

# TEACHING

G U I D E B O O K

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## Distribution

The *Teaching Guidebook* is used in conjunction with the basic curriculum and will be useful also for teachers and other members in units using general curriculum (see *Information for Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders on Curriculum* [36363]). This guidebook can help members improve teaching in the home and in Church organizations. Each teacher should receive a copy; the head of each family might find it helpful also.



# Introduction

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This guidebook is designed for parents, leaders, and teachers. It can be used as part of an individual effort to improve as a teacher. It can be used as the basis for the Teaching the Gospel course and teacher improvement meetings (see pages 21–22).

The Lord taught:

“And I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom.

“Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand” (D&C 88:77–78).



The home should be the central place in which this is done. The home is supported by the teaching and learning that takes place at church. We all have responsibilities as teachers in these settings and with our neighbors

and associates in daily life. We teach as parents, sons, daughters, husbands, wives, brothers, and sisters. We teach as Church leaders, classroom teachers, home teachers, and visiting teachers. We also teach as coworkers, neighbors, and friends. Sometimes we teach by the things we say and the testimony we bear, but even more frequently we teach by example.

On the shore of the Sea of Galilee, the resurrected Lord instructed Peter, “Feed my sheep” (John 21:16–17). The call to teach requires that we nourish the souls of others with gospel truths and thereby lead them to the Savior (see Moroni 6:4). Think of the role of gospel teaching in the salvation of Heavenly Father’s children. Can you imagine a duty more noble or sacred?

If you are a parent or newly called teacher, you may be especially concerned about this responsibility. Remember that the Lord is ready to help you. He has promised that if we are humble and have faith, He will “make weak things become strong unto [us]” (Ether 12:27). In our efforts to improve as teachers, we can build on the experiences we have had and skills we have developed in our lives so far. Our abilities will increase as we prepare carefully, try to strengthen those we teach, and trust the Lord.

# Prepare Yourself Spiritually

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As you prepare yourself spiritually, the Spirit, or the Holy Ghost, will guide and help you in your teaching. The Holy Ghost is necessary to teach the principles and truths of the gospel. The Lord said, “The Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith; and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach” (D&C 42:14). The following suggestions will help you prepare to teach with the guidance of the Holy Ghost.

## **Be Set Apart**

When you are called to teach, you should be set apart and given a special blessing by your priesthood leaders. This blessing will help you fulfill your calling. As you do all you can to serve in your call to teach, the Lord will enlarge your potential to

influence others for good. He will even magnify you beyond your own talents and abilities when necessary.



## **Seek the Guidance of the Holy Ghost**

Seek the Holy Ghost as you teach. He can help you to understand the needs of those you teach and to prepare lessons that meet those needs. He will soften your heart and prepare your mind to receive additional inspiration and guidance.

## **Pray Often**

Pray often and ask the Lord to bless you as you study and prepare. At times you may add fasting to your prayers. Pray to understand and to love the individuals you teach. Learn to recognize and follow the promptings of the Holy Ghost that will come to you.

## Study the Scriptures

Prayerfully study the scriptures. As you do, you will learn about the Savior and grow in the knowledge of the truth. The Holy Ghost will help you understand the scriptures and see how they apply to the needs of class members or family members. By adding prayer and fasting to your scripture study, you will be strengthened and guided by the Holy Ghost in your teaching.



## Live the Gospel

Live the teachings of the gospel as completely as you can. Repent of past transgressions. As you do these things, you will receive strength and

understanding. The peace and happiness you feel from striving to live the gospel will be evident to others. They will feel the sincerity of your testimony and the power of your commitment. They will be instructed by the example of your life.

One teacher had a difficult time feeling the guidance of the Holy Ghost as she prepared her lesson. As she prayed for help, she realized she had angry feelings in her heart toward a neighbor who had been very unkind to her. She humbly asked the Lord to forgive her. The next day she visited her neighbor and apologized for having had hard feelings toward her. She and her neighbor drew closer, and she was able once again to enjoy the guidance of the Holy Ghost.

## Be Humble

Humility can help you avoid the temptation to seek attention for yourself or rely too much on your own knowledge or talents. You can show humility by following the counsel in Proverbs 3:5–6: “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” The Lord taught, “Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers” (D&C 112:10).



# Teach As Jesus Taught

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## Love Those You Teach

During His life on earth, the Savior showed great love and understanding to every person. He taught the poor, the rich, the outcast, and the sinners. He taught us to love everyone and to help one another. He said, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another” (John 13:34). As we show love for those we teach, they become more aware of their eternal worth, more enthusiastic about learning, and more receptive to the Spirit.

Being a gospel teacher means more than presenting a lesson each week. It also means caring about your class

members. Make an effort to get to know each of them as an individual. It will help you teach them more effectively. They may need your help when they have problems, when they are not attending, or if they have disabilities. Remember the Savior’s parable of the one lost sheep (see Luke 15:3–6).



One teacher of a child who seldom attended class found that every time she contacted the child's family during the week, he would be at church the following Sunday. She made an effort to talk with the parents often and to mention her affection for their child. She even picked up the child from school when the parents were at work so that he would not miss a class activity.

As a teacher, you can also do much to fellowship members and help them remain converted to the gospel. This is especially important with new members. Always help them feel welcome. Look for opportunities for them to participate in class. Prepare yourself to teach gospel truths by the Spirit and with love.

## **Teach Gospel Truths**

The Savior taught the truths of the gospel. He emphasized the first principles and ordinances—faith, repentance, baptism, and receiving the Holy Ghost. He taught us to love and serve one another. He taught of priesthood, covenants, and ordinances, and of all we must know, do, and be to come unto Him. We too should teach the gospel as revealed in the scriptures and the words of latter-day prophets. Secular subjects, personal opinions, and speculative or controversial teachings are not appropriate.

The Savior taught gospel truths simply. He used clear and understandable language, stories, and examples from everyday life. His lessons included many common experiences that people could understand. He spoke of finding a lost sheep, searching for a coin, and rejoicing over the return of a wayward son (see Luke 15).

The Savior often drew upon the scriptures as He taught. Lead those you teach in using the scriptures often during the lesson. Help them understand that the people in the scriptures were real people who experienced trials and joys in their efforts to serve the Lord. Ask questions that require those you teach to find answers in the scriptures. Encourage individuals to study at home, and show those you teach how to make that study effective. Teach them how to use the study helps in the scriptures. Give assignments that require class members to search the scriptures and the words of latter-day prophets.

## **Teach by the Spirit**

Teachers should seek to have the Spirit of the Lord when they teach. A person may teach profound truths, and class members may engage in stimulating discussions, but unless the Spirit is present, these things will not be powerfully impressed upon the soul. When the Spirit is present, all are strengthened in their love for

Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, in their love for each other, and in their commitment to live the gospel. Following are some things you can do to invite the Spirit in your teaching:

- Begin with prayer.
- Teach from the scriptures and words of latter-day prophets.
- Bear your testimony.
- Share experiences and invite others to do so.
- Use music (see page 10).
- Show your love for the Lord and others.

If you have properly prepared yourself, the Holy Ghost will enlighten and guide you as you teach. You may receive impressions about those you are teaching and what you should emphasize in teaching them. You may receive ideas and feelings about how you can teach them most effectively. Your diligent efforts will be magnified as you humbly obey the whisperings of the Spirit. You will also be able to help those you teach recognize the influence of the Spirit.

## Invite Diligent Learning

The Lord said, “Seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118). Each member is responsible to gain a knowledge of



the truth through his or her own efforts. A teacher’s responsibility is to awaken in others the desire to study, understand, and live the gospel. To fulfill this responsibility, you can focus on three things:

1. Awaken and hold the interest of those you teach. A key to doing this is your own enthusiasm for studying the gospel. Another is your use of teaching methods that make your lessons clear, interesting, and easy to remember (see pages 9–12). Awakening interest is especially important at the beginning of a lesson. As you plan your teaching, look for ways to invite the Spirit, get everyone’s attention with an interesting beginning, and focus on the doctrine or principle to be taught in the lesson.
2. Encourage participation. Plan ways to have everyone participate in your lessons. You might ask someone to read a quotation or scripture or to tell a story. You might invite

them to respond to questions and freely discuss the lesson material. You might ask one or more individuals to sing a song or play an instrument. You might prayerfully select someone to bear testimony or share a personal experience that relates to the lesson topic. Sometimes it will be important to request this participation in advance so that those you ask can practice and feel comfortable participating.

The main idea of one teacher's lesson was the importance of reading the Book of Mormon. He invited the youth in his class to think of a passage of scripture that had changed their lives. He then invited three or four volunteers to stand and share their scriptural passages with the class and to describe how the passages had changed their lives. As each person shared sweet feelings about the power of the Book of Mormon, class members gained an earnest desire to read and ponder the scriptures daily.

Some people are reluctant to participate. Do not ask individuals to read aloud or pray until you are sure they feel comfortable doing so. If you have any doubt about a person's willingness to participate, ask for volunteers rather than calling on someone who might be reluctant. Most learners will gradually learn to feel comfortable

participating if they see that those who participate are treated with respect and courtesy.

3. Help them apply what they learn. You also should help learners apply what is taught to the circumstances of their lives. This may include giving assignments and challenges that help class members have learning experiences with the truths that are taught. Remember that gospel learning is of no value unless it becomes gospel living.

## Create a Learning Atmosphere

The best environment for gospel learning is one in which each person present is concerned about the learning of the other members of the group. The desire to learn increases when teachers and learners love one another and help one another understand and live the gospel. When you and those you teach work together



to create a positive learning environment, disruptions will be less likely to occur. You should do all you can to create such an environment and to help those you teach know how to contribute to it.

Following are some things you could do to help create a learning atmosphere:

- Arrive promptly with all necessary teaching materials and equipment.
- Make sure that the classroom is as clean, orderly, comfortable, and free from distractions as possible.
- Begin and end on time.
- Greet and welcome class members individually, if possible.
- Do things that invite the Spirit and that encourage reverence and courtesy.
- Love class members and help them feel comfortable in participating.
- Ask questions that help the class members focus on the subject.
- Encourage class members to listen to one another with respect and understanding.
- Guard against conversations that might damage or weaken testimonies or otherwise cause the Spirit to withdraw.

Even after you have done all you can to create an atmosphere of learning, you may still encounter some challenges. The following suggestions may help you resolve some common challenges and problems:

- If a disruption occurs, stop talking until you have everyone's attention. Then continue the lesson.
- If certain individuals talk with each other during the lesson, visit privately with them after class and ask them what you and they could do to make the class successful.
- If someone dominates class discussion, direct questions to other class members or politely suggest that you would like to hear from those who have not yet participated.
- If class members make comments that lead the discussion away from the lesson topic, acknowledge them but lead the discussion back to the lesson topic.

Disruptive behavior will decrease as you find ways for every person in the group to feel loved and accepted and to participate successfully.

## Use a Variety of Teaching Methods

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There are many things you can do to make your lesson presentations interesting and to help class members learn gospel truths. Some suggestions follow:

### **Use Stories and Examples**

Stories and examples awaken and hold people's interest and show how gospel principles apply in daily life.

You will find excellent stories in the scriptures and in your teacher's manual. Before your lesson, study each story you plan to use. Practice telling it using your own words. Your class will listen more closely if you tell the story in your words, rather than read it. Also, younger children enjoy acting out stories.

One Primary teacher always started her lesson with a story from the scriptures. For example, when her lesson was on kindness, she told about the good Samaritan. The children could picture in their minds the man who had been robbed and the men who looked away and hurried past. They were impressed with the kindness and dignity of the Samaritan who cared for the wounded man. The children looked forward to these stories. The teacher learned to use her voice and expressions to keep the attention of her class. The class members became more familiar with and interested in the scriptures.

## Use Pictures and Objects

The Savior often used simple objects as He taught. He used wheat, sand, rocks, and other familiar things to help the people understand what He was teaching. For example, He likened the kingdom of God to a treasure so great that a man would sell all he had to obtain it (see Matthew 13:44).



Look around you. What ordinary objects can you use to help class members better understand gospel principles?

You may want to use simple drawings and pictures to illustrate gospel principles. Show a picture from the Gospel Art Picture Kit as you tell a scripture story. Draw simple pictures on the chalkboard or a piece of paper to make a story more interesting.

One teacher was giving a lesson based on Jesus' parable of the wheat and the tares. The class members lived in a farming area, so the teacher

knew they would understand that the young wheat plants could be destroyed by removing the weeds too soon. He prepared a small bundle of wheat stalks mingled with weeds. He displayed this bundle throughout the lesson.

Another teacher encouraged class members to think of something they could compare to repentance. One class member suggested that repentance is like soap, in that it can cleanse us from our sins.

## Use Music

Music is an excellent way to invite the Spirit of the Lord into your lessons. Music helps us express feelings that may be hard to express through the spoken word.



Church hymns teach many gospel principles and can be used in almost any lesson. You can invite an individual, a group, or the entire family or class to sing a hymn that is related to the lesson. You also could read the

words of a hymn aloud while someone plays the accompaniment. Or you could play a recording of a hymn.

One teacher prepared a lesson on service. She selected a hymn that supported the main idea. During the lesson, she invited one sister to read the words of this hymn as another softly hummed the tune. She asked the class to quietly ponder the words as they were read. This music helped the class members feel more strongly about the importance of service.

## Ask Questions That Invite Careful Thought and Create Discussion



Asking the right questions will encourage thoughtful learning and discussion in your lesson. Questions and discussions are helpful in many ways. They help class members remain attentive during a lesson. You can find out if the class members understand the lesson. Class members can teach each other as they answer and dis-

cuss questions. They can learn how to apply gospel principles in their own lives.

As you prepare lessons, decide what questions you will ask. The following suggestions may help you.

- Ask questions that help the class members think about the gospel principle and how it applies in their lives. Thought-provoking questions often begin with “why?” or “how?” You should generally avoid questions that can be answered with only “yes” or “no” or any other one-word answers.

For example, in teaching a lesson about centering our lives on the Savior, you might ask questions like the following:

“What does it mean to build on the rock of Christ?”

“What foundations other than the rock of Christ do people sometimes build their lives on?”

“How have you been blessed as you have built your life on the rock of Christ?”

- Ask questions that encourage class members to share personal ideas and experiences. For example:

“Why does the Lord command us to pray always?”

“How has He answered your prayers?”



- Ask questions that help class members apply gospel principles in their lives. For example:

“How can we better prepare ourselves to receive answers to our prayers?”

“How can you come to know that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world?”

“How can you strengthen your testimony that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God?”

If someone asks you a question that you cannot answer, ask the class members to help you answer it, or tell the person that you will find the answer for next time.

Do not be concerned if class members are silent for a few seconds after you ask a question. They usually need time to think of responses. However, if they don't seem to understand the question, you may need to rephrase it. When asking someone a question, it is helpful to call him or her by name first and then ask the question.

Finally, be careful not to end a good discussion prematurely in an attempt to cover all the material you have prepared. What matters most is that members feel the influence of the Spirit, increase their understanding of the gospel, learn to apply gospel principles in their lives, and strengthen their commitment to live the gospel.

## **Invite Special Guests**

You may occasionally want to invite a special guest to come to your class. You can ask a worthy Church member to give a report, share a story, or bear testimony. Let this person know in advance how much time he or she should take. Get approval from your bishop or branch president before inviting a guest who lives outside of your ward or branch.

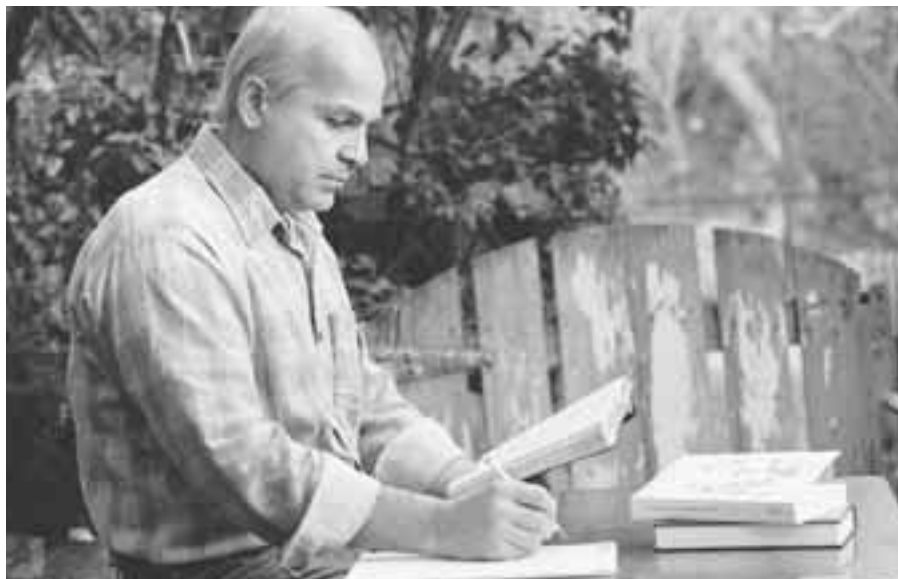
One elders quorum president invited another member to come and tell the elders about ways to make their home teaching messages interesting to the children they visited. The elders not only gained a new understanding of why children need to participate during home teaching visits, but they also received many suggestions on how to help children participate.

## **Use Activities**

Simple activities that relate to the lesson can help class members, especially children and youth, learn gospel principles. Such activities should be appropriate for gospel learning. Many Church-produced lesson manuals include suggestions for activities.

# Prepare Your Lesson

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It is important to carefully prepare the lessons you teach so that you can present the gospel principles most effectively. The following suggestions will help you prepare.

## Identify Resources

The Church has carefully prepared approved curriculum materials based on the scriptures and teachings of the latter-day prophets. Ask your priesthood or auxiliary leader whether the following resources are available for you to use:

- A teacher's manual published by the Church for your class
- Copies of the scriptures for class members

- Church magazines containing teachings of the latter-day prophets
- Scripture study aids available in your language
- A set of pictures called the Gospel Art Picture Kit, which should be in your meetinghouse library



Look over the available items so you can plan how to use them in your lessons. You do not need elaborate materials to be an effective teacher. Christ taught many lessons in humble surroundings. The most important influence in your teaching is the Spirit. Appropriate use of teaching resources along with the guidance of the Spirit offers the greatest potential for gospel learning.

## **Begin Preparing Early**

Prepare your lessons early. It is often helpful to begin studying lessons a few weeks before teaching them. This allows time for you to think and pray about the lesson topics and to prepare adequately.

## **Focus on the Lesson's Purpose**

Each lesson you teach should have a purpose. For example, the purpose of a lesson on fasting might be to help class members understand the blessings of fasting or the importance of fasting for a specific purpose on fast Sunday. The presentations and discussion in the lesson should focus on the purpose.

To decide on the purpose of a lesson, study the lesson material and the accompanying scriptures. Ask the Lord to help you understand the most important messages from this lesson for those individuals you teach. Ask yourself, "What should happen in the

lives of those I teach as a result of this lesson?" Many lessons in Church-produced lesson manuals include purpose statements. These statements can help you decide how each lesson should influence those you teach.

## **Decide What to Teach**

After you have determined the purpose of a lesson, decide what principles should be taught to accomplish that purpose. Most manuals include scriptures, stories, and other information to help you teach the lesson. But often a lesson will contain more material than you are able to teach in the time you are given. In such cases, you should select the material that will be most helpful to those you teach. Ask yourself, "Which doctrines and principles in the lesson will help class members meet the challenges they currently face?"

If you need material that is not in the manual or the scriptures, consider using stories and talks from the *First Presidency Messages*, *Visiting Teaching Messages*, and the Church magazines, especially the general conference messages.

As you decide what to teach:

- Prayerfully study the content of the lesson.
- Make a list of key doctrines and principles covered in the lesson.
- Always keep in mind the needs and backgrounds of those you teach.

- Follow the guidance of the Spirit.

It is usually best to focus on one or two main principles.

## Decide How to Teach

After you have decided what to teach, you must decide how to teach it. Study the material and prayerfully ponder the best ways to present it to those you teach. The methods you use should help learners understand and apply what you teach.

Carefully study the scriptures, stories, and other information discussed in the lessons and any other scriptures that will help you teach the doctrine or principle. Prepare to help the class members understand how the scriptures apply in their lives (see 1 Nephi 19:23).

Also consider using stories and examples from your own life and the lives of your class members. For example, one teenager quit smoking after a priesthood class on the Word of Wisdom in which the teacher described his own brother's experience in overcoming this habit. This example showed that a smoker could change his habits. Hearing this story helped the class member determine that he could change his own life.

For information about teaching methods that will help you present the lesson, see pages 9–12 of this guide.

## Plan a Conclusion

The Savior often summarized what He taught and encouraged people to apply it in their lives (see the parable of the good Samaritan, Luke 10:30–37). At the close of a lesson, you should review and summarize what has been taught. Suggest ways for class members to apply the gospel doctrines or principles, and invite them to suggest other ways. Encourage them to try one of these ideas during the coming week. In later lessons, you may want to ask them what they have learned from their efforts.

The students in one teacher's class were invited to perform an anonymous act of service each day for a week. At the beginning of the next class period, the teacher asked for a brief report. Several class members enthusiastically shared their experiences and the joy they felt from putting this lesson into practice. The positive response of these class members motivated others to give greater service themselves.

# Understand Those You Teach

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It is important to understand those you teach. Consider the maturity and experience of your class members. People of different ages have different needs and learn in different ways.

## Children

Children are growing physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually. As you prepare your lesson, remember each child's talents, abilities, and needs.

Children enjoy variety. Use short stories, simple games, pictures, object lessons, and songs to keep their interest.

Children are just learning about sharing, kindness, and patience. Help

them overcome shortcomings in these areas by reminding them of Jesus' example and encouraging them to follow Him.

Children are trusting and believing. They will believe what you teach them. They will also watch and follow your example.

## Youth

The period between childhood and adulthood is sometimes difficult and challenging. Class members may have many responsibilities in their families, at school, and at work. The following suggestions may help you influence young people for good.



Prepare each lesson to be directly relevant to their lives. Help them see how the gospel can answer their questions and help them make good choices.

Young people may feel lonely or unappreciated. Help each person become an important part of your class. Belonging to a group with gospel standards gives young people spiritual strength and helps them keep their lives pure.

Show that you respect their opinions. Encourage them to participate in the lesson and to discuss their ideas with you and with each other.

## **Adults**

Adult class members are of different ages and have varying backgrounds and experiences. Use these differences to enrich your class. Encourage class members to share the wisdom they have learned from their experiences. Make use of their many talents.

Teach the truths of the gospel simply. The Holy Ghost will help the class members understand and apply the truths in their individual lives.

## Rewards of Teaching

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As a teacher, you can experience the joy that comes from helping others grow in their knowledge of the gospel. Your diligent and faithful efforts to teach the gospel will help others develop stronger testimonies of the Savior and live the commandments.

A Sunday School teacher worried that there were many others in the class more qualified to teach than he was. He wondered if his teaching was making a difference. Then one Sunday a class member took the teacher aside. She said that because of her husband's experiences with the Spirit in the class, he now had committed to gather their family together daily for family prayer. He had also committed to prepare to go to the

temple to be sealed as a family. The class member expressed her love and deep appreciation for all the effort the teacher had made to invite the Spirit into their class. Then the teacher's heart was filled with humility, and he understood the true purpose and rewards of teaching.

As you teach, you will be blessed along with your students. Your own knowledge of the gospel and testimony of the Savior will be strengthened as you study, prepare, and teach gospel lessons. You will feel greater love for others. You will feel a greater outpouring of the Spirit in your life as you humbly and diligently strive to live what you teach. Your life will be enriched by your service as a teacher.

# Administering Teacher Improvement in the Branch

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The branch presidency is responsible for the quality of teaching in the branch.

## **Responsibilities of the Teacher Improvement Coordinator**

As the branch membership increases, a member of the branch presidency calls and sets apart a teacher improvement coordinator to oversee teacher improvement. The coordinator may be either a brother or sister. He or she is a member of the branch council and serves as a resource to priesthood and auxiliary leaders and teachers in their efforts to improve gospel teaching. The coordinator helps leaders plan

and conduct teacher improvement meetings and, when assigned, teaches the Teaching the Gospel course.

## **Leader Support of Teachers**

Priesthood and auxiliary leaders are responsible for the quality of gospel teaching in their organizations. They model superior teaching and help teachers understand the importance of their callings. They extend appreciation, assistance, and encouragement to the teachers with whom they serve. The excellence of teaching in the Church will improve as leaders give caring support and encouragement to the teachers in their organizations.



## Teacher Improvement Meetings

Each priesthood and auxiliary leader and teacher is to attend a teacher improvement meeting once every three months to learn principles, methods, and skills to improve gospel teaching and learning. The teacher improvement coordinator takes the lead in scheduling and planning teacher improvement meetings in consultation with priesthood and auxiliary leaders. The meetings should be held at times that are convenient for teachers and leaders but do not conflict with the regular Sunday meeting schedule. Generally, the meetings should not last more than one hour.

A teacher improvement meeting may include:

- A brief message from a member of the branch presidency or a priesthood or auxiliary leader about a principle of teaching or learning.
- A presentation of a teaching method or skill by a priesthood or auxiliary leader or a teacher.
- Time for teachers and leaders to share ideas and discuss ways to help specific class members.

As the number of teachers and leaders increases in the branch, one teacher improvement meeting may be held each quarter for:

- Teachers and leaders of members 18 and older.
- Teachers and leaders of members 12 through 17.
- Teachers and leaders in Primary.

These meetings may be scheduled so one is held each month.

## The Teaching the Gospel Course

The Teaching the Gospel course provides a foundation to help members become better gospel teachers in their homes and in Church meetings. An outline of the course is on pages 21–22 of this guidebook. The teacher improvement coordinator teaches the course unless the branch presidency calls another branch member to teach it.

The branch presidency invites members to take the course. Generally, no more than 10 members are in the course at one time, allowing each one to participate fully.

# Outline for the Teaching the Gospel Course

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The Teaching the Gospel course provides an opportunity for all Church members to learn how to become better teachers. The course instructor is the teacher improvement coordinator or another experienced teacher called by the branch president. This course could be taught during Sunday School or at another convenient time. If the course is being held for leaders and teachers from a particular organization, it might be taught as part of their regular leadership meeting. Where distance or available facilities make the normal Sunday School format difficult to follow, a combination of home study and a few class meetings (each covering several lessons) may be considered.

Ideas for each lesson are provided in this guidebook. As the instructor prepares a lesson, he or she should use the suggestions in the section titled "Use a Variety of Teaching Methods." At the end of each lesson, the instructor should encourage class members to put into practice what they have learned that day, either in a Church class or in family home evening. This will greatly enhance their development as teachers. Except as noted, the course should be taught over an eight-week period according to the following schedule. The suggestions below are addressed to the course instructor.

## Week 1

Give each class member a copy of this guidebook, and review its contents. Focus the lesson on the introduction and the section titled "Prepare Yourself Spiritually." Emphasize the importance of being set apart and living the gospel to qualify to have the Spirit.

## Week 2

Focus on "Love Those You Teach," located in the section titled "Teach As Jesus Taught." Refer also to the age-group characteristics on pages 16–17 of this guidebook. Ask class members to share experiences in which understanding or reaching out to family members or class members in love has had a positive effect. You may also wish to discuss how teachers can reach out to and nourish each member according to his or her needs, especially new converts and members with disabilities.

## Week 3

Focus on "Teach Gospel Truths," located in the section titled "Teach As Jesus Taught." Emphasize the importance of teaching the doctrine faithfully, clearly, and simply, using the scriptures in teaching, and establishing a plan for personal gospel study.

## **Week 4**

Focus on “Teach by the Spirit,” located in the section titled “Teach As Jesus Taught.” Help class members feel encouraged that they can qualify to have the Spirit in their teaching. Help them learn to recognize and follow the Spirit.

## **Week 5**

Focus on “Invite Diligent Learning,” located in the section titled “Teach As Jesus Taught.” Emphasize specific ways that teachers can help those they teach accept their responsibility to learn the gospel and live it more fully.

## **Week 6**

Focus on “Create a Learning Atmosphere,” located in the section titled “Teach As Jesus Taught.” Help class members understand how to help create an atmosphere in which everyone participates and wants to learn.

## **Week 7**

Focus on the section titled “Use a Variety of Teaching Methods.” Developing an effective lesson requires thought and creativity, and the material in this section can be very helpful. Ask class members to demonstrate or share experiences they have had with the teaching methods discussed in the section.

## **Week 8**

Focus on the section titled “Prepare Your Lesson.” Help class members understand the importance of beginning lesson preparation early, and discuss how to plan and present effective lessons.

At appropriate points during the course, you might emphasize elements in the section titled “Rewards of Teaching.” Ask class members to share ways teachers have blessed their lives and ways they as teachers have been able to help others.

After the course ends, encourage participants to continue to improve as teachers. If they are newly called classroom teachers, their priesthood or auxiliary leader should meet with them and give a brief orientation of the class and its members. After that, they should periodically report their progress and discuss specific needs and challenges with their priesthood or auxiliary leaders. They can invite a leader to visit their class and help them in any way. The teacher improvement coordinator is a continuing source of help for all teachers—those who are called as classroom teachers and those who teach in their families and leadership responsibilities.

# Obtaining Church Materials and Locating Information on Family History

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Local leaders and other members may obtain Church materials, including scriptures, courses of study, Church magazines, garments, and temple clothing, from their Church distribution center or service center, from the Salt Lake Distribution Center, or through the Church's official Internet site, which is located at [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org).

Information on family history work is available on the Church's family history Internet site, which is located at [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org).



THE CHURCH OF  
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OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

