder.** What have others done to help me feel confident in my ability to learn the gospel?

**Scriptural example.** The Savior expressed His confidence in His disciples by giving them challenging but attainable invitations (see, for example, Luke 5:1–11). What can I do to follow His example?

### ENCOURAGE SHARING

When learners share what they are learning, they not only feel the Spirit and strengthen their own testimonies, but they also encourage other class members to discover truths for themselves. In addition to sharing what you have learned from your study, encourage learners to share. You might ask questions like “What truths stand out to you in these verses?” or “What do you learn about rescuing those who are lost as you read President Monson’s story?” Small children can share by drawing pictures or telling stories. Reserve time for student sharing in every lesson—in some cases, you may find that these discussions *are* the lesson.

**Question to ponder.** How can I encourage my class members to share what they are learning?

**Scriptural example:** Luke 10:1–9 records that the Savior sent His disciples to share what they had learned from Him. How did this experience bless them? (see verses 17–24).

### TEACH LEARNERS TO FIND ANSWERS IN THE SCRIPTURES

A person who knows how to draw meaning out of the scriptures and turns to them daily will be able to access divine guidance to overcome any challenge. Such a person will not be



dependent upon a teacher for spiritual strength. As you teach, ask questions that require learners to find answers in the scriptures. Even better, help them learn how to ask their own questions. Help them see that even though the scriptures were written many years ago, they contain the Lord’s answers to questions and problems we all face.

**Question to ponder.** What counsel could I give class members to help them have better experiences with finding answers in the scriptures?

**Scriptural example.** What do I learn from Nephi’s example in 1 Nephi 19:22–24 and 2 Nephi 25:1–4?

### INVITE LEARNERS TO RECORD IMPRESSIONS

Encourage learners to record the impressions they receive from the Holy Ghost as they study the gospel. For young children this may mean drawing a picture or sharing their thoughts with their parents. Teach learners that sometimes the Spirit will teach them things during a class discussion

that are never spoken aloud. Elder Richard G. Scott taught, “Write down in a secure place the important things you learn from the Spirit. You will find that as you write down precious impressions, often more will come. Also, the knowledge you gain will be available throughout your life.”<sup>4</sup>

**Question to ponder.** When have I been blessed by recording a spiritual impression?

**Scriptural example.** The Savior asked the Nephites to write down the things they were taught (see 3 Nephi 16:4; 23:4, 11; 27:23). What blessings have come from that commandment?

1. David A. Bednar, “Watching with All Perseverance,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2010, 42–43.
2. Bruce R. McConkie, “Finding Answers to Gospel Questions,” in *Charge to Religious Educators*, 3rd ed. (1994), 80; see also [lds.org/manual/teaching-seminary-preservice-readings-religion-370-471-and-475](https://www.lds.org/manual/teaching-seminary-preservice-readings-religion-370-471-and-475).
3. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Your Potential, Your Privilege,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 59.
4. Richard G. Scott, “To Acquire Knowledge and the Strength to Use It Wisely,” *Ensign*, June 2002, 32.

### FOR THE DISCUSSION LEADER

**Share and counsel together.** Begin by inviting teachers to share recent teaching experiences and ask questions. This could be an opportunity to model ways to invite diligent learning.

**Learn together.** Invite teachers to discuss one or more of the ideas in this section.

**Practice.** Before the meeting, assign each teacher to learn about a gospel principle and come to the meeting prepared to inspire the other teachers to learn about the principle.

How is this approach different from simply teaching others about the principle? How will it bless learners?

**Prepare.** Decide together on a topic for the next meeting, and invite teachers to prepare.

## Ask Inspired Questions

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The Savior asked questions that invited learners to think and feel deeply about the truths He taught. Our questions can similarly inspire learners to ponder gospel truths and find ways to apply them in their lives. An inspired question is an invitation to learners to discover gospel truths on their own and to evaluate their understanding of and commitment to those truths. Inspired questions can make learning the gospel a more engaging and personally meaningful experience.

### **ASK QUESTIONS THAT HELP LEARNERS GAIN BASIC KNOWLEDGE OF ETERNAL TRUTHS**

Before class members can discuss a scripture story or gospel principle, they need to understand it. Some of your questions should encourage learners to search the scriptures to gain a basic knowledge of a story or principle. Such questions often have specific answers, but it is usually best to let the learners discover the answers for themselves. For example, if you were studying Matthew 26:36–46, you could ask, “What details do you find in these verses that describe the Savior’s experience in the Garden of Gethsemane? What did He do for us there?” Or, if you are teaching young children, you could describe the Savior’s experience in Gethsemane in your own words and then ask the children to tell you what Jesus did there.

These discussions should go beyond just the details of the story, as important as they are. Ask questions that help your class members discover gospel principles—the eternal, life-changing truths in the scriptures.

**Questions to ponder.** What scripture stories or principles do my class

members need to understand in an upcoming lesson? What questions could I ask to help them gain a basic understanding from the scriptures?

**Scriptural example.** What do I learn from the questions the Savior asked in Luke 10:25–28?

### **ASK QUESTIONS THAT TOUCH THE HEART AND MIND**

Once learners have basic knowledge about a story or principle, ask questions that help them ponder its meaning so that the story or principle can touch their hearts and minds. You might ask learners to share how they feel about a scripture passage, how the people in the scriptures may have felt, or how the truths in the passage relate to our lives. Because responses to these questions often rely on the feelings and experiences of the learners, the questions usually do not have just one correct answer. Often these questions begin with phrases like “in your opinion” or “how do you feel.” For example, you could ask, “How do you think the Apostles might have felt as they walked to the Garden of Gethsemane with the Savior? How do you feel about what Jesus did there? How

are our lives blessed by the Savior’s suffering in the garden?”

**Question to ponder.** How might questions like those above inspire learners to make changes in their lives?

**Scriptural example.** When did the Savior or others in the scriptures ask questions that inspired heartfelt pondering? (see, for example, Matthew 16:13–15; John 1:37–38).

► See also the video “Ask Us Questions” ([LDS.org](https://LDS.org)).

### **ASK QUESTIONS THAT INVITE LEARNERS TO ACT**

Some questions prompt learners to apply what they have learned and commit themselves to live the gospel more fully. In most cases, these questions should invite learners to listen to promptings from the Spirit about what they should do. For example, you might ask, “As we have discussed the Savior’s suffering in Gethsemane, what spiritual impressions have you received?” or “What will you do differently because of what you learned today?” These are usually not discussion questions; they are for personal reflection. Learners should share their answers only if they feel comfortable doing so.

**Question to ponder.** How have questions asked by inspired teachers deepened my commitment to Jesus Christ?

**Scriptural example.** What do I learn from the way Alma invited his people to be baptized? (see Mosiah 18:7–12).

See also “Invite Learners to Act” in this resource.

### **DON’T BE AFRAID OF SILENCE**

Good questions take time to answer. They require pondering, searching, and inspiration. The time you spend waiting for answers to a question can be a sacred time of pondering. Avoid the temptation to end this time too soon by answering your own question or moving on to something else. Tell learners that you will give them time to ponder before they answer.

## ASK QUESTIONS THAT INVITE LEARNERS TO BEAR TESTIMONY

Asking questions that encourage learners to bear testimony of the principles being taught can be a powerful way to invite the Spirit. As learners ponder these questions, they will recognize times when they have seen the Lord's hand in their lives. Their testimonies—and the testimonies of others in the class—will grow as the Spirit bears witness of the truth. To invite testimonies, you might ask questions such as "How have you come to know that Jesus Christ atoned for your sins?" or "How have you come to appreciate what the Savior did for us in Gethsemane?" or, if you are teaching young children, "How do you feel about Jesus?"

**Questions to ponder.** What has prompted members of my class to bear their testimonies? How can I encourage them to testify?

**Scriptural example.** What effect did King Benjamin's question in Mosiah 5:1 have on his people? (see also verses 2–5). How can I apply this example as I teach?

## ASK QUESTIONS THAT ENCOURAGE SELF-EVALUATION

When Alma preached to the people of Zarahemla, he asked introspective questions like these: "Have ye spiritually been born of God? . . . Have ye experienced this mighty change in your hearts?" (Alma 5:14). You might ask similar questions to encourage



learners to evaluate their behavior and commitment to the gospel—for example, "Do you have the faith to pay tithing?" or "Do you tell your family that you love them?" Tell learners not to answer these questions out loud; the purpose of such questions is to help learners privately evaluate their own behavior and commitment to the gospel.

**Question to ponder.** When has an inspired question helped me evaluate my spiritual progress and commitment? What questions could I ask to encourage self-evaluation in the people I teach?

**Scriptural example.** As I read John 21:15–17, what stands out to me about the questions Jesus Christ asked Peter?

## ASK QUESTIONS THAT ASSESS UNDERSTANDING

To determine whether class members understand a principle, try asking a question like "What have you learned about the Atonement of Jesus Christ?" A question that invites learners to state a gospel principle in their own words—especially if asked at the beginning of class—can help you assess how much time you need to spend studying that principle in class.

**Question to ponder.** What are some other ways I can assess what class members understand?

**Scriptural example.** How did Ammon assess King Lamoni's understanding? (see Alma 18:24–36).

## FOR THE DISCUSSION LEADER

**Share and counsel together.** Begin by inviting teachers to share recent teaching experiences and ask questions related to teaching.

**Learn together.** Invite teachers to discuss one or more of the ideas in this section. Do not try to cover everything in one meeting.

**Practice.** Ask teachers (individually or in small groups) to follow the guidelines in this section and write a few questions that they think could benefit class members during an upcoming lesson. (It may be helpful to give teachers this invitation a few days before the meeting so they

can come prepared.) Invite teachers to share their questions with each other and provide feedback.

**Prepare.** Decide together on a topic for the next meeting, and invite teachers to prepare.

## Lead Inspired Discussions

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When the Savior taught, He did more than just share information. He gave His disciples opportunities to ask questions and share their testimonies. His pattern for teaching and learning invites us to “teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom” so that “all may be edified of all, and that every man may have an equal privilege” (D&C 88:77, 122). As a teacher, you can encourage uplifting discussions enriched by learners’ experiences and testimonies. Even small children often have much to contribute. A robust discussion is not your primary goal as a teacher, but it can support that goal—to help learners increase their faith in Jesus Christ and become more like Him.

### CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT THAT ENCOURAGES DISCUSSION

Church classes and meetings provide Latter-day Saints with opportunities to strengthen each other by sharing thoughts, experiences, and testimonies. The environment you create in a classroom can help to encourage these kinds of interactions. Your words, your actions—even the setup of the room, including the lighting and arrangement of the chairs—can help establish a spirit of mutual respect and active learning.

**Question to ponder.** What can I change about the environment in my classroom to encourage more edifying discussions?

**Scriptural example.** As recorded in John 21:8–12, what did Jesus do to prepare an environment in which He could effectively teach His disciples? How can I follow His example?

► See also the video “We Share” ([LDS.org](#)).

### ASK QUESTIONS THAT ENCOURAGE PONDERING

A good discussion often begins with a good question—one that invites people to think deeply about the gospel. For example, you might ask, “What doctrinal truths are taught in Joseph Smith’s account of the First Vision?” or “How has Joseph Smith’s First Vision made a difference in your life?”

When asking this type of question, give learners time to ponder their responses. Sometimes writing a question on the board in advance can encourage pondering. You could even let learners know that you want them to take a little time to think before answering. Invite them to silently ask Heavenly Father to inspire them as they ponder the question. In these moments of quiet contemplation, the Spirit can touch hearts.

**Question to ponder.** What questions could I ask in my next lesson to inspire pondering and discussion?

**Scriptural example.** What do I learn from questions the Savior asked? (see, for example, Matthew 16:13–17; Luke 10:25–26).

### ASK INSPIRED QUESTIONS

The right questions can make the difference between an inspired discussion that builds faith and testimony and one that is merely interesting or even unproductive. For more information about asking inspired questions, see “Ask Inspired Questions” in this resource.

### ALLOW EVERYONE TO TAKE PART

Everyone has something to contribute, but sometimes not everyone gets a chance. Christlike teachers are interested in the learning of each person, not just the outspoken ones. Look for ways to increase the number of class members who can share their testimonies. For example:

- You could divide learners into pairs or small discussion groups, or even into smaller classes, as approved by the bishopric.
- You could invite class members to write their thoughts or feelings and ask a few to share what they wrote.
- You could say “Let’s hear from someone who hasn’t shared yet” or “That’s an interesting comment. What do the rest of you think?”
- If you are teaching children, you could think of a simple game that involves everyone.

You may feel inspired to invite a specific person to share—perhaps because he or she has a perspective that others could benefit from hearing. Consider asking questions that draw upon a person’s experiences and strengths, such as “What has your experience as a mother taught you about Christlike love?”

Don’t become so absorbed with the lesson that you forget to thank learners for their contributions. They need to know that you appreciate their willingness to share their insights and testimonies.



**Question to ponder.** Besides making comments or sharing experiences, what are some other ways in which class members can participate?

**Scriptural example.** How did the Savior include those who were often overlooked? (see Mark 10:13–16; John 4:3–42).

#### LET THE SPIRIT GUIDE

As you lead discussions, let the Holy Ghost guide you. Make sure that discussions are always positive and uplifting. Do not end an inspiring discussion too soon in order to cover all the lesson material, especially if you perceive that the discussion is meaningful to those you are teaching.

**Questions to ponder.** How can I tell when a discussion is being guided by the Spirit? How can I know when to end a discussion and move on?

**Scriptural example.** What do I learn from Doctrine and Covenants 50:21–22 about following the Spirit as I teach?

#### ASK FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

When someone shares a doctrinal insight or spiritual experience, you might sense that he or she—or someone else in the class—has more to share. Follow-up questions can prompt additional comments and lead to deeper insights. For example, you might ask, “Why is this principle important to you?” or “What other scripture passages teach this truth?”

**Question to ponder.** How could I encourage those I teach to think more deeply about the principles they are discussing?

**Scriptural example.** How did the Savior inspire His disciples to think more deeply about His teachings? (see, for example, Luke 24:13–32; John 21:15–18).

► See also the video “Asking Follow-Up Questions” ([LDS.org](#)).

#### LISTEN

Listening is an act of love. It requires that we care more about what is in another person’s heart than what is next on our agenda or outline. Ask Heavenly Father to help you understand what your class members say. As you pay careful attention to their spoken and unspoken messages, you will come to better understand their needs, their concerns, and their desires. The Spirit will help you know how to teach them, what follow-up questions to ask, and how to help meet their needs.

**Questions to ponder.** How do I know when someone is listening to me? How can I show class members that I am sincerely listening to them?

**Scriptural example.** What did Alma learn by listening to the poor Zoramites? (see Alma 32:4–8). How did what he learned affect his teaching?

See also *Preach My Gospel* (2004), 185–86.

#### FOR THE DISCUSSION LEADER

**Share and counsel together.** Begin by inviting teachers to share recent teaching experiences and ask questions related to teaching.

**Learn together.** Invite teachers to discuss one or more of the ideas in this section. Do not try to cover everything in one meeting.

**Practice.** Invite a teacher to practice leading the group in a brief discussion about a gospel principle that he or she will be teaching soon. Encourage the teacher to apply the ideas in this section (the suggested

videos may be helpful). Afterward, teachers could talk about what went well and what could be improved.

**Prepare.** Decide together on a topic for the next meeting, and invite teachers to prepare.

## Invite Learners to Act

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The Savior taught in order to change lives. He wanted His disciples to do more than just hear His words, so He invited them to act on His teachings with faith. He knew that as His followers lived the doctrine He taught, they would come to know that it came from God (see John 7:17). His teachings would be a protection to them in times of turmoil, confusion, and adversity (see Matthew 7:24–27). Remember that building faith and becoming more Christlike does not happen in one brief class period. As you invite those you teach to act on true doctrine, you help them extend the learning experience into their homes and daily lives (see D&C 43:8–10).

### EXTEND INVITATIONS THAT RESPECT AGENCY

People are more likely to make meaningful changes in their lives when those changes come from their own exercise of agency. When you extend invitations to act, be sure to respect the agency of those you teach. For example, rather than always extending invitations to do something specific, consider inviting learners to think of their own ways to apply what they have learned. You could say, “How could you strengthen your relationships with your siblings?” or “Write down one spiritual impression you received and how you will act on it.”

**Question to ponder.** When has an invitation from a teacher helped me exercise my agency?

**Scriptural example.** After telling the parable of the good Samaritan, the Savior said, “Go, and do thou likewise” (Luke 10:37). What do I learn from this invitation and others the Savior extended?

### TESTIFY OF PROMISED BLESSINGS

When the Lord gives a commandment, He often promises blessings for keeping that commandment. When you extend an invitation to live a certain principle, help learners discover the blessings that God has promised to those who live that principle. You might also bear testimony of the blessings that you have received by living the principle.

**Question to ponder.** When have I been inspired to live a gospel principle by hearing a testimony of promised blessings?

**Scriptural example.** How did the Savior use promises to inspire His disciples? (see Luke 12:22–31).

### FOLLOW UP ON INVITATIONS TO ACT

When you follow up on an invitation to act, you show learners that you care about them and how the gospel is blessing their lives. You also give them opportunities to share their experiences, which strengthens

their commitment and allows them to support one another in living the gospel. There are many ways to follow up on invitations. For instance, you might provide time at the beginning of class for learners to share what they have done to act on an invitation. Or you could follow up by sending class members a text message or email.

If you share a teaching assignment with another teacher and teach on alternate weeks, it may be necessary to coordinate your efforts to follow up. For example, you might offer to begin your lesson by following up on any invitations the other teacher extended on the previous week, and you could ask the other teacher to do the same. Or it may be more appropriate for an auxiliary, quorum, or class presidency member to extend and follow up on invitations.

**Question to ponder.** Why is it important to follow up on invitations to act?

**Scriptural example.** The Savior gathered with His Apostles so they could tell Him what they had done and taught (see Mark 6:30). How can I follow up on invitations to act?

### FOR THE DISCUSSION LEADER

**Share and counsel together.** Begin by inviting teachers to share recent teaching experiences and ask questions related to teaching.

**Learn together.** Invite teachers to discuss one or more of the ideas in

this section. Consider watching and discussing the video “Invite Us to Act” ([LDS.org](https://LDS.org)). 

**Practice.** Invite teachers to think about their upcoming teaching opportunities and write down possible age-appropriate invitations

they could extend. Encourage them to share with each other what they wrote and give each other feedback.

**Prepare.** Decide together on a topic for the next meeting, and invite teachers to prepare.

## Support Gospel Learning in the Home

One of your goals as a teacher should be to encourage those you teach to have their own experiences in the scriptures—both individually and with their families. As effective as your class time may be, it cannot make up for individual and family scripture study—times when the Spirit can teach people personally. In many ways, your success as a teacher depends on how effectively you help and encourage class members to learn on their own.

### ENCOURAGE PERSONAL AND FAMILY GOSPEL STUDY

While your Sunday class should not be the main setting in which class members learn the gospel, it should be a place where they receive encouragement and inspiration to study the gospel on their own and with their families.

There are many ways you can encourage personal and family study at home. One Gospel Doctrine teacher decided that she would reserve the first few minutes of every lesson for class members to share anything that inspired them from their personal or family scripture reading. At first only a few were willing to share. But as their teacher continued with this pattern, more and more class members began sharing. One class member observed, “Our teacher wasn’t inviting us to read so her lesson would go better; she was inviting us to read because she knew it would bless our lives. Then, once we saw that what God had taught us from the scriptures was important to her, it made a huge

difference. I definitely read the scriptures with more purpose now.”

Another way to encourage personal and family scripture study is to invite class members to share something they learned in class with their family members or friends.

**Questions to ponder.** What can I do to encourage learners to study the gospel on their own? How can I do this if I teach young children?

**Scriptural example.** What impresses me about Nephi’s words in 1 Nephi 15:23–25? How can I follow his example in my teaching?

### HELP LEARNERS SUPPORT EACH OTHER

Some people do not study the scriptures at home because they think that scripture study is too difficult. Others may not clearly understand the blessings that come from gospel learning at home. You can help to overcome both of these obstacles by creating a class environment where learners support and encourage each other and feel

comfortable sharing helpful ideas and experiences.

In one Gospel Doctrine class that was studying the Old Testament, an elderly brother expressed frustration with trying to understand the book of Isaiah. The teacher thanked him for his honest comment and asked the rest of the class what advice they might give. Several class members shared scripture study strategies and inspiring experiences they had with studying the words of Isaiah. A class member recalled, “We all rallied around this brother. There was an amazing spirit of unity in the room. We truly felt like we were all in it together.”

**Question to ponder.** What could I do to inspire my class to share ideas about how to have meaningful experiences with the scriptures?

**Scriptural example.** What does it mean for “all [to] be edified of all”? (D&C 88:122). How can I encourage learners to desire to edify one another during class discussions?

### FOR THE DISCUSSION LEADER

**Share and counsel together.** Begin by inviting teachers to share recent teaching experiences and ask questions related to teaching.

**Learn together.** Invite teachers to discuss one or more of the ideas in this section.

**Invite.** Invite teachers to dedicate some time during several upcoming lessons for class members to share what they have learned at home. In a future teacher council meeting, ask these teachers to share their experiences. Invite them to share

other advice about how to support learners in their efforts to learn the gospel at home.

**Prepare.** Decide together on a topic for the next meeting, and invite teachers to prepare.

## Improving as a Christlike Teacher: A Personal Evaluation

The Apostle Paul encouraged the Saints in his day to “examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves” (2 Corinthians 13:5). As teachers, we too should evaluate our strengths and weaknesses so that we can always be improving in our ability to help learners build faith in Jesus Christ and become more like Him. As you seek to improve, remember the Lord’s promise: “Because thou hast seen thy weakness thou shalt be made strong” (Ether 12:37). Be patient with yourself, and seek the Savior’s strengthening power to become the kind of teacher He knows you can be.

The following activity can help you apply principles of Christlike teaching. Read each statement below, and consider how well it describes you as a teacher. Choose the most appropriate response for each:

**1 = rarely    2 = sometimes**

**3 = often    4 = almost always**

Then, as guided by the Spirit, prayerfully select a few things you would like to improve. Set some goals, and use the sections of this resource to help you improve. Return to this activity periodically to evaluate your progress.

### LOVE THOSE YOU TEACH

- I pray for those I teach.
- I express my love to the people I teach.
- I understand the needs and experiences of those I teach.
- When I prepare to teach, I focus more on the people I am teaching than on making a presentation.
- As prompted by the Spirit, I alter my plans in order to address learners’ questions and needs rather

than trying to cover everything I have prepared.

- I reach out to those who are not attending class.

### TEACH BY THE SPIRIT

- I pray for the guidance of the Spirit in my life and in my efforts as a teacher.
- I strive to live worthy of the companionship of the Holy Ghost.
- I listen for spiritual promptings as I prepare and as I teach, and I have the faith to adjust my plans accordingly.
- I bear my testimony to those I teach.
- I help those I teach to recognize the Spirit’s influence.
- I begin preparing at least one week in advance, and I record spiritual impressions that I receive.
- The environment in my classroom invites the Spirit.

### TEACH THE DOCTRINE

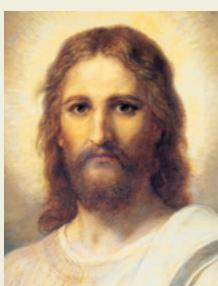
- My teaching is centered on the scriptures and the words of latter-day prophets.

As appropriate, I use stories, music, artwork, and other appropriate resources to help those I teach understand doctrines.

When difficult questions arise, I respond in ways that build faith.

### INVITE DILIGENT LEARNING

- I help those I teach become responsible for their own learning.
- I ask questions that encourage pondering.
- I invite learners to share their insights and testimonies and to strengthen one another.
- I ask follow-up questions to encourage learners to think more deeply about gospel principles.
- I help learners find answers to their questions, rather than answering all their questions for them.
- I provide opportunities for all learners to participate in discussions.
- I invite learners to act on what they learn, as guided by the Spirit.
- I follow up on invitations to act, and I ask learners to share their experiences.
- I encourage learners to study the scriptures on their own and with their families.



“And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them” (Ether 12:27).

## Orienting New Teachers: A Responsibility of Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders

If you are a priesthood or auxiliary leader, you have the responsibility to “meet individually with newly called teachers in [your] organizations, preferably before each teacher’s first lesson” (*Handbook 2: Administering the Church* [2010], 5.5.3). These meetings are an opportunity to introduce new teachers to their sacred callings and inspire them with a vision of what it means to teach in the Savior’s way. As a leader, you can help new teachers prepare to serve by doing the following things:

### **DISCUSS WHAT IT MEANS TO TEACH IN THE SAVIOR’S WAY**

To help the new teacher understand how the Savior taught and what that means for teachers, briefly discuss the following principles with the new teacher:

- *Love those you teach.* Help the new teacher focus on the needs of the people he or she is teaching. Invite the new teacher to look for their strengths and unique needs. If necessary, provide a list of class members. Remind the new teacher that he or she is responsible to help those learners who do not attend class regularly. Encourage the teacher to prayerfully seek ways to reach out to these people.
- *Teach by the Spirit.* Discuss the importance of preparing spiritually to teach. Because the promptings of the Holy Ghost come line upon line, encourage the new teacher to begin preparing to teach at least one week in advance and to seek inspiration throughout the week.
- *Teach the doctrine.* Bear your testimony of the power of the word of

God to change hearts. Invite the new teacher to study the scriptures and the words of living prophets on the assigned teaching topics before referring to any supplemental material. Encourage the teacher to record the spiritual impressions that he or she receives while studying and to focus on principles and resources that build faith and encourage Christlike living.

■ *Invite diligent learning.* Help the new teacher understand that teaching means more than just making a presentation; it means encouraging people to become responsible for their own gospel learning and to edify one another as gospel learners (see D&C 88:122).

### **DISCUSS YOUR SPECIFIC ORGANIZATION**

In addition to discussing general principles of Christlike teaching, you might take some time to share with the new teacher anything about your organization that would be helpful. Are there any needs you have discussed as a presidency that you would like your teachers to be aware of? For example, if an elders quorum

presidency has felt inspired to emphasize quorum unity, how could the quorum instructors support that goal? If the bishop has asked the ward council to improve reverence in the ward, how could Primary teachers help?

As needed, tell the new teacher which room to teach in and what lesson to begin with, and provide any information the teacher needs about the class and class members.

### **OFFER ONGOING SUPPORT**

Explain that you can help the new teacher with his or her calling in any way and provide support in the classroom if needed. You could even offer to observe the new teacher’s class occasionally and provide feedback. Give the teacher a copy of this resource and explain when the monthly teacher council meetings are held. Explain the purposes of these meetings and the expectation that the new teacher participate.

Encourage the new teacher to visit the My Calling section of LDS.org and the Gospel Library app for more about how to grow as a teacher.



“Even the newest member of the Church can sense that a call to service should be primarily a matter of the heart. It is by giving our whole hearts to the Master and keeping His commandments that we come to know Him. . . . What [those who are called to serve] will need, even more than to be trained in their duties, is to see with

spiritual eyes what it means to be called to serve in the restored Church of Jesus Christ” (Henry B. Eyring, “Rise to Your Call,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2002, 75).



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