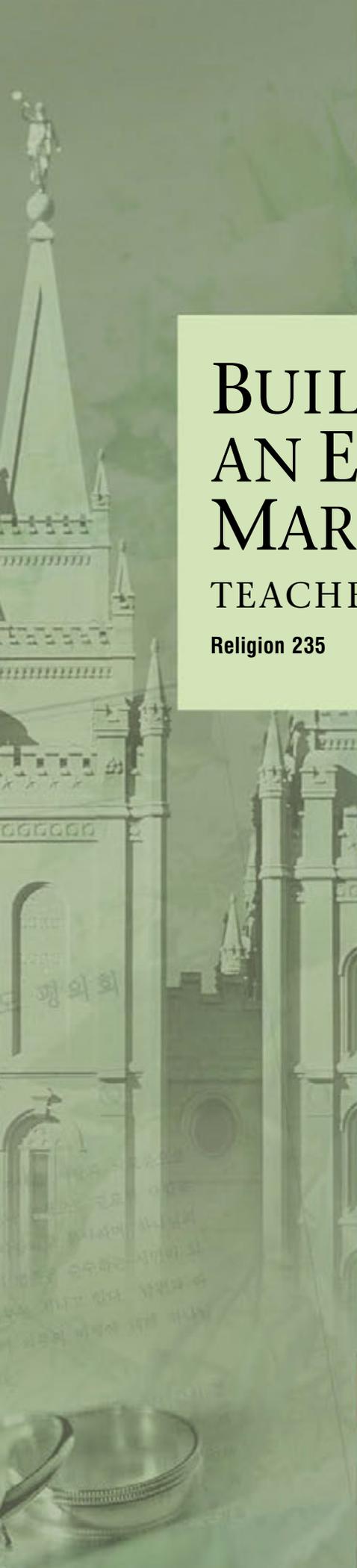
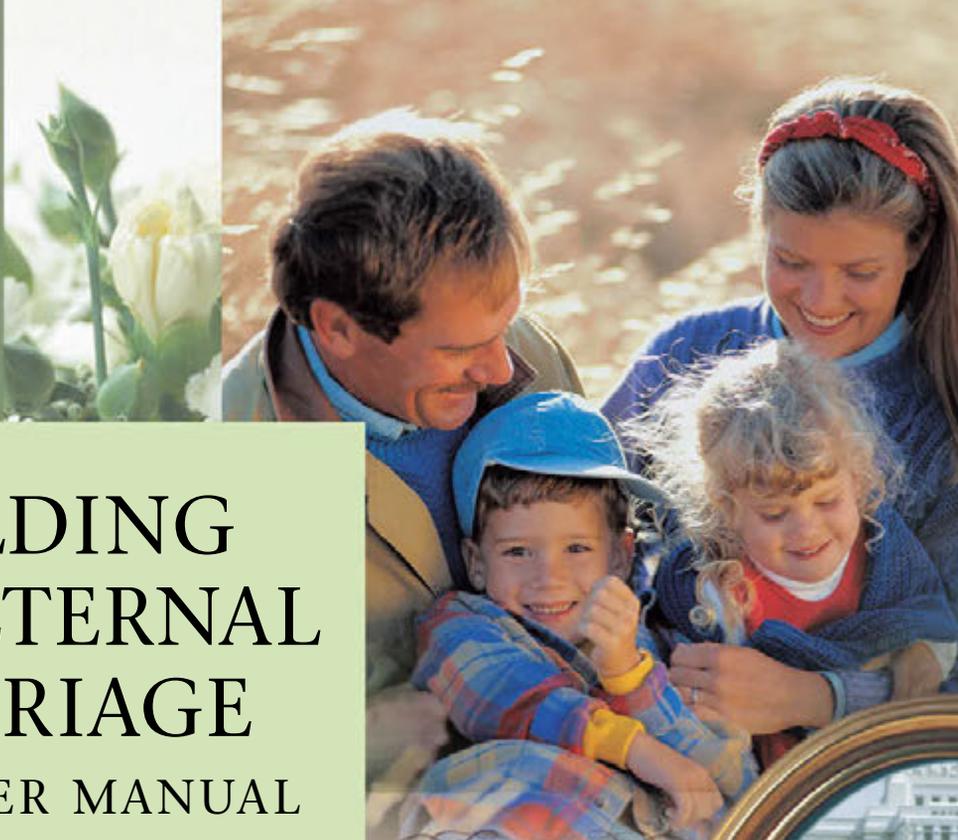


BUILDING AN ETERNAL MARRIAGE

TEACHER MANUAL

Religion 235



BUILDING AN ETERNAL MARRIAGE TEACHER MANUAL

Religion 235

Prepared by the
Church Educational System

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INTRODUCTION

Religion 235, *Building an Eternal Marriage*, is a continuation of the Religion 234 course, *Preparing for an Eternal Marriage*. Religion 234 emphasizes finding a compatible mate to marry in the temple. Religion 235 uses revealed truth to focus on principles and skills that can help a couple develop a happy marriage.

Religion 235 is a semester course. Whether the class meets twice a week during the day or once a week in the evening, there is abundant material available. Teacher discretion will be a key factor in progressing through the teacher manual.

The student manual for this course is entitled *Eternal Marriage Student Manual* (2001). This one manual has readings for both the 234 and 235 courses, and each course emphasizes different readings from the manual.

LIVING BY GOSPEL PRINCIPLES

Governing Our Lives with Principles

President Ezra Taft Benson counseled: “One of the most important things you can do . . . is to immerse yourselves in the scriptures. Search them diligently. Feast upon the words of Christ. Learn the doctrine. Master the principles that are found therein” (“The Power of the Word,” *Ensign*, May 1986, 81).

Elder Richard G. Scott, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, stated: “As you seek spiritual knowledge, search for principles. Carefully separate them from the detail used to explain them. Principles are concentrated truth, packaged for application to a wide variety of circumstances. A true principle makes decisions clear even under the most confusing and compelling circumstances. It is worth great effort to organize the truth we gather to simple statements of principle” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 117; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 86).

Knowing and living by correct principles is essential to a happy life and a happy marriage. Gospel principles include doctrine, commandments, covenants, ordinances, and precepts. In this manual, however, the term *principle* refers to a gospel truth that gives us counsel and guidance for conduct.

We Must Do Our Part

Principles can often be divided into two main parts: *if* and *then*. The *if* part is a statement of general counsel from the Lord. The *then* part is the promised results of obeying or disobeying that counsel.

God called the Word of Wisdom “a principle with promise” (D&C 89:3). The *if* part is the counsel to keep our bodies physically and spiritually pure. The *then* part promises health, wisdom, strength, and other blessings.

The Lord keeps His promises: “I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise” (D&C 82:10). We must do our part to qualify for the blessings (see D&C 130:20–22). We should also remember that God determines the *then* part according to His wisdom and not according to our expectations.

Principles are not always taught or written in the *if-then* format. For example, General Authorities do not always say “*if you have faith, then you will have the Lord’s power in your life.*” Instead, they may relate examples that illustrate faith or motivate us to be faithful.

Gospel Principles Are Universal

Gospel principles are universal—they are true in all situations in all cultures at all times. The principles revealed to Adam in the beginning of the world are just as true in these latter days. We have prophets, scriptures, and the influence of the Holy Ghost to help us see and apply correct principles.

Summary

A principle is an enduring truth, law, or rule you can adopt to guide you in making decisions. Principles help us apply the doctrines of the gospel to everyday living. They give us a light to illuminate the path before us in an increasingly confused and wicked world.

USING THE STUDENT MANUAL

The *Eternal Marriage Student Manual* (item 35311) presents teachings from inspired sources about dating and marriage (see “Purpose of the Manual,” student manual, viii). The lessons in this teacher manual are based on the readings in the student manual.

As your students come to understand and live by the teachings compiled in the student manual, they will be better prepared to govern their lives with correct principles and follow the Lord’s great plan of happiness. The teachings in the student manual follow the pattern of the law of witnesses. Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “One of the ways we may know that the warning is from the Lord is that the law of witnesses, authorized witnesses, has been invoked. When the words of prophets seem repetitive, that should rivet our attention and fill our hearts with gratitude to live in such a blessed time” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 32; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 25; student manual, 290).

The topics discussed in the student manual are listed alphabetically in the manual’s table of contents. A comprehensive index in the back of the manual can also help the reader find inspired statements on topics related to dating, courtship, marriage, and the family. These teachings present the Lord’s expectations for His covenant people when it comes to dating standards and marital conduct.

HOW THE TEACHER MANUAL IS ORGANIZED

Each lesson in the teacher manual has several parts:

- ***Title.*** The topic of the lesson.
- ***Doctrinal Overview.*** A brief introduction to the lesson topic and doctrinal background for the lesson.
- ***Principle.*** A summary of the main point of the lesson.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained:

“Well-taught doctrines and principles have a more powerful influence on behavior than rules. When we teach gospel doctrine and principles, we can

qualify for the witness and guidance of the Spirit to reinforce our teaching, and we enlist the faith of our students in seeking the guidance of that same Spirit in applying those teachings in their personal lives” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1999, 102; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 79–80).

- ***Student Manual Readings.*** A list of recommended readings from the student manual that you and your students should read before each class. (For a complete list of student manual readings for all lessons, see “Student Manual Readings,” viii.) These readings should be the primary resource for discussions and should not be replaced with secular material. You may wish to look in the subject index in the latest general conference editions of the *Ensign* to find speeches to supplement these readings.
- ***What to Teach.*** One or more statements (found in the left-hand margin) that describe the doctrine, principle, or concept being taught.
- ***Suggestions for How to Teach.*** “The *methods*, the approaches and learning activities a teacher uses to help students learn the content. These methods may include such activities as discussion, audiovisual resources, writing exercises, and small group work” (*Teaching the Gospel: A Handbook for CES Teachers and Leaders* [1994], 19). See *Teaching the Gospel* for further discussion on what and how to teach.
- ***Conclusion.*** A summary of what students should learn from the lesson.

STUDENT MANUAL READINGS

LESSON 1: AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (83–84)

Selected Teachings from “Eternal Perspective” (81–82)

Selected Teachings from “Principles” (274–75)

“Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge,” Elder Richard G. Scott (148–51)

LESSON 2: THE JOY OF MARRIAGE

Selected Teachings from “Happiness in Marriage” (133–35)

“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (83–84)

LESSON 3: KEEPING THE SACRED COVENANT OF MARRIAGE

Selected Teachings from “Covenants and Ordinances” (38–40)

Selected Teachings from “Divorce” (73–74)

“Holy Spirit of Promise” (136)

“Covenant Marriage,” Elder Bruce C. Hafen (47–50)

LESSON 4: SPIRITUALITY IN MARRIAGE

“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (83–84)

Selected Teachings from “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” (84–100)

LESSON 5: COMMUNICATION FUNDAMENTALS IN MARRIAGE

Selected Teachings from “Communication” (31)

LESSON 6: RIGHTEOUS UNITY IN MARRIAGE

Selected Teachings from “Unity” (344–46)

Selected Teachings from “Selfishness” (304)

LESSON 7: TRADITIONS OF THE FATHERS

Selected Teachings from “Traditions of the Fathers” (337–38)

“The Tradition of Their Fathers,” Elder Marion D. Hanks (339–41)

LESSON 8: INTIMACY IN MARRIAGE

Selected Teachings from “Intimacy in Marriage” (139–41)

“The Fountain of Life,” Elder Boyd K. Packer (141–46)

“The Ultimate Symbol of Total Union” and “A Symbol of the Relationship with God,” in “Personal Purity,” Elder Jeffrey R. Holland (234–35)

Selected Teachings from “Birth Control” (14–16)

“I Have a Question,” Dr. Homer Ellsworth (17–18)

LESSON 9: DIFFERENCES INHERENT BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

Selected Teachings from “Differences Inherent between Men and Women” (63–65)

“For Time and All Eternity,” Elder Boyd K. Packer (66–70)

“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (83–84)

Selected Teachings from “Equality of Men and Women” (79–80)

LESSON 10: MEN’S DIVINE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (83–84)

“To the Fathers in Israel,” President Ezra Taft Benson (203–6)

“Our Solemn Responsibilities,” President Gordon B. Hinckley (22–26)

“Being a Righteous Husband and Father,” President Howard W. Hunter (206–9)

LESSON 11: WOMEN’S DIVINE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Selected Teachings from “Women’s Divine Roles and Responsibilities” (347–49)

“To the Mothers in Zion,” President Ezra Taft Benson (352–57)

“Women of the Church,” President Gordon B. Hinckley (357–60)

“The Joy of Living the Great Plan of Happiness,” Elder Richard G. Scott (360–63)

“We Are Women of God,” Sister Sheri L. Dew (364–66)

LESSON 12: PRIORITIZING LIFE’S DEMANDS

Selected Teachings from “Priorities and Balance” (276–77)

“Keeping Life’s Demands in Balance,” Elder M. Russell Ballard (280–82)

“‘One Thing Needful’: Becoming Women of Greater Faith in Christ,” Sister Patricia T. Holland (366–72)

“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (83–84)

LESSON 13: MONEY AND MARRIAGE

Selected Teachings from “Finances” (115)

“One for the Money: Guide to Family Finance,” Elder Marvin J. Ashton (115–19)

“Greed, Selfishness, and Overindulgence,” Elder Joe J. Christensen (120–23)

LESSON 14: MANAGING TEMPORAL RESOURCES

"To the Boys and to the Men," President Gordon B. Hinckley (60–62)
Selected Teachings from *"Debt"* (59–60)
Selected Teachings from *"Temporal Preparedness"* (327–29)

LESSON 15: MOTHERS' EMPLOYMENT OUTSIDE THE HOME

Selected Teachings from *"Mothers' Employment outside the Home"* (237–40)
Selected Teachings from *"Education"* (77–78)
"The Family: A Proclamation to the World," the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (83–84)

LESSON 16: KEEPING LOVE ALIVE

Selected Teachings from *"Marriage throughout the Years"* (184)
Paragraph 7 of *"The Family: A Proclamation to the World,"* the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (83)
Selected Teachings from *"The Family: A Proclamation to the World"* (84–89)
"The Enriching of Marriage," Elder James E. Faust (184–86)
"Hinckleys to Note 60th Anniversary" (186–87)
"How Do I Love Thee?" Elder Jeffrey R. Holland (158–62)
"A Union of Love and Understanding," Elder Marlin K. Jensen (162–66)

LESSON 17: RESPECTING YOUR SPOUSE

Selected Teachings from *"Abuse"* (3–5)
"Healing the Tragic Scars of Abuse," Elder Richard G. Scott (5–8)

LESSON 18: FIDELITY IN MARRIAGE

Selected Teachings from *"Fidelity in Marriage"* (111–14)
Selected Teachings from *"Pornography"* (264–67)
"The Family: A Proclamation to the World," the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (83–84)

LESSON 19: INASMUCH AS PARENTS HAVE CHILDREN IN ZION

"Bear and Nurture Children," in *"The Great Plan of Happiness,"* Elder Dallin H. Oaks (262)
"The Family: A Proclamation to the World," the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (83–84)
Selected Teachings from *"Parenthood: Creating a Gospel-Centered Home"* (241–43)

1 AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW

Our leaders often emphasize the importance of looking at marriage and family issues from an eternal perspective. Elder Merrill J. Bateman, a member of the Seventy, stated: “A view of marriage and the family based on eternal principles increases the probability of success. When one takes the long view, one tries harder to be patient, long-suffering, kind, gentle, and meek. These characteristics, in turn, strengthen the marriage” (“The Eternal Family,” in *Brigham Young University 1997–98 Speeches* [1997], 115).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who was then a member of the Seventy, taught:

“From the moment of birth into mortality to the time we are married in the temple, everything we have in the whole gospel system is to prepare and qualify us to enter that holy order of matrimony which makes us husband and wife in this life and in the world to come.

“Then from the moment we are sealed together by the power and authority of the holy priesthood . . . everything connected with revealed religion is designed to help us keep the terms and conditions of our marriage covenant, so that this covenant will have efficacy, virtue, and force in the life to come.

“Thus celestial marriage is the crowning ordinance of the gospel. . . . Thus the family unit is the most important organization in time or in eternity.

“And thus we should have more interest in and concern for our families than for anything else in life. . . .

“There is nothing in this world as important as the creation and perfection of family units” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1970, 27).

PRINCIPLE

A view of marriage and the family based on the gospel of Jesus Christ increases the probability of marital happiness.

STUDENT MANUAL READINGS

“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (83–84)

Selected Teachings from “Eternal Perspective” (81–82)

Selected Teachings from “Principles” (274–75)

“Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge,” Elder Richard G. Scott (148–51)

WHAT TO TEACH

Our marriage and family relationships will improve through the application of correct principles.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH



Student manual. Explain that this course, Religion 235, is based on principles. Each lesson sets forth one general principle that can be applied in a variety of ways to help build an eternal marriage.

Have the students turn to “Living by Gospel Principles” in the student manual (viii). Ask how Joseph Smith responded when asked how he governed his people. (“I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves” [in John Taylor, “The Organization of the Church,” *Millennial Star*, 15 Nov. 1851, 339]). Have students read Elder Richard G. Scott’s statement on principles (student manual, viii). How can true principles help us govern our married lives?

Read the rest of “Governing Our Lives with Gospel Principles” and discuss questions similar to the following:

- How is the term *principle* used in the student manual?
- How does understanding true principles help us obey the commandments?
- In what ways can understanding true principles help make difficult decisions clear?

Have students read the rest of “Living by Gospel Principles” (student manual, viii–ix), and ask questions such as:

- What are some scriptural examples of “if-then” principle statements?
- In what ways are true principles “universal”?
- In what ways are true principles “conditional”?

Tell students that two objectives of this course are to:

- Identify gospel principles of conduct about marriage relationships found in scripture and the teachings of the Brethren.
- Learn to apply these principles in our lives.

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles noted: “While easy to find, true principles are not easy to live until they become an established pattern of life” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1993, 43; or *Ensign*, May 1993, 34). Elder Scott gave counsel on how to do this. Write the following statement by Elder Scott on the board: “As packets of knowledge unfold, they must be *understood, valued, obeyed, remembered, and expanded*” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 119; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 88).



Student manual. Have students turn with you to the article by Elder Scott entitled “Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge” (student manual, 148). Have them find the above statement and underline it (p. 150, column 2). Discuss how we can make gospel principles about marriage part of our lives by using Elder Scott’s counsel.

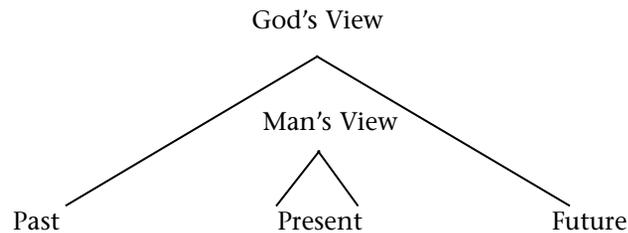
WHAT TO TEACH

When we begin to see marriage from the Lord’s perspective, our desire to achieve an eternal marriage increases.



SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

Discussion. Draw the following diagram on the board (see student manual, 81) and ask a student to explain what an eternal perspective is according to the diagram.



What implications does this diagram have for daily marital and family decisions? Have half the class read “Pray for the Success of Your Marriage” by Elder Joe J. Christensen of the Presidency of the Seventy in the student manual (284). Have the other half read “Turning to the Lord” by Elder Robert E. Wells of the Seventy (288–89). Invite class members to give their perspectives on the advice in these readings. What are specific ways that seeking divine help can benefit couples in their marriage?

An eternal perspective means to use the knowledge God gives His children through scripture and the prophets. Heavenly Father sees our past, present, and future. His eternal perspective has no mortal limitations. The plan of salvation helps us begin to see as He does so we can make wiser and more righteous decisions. Discuss the following scriptures:

- Alma 40:8. “All is as one day with God, and time only is measured unto men.”
- Doctrine and Covenants 38:2. “For all things are present before mine eyes.”
- Doctrine and Covenants 130:7. “All things for their glory are manifest, past, present, and future, and are continually before the Lord.”

Read and discuss several of the quotations in Selected Teachings from “Eternal Perspective” in the student manual (81–82).

WHAT TO TEACH

“There is nothing in this world as important as the creation and perfection of family units.”

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH



Discussion. Read Elder Bruce R. McConkie’s statement in the Doctrinal Overview at the beginning of this lesson, and write the last sentence of his statement on the board. Ask: What are some of the teachings in the plan of salvation that support Elder McConkie’s statement? Help your students discover such teachings as:

- We are children of God. He is the father of our spirits. We are “after the order” of God (see Moses 6:67) and have the potential to become like our heavenly parents.
- We came to this earth to gain a physical body and prove obedient to “all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them” (Abraham 3:25). “God himself, finding he was in the midst of spirits and glory, because he was more intelligent, saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself” (Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 6:312).
- Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ and by following His commandments, we can live with our Heavenly Father again and become like Him: “Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God” (D&C 76:58).
- The creation of the earth provided a place for us to gain mortal experience and learn to be more like our heavenly parents. Regarding marriage, read Doctrine and Covenants 49:16–17 together.

WHAT TO TEACH

The Proclamation on the Family helps us understand the importance of eternal marriage and family life.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH



Discussion. On 23 September 1995, President Gordon B. Hinckley read to the Relief Society sisters a proclamation about the importance of the family in the plan of salvation. Read together the first paragraph of “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” (student manual, 83).

Read or tell the story in Elder Henry B. Eyring’s address “The Family,” in which he describes his university years living in Mrs. Soper’s boarding house (student manual, 104). Emphasize that “we must have the goal not just in our minds but in our hearts. What we want is eternal life in families. We don’t just want it if that is what works out, nor do we want something approaching eternal life. We want eternal life, whatever its cost in effort, pain, and sacrifice” (*To Draw Closer to God* [1997], 161; or student manual, 105).

WHAT TO TEACH

An eternal perspective of the plan of salvation influences our thoughts, feelings, and conduct in marriage.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH



Role play. Explain that husbands and wives often have different views about decisions that must be made. When such differences occur, there are typically three ways married couples decide: (1) The wife gives in and the husband gets his way. (2) The husband gives in and the wife gets her way. (3) The husband and wife compromise and come up with a solution that partially satisfies both of them.

In an eternal marriage there is a fourth way that can help bring peace and unity to the marriage. Each partner seeks to understand the gospel principles taught in the plan of salvation and to learn, through study and faith, the mind of the Lord. Both partner are willing to sacrifice or adjust their own desires to be obedient to the Lord. Unity is possible for two people with different views when they adopt a common set of gospel principles.

Present the following hypothetical situation to the class: Bill and Susan have been married for two years. Bill has graduated from university and has his first career job. Bill wants a new car and approaches Susan about it. Susan says she wants a baby and they can't afford both a car and a baby right now.

Invite a couple to play the roles of Susan and Bill. Instruct them to begin the role play by stating their position and trying hard to win their point. Then have them work toward a compromise in which both get part of what they want. (For example, "We'll buy a *used* car and *wait* a certain amount of time before we have a baby.") Then replay the situation, asking them to solve the problem by using an *eternal perspective*. Invite the class to help them by finding what Church leaders have said about the subject (see student manual, 283–89). Rotate several student couples into the role play. Summarize their conclusions on the board.

Issue	His View	Her View	Compromise	Lord's Eternal Perspective
Buy a new car, or have a baby?				

Conclude the role play by showing how knowledge and application of gospel principles increases unity and clarifies decision making.

As an alternative, create your own hypothetical situation for the class to work through, or have the class suggest a dilemma for young married couples that is common in their culture.

 **Discussion.** Distribute handout 1, "A Comparison of Views," found at the end of this lesson (pp. 7–8). Pick two or three of the issues from the left-hand column and write them on the board. Explain that these are representative of the many topics you will discuss in Religion 235. Ask students to briefly identify popular positions on these issues in your community or in the world. From a gospel perspective, what will be the consequences of each popular view? Have students briefly compare these views with what the plan of salvation teaches. What promised blessings follow each view? As the discussion progresses, have students fill in the information on their handouts.

CONCLUSION

Share the following statement by President Harold B. Lee: “All of the gospel principles and ordinances are but invitations to learning the gospel by the practice of its teachings” (*The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, ed. Clyde J. Williams [1996], 619).

Emphasize that we learn gospel principles best by following them. When the Savior taught the parable of the good Samaritan, He concluded by asking His followers to “Go, and do thou likewise” (Luke 10:37; see also James 1:27). Gospel principles should be the foundation for Christ-centered marriage relationships. Encourage students to make the gospel principles taught in this class part of their lives by applying them in their decisions in marriage.

Handout 1 • A Comparison of Views

Issue	Popular View	Consequences	Plan of Salvation View	Consequences
Interfaith marriage				
Living together before marriage				
When to have children				
Desired number of children				
Commitment to marriage				
Importance of religion				
Developing a Christlike character				
Spouse and child abuse				
Swearing or obscene language				
Respect for spouse				

Issue	Popular View	Consequences	Plan of Salvation View	Consequences
Working mothers				
Handling money				
Importance of service				
Importance of sacrifice				
Balancing priorities				
Roles of men and women				
Fulfilling each other's needs				
Fidelity in marriage				
Commitment to the marriage during difficult times				
Being trustworthy				

2 THE JOY OF MARRIAGE

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW

“Happiness in marriage and parenthood can exceed a thousand times any other happiness” (James E. Faust, in Conference Report, Oct. 1977, 14; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, 8).

“Marriage can be more an exultant ecstasy than the human mind can conceive. This is within the reach of every couple, every person” (Spencer W. Kimball, “Oneness in Marriage,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1977, 3; see also “Marriage and Divorce,” in *1976 Devotional Speeches of the Year* [1977], 146).

“The marriage vows taken in these hallowed places and the sacred covenants entered into for time and all eternity are proof against many of the temptations of life that tend to break homes and destroy happiness. . . .

“Worthy young Latter-day Saint men and women who so begin life together find that their eternal partnership under the everlasting covenant becomes the foundation upon which are built peace, happiness, virtue, love, and all of the other eternal verities of life, here and hereafter” (Heber J. Grant, “Beginning Life Together,” *Improvement Era*, Apr. 1936, 198–99).

PRINCIPLE

If couples obey the gospel principles that lead to marital happiness, marriage can bring a more “exultant ecstasy than the human mind can conceive.”

STUDENT MANUAL READINGS

Selected Teachings from “Happiness in Marriage” (133–35)

“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (83–84)

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Scripture activity.** Invite students to suggest scriptures that show that happiness in marriage is possible and important to seek. The following references and questions may help your discussion:

- Ecclesiastes 4:9–12. Why is it better to be married than single?
- Ecclesiastes 9:9. What does the Lord expect of us in marriage?
- Doctrine and Covenants 49:15–17. Why was the earth created?
- 2 Nephi 2:25. What is one purpose of our creation? (To have joy.)

Help students understand that seeking a marriage and family that will last throughout eternity is one of the greatest pursuits of mortality.

WHAT TO TEACH

Happy, resilient, enduring marriages and families are possible today.

 **Student manual.** Some in the world teach that marriage and families are outdated and no longer bring happiness. Invite students to read “Marriage Brings Happiness and Joy” in the student manual (133–34) and summarize what prophets of God teach about happiness in marriage and the family. Discuss questions similar to the following:

- According to President Kimball, why is marriage perhaps the most vital of all the decisions we make?
- What reasons does Elder Boyd K. Packer give for keeping faith in marriage?
- According to Elder Bruce R. McConkie, why is it important to be united as one in the Lord?
- Given Elder James E. Faust’s observation, why do you think so many people try to find happiness by pursuing the things of this world rather than an eternal marriage?

Conclude that it is still possible to find happiness in marriage. This happiness has the potential to become a fulness of joy throughout the eternities.

WHAT TO TEACH

Satan desires to thwart God’s great plan of happiness.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Student manual.** If our goal is to have an eternal marriage, it is important to understand the forces that work against it. In 1900 in the United States there was one divorce for every twelve marriages. By the year 2000 this rate was estimated at one divorce for every two marriages. The trends for divorce are similar in many countries throughout the world (see student manual, 169, 176, 184).

Have students turn to “Satan Tries to Destroy Happiness” in the student manual (134). Read Elder Boyd K. Packer’s comments about Lucifer’s single purpose, and discuss questions such as the following:

- According to Elder Packer, why is Satan so intent on destroying marriages and families?
- What are the consequences if he succeeds?

Read President Gordon B. Hinckley’s statement in the student manual (134). Discuss questions like the following:

- What trends does President Hinckley warn us about?
- What can be done to avoid such problems?

Discuss how the following statement by President Spencer W. Kimball can apply to eternal marriage: “Satan is very much a personal, individual spirit being, but without a mortal body. His desires to seal each of us his are no less ardent in wickedness than our Father’s are in righteousness to attract us to his own eternal kingdom” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 35).

WHAT TO TEACH

Happy marriages are a result of living the laws upon which the blessings of a happy marriage are predicated.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Discuss how the following teachings relate to eternal marriage:

“There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—

“And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated” (D&C 130:20–21).

“Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 255).

When seeking any blessing, it is important to learn and apply the fundamental principles associated with it. This is particularly true of the blessing of a happy marriage. This course is built on the premise that we can find correct principles that lead to happy marriages in the scriptures and in the teachings of living prophets.

 **Group work.** Refer to the list of scriptures under “Scripture Study” in the “Happiness in Marriage” section of the student manual (134). Write the following statement from “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” on the board: “Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.” Explain that the scriptures and the teachings of living prophets are the best place to find teachings of Jesus Christ regarding marriage and family.

Divide the class into groups and assign scriptures from the list in the student manual. Ask each group to identify a principle that can be applied to a marriage relationship. Also ask the groups to explain how the principle will increase the likelihood of achieving success in marriage. After a few minutes of group discussion, ask each group to present their findings. Possible answers are listed below:

- Job 6:25. If we speak in a Christlike way, we are more likely to have happiness in marriage.
- Proverbs 15:1. Patience and self-control make happiness in marriage more likely.
- Matthew 12:34–37. Christlike communication comes from a Christlike heart.
- 1 Nephi 1:20. Through obedience and faith in Jesus Christ, we can avoid and even be delivered from many trials that destroy marriages today.
- 3 Nephi 18:19–21. Families can be strengthened to resist the temptations of Satan by praying together.
- Alma 41:10. Wickedness in marriage never results in happiness. Righteousness greatly increases our chances of finding happiness in marriage.
- Doctrine and Covenants 42:22. When we are loyal and committed to our spouse and gospel covenants, we increase the probability of a happy and enduring marriage.
- Doctrine and Covenants 42:23. Adultery and thoughts of adultery can destroy marriages.

- Doctrine and Covenants 50:28. Perfection in marriage must be preceded by sanctification from all sins.

Discuss additional scriptures of your own or suggested by your students. Tell students that these are only a few of the principles about marriage and family in the scriptures. Encourage students to look for such principles daily in their scripture study.

 **The law of witnesses.** Read Elder Henry B. Eyring's statement at the end of the "Happiness in Marriage" section in the student manual (135). Discuss the following questions:

- Where can we turn for safety in these perilous times?
- What is the law of witnesses and how can it help save marriages?

Explain that topics and readings in this course use the approach of the law of witnesses. If several prophets have given counsel on a topic related to marriage, it is included in this class. As we apply their teachings on what is needed to have happy and enduring marriages, we will be entitled to the promised blessings.

 **Course overview.** If you have not done so already, give students a copy of the "Student Manual Readings" from the beginning of this manual (pp. viii–x). Preview the upcoming lessons and readings. Bear witness of the power for good that comes from studying the teachings of prophets. Assign students to complete the readings prior to each class.

CONCLUSION

Review the statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith on happiness from the discussion activity above (see p. 11). Explain that we can find true marital happiness in this life by learning and living correct principles and by seeking the influence of the Holy Ghost in our marital decisions. If we live by these principles, we will greatly increase our likelihood of achieving happiness in marriage in both this life and the next.

3 KEEPING THE SACRED COVENANT OF MARRIAGE

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW

The following scripture illustrates the significance of priesthood ordinances and the covenants associated with them: “Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest.

“And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh” (D&C 84:20–21).

Making and keeping covenants is central to becoming worthy of eternal blessings.

PRINCIPLE

Obeying covenants made during sacred ordinances increases the power of godliness in our marriage.

STUDENT MANUAL READINGS

Selected Teachings from “Covenants and Ordinances” (38–40)

Selected Teachings from “Divorce” (73–74)

“Holy Spirit of Promise” (136)

“Covenant Marriage,” Elder Bruce C. Hafen (47–50)

Note: This lesson may take more than one class period to teach.

WHAT TO TEACH

The power of God is available to mankind through sacred covenants and ordinances. This power makes eternal relationships possible.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Ask: What can a husband and wife do to keep their commitment to their marriage covenant strong throughout their lives?

 **Discussion.** Invite students to read and discuss the definition for “covenant” in the Bible Dictionary (p. 651). The following questions may be helpful:

- How would you define *covenant*?
- Who sets the terms of a covenant with God?
- What do covenants have to do with principles and ordinances of the gospel?
- In what ways do covenants help us live the gospel?

Explain that in a covenant between God and man, both parties take on obligations and both parties receive a benefit. Draw the following chart on the board, including the bold headings only. Ask students to suggest what to write in each column.

	Obligation	Benefit
God	He provides the promised blessing.	He receives the individual or couple back in His presence, which is His work and glory (see Moses 1:39).
Man	We keep the terms set by God in the covenant.	We receive the promised blessings.

Analyze and discuss Doctrine and Covenants 84:20–21.

Regardless of our enthusiasm or sincerity, the blessings of eternity are available to us only as we receive the ordinances and keep the covenants associated with them.

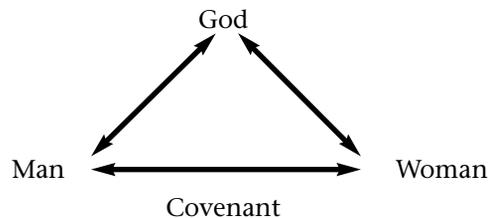
Share the following statement: “In the Church the word *ordinances* usually refers to rites and ceremonies that the Lord has given us for our salvation, guidance, and comfort. . . . These ordinances are physical actions that symbolize spiritual experiences. By taking part in them we receive the spiritual power we need to change our lives” (*Duties and Blessings of the Priesthood: Basic Manual for Priesthood Holders, Part B* [2000], 27).

Draw the following diagram on the board:



Invite students to interpret the diagram as it relates to civil marriage, and discuss their answers. (For example, the arrows could represent the love and support marriage partners give each other, and the line could represent their obligation to each other.) What authority is needed to make a civil marriage valid?

Draw a second illustration as follows:



Again invite students to interpret the diagram, and discuss their answers. (The arrows reaching downward could represent God’s authority, the commandments, the Atonement, and so forth. The arrows reaching upward could represent the couple’s obedience and prayers.)

- Why must eternal covenants be sanctioned by God?
- How can we be sure that God is a party to the covenants we make?

Explain that when we enter into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage, the union becomes far more than a civil contract. The ordinances in the temple draw us heavenward as God becomes a partner to our covenants. These ordinances can help us gain an eternal perspective of our marriage and be more committed to each other and to God.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “The ultimate Latter-day Saint priorities are twofold: First, we seek to understand our relationship to God the Eternal Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and to secure that relationship by obtaining their saving ordinances and by keeping our personal covenants. Second, we seek to understand our relationship to our family members and to secure those relationships by the ordinances of the temple and by keeping the covenants we make in that holy place. These relationships, secured in the way I have explained, provide eternal blessings available in no other way. No combination of science, success, property, pride, prominence, or power can provide these eternal blessings!” (in Conference Report, Apr. 2001, 110; or *Ensign*, May 2001, 84).

How can married couples keep these two priorities foremost in their lives?

Briefly review the information from the “Celestial Marriage” chart in the student manual (46).

WHAT TO TEACH

The power available through sacred covenants makes it possible for couples to become like their heavenly parents.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Read Doctrine and Covenants 130:20–21.

- What are the Lord’s blessings contingent upon? (Obedience to the laws upon which they are predicated.)
- When the Lord promises us certain blessings as part of an ordinance we participate in, what must we do to receive the blessings?
- Read Doctrine and Covenants 136:4. In what way does walking “in all the ordinances of the Lord” help us qualify for eternal life? (As part of these ordinances, we covenant to do all the things that are necessary to enter the presence of our heavenly parents as heirs to their kingdom.)

Sister Patricia T. Holland said: “Covenants not only commit us to being unshakable in our devotion to God, they remind us God will always be unshakable in his devotion toward us. And though we may falter and make mistakes, he never falters. He never makes a mistake. He is ever faithful to us. That is the beauty and majesty inherent in the covenants we make with God” (“Considering Covenants: Women, Men, Perspective, Promises,” in *To Rejoice as Women: Talks from the 1994 Women’s Conference*, ed. Susette Fletcher Green and Dawn Hall Anderson [1995], 99–100; or student manual, 39).

 **Discussion.** Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained how understanding and remembering sacred covenants helps keep us worthy of God’s promised blessings:

“A periodic review of the covenants we have made with the Lord will help us with our priorities and with balance in our lives. This review will help us see where we need to repent and change our lives to ensure that we are worthy of the promises that accompany our covenants and sacred ordinances. Working out our own salvation requires good planning and a deliberate, valiant effort” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 15; or *Ensign*, May 1987, 14; student manual, 40).

- What are the sacred ordinances of salvation that Elder Ballard spoke of?
- What do we covenant with God as part of each of these ordinances?
- What does the Lord promise us in each ordinance?

After students respond, invite them to compare their answers to the information in “Our Covenant-Based Relationship with the Lord” (student manual, 40–46). Column one shows who has authority to perform the ordinance. Columns two and three review the promises we make with God and what He promises us. Review with students the covenants leading up to eternal marriage, and invite students to mentally examine their faithfulness in keeping each of them.

 **Discussion.** What is the best indicator that a potential mate will keep his or her eternal marriage covenants?

Help students understand that the best indicator is how well they honor their covenants now, including baptism, the oath and covenant of the priesthood, and the endowment if they have been endowed.

Review the last section on celestial marriage in “Our Covenant-Based Relationship with the Lord” (student manual, 46). Ask what we covenant to do when we marry in the temple. What does the Lord promise us if we keep our covenants? Point out the many blessings that are available to those who make and keep sacred covenants.

WHAT TO TEACH

Keeping covenants gives us the power to call on heaven for help with our marriage and family.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Student manual.** There are many ways that keeping covenants can bless our lives. Turn to Selected Teachings from “Covenants and Ordinances” in the student manual (38). Read and discuss the statement by Elder Boyd K. Packer on page 47 regarding the power of the sealing ordinances to bind families.

 **Scripture activity.** Review the following scriptures and relate them to how faithfulness brings power to protect families.

- Mosiah 26:15–20. In what ways do you think Alma honored the oath and covenant of the priesthood?
- Mosiah 27:14. How did Alma’s faithfulness enable him to bless his family? (He was able to pray “with much faith” concerning his son Alma the Younger that he would “be brought to the knowledge of the truth.”)
- Mosiah 28:5–7. How did King Mosiah’s relationship with the Lord bless his family? (When his sons asked him if they could go on a dangerous mission to the Lamanites, he was worthy of asking for and receiving an answer from the Lord.) Review the account of a fulfillment of the Lord’s promise to King Mosiah (see Alma 19:22–23). Although this is not intended as a pattern for all families, it illustrates the power of the faith of one person in behalf of another worthy member of the family.
- Alma 53:16–21; 56:45–48, 56. To what did the sons of Helaman attribute their protective power? Discuss how this kind of power is available today. How will keeping all our covenants, including those that accompany eternal marriage, increase our ability to bless our families?

WHAT TO TEACH

Living prophets give us guidance regarding the new and everlasting covenant of marriage.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Group work.** Modern prophets help us understand the nature of the covenants we enter into when we marry in the temple. Turn to Selected Teachings from “Covenants and Ordinances” (student manual, 38). Divide the following questions among groups of students. Give them a few minutes to discuss the answers, and then have them present their findings to the class. (As an alternative, go through the questions as a class.)

- President Joseph Fielding Smith (student manual, 38). What function does the Holy Spirit of Promise perform in our eternal marriage covenant? (see also Selected Teachings from “Holy Spirit of Promise,” student manual, 136).

What did President Smith teach about avoiding divorce? What did he say is the Lord’s penalty for breaking the marriage covenant through divorce? (see also Presidents Gordon B. Hinckley and James E. Faust, Selected Teachings, “Divorce,” student manual, 73).

What two other obligations did President Smith say that we accept when we marry? What difficulties might we encounter as we strive to meet these obligations?

- Elder J. Ballard Washburn (student manual, 40). According to Elder Washburn, what aspect of the marriage covenant do many couples neglect? Why do you think this is happening? What does it take to keep this part of the new and everlasting covenant of marriage?
- Elder Marion G. Romney (student manual, 38–39). Based on Elder Romney’s assessment, why should we take our covenants seriously? In what ways are we sometimes careless or casual about sacred covenants and ordinances?
- Elder Boyd K. Packer (student manual, 39). Discuss Elder Packer’s warnings about common ways Latter-day Saints are enticed to break their covenants and lose promised blessings. What can we do to help assure that these temptations never cause us to lose our promised blessings?
- Elder Robert D. Hales (student manual, 39). Why does the Lord expect us to continue to love our spouse even if there are things about our marriage that we are not satisfied with? How can the desire to honor our covenants help us in situations like this?
- Elder Jeffrey R. and Sister Patricia T. Holland (student manual, 39). What is the power of covenants as taught by Elder and Sister Holland?

 **Discussion.** Explain the difference between civil contractual marriages and eternal covenant marriages (see Elder Bruce C. Hafen, “Covenant Marriage,” student manual, 47–50). Illustrate the differences by drawing a vertical line down the center of the board. Label one side “Contract Marriage,” and the other side “Covenant Marriage.” Using Elder Hafen’s talk, make a list of characteristics of each type of marriage, and compare and contrast them as a class.

All married couples must deal with adversity. Couples married by civil law may lack the eternal perspective that gives power to covenant marriages.

CONCLUSION

Consider bearing testimony of how keeping your covenants blesses your marriage and family.

ASSIGNMENT FOR LESSON 7

Give students the following family history assignment. This assignment will be due when you teach lesson 7, “Tradition of the Fathers,” normally in about two weeks.

Part 1. Do some research to learn something about events in your ancestors’ lives that can influence your own marriage and family life. Learn something you did not know before this assignment. You could read family histories written by relatives, or you could ask your parents, grandparents, or aunts and uncles to tell you about events in your family history that are unusual or inspiring. Write down what you learn so it becomes part of your own family history. Describe how it can influence your own marriage and family. Be prepared to share your insights with the class.

Part 2. Talk to your parents, other family members, or family friends. Ask them if they see any similarities in mannerisms, interests, and so forth between you and your parents. Ask them if your grandparents had any of these characteristics.

Part 3. Make a list of family rules, practices, and traditions you observed while growing up. Make a second list of the rules and traditions you would like to continue in your own family. Indicate which you feel are grounded in gospel principles.

These practices and traditions could relate to chores, study, curfews, bedtimes, meals, family councils, family scripture study, family home evening, family prayer, couple prayer, father’s blessings and interviews, birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, weddings, holiday traditions, Sabbath observance, missions, temple marriage, recreational activities, husband’s role and wife’s role, decision making, finances (such as payment of tithes, credit cards, debt, and budgeting), expressing affection, communication styles, problem solving, and focus on material things.

4 SPIRITUALITY IN MARRIAGE

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW

“If two people love the Lord more than their own lives and then love each other more than their own lives, working together in total harmony with the gospel program as their basic structure, they are sure to have . . . great happiness. When a husband and wife go together frequently to the holy temple, kneel in prayer together in their home with their family, go hand in hand to their religious meetings, keep their lives wholly chaste, mentally and physically, so that their whole thoughts and desires and loves are all centered in one being, their companion, and both work together for the upbuilding of the kingdom of God, then happiness is at its pinnacle” (Spencer W. Kimball, “Marriage and Divorce,” in *1976 Devotional Speeches of the Year* [1977], 151; or student manual, 172).

PRINCIPLE

“If two people love the Lord more than their own lives and . . . both work together for the upbuilding of the kingdom of God, then happiness is at its pinnacle.”

STUDENT MANUAL READINGS

“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (83–84)

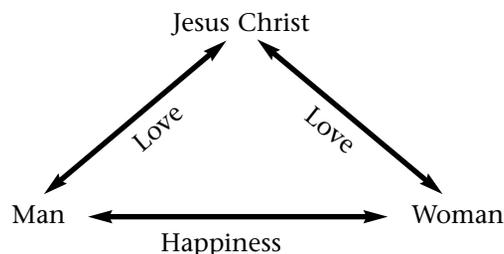
Selected Teachings from “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” (84–100)

WHAT TO TEACH

Married couples become more able to love each other as they become more Christlike.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Write the lesson principle on the board. Ask students to draw a diagram that illustrates this principle. After their attempts, draw the following diagram on the board and leave it there for the rest of the lesson.



 **Student manual.** Have students turn to the section “How Does Our Love for God Influence Our Ability to Love Others?” (student manual, 157). Read each statement and ask questions similar to the following:

- Elder Orson Pratt. Why do you think “a wicked man can have but little love for his wife”? How would living gospel principles in a Christ-centered home help a man love his wife?

- Elder John A. Widtsoe. Why is it that true love between men and women “always includes love of God”?
- Elder Russell M. Nelson. According to Elder Nelson, how does our commitment to the Lord increase our commitment to our spouse? Why is this true? What might be the consequences in a marriage if the partners’ commitment to their sacred covenants is weak?

WHAT TO TEACH

Building spirituality is a quest for both individual and couple.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Group work.** Divide the class into three groups and have each group read one of the following sections from “Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge” by Elder Richard G. Scott (student manual, 148): “Humbly Seek Divine Light,” “Exercise Faith and Hearken to Jesus’ Counsel,” and “Obey the Commandments.” Have each group present two or three significant concepts from their assigned reading, and discuss them as a class.

 **Discussion.** Ask students: What can you do to increase spirituality as an individual? What can you do as a couple to increase spirituality? How can the Spirit help solve daily problems in a marriage?

WHAT TO TEACH

“Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World”).

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Group work.** Turn with students to “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” (student manual, 83), and read the following principle from paragraph 7: “Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.” Briefly remind students how the scriptures teach the importance of building on solid foundations (refer to Luke 6:47–49; 1 Corinthians 3:10–13; Ephesians 2:20, or 2 Nephi 28:28). Explain that to find happiness in family life, we must build on the foundation of the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The seventh paragraph of the proclamation lists nine principles that serve as a foundation for a successful marriage: faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities. Divide the class into small groups and assign one or two of the principles to each group. Ask each group to think of examples of how their assigned principles strengthens marriage and share them with the class. Discuss additional examples as time allows.

CONCLUSION

Read the following statement by Elder James E. Faust, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Having the companionship and enjoying the fruits of a Holy and Divine Presence is the kernel of a great happiness in marriage. Spiritual oneness is the anchor. Slow leaks in the sanctifying dimension of marriage often cause marriages to become flat tires” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1977, 14; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, 9; student manual, 186). Return to the diagram on the board and explain that we can keep our marriages from becoming “flat tires” by both husband and wife loving Jesus Christ and following His teachings. Use the diagram you drew on the board to explain that the closer a couple gets to the Lord, the closer they come to each other.

Review the principle that spirituality enhances marriage. Invite students to consider their own strengths and weaknesses and look for ways to become more Christlike.

5 COMMUNICATION FUNDAMENTALS IN MARRIAGE

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW

“Our communications reflect in our countenance. Therefore, we must be careful not only *what* we communicate, but also *how* we do so. Souls can be strengthened or shattered by the message and the manner in which we communicate” (L. Lionel Kendrick, in Conference Report, Oct. 1988, 28; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 23).

PRINCIPLE

Good communication edifies marriage.

STUDENT MANUAL READINGS

Selected Teachings from “Communication” (31)

WHAT TO TEACH

Understanding your own strengths and weaknesses can be helpful in improving communication skills.

WHAT TO TEACH

Church leaders teach that marital communication is improved through sensitivity, prudence, openness, tolerance, love, respect, seeing each other as equals, and respecting each other’s agency.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Student pretest.** Make copies of handout 2, “Communication Quiz,” from the end of this lesson (p. 23) and distribute them to your married or engaged students. Give them a few minutes to answer the questions under “How Well Am I Communicating?” Explain that you will not be discussing their answers in class, but encourage them to discuss them later with their fiancé or spouse.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Read Doctrine and Covenants 76:94 with students. Explain that one of the characteristics of those who inherit the celestial kingdom is that “they see as they are seen, and know as they are known.” This seems to indicate that in our perfected, celestial state, our communications with one another will be pure and transparent, without hypocrisy, deception, or misunderstanding. Since celestial glory is our goal, we should try to learn and use this type of communication now.

 **Group work.** Have students turn to the related scriptures under “Communication” in the student manual (31). Divide the class into groups and assign several scriptures to each group. Ask them to discuss in their groups how their scriptures apply to communication in marriage and the family. Have them report their conclusions to the class.

Handout 3. Make copies of handout 3, “Self-Evaluation of Emotional Abuse,” from the end of this lesson (p. 24) and distribute them to students. Invite students to discuss their feelings about the behaviors listed there. Encourage them to fill out the questionnaires at home and, if they are married, to discuss them afterwards with their spouse.

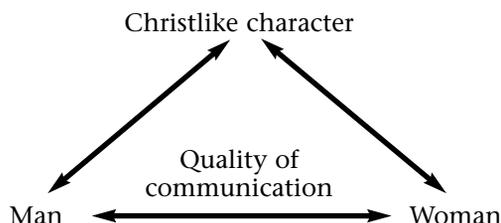
Point out that to have a strong marriage you must eliminate all forms of hurtful communication and instead communicate in ways that nurture, edify, uplift, encourage, and make your spouse feel valued and loved.

WHAT TO TEACH

The more Christlike husband and wife become, the greater ability they have to communicate with love for each other.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Draw the following diagram on the board. Ask the class to explain it. Explain that the closer the man and woman come to Christ (or in other words, the more Christlike they become), the greater ability they have to communicate with love for each other.



 **Discussion.** Read the following statements to the class and ask what each has to do with marital communication.

- Elder John A. Widtsoe, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote: “True love of man for woman always includes love of God from whom all good things issue” (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, arr. G. Homer Durham, 3 vols. in 1 [1960], 297; or student manual, 157).
- Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “In the teachings of men—without Christ at the center—there will soon be a slackening sense of service to others. . . . Men do not usually love a neighbor simply because he is there; some discover that he exists only after they become persuaded that God exists” (*Of One Heart: The Glory of the City of Enoch* [1975], 15).

CONCLUSION

Two passages from James 3 summarize the challenge of communicating in a way that strengthens eternal relationships:

“For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. . . .

“Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom” (James 3:2, 13).

If time allows, review and discuss all of James 3.

Handout 2 • Communication Quiz

How Well Am I Communicating?	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom
1. The way I speak to my companion strengthens our relationship.			
2. What I choose to talk about with my companion strengthens our relationship.			
3. I give greater emphasis to my companion's virtues than to his or her faults.			
4. I have a positive attitude about my companion.			
5. I avoid criticism, contempt, defensiveness, withdrawal, isolation, and stubbornness when communicating with my companion.			
6. The way I communicate with my companion shows that I love and respect him or her.			
7. I view my companion as an equal in our marriage relationship.			
8. I include my companion in all important decisions made in our marriage.			
9. I am sensitive that I should not try to compel my companion to fit my preconceived ideal.			
10. I work hard at communicating in a Christlike way.			

Handout 3 • Self-Evaluation of Emotional Abuse

Adapted from Judy C. Olsen, "The Invisible Heartbreaker," Ensign, June 1996, 24–25

Mark how often you use each of the following forms of emotional abuse with your spouse or others.

ABUSIVE CONDUCT	NEVER (not in last five years)	RARELY (less than once a year)	OCCASIONALLY (less than once a month)	FREQUENTLY (weekly or daily)
<i>Name Calling</i>				
Words like <i>idiot, jerk</i> , or worse				
Sarcastic comments or exaggerations				
Unflattering nicknames				
Insulting labels				
<i>Demeaning Statements</i>				
Devaluation of efforts				
Patronizing tone of voice				
Put-down humor that humiliates				
Faultfinding				
<i>Intimidation</i>				
Threats to get one's way				
Angry words				
Shouting				
Stomping around the house				
Throwing or breaking things				
Interrupting and speaking sharply				
Angry looks or other signs of belligerence				
<i>Isolation (limiting spouse's interaction)</i>				
Withholding information or affection				
Harboring feelings of ill-will or estrangement				
Setting inappropriate rules				
<i>Manipulation</i>				
Acting hurt to get sympathy				
Attempting to create guilty feelings				
Blaming the spouse or others for problems				
Deliberately disagreeing with a spouse's decisions for selfish reasons				

6 RIGHTEOUS UNITY IN MARRIAGE

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW

“Be determined in one mind and in one heart, united in all things” (2 Nephi 1:21).

“And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness” (Moses 7:18).

“A husband and wife must attain righteous unity and oneness in their goals, desires, and actions” (Ezra Taft Benson, “Salvation—A Family Affair,” *Ensign*, July 1992, 2; or student manual, 283).

“It is far more difficult to be of one heart and mind than to be physically one” (James E. Faust, in Conference Report, Apr. 1993, 46; or *Ensign*, May 1993, 36; student manual, 344).

PRINCIPLE

Achieving a righteous unity with our spouse increases the likelihood of success in marriage.

STUDENT MANUAL READINGS

Selected Teachings from “Unity” (344–46)

Selected Teachings from “Selfishness” (304)

WHAT TO TEACH

Righteous unity in marriage consists of oneness in our goals, desires, and actions.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

Remind the students of the principles of love, respect, and good communication discussed in the previous lesson. Point out the importance of these principles in building unity in marriage.

 **Discussion.** Write on the board President Ezra Taft Benson’s statement from Gospel Principles (above). Ask: What do you think is meant by “righteous unity”? Discuss this concept by asking questions similar to the following:

- In what ways might righteous unity help prevent or resolve problems in marriage? Do you think *any* type of unity will improve relationships, or does it have to be a *righteous* unity? Why?
- In what areas does President Benson say we must strive for oneness?
- What are examples of righteous unity in a marriage?
- Why is there room for both individuality and oneness in an eternal marriage?

WHAT TO TEACH

Righteous unity in marriage brings strength.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Scripture activity.** The following analogy could be used to teach the power of unity in marriage. Show students a short piece of two-by-four lumber (the size most commonly used to frame buildings). Explain that a two-by-four eight feet long, when placed vertically, can support 577 pounds. If subjected to a greater

weight, it will buckle. Show students a second piece of two-by-four. Hold the two boards side-by-side (do not let them touch), and ask students how much weight they can support together. (They can support twice as much, or 1,154 pounds.) Now move the two boards together so that they are touching. Ask students how much weight they think the boards can support if they are joined so they act as a single board. (When they are joined, they can support 4,610 pounds, nearly four times what they can hold if they are not joined.) *Note:* You could adapt this analogy using sticks or rulers. Two vertical rulers bound together will bear much more weight than they could if they were not bound.

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9 with your students. Discuss how this scripture and the analogy of the two-by-fours relate to marriage. In what ways are a man and a woman united in eternal marriage more powerful than their combined talents would be if they remained single? What does the term *synergy* mean? (“Interaction or cooperation of two or more . . . agents to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects” [*The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 10th ed. (1999), 1452].) Discuss how synergy can work to strengthen an eternal marriage and family.



Discussion. Read the following statement by Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“Marriage allows [our] different characteristics to come together in oneness—in unity—to bless a husband and wife, their children and grandchildren. For the greatest happiness and productivity in life, both husband and wife are needed. Their efforts interlock and are complementary. Each has individual traits that best fit the role the Lord has defined for happiness as a man or woman. When used as the Lord intends, those capacities allow a married couple to think, act, and rejoice as one—to face challenges together and overcome them as one, to grow in love and understanding, and through temple ordinances to be bound together as one whole, eternally. That is the plan” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 101; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 74; student manual, 345).

Discuss how natural differences can benefit a marriage and how differences need not stop us from thinking, acting, and rejoicing as one.

WHAT TO TEACH

There are many types of wedges that create distance and disunity in marriage.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH



Discussion. Share the following story by Elder Spencer W. Kimball, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Explain that wedges are triangular pieces of metal used to split logs into firewood.

“One night I lay awake thinking through the problems of the day. All week there had filed by my desk people—wonderful people—some bowed in grief and anguish of soul; others learning repentance through life’s penalties; some frustrated in their marital upsets, in their moral aberrations, in their financial reverses, and in their spiritual deficiencies.

“These people were good people basically; but as they traveled, they had found difficulty in staying on the main thoroughfare and had deviated on side roads; they had forgotten covenants and postponed putting into effect their good resolutions.

“There came to my mind an article by Samuel T. Whitman entitled ‘Forgotten Wedges.’ I had learned to use wedges when I was a lad in Arizona, it being my duty to supply wood for many fires in the big house. May I quote Whitman:

“The ice storm wasn’t generally destructive. True, a few wires came down, and there was a sudden jump in accidents along the highway. Walking out of doors became unpleasant and difficult. It was disagreeable weather, but it was not serious. Normally, the big walnut tree could easily have borne the weight that formed on its spreading limbs. It was the iron wedge in its heart that caused the damage.

“The story of the iron wedge began years ago when the white-haired farmer was a lad on his father’s homestead. The sawmill had then only recently been moved from the valley, and the settlers were still finding tools and odd pieces of equipment scattered about. . . .

“On this particular day, it was a faller’s wedge—wide, flat, and heavy, a foot or more long, and splayed from mighty poundings. The path from the south pasture did not pass the woodshed; and, because he was already late for dinner, the lad laid the wedge . . . between the limbs of the young walnut tree his father had planted near the front gate. He would take the wedge to the shed right after dinner, or sometime when he was going that way.

“He truly meant to, but he never did. It was there between the limbs, a little tight, when he attained his manhood. It was there, now firmly gripped, when he married and took over his father’s farm. It was half grown over on the day the threshing crew ate dinner under the tree. . . . Grown in and healed over, the wedge was still in the tree the winter the ice storm came.

“In the chill silence of that wintry night, with the mist like rain sifting down and freezing where it fell, one of the three major limbs split away from the trunk and crashed to the ground. This so unbalanced the remainder of the top that it, too, split apart and went down. When the storm was over, not a twig of the once-proud tree remained.

“Early the next morning, the farmer went out to mourn his loss. “Wouldn’t have had that happen for a thousand dollars,” he said. “Prettiest tree in the valley, that was.”

“Then, his eyes caught sight of something in the splintered ruin. “The wedge,” he muttered reproachfully. “The wedge I found in the south pasture.” A glance told him why the tree had fallen. Growing edge-up in the trunk, the wedge had prevented the limb fibers from knitting together as they should.’

“Forgotten wedges! Hidden weaknesses grown over and invisible, waiting until some winter night to work their ruin. What better symbolizes the presence and the effect of sin in our lives?” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1966, 70–71).

What are some wedges that can threaten unity in marriage?

Ask students to turn to Selected Teachings from “Selfishness” in the student manual (p. 304). Read the first sentence of the second paragraph under President Spencer W. Kimball: “Every divorce is the result of selfishness on the part of one or the other or both parties to a marriage contract.” Selfishness can act as a wedge in marriage. It manifests itself in a variety of ways.

Read each of the statement in Selected Teachings and list on the board conduct that can act as a wedge in a marriage. Discuss how each of these wedges can be overcome or avoided altogether. Your list could be similar to the following:

- President David O. McKay. Hatred, greed, animosity, and envy.

- President Spencer W. Kimball. Thinking of our own comforts, conveniences, freedoms, luxuries, or ease; ceaseless pinpricking, physical violence; marrying for the wrong reasons (wealth, prestige, social status, vanity, or to spite someone).
- President Gordon B. Hinckley. Selfishness leading to money problems, adultery, lust, greed. Selfishness that destroys self-discipline, loyalty, or covenants.
- Elder Neal A. Maxwell. Proud selfishness, lack of intellectual humility, nurturing grievances.

WHAT TO TEACH

We should follow good counsel for increasing unity in marriage.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Group work.** Distribute handout 4, “That We May Be One,” found at the end of this lesson (pp. 30–33). Assign small groups of students to study particular portions. Have each group read together their assigned section. Have them look for (1) conduct that invites unity in marriage and (2) principles for becoming one in marriage. Have each group present their findings to the class. Possible student responses can be found in the following chart:

Conduct that Brings Unity	Principles of Unity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be willing to put one’s spouse’s interests above one’s own. • Believe in the truths the Savior taught. • Accept the ordinances and covenants offered by His authorized servants. • Keep the promises made during the sacrament (take His name upon us, always remember Him, and keep all of His commandments). • Put Him first in our lives. • Want what the Lord wants rather than what we want or what the world teaches us to want. • Speak no ill of anyone. • See the good in each other and speak well of each other whenever we can. • Stand against those who speak contemptuously of sacred things (without being contentious). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Righteous unity in marriage is necessary for exaltation: “Be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27). • Satan plants seeds of discord that separate us from loved ones. • The gospel of Jesus Christ allows our hearts to be made one. • The Atonement makes it possible for us to be sanctified and live in unity. • Where people have the Spirit, there is harmony. • As long as we love the things of the world first, we will have no peace or unity. • Surrendering to the authority of Jesus Christ binds us as families, as a Church, and as the children of Heavenly Father. • We must stay clean and not love the things of the world to keep the Spirit, and without the Spirit we cannot be one. • Pride is a sure source of disunity. • Service is a protection against pride. • A husband and wife learn to be one by using their similarities and differences as they serve each other and those around them.

CONCLUSION

Elder James E. Faust of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained: “There are many things which go into making a marriage enriching, but they seem to be of the husk. Having the companionship and enjoying the fruits of a Holy and Divine Presence is the kernel of a great happiness in marriage. Spiritual oneness is the anchor” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1977, 14; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, 10–11; student manual, 186). We are more likely to be united when we focus on spiritual oneness and do things that invite the Spirit into our marriage. In so doing we automatically eliminate selfish conduct that can place wedges in our marriage.

STUDENT ASSIGNMENT

Remind students of the family history assignment that is due next class period (see p. 18).

Handout 4 • That We May Be One



Elder Henry B. Eyring

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

In Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 85–89; or Ensign, May 1998, 66–68

“If Ye Are Not One Ye Are Not Mine”

The Savior of the world, Jesus Christ, said of those who would be part of His Church: “Be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27). And at the creation of man and woman, unity for them in marriage was not given as hope; it was a command! “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). Our Heavenly Father wants our hearts to be knit together. That union in love is not simply an ideal. It is a necessity.

The requirement that we be one is not for this life alone. It is to be without end. The first marriage was performed by God in the garden when Adam and Eve were immortal. He placed in men and women from the beginning a desire to be joined together as man and wife forever to dwell in families in a perfect, righteous union. He placed in His children a desire to live at peace with all those around them.

But with the Fall it became clear that living in unity would not be easy. Tragedy struck early. Cain slew Abel, his brother. The children of Adam and Eve had become subject to the temptations of Satan. With skill, hatred, and cunning, Satan pursues his goal. It is the opposite of the purpose of our Heavenly Father and the Savior. They would give us perfect union and eternal happiness. Satan, their enemy and ours, has known the plan of salvation from before the Creation. He knows that only in eternal life can those sacred, joyful associations of families endure. Satan would tear us from loved ones and make us miserable. And it is he who plants the seeds of discord in human hearts in the hope that we might be divided and separate.

All of us have felt something of both union and separation. Sometimes in families and perhaps in other settings we have glimpsed life when one person put the interests of another above his or her own, in love and with sacrifice. And all of us know something of the sadness and loneliness of being separate and alone. We don’t need to be told which we should choose. We know. But we need hope that we can experience unity in this life and qualify to have it forever in the world to come. And we need to know how that great blessing will come so that we can know what we must do.

The Savior Makes Unity Possible

The Savior of the world spoke of that unity and how we will have our natures changed to make it possible. He taught it clearly in the prayer He gave in His last meeting with His Apostles before His death. That supernally beautiful prayer is recorded in the book of John. He was about to face the terrible sacrifice for all of us that would make eternal life possible. He was about to leave the Apostles whom He had ordained, whom He loved, and with whom He would leave the keys to lead His Church. And so He prayed to His Father, the perfect Son to the perfect Parent. We see in His words the way families will be made one, as will all the children of our Heavenly Father who follow the Savior and His servants:

“As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

“And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 17:18–21).

In those few words He made clear how the gospel of Jesus Christ can allow hearts to be made one. Those who would believe the truth He taught could accept the ordinances and the covenants offered by His authorized servants. Then, through obedience to those ordinances and covenants, their natures would be changed. The Savior’s Atonement in that way makes it possible for us to

be sanctified. We can then live in unity, as we must to have peace in this life and to dwell with the Father and His Son in eternity.

The ministry of the apostles and prophets in that day, as it is today, was to bring the children of Adam and Eve to a unity of the faith in Jesus Christ. The ultimate purpose of what they taught, and of what we teach, is to unite families: husbands, wives, children, grandchildren, ancestors, and finally all of the family of Adam and Eve who will choose it.

The Spirit Leads to Union with Others

You remember the Savior prayed, “For their sakes”—speaking of the Apostles—“I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth” (John 17:19). The Holy Ghost is a sanctifier. We can have it as our companion because the Lord restored the Melchizedek Priesthood through the Prophet Joseph Smith. The keys of that priesthood are on the earth today. By its power we can make covenants which allow us to have the Holy Ghost constantly.

Where people have that Spirit with them, we may expect harmony. The Spirit puts the testimony of truth in our hearts, which unifies those who share that testimony. The Spirit of God never generates contention (see 3 Nephi 11:29). It never generates the feelings of distinctions between people which lead to strife (see Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [1939], 131). It leads to personal peace and a feeling of union with others. It unifies souls. A unified family, a unified Church, and a world at peace depend on unified souls.

Keeping the Promises Made in the Sacrament Prayer

Even a child can understand what to do to have the Holy Ghost as a companion. The sacrament prayer tells us. We hear it every week as we attend our sacrament meetings. In those sacred moments we renew the covenants we made at baptism. And the Lord reminds us of the promise we received as we were confirmed members of the Church—the promise that we might receive the Holy Ghost. Here are the words of the sacrament prayer: “They are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given them; that they may always have his Spirit to be with them” (D&C 20:77).

We can have His Spirit by keeping that covenant. First, we promise to take His name upon us. That means we must see ourselves as His. We will put Him first in our lives. We will want what He wants rather than what we want or what the world teaches us to want. As long as we love the things of the world first, there will be no peace in us. Holding an ideal for a family or a nation of comfort through material goods will, at last, divide them (see Harold B. Lee, *Stand Ye in Holy Places* [1974], 97). The ideal of doing for each other what the Lord would have us do, which follows naturally from taking His name upon us, can take us to a spiritual level which is a touch of heaven on earth.

Second, we promise always to remember Him. We do that every time we pray in His name. Especially when we ask for His forgiveness, as we must do often, we remember Him. At that moment we remember His sacrifice that makes repentance and forgiveness possible. When we plead, we remember Him as our advocate with the Father. When the feelings of forgiveness and peace come, we remember His patience and His endless love. That remembering fills our hearts with love.

We also keep our promise to remember Him when as families we pray together and when we read the scriptures. At family prayer around a breakfast table, one child may pray for another to be blessed that things will go well that day in a test or in some performance. When the blessings come, the child blessed will remember the love of the morning and the kindness of the Advocate in whose name the prayer was offered. Hearts will be bound in love.

We keep our covenant to remember Him every time we gather our families to read the scriptures. They testify of the Lord Jesus Christ, for that is the message and always has been of prophets. Even if children do not remember the words, they will remember the true Author, who is Jesus Christ.

Obey All of the Commandments

Third, we promise as we take the sacrament to keep His commandments, all of them. President J. Reuben Clark Jr., as he pled—as he did many times—for unity in a general conference talk, warned us against being selective in what we will obey. He put it this way: “The Lord has given us nothing that is useless or unnecessary. He has

filled the Scriptures with the things which we should do in order that we may gain salvation.”

President Clark went on: “When we partake of the Sacrament we covenant to obey and keep his commandments. There are no exceptions. There are no distinctions, no differences” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1955, 10–11). President Clark taught that just as we repent of all sin, not just a single sin, we pledge to keep all the commandments. Hard as that sounds, it is uncomplicated. We simply submit to the authority of the Savior and promise to be obedient to whatever He commands (see Mosiah 3:19). It is our surrender to the authority of Jesus Christ which will allow us to be bound as families, as a Church, and as the children of our Heavenly Father.

The Lord conveys that authority through His prophet to humble servants. That faith turns our call as a home teacher or a visiting teacher into an errand from the Lord. We go for Him, at His command. An ordinary man and a teenage junior companion go into homes expecting that the powers of heaven will help them assure that families are united and that there is no hardness, lying, backbiting, nor evil speaking. That faith—that the Lord calls servants—will help us ignore their limitations when they reprove us, as they will. We will see their good intent more clearly than their human limitations. We will be less likely to feel offense and more likely to feel gratitude to the Master who called them.

Charity Is Essential to Unity

There are some commandments which, when broken, destroy unity. Some have to do with what we say and some with how we react to what others say. We must speak no ill of anyone. We must see the good in each other and speak well of each other whenever we can (see David O. McKay, in Conference Report, Oct. 1967, 4–11).

At the same time, we must stand against those who speak contemptuously of sacred things, because the certain effect of that offense is to offend the Spirit and so create contention and confusion. President Spencer W. Kimball showed the way to stand without being contentious as he lay on a hospital gurney and asked an attendant who, in a moment of frustration, took the name of the Lord in vain: “Please! Please! That is my Lord whose names you revile.” There was a deathly

silence, then a subdued voice whispered: “I am sorry” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 198). An inspired, loving rebuke can be an invitation to unity. Failure to give it when moved upon by the Holy Ghost will lead to discord.

If we are to have unity, there are commandments we must keep concerning how we feel. We must forgive and bear no malice toward those who offend us. The Savior set the example from the cross: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). We do not know the hearts of those who offend us. Nor do we know all the sources of our own anger and hurt. The Apostle Paul was telling us how to love in a world of imperfect people, including ourselves, when he said, “Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil” (1 Corinthians 13:4–5). And then he gave solemn warning against reacting to the fault of others and forgetting our own when he wrote, “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as . . . I am known” (1 Corinthians 13:12).

Stay Clean and Beware of Pride

The sacrament prayer can remind us every week of how the gift of unity will come through obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ. When we keep our covenants to take His name upon us, to remember Him always, and to keep all His commandments, we will receive the companionship of His Spirit. That will soften our hearts and unite us. But there are two warnings which must come with that promise.

First, the Holy Ghost remains with us only if we stay clean and free from the love of the things of the world. A choice to be unclean will repel the Holy Ghost. The Spirit dwells only with those who choose the Lord over the world. “Be ye clean” (3 Nephi 20:41; D&C 38:42) and love God with all your “heart, . . . might, mind, and strength” (D&C 59:5) are not suggestions but commandments. And they are necessary to the companionship of the Spirit, without which we cannot be one.

The other warning is to beware of pride. A unity which comes to a family or to a people softened by

the Spirit will bring great power. With that power will come recognition from the world. Whether that recognition brings praise or envy, it could lead us to pride. That would offend the Spirit. There is a protection against pride, that sure source of disunity. It is to see the bounties which God pours upon us not only as a mark of His favor but an opportunity to join with those around us in greater service. A man and his wife learn to be one by using their similarities to understand each other and their differences to complement each other in

servicing one another and those around them. In the same way, we can unite with those who do not accept our doctrine but share our desire to bless the children of our Heavenly Father.

We can become peacemakers, worthy to be called blessed and the children of God (see Matthew 5:9).

God our Father lives. His beloved Son, Jesus Christ, is the head of this Church, and He offers to all who will accept it the standard of peace. I so testify, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

7 TRADITIONS OF THE FATHERS

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW

The family that we are born into or grow up in is where we learn the “traditions of our fathers” (Enos 1:14; see Proverbs 22:6). *Traditions* are knowledge, customs, practices, and beliefs handed down from generation to generation. *Fathers* means male and female ancestors on both the mother’s and father’s lines.

Some children are fortunate to have righteous parents who teach them good family traditions. Nephi begins his record, “I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents . . .” (1 Nephi 1:1). Enos starts his book in a similar way: “I, Enos, knowing my father that he was a just man—for he taught me in his language, and also in the nurture and admonition of the Lord—and blessed be the name of my God for it . . .” (Enos:1:1).

Other children are not as fortunate. Doctrine and Covenants 93:39–40 explains how poor traditions can lead children toward unrighteousness: “And that wicked one cometh and taketh away light and truth, through disobedience, from the children of men, and because of the tradition of their fathers.

“But I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth.”

PRINCIPLE

Parents have the responsibility to establish traditions founded in light and truth and then pass them on to their children.

STUDENT MANUAL READINGS

Selected Teachings from “Traditions of the Fathers” (337–38)

“The Tradition of Their Fathers,” Elder Marion D. Hanks (339–41)

WHAT TO TEACH

Children can learn much about marriage from observing their parents and studying their family history.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Family history assignment.** Discuss the definition of *tradition* given by Elder Marion D. Hanks in the student manual (337, 339). Refer students to the written assignment on family history that they were asked to complete for today’s class (see p. 18 in this manual). Have the class share their findings from part 1 about events in their ancestors’ lives that can influence their own marriage. (Typical events might include joining the Church, moving to a new country or city, breaking out of poverty, getting an education, going on a mission, being the first to marry in the temple.) Discuss how knowing about these events might affect their marriages.

Next have a few students share from part 2 of the assignment what they learned about similarities between themselves and their parents or grandparents. Briefly discuss the idea of “family traits,” and point out that marriage partners may need to make adjustments as they begin their own family.

WHAT TO TEACH

When we marry, traditions we learned from parents can help unite and lift us or can lead to conflict and divisiveness.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Discuss the scriptures in “Examples of False Traditions (student manual, 337). Where might we find similar things happening today?”

Review the scriptures and counsel in “Overcoming False Traditions” (338). How can we ensure that we will pass on a heritage of light and truth? Review Elder Boyd K. Packer’s counsel about overcoming a cycle of abuse or neglect. What did Elder Packer say victims of abuse should do?

Note: To be prepared for questions about abuse, review Elder Richard G. Scott’s talk, “Healing the Tragic Scars of Abuse” (student manual, 5). Lesson 17, Respecting Your Spouse, covers the subject of abuse in detail.

Handout 5. Distribute handout 5, “Family Traditions,” found at the end of this lesson (pp. 37–38). Ask students to individually add to the list of traditions in the first column of each chart. Then have them fill in the husband’s and wife’s family traditions as much as they are able.

Divide the class into groups of two or three (try to get a male-female mix) and ask them to compare their lists of family traditions. Explain that the traditions a husband and wife bring to a marriage may or may not be compatible. Have each group:

- Identify cases where the husband’s and wife’s traditions are compatible and those that may cause conflict.
- Consider the traditions in light of their knowledge of the plan of salvation.
- Suggest righteous traditions the couple might want to establish or carry forward.

After about ten minutes ask a few of the groups to share what they learned from the exercise. Encourage engaged and married couples to fill in the rest of their charts together.

WHAT TO TEACH

Newlyweds can develop their own traditions based on personal preference and gospel principles.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Ask: What do you think is the most frequently quoted scripture on marriage? Have students look up Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5; Mark 10:7; Ephesians 5:31; Moses 3:24; and Abraham 5:18. Read Genesis 2:24 together.

- What does it mean to leave your father and mother? (Among other things, it means couples are faced with establishing new traditions.)
- How can couples resolve differences or conflicts?
- What does it mean to “honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee” (Exodus 20:12; see 1 Nephi 17:55).
- Does this commandment end when we marry?

Read and discuss several of the scriptures under “Maintaining Righteous Traditions” (student manual, 337). Ask questions similar to the following:

- What did Nephi and Enos say about the traditions they learned from their parents? Why?
- What are some ways we can insure that we teach righteous traditions to our children?

CONCLUSION

Review the following points:

- The family we grew up in is where we learned the traditions of our fathers (see Proverbs 22:6).
- Some traditions are founded in the plan of salvation. It is our responsibility to identify and hold fast to these.
- Other traditions go contrary to the plan of salvation. It is our responsibility to identify and not pass on these (see Mosiah 25:12; Alma 3:11; Alma 37:9).
- Other traditions are neither right nor wrong but can still be a source of conflict. Couples should work together to decide which of these to pass on.
- Understanding and following the scriptures and the teachings of prophets helps us know what is important to hold fast to and what is not (see 1 Nephi 3:19; 5:21; 2 Nephi 25:26; D&C 68:25).

Note: Remind students to complete the student readings before each class.

Handout 5 • Family Traditions

Gospel-Centered Traditions	Husband's Family Traditions	Wife's Family Traditions	Desired Family Traditions
Family prayer			
Family home evening			
Family scripture study			
Attending church as a family			

Other Family Traditions	Husband's Family Traditions	Wife's Family Traditions	Desired Family Traditions
Eating together as a family			
Celebrating birthdays			
Family vacations			
Supporting children's activities			

8 INTIMACY IN MARRIAGE

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW

Note: Do not add greater detail on this subject than what is given by the Brethren.

“And they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24).

President Spencer W. Kimball taught: “There are many aspects to love in marriage, and sex is an important one. Just as married partners are not for others, they *are* for each other. Paul knew the approaches to adultery and the ways to avoid them:

“ . . . Let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

“Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.

“The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.

“Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.’ (1 Cor. 7:2–5.)” (*The Miracle of Forgiveness* [1969], 73).

The union of man and woman is sanctified in marriage and becomes an expression of the love, unity, and potential godhood of the couple. President Joseph F. Smith noted, “The lawful association of the sexes is ordained of God, not only as the sole means of race perpetuation, but for the development of the higher faculties and nobler traits of human nature, which the love-inspired companionship of man and woman alone can insure” (“Unchastity the Dominant Evil of the Age,” *Improvement Era*, June 1917, 739; or student manual, 139).

PRINCIPLE

A correct understanding of intimacy in marriage increases our chances of building a happy marriage.

STUDENT MANUAL READINGS

Selected Teachings from “Intimacy in Marriage” (139–41)

“The Fountain of Life,” Elder Boyd K. Packer (141–46)

“The Ultimate Symbol of Total Union” and “A Symbol of the Relationship with God,” in “Personal Purity,” Elder Jeffrey R. Holland (234–35)

Selected Teachings from “Birth Control” (14–16)

“I Have a Question,” Dr. Homer Ellsworth (17–18)

WHAT TO TEACH

Physical intimacy within marriage is a blessing ordained of God.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Explain that there are many distorted views in the world today about sexual relationships, which if believed and practiced can destroy our happiness. It is important that we understand our procreative powers in terms of the plan of salvation.

Read and discuss the following statement from the *Church Handbook of Instructions*: “Married couples . . . should understand that sexual relations within marriage are divinely approved not only for the purpose of procreation, but also as a means of expressing love and strengthening emotional and spiritual bonds between husband and wife” (*Book 1: Stake Presidencies and Bishoprics* [1998], 158).

Read Abraham 4:27–28. Point out in verse 28 that God calls the capacity to multiply and replenish the earth a blessing.

Conduct a classroom discussion based on the following selections from the student readings for this lesson: “Physical Intimacy Ordained of God” (student manual, 139–40), “Physical Intimacy Only in Marriage,” “Purposes of Intimacy” (140), “The Fountain of Life” (141–46), “The Ultimate Symbol of Total Union,” “A Symbol of the Relationship with God” (234–35). As part of your discussion, consider these questions:

- How are our God-given natural affections a blessing to us?
- How are sexual relations within marriage the ultimate symbol of total union?
- How are procreative powers within marriage a symbol of our relationship with God?
- How does the commandment to multiply and replenish the earth apply today?
- Why are procreative urges designed to be strong and constant?

Emphasize that procreation comes from God and is holy but is appropriate only between a man and a woman within marriage. Bear testimony of the truth of these principles and of the blessings of obedience. (Do not stray into the details of your own relationship with your spouse.)

WHAT TO TEACH

It is possible to misuse physical intimacy even in the marriage relationship.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Read together the statements by the Brethren under “Misused Physical Intimacy” (“Intimacy in Marriage,” student manual, 140).

WHAT TO TEACH

“Love in marriage transcends sex” (Spencer W. Kimball, The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 248).

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Explain that sometimes couples place too much emphasis on the physical aspects of marriage. Physical intimacy is an important element of married love, but more is required to achieve a pure love.

President Spencer W. Kimball taught: “Your love, like a flower, must be nourished. There will come a great love and interdependence between you, for your love is a divine one. It is deep, inclusive, comprehensive. It is not like that association of the world which is misnamed love, but which is mostly physical

attraction. When marriage is based on this only, the parties soon tire of each other. There is a break and a divorce, and a new, fresher physical attraction comes with another marriage which in turn may last only until it, too, becomes stale. The love of which the Lord speaks is not only physical attraction, but spiritual attraction as well. It is faith and confidence in, and understanding of, one another. It is a total partnership. It is companionship with common ideals and standards. It is unselfishness toward and sacrifice for one another. It is cleanliness of thought and action and faith in God and his program. It is parenthood in mortality ever looking toward godhood and creationship, and parenthood of spirits. It is vast, all-inclusive, and limitless. This kind of love never tires or wanes. It lives on through sickness and sorrow, through prosperity and privation, through accomplishment and disappointment, through time and eternity" (*Faith Precedes the Miracle* [1972], 130–31; or student manual, 140).

Ask students to read "Mature Love" in Elder Boyd K. Packer's talk "The Fountain of Life" (student manual, 142) and look for attributes and experiences that help us achieve a mature and pure love. List student findings on the board. Summarize that pure love takes time and effort to achieve. Physical intimacy in marriage is part of the process of becoming as one in the Lord.

WHAT TO TEACH

Married couples must deal with birth control issues.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH



Group work. Refer to the section "Birth Control" in the student manual (pp. 14–18). Invite students to read or review this section outside of class. Explain that these issues are personal and sacred. Husband and wife should make decisions regarding birth control in unity after seeking the guidance of the Spirit. Encourage students, if they have questions, to seek counsel from parents and priesthood leaders.

CONCLUSION

From the very beginning the Lord decreed, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18). The Apostle Paul said, "Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 11:11).

When we understand physical intimacy with the perspective of the plan of salvation and are obedient to the Lord, we can avoid many of the problems that plague the world as a result of disregard for the law of chastity. Husbands and wives knit together in love and fidelity can experience joy in their physical relationship and help the Lord fulfill His purposes in multiplying and replenishing the earth.

9 DIFFERENCES INHERENT BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW

The Apostle Paul taught of the differing gifts of Church members: “For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

“So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us” (Romans 12:4–6).

Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles applied this concept to the marriage relationship: “A man and his wife learn to be one by using their similarities to understand each other and their differences to complement each other in serving one another and those around them” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 89; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 68).

PRINCIPLE

Appreciating and building on the differences between men and women can increase sensitivity, understanding, and happiness in marriage.

STUDENT MANUAL READINGS

Selected Teachings from “Differences Inherent between Men and Women” (63–65)

“For Time and All Eternity,” Elder Boyd K. Packer (66–70)

“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (83–84)

Selected Teachings from “Equality of Men and Women” (79–80)

TEACHER ENRICHMENT

President Gordon B. Hinckley, *Cornerstones of a Happy Home* (pamphlet, 1984; or student manual, 127)

Elder Richard G. Scott, “The Joy of Living the Great Plan of Happiness” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 100–104; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 73–75; student manual, 360)

WHAT TO TEACH

Understanding differences between men and women can help couples achieve marital unity.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Group work.** Distribute handout 6, “Questions on ‘Differences Inherent between Men and Women,’” found at the end of this lesson (p. 44). Divide the class into small groups, and assign each group some of the statements in Selected Teachings from “Differences Inherent between Men and Women” (student manual, 63–65). Invite each group to find answers to the questions based on the teachings in their assigned readings. Have them report their findings to the class.

WHAT TO TEACH

There are “separate duties and privileges of men and women that are essential to accomplish the great plan of happiness” (Dallin H. Oaks, in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 99; or Ensign, Nov. 1993, 73; student manual, 261).

WHAT TO TEACH

Men and women have different but equally important roles in the family.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Have the class turn to Elder Boyd K. Packer’s talk “For Time and All Eternity” (student manual, 66–70), and discuss the following questions:

- What strategies does Lucifer use to corrupt romance, love, marriage, and parenthood?
- In what ways has the Lord shown that He values men and women equally?
- What does the responsibility to multiply and replenish the earth mean to you today?
- In difficult economic times, how can mothers fulfill their responsibility to give their children “the full needed measure of watchful care”? (p. 68).
- What is the eternal purpose for the difference between the roles of men and women?
- What in the parable of the treasure and keys symbolizes the equality of men and women?
- What blessings can be had when men and women each use their keys to open the vault?
- What philosophies today are represented by those who try to change the keys to suit themselves?

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Have students read “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” and find sentences related to the complementary roles of men and women in the family. Have students read their sentences aloud, and discuss them as a class.

CONCLUSION

Review the statement by Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve on the complementary natures of men and women:

“In the Lord’s plan, it takes two—a man and a woman—to form a whole. Indeed, a husband and wife are not two identical halves, but a wondrous, divinely determined combination of complementary capacities and characteristics.

“Marriage allows these different characteristics to come together in oneness—in unity—to bless a husband and wife, their children and grandchildren. For the greatest happiness and productivity in life, both husband and wife are needed. Their efforts interlock and are complementary. Each has individual traits that best fit the role the Lord has defined for happiness as a man or woman. When used as the Lord intends, those capacities allow a married couple to think, act, and rejoice as one—to face challenges together and overcome them as one, to grow in love and understanding, and through temple ordinances to be bound together as one whole, eternally. That is the plan” (student manual, 65).

Handout 6 • Questions on “Differences Inherent between Men and Women”

The following questions refer to statements in the student manual (63–65, 80).

- How does a mother’s intuition help her relate to the intimate details of bringing up children in the home? (President Harold B. Lee)
- Why are men and women dependent on each other in achieving their full potential? (President Spencer W. Kimball)
- Women were not created to be the same as men. Why? (President Ezra Taft Benson)
- In what ways do women possess abilities superior to those of men? How can a woman’s desire to be the same as a man curtail her ability to meet the measure of her creation? (President Howard W. Hunter)
- How can an understanding of our pre-mortal commitments as sons and daughters of God help us better understand and live the gospel? (President James E. Faust)
- Why is it important for parents not to foster influences that weaken the differences in men’s and women’s natures? (President Boyd K. Packer)
- What are some of the important differences between men and women? (Elder Thomas S. Monson)
- How are the complementing differences between men and women the key to the Lord’s plan of happiness? (Elder Boyd K. Packer)
- How should those who bear the priesthood treat their wives and other women in their family? (Elder James E. Faust)
- What are some laws and customs regarding the treatment of men and women that have been changed to “correct old wrongs that were never grounded in eternal principles” (Elder Dallin H. Oaks)
- How does marriage allow the characteristics of man and woman to come together in oneness? (Elder Richard G. Scott)
- When were the responsibilities of womanhood, manhood, motherhood, and priesthood determined? (Elder Neal A. Maxwell)
- How does understanding our divine nature help men and women respect each other? (Elder Merrill J. Bateman)

10 MEN'S DIVINE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW

"Our Heavenly Father endowed His sons and daughters with unique traits especially fitted for their individual responsibilities as they fulfill His plan. To follow His plan requires that you do those things He expects of you as a son or daughter, husband or wife" (Richard G. Scott; in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 101; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 73; student manual, 361).

PRINCIPLE

Husbands who fulfill their divine family responsibilities contribute to the happiness of their marriage.

STUDENT MANUAL READINGS

"The Family: A Proclamation to the World," the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (83–84)

"Our Solemn Responsibilities," President Gordon B. Hinckley (22–26)

"To the Fathers in Israel," President Ezra Taft Benson (203–6)

"Being a Righteous Husband and Father," President Howard W. Hunter (206–9)

TEACHER ENRICHMENT

"Living Worthy of the Girl You Will Someday Marry," President Gordon B. Hinckley (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 66–69; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 49–51; student manual, 209–12)

WHAT TO TEACH

The Proclamation on the Family identifies three primary responsibilities of fathers.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Read together paragraph 7 of "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" (student manual, 83–84). Ask students to identify three primary duties of fathers from this reading. Write *Preside*, *Provide*, *Protect* on the board. Ask students to define each duty as best they can. Ask if paragraph 7 of the proclamation allows a mother to perform these duties. Briefly discuss situations that might make it necessary for a mother to assume responsibilities that are normally the father's.

WHAT TO TEACH

Priesthood holders are expected to live up to their responsibilities as husbands and fathers.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Group Work.** Divide the class into three groups and assign one of the talks in the student manual readings listed below to each of the groups. Invite each group to read their talk and list the responsibilities of husbands and fathers it contains. Also, have each groups discuss the question below that goes with their talk. When they finish, invite them to share their lists and report the results of their discussion.

- “Our Solemn Responsibilities” (22–26). President Hinckley mentions sorrows that families experience because of the actions of husbands and fathers. What can men do to ensure they are not the causes of these sorrows?
- “To the Fathers in Israel” (203–6). How can fathers and prospective fathers prepare to fulfill the responsibilities listed by President Benson?
- “Being a Righteous Husband and Father” (206–9). What pressures and trends could keep husbands and fathers from fulfilling the responsibilities listed by President Hunter? How can we overcome these obstacles?

CONCLUSION

The plan of salvation helps husbands understand what is expected of them in marriage and family relationships. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” explains that husbands and fathers are responsible to *preside* over their families in love and righteousness, *provide* the necessities of life, and *protect* their families. Prophets of God continue to clarify the responsibilities of husbands and fathers.

11 WOMEN'S DIVINE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW

"No greater recognition can come to you in this world than to be known as a woman of God. No greater status can be conferred upon you than being a daughter of God who experiences true sisterhood, wifehood, and motherhood, or other tasks which influence lives for good" (Spencer W. Kimball, "The Role of Righteous Women," *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 102; or student manual, 350).

PRINCIPLE

As women pattern their lives according to the plan of salvation, they can better achieve happiness in marriage.

STUDENT MANUAL READINGS

Selected Teachings from "Women's Divine Roles and Responsibilities" (347–49)

"To the Mothers in Zion," President Ezra Taft Benson (352–57)

"Women of the Church," President Gordon B. Hinckley (357–60)

"The Joy of Living the Great Plan of Happiness," Elder Richard G. Scott (360–63)

"We Are Women of God," Sister Sheri L. Dew (364–66)

WHAT TO TEACH

Women have essential responsibilities in building up the Church.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Ask: How do women contribute to the development of the Church? Read the following statement by President Spencer W. Kimball:

"Much of the major growth that is coming to the Church in the last days . . . will happen to the degree that the women of the Church reflect righteousness and articulateness in their lives and to the degree that the women of the Church are seen as distinct and different—in happy ways—from the women of the world" ("The Role of Righteous Women," *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 103–4; or student manual, 351).

- What did President Kimball say the women of the Church must do to help the Church grow?
- What do you think it means for the women of the Church to be "distinct and different" from the women of the world?

Explaining that the eternal salvation of the world depends on the Church growing to its potential. Much of the Church's growth is dependent on the women of the Church fulfilling their responsibilities as daughters of God.

WHAT TO TEACH

To accomplish their divine responsibilities, the women of the Church must “come out of the world and come closer to Christ.”

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Group work.** Divide the board into four equal sections. Above each section write the following headings: *Practices Women of God Should Avoid*, and *Responsibilities and Privileges of Women of God*.

Divide the class into four groups and assign each group a different talk from the student manual readings. Give them fifteen minutes to go through their talks and find teachings related to the headings. Have a member of each group report and discuss their findings, while another group member summarizes them on the board.

Review with the women in your class the invitation by Sister Sheri L. Dew, who was then a counselor in the Relief Society general presidency, found on page 366 of the student manual (“I invite each of us to identify at least one thing we can do to come out of the world and come closer to Christ. And then next month, another. And then another”). Testify of the divine responsibility that the daughters of God have in the eternal salvation of all mankind. Encourage the men in your class to respect and honor the women in their lives.

CONCLUSION

The divine roles of women include being daughters of God, sisters, wives, and mothers. Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

“Our Heavenly Father endowed His sons and daughters with unique traits especially fitted for their individual responsibilities as they fulfill His plan. To follow His plan requires that you do those things He expects of you as a son or daughter, husband or wife. . . .

“ . . . Each has individual traits that best fit the role the Lord has defined for happiness as a man or woman” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996; 101; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 73; student manual, 361).

12 PRIORITYING LIFE'S DEMANDS

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW

President Spencer W. Kimball spoke of “the need to do the things that matter most without leaving the other things undone” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1976, 70; or *Ensign*, May 1976, 46).

When we strive to balance important priorities in our lives, we increase our chances for success in all aspects, including marriage and family relationships. Elder Russell M. Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained, “Perhaps if you, too, search your hearts and courageously assess the priorities in your life, you may discover, as I did, that you need a better balance among your priorities” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 14–15; or *Ensign*, May 1987, 13; student manual, 276).

President David O. McKay taught, “No other success can compensate for failure in the home” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1964, 5).

PRINCIPLE

Happiness in marriage and family is more likely when we focus on the things that matter most.

STUDENT MANUAL READINGS

Selected Teachings from “Priorities and Balance” (276–77)

“Keeping Life’s Demands in Balance,” Elder M. Russell Ballard (280–82)

“‘One Thing Needful’: Becoming Women of Greater Faith in Christ,” Sister Patricia T. Holland (366–72)

“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (83–84)

WHAT TO TEACH

Our priorities should reflect eternal values.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Read the following statement by Elder M. Russell Ballard: “One of the greatest challenges of this life is the ordering of priorities. If we do not do this wisely, then things that matter most in life are at the mercy of things that matter least” (*Be Strong in the Lord, and in the Power of His Might* [CES fireside for young adults, 3 Mar. 2002], 6).

Write on the board the headings *Temporary* and *Eternal*. Ask students to list things that are temporal or temporary and things that can become eternal for us. (“Temporary” might include money, cars, furniture, vacations, fame, clothing, political power, and sports. “Eternal” might include marriage, family members, priesthood, service, knowledge, a resurrected body, testimony.)

As students expand the list of things that can become eternal, help them discover the eternal nature of marriage, a resurrected body, and priesthood power.

WHAT TO TEACH

Establishing correct priorities requires an eternal perspective.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Read through Selected Teachings from “Priorities and Balance” (student manual, 276–77). As you read, discuss questions similar to the following:

- Elder Neal A. Maxwell. Why is it important for us to “know our real priorities”? How did the Lord set the example for us?
- President Spencer W. Kimball. How can we compare the importance of balance in our lives to a piano keyboard?
- President Ezra Taft Benson. What happens to our lives when we put God first?
- Elder Dallin H. Oaks. What examples can you give that our priorities determine what we seek in life?
- President Ezra Taft Benson. What should be one of our first priorities?
- Elder John A. Widtsoe. Which comes first, family or church? Why?
- Elder Neal A. Maxwell. What should each parent and grandparent do? Why?
- First Presidency letter of 27 February 1999. What is the central message of this letter from the First Presidency?

Share the following counsel from Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“How do you determine your *priority*? Ask yourself: What do I really want, most of all? Compare your answer with the high standard revealed by your Creator. He said you are to ‘seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness; and all . . . things shall be added unto you’ (JST, Matthew 6:38; see also Matthew 6:33a). You build up the kingdom of God as you place your family first. A husband’s highest priesthood duty is to love and care for his wife, to bless her and their children. A wife’s highest calling is to love her husband and nurture their children. As you serve the Lord, know that your ‘duty is unto the church forever, and this because of [your] family’ (D&C 23:3)” (*Identity, Priority, and Blessings* [CES fireside for young adults, 10 Sept. 2000, 5; *Ensign*, Aug. 2001, 11–12).

WHAT TO TEACH

Life’s demands should not be allowed to overwhelm our eternal priorities.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Summarize the first two sections of “Keeping Life’s Demands in Balance,” by Elder M. Russell Ballard (student manual, 280–82). Discuss how reviewing our covenants keeps balance in our lives. Briefly review each of the principles for balancing life’s demands in Elder Ballard’s speech.

 **Student manual discussion.** Look for priorities mentioned in “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” (student manual, 83–84). The following list may help your discussion:

- Parents have a responsibility to “love and care for each other.”
- Parents have a responsibility to love and care “for their children.”
- Parents should “rear their children in love and righteousness.”
- Parents should “provide for their physical and spiritual needs.”
- Parents should teach their children “to love and serve one another.”

- Parents should teach their children “to observe the commandments of God.”
- Parents should teach their children “to be law-abiding citizens wherever they live.”

Ask students to go back through the list and ask “How do we . . .” at the beginning of each principle (for example, “How do we love and care for each other?”). Provide answers and discuss them.

 **Discussion.** Summarize the article, “‘One Thing Needful’: Becoming Women of Greater Faith in Christ,” by Sister Patricia T. Holland (student manual, 366–72). Review the struggles Sister Holland went through trying to keep life’s demands in balance. Share how she came to find peace in her life and the specific ways she found balance. Or assign this article to a student for an in-class report.

CONCLUSION

Student learning activity. Ask: Has God ever given us a scripture that succinctly summarizes His priorities? After student responses, read aloud Moses 1:39 and the third paragraph by Elder Maxwell under Selected Teachings from “Priorities and Balance” (student manual, 276). Testify to the students that by following the Savior’s example we can see our life’s mission and set our priorities accordingly.

13 MONEY AND MARRIAGE

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW

“Ye will not suffer your children that they go hungry, or naked” (Mosiah 4:14).

“Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs. . . . Husbands and wives—mothers and fathers—will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” student manual, 83).

“Before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God.

“And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them; and ye will seek them for the intent to do good—to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted” (Jacob 2:18–19; see also D&C 19:34).

“You must continue to bear in mind that the temporal and the spiritual are blended. They are not separate. One cannot be carried on without the other, so long as we are here in mortality” (Joseph F. Smith, in Conference Report, Oct. 1900, 46; or student manual, 9; see D&C 29:34).

PRINCIPLE

Applying correct principles related to money increases the likelihood of a happy marriage.

STUDENT MANUAL READINGS

Selected Teachings from “Finances” (115)

“One for the Money: Guide to Family Finance,” Elder Marvin J. Ashton (115–19)

“Greed, Selfishness, and Overindulgence,” Elder Joe J. Christensen (120–23)

WHAT TO TEACH

Our attitude about money can affect our salvation.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Read Elder Dallin H. Oaks’s statement under Selected Teachings from “Finances” (student manual, 115).

- According to Elder Oaks, in what ways can the deceitfulness of riches choke out the fruits of the gospel?
- How can riches be turned to benefit the work of the Lord?

WHAT TO TEACH

Sound money management principles are taught by the Brethren.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Review “One for the Money: Guide to Family Finance,” by Elder Marvin J. Ashton, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (student manual, 115–19). Elder Ashton gave twelve suggestions that can help us manage our personal and family finances. Invite class members to discuss challenges a person or family might face in each of the categories below and to offer solutions.

1. Pay an honest tithing.
2. Learn to manage money before it manages you.
3. Learn self-discipline and self-restraint in money matters.
4. Use a budget.
5. Teach family members early the importance of working and earning.
6. Teach children to make money decisions in keeping with their capacities to comprehend.
7. Teach each family member to contribute to the total family welfare.
8. Make education a continuing process.
9. Work toward home ownership.
10. Appropriately involve yourself in an insurance program.
11. Understand the influence of external forces on family finances and investments.
12. Appropriately involve yourself in a food storage and emergency preparedness program.

Invite students to look for principles in the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“What a wonderful feeling it is to be free of debt, to have a little money against a day of emergency put away where it can be retrieved when necessary.

“President Faust would not tell you this himself. Perhaps I can tell it, and he can take it out on me afterward. He had a mortgage on his home drawing 4 percent interest. Many people would have told him he was foolish to pay off that mortgage when it carried so low a rate of interest. But the first opportunity he had to acquire some means, he and his wife determined they would pay off their mortgage. He has been free of debt since that day. That’s why he wears a smile on his face, and that’s why he whistles while he works.

“I urge you, brethren, to look to the condition of your finances. I urge you to be modest in your expenditures; discipline yourselves in your purchases to avoid debt to the extent possible. Pay off debt as quickly as you can, and free yourselves from bondage.

“This is a part of the temporal gospel in which we believe. May the Lord bless you, my beloved brethren, to set your houses in order. If you have paid your debts, if you have a reserve, even though it be small, then should storms howl about your head, you will have shelter for your wives and children and peace in your hearts” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 71–72; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 54; student manual, 62).

Invite students to share principles they noted in the statements just read.

 **Discussion.** Ask questions similar to the following:

- What verse in Matthew 6 could be used to teach the most basic of all financial principles? (Matthew 6:33: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God.”)
- What are some of the dangers of consumer debt?
- How can Elder Ashton’s debt-elimination calendar help reduce or eliminate unnecessary debt? (see student manual, 117).

 **Discussion.** Refer to Elder Joe J. Christensen’s talk, “Greed, Selfishness, and Overindulgence” (student manual, 120–23). Explain that prosperity and materialism can threaten individuals and marriages as much as poverty. Elder Christensen gave four suggestions to lessen the negative effects of materialism. Divide the four suggestions among groups of students and have them discuss how they apply in our married lives. After five minutes of discussion have them report their findings to the class.

WHAT TO TEACH

The scriptures teach principles that apply to money management.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Scripture activity.** Explain that money can bless us in our family lives or can hinder our spiritual progress. Whether money becomes a blessing or a hindrance depends on our attitude and actions. The scriptures help us see the value of money from an eternal perspective.

Read and discuss Doctrine and Covenants 38:39 and Jacob 2:18–19. How can riches be used to bless our families?

Group work. Read some of the following scriptures as a class, and ask students what financial principles can be derived from them: Matthew 6:19–21; 25:14–18; 1 Corinthians 2:12; Ephesians 5:20; Galatians 6:7; 1 Timothy 6:7–10; 2 Nephi 9:51.

CONCLUSION

If used with an eternal perspective, money can be a blessing to eternal marriages. If used with a worldly perspective, money issues can destroy marriages. The scriptures and prophets teach us principles that can help us use money in ways that will bless us and our families.

14 MANAGING TEMPORAL RESOURCES

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW

President Heber J. Grant taught: “If there is any one thing that will bring peace and contentment into the human heart, and into the family, it is to live within our means. And if there is any one thing that is grinding, and discouraging and disheartening it is to have debts and obligations that one cannot meet” (*Relief Society Magazine*, May 1932, 302).

Sixty-six years later, President Gordon B. Hinckley told the priesthood in conference: “Now, brethren, I want to make it very clear that I am not prophesying, that I am not predicting years of famine in the future. But I am suggesting that the time has come to get our houses in order. . . .

“I urge you, brethren, to look to the condition of your finances. I urge you to be modest in your expenditures; discipline yourselves in your purchases to avoid debt to the extent possible. Pay off debt as quickly as you can, and free yourselves from bondage” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 70, 72; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 53–54; student manual, 61–62).

PRINCIPLE

Happiness in marriage is more likely if couples prepare now for difficult economic times.

STUDENT MANUAL READINGS

“To the Boys and to the Men,” President Gordon B. Hinckley (60–62)

Selected Teachings from “Debt” (59–60)

Selected Teachings from “Temporal Preparedness” (327–29)

WHAT TO TEACH

Understand the nature of debt. “The time has come to get our houses in order.”

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Read and compare the statements by Presidents Heber J. Grant and Gordon B. Hinckley in the “Doctrinal Overview” above. Ask students to identify the main principle taught in these statements.

 **Group work.** Have students turn to President Hinckley’s address, “To the Boys and to the Men” (student manual, 60–62). Why are the prophets of God concerned about our temporal affairs?

Divide the class into small groups, and assign each group a portion of President Hinckley’s talk. Have students look for teachings that complete the following sentence: *To prepare for the future, we should _____.*

After a few minutes, have the groups report their findings. These might include:

- Understand interest and avoid paying it.
- Buy a home that we can afford.
- Prepare for emergencies.

- Live within our means.
- Become self-reliant.
- Be modest in expenditures.
- Discipline ourselves in our purchases to avoid debt.
- Pay off debt as quickly as we can.
- Keep a reserve of money, even if it is small.

Have students discuss how they can apply these teachings in their lives.

Discussion. Discuss some of the quotations in Selected Teachings from “Debt” (student manual, 59–60). Read the statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley on page 59 and ask:

- Why do many people go into debt? (To satisfy their desires.)
- What happens as a result of debt? (They dissipate their resources by paying high interest and they become as slaves to the debt.)

Read the statement by Elder James E. Faust on page 60 and ask:

- What examples can you give of distinguishing between wants and needs?
- What does Elder Faust say is an important part of being independent? (Being free of personal debt.)

Read the following statement by President J. Reuben Clark Jr., who was a counselor of the First Presidency:

“Interest never sleeps nor sickens nor dies; it never goes to the hospital; it works on Sundays and holidays; it never takes a vacation; it never visits nor travels; it takes no pleasure; it is never laid off work nor discharged from employment; it never works on reduced hours; it never has short crops nor droughts; it never pays taxes; it buys no food; it wears no clothes; it is unhoused and without home and so has no repairs, no replacements, no shingling, plumbing, painting, or whitewashing; it has neither wife, children, father, mother, nor kinfolk to watch over and care for; it has no expense of living; it has neither weddings nor births nor deaths; it has no love, no sympathy; it is as hard and soulless as a granite cliff. Once in debt, interest is your companion every minute of the day and night; you cannot shun it or slip away from it; you cannot dismiss it; it yields neither to entreaties, demands, or orders; and whenever you get in its way or cross its course or fail to meet its demands, it crushes you” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1938, 103).

Ask students for ways to complete this sentence: “Interest is _____.”

WHAT TO TEACH

“If ye are prepared ye shall not fear” (D&C 38:30).

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Ask students to describe an experience in which preparation helped them perform with greater confidence (such as school, music, or athletics).

- According to Doctrine and Covenants 38:30, how does preparation relate to fear?
- Why is preparation important in bringing about a good outcome?

Explain that temporal preparedness involves more than getting out of debt. Share the following statements from the Selected Teachings from “Temporal Preparedness” (student manual, 327–29). Ask students how heeding each one can help eliminate fear from our lives.

- “‘Provident living’ [includes] the wise planning of financial matters” (Spencer W. Kimball, 327).
- “We teach our people to live the laws of health” (Spencer W. Kimball, 327).
- “Ideally, we need to seek that work to which we are suited by interest, by aptitude, and by training” (Howard W. Hunter, 328).
- “We want [our sisters] to obtain all the education and vocational training possible before marriage. If they become widowed or divorced and need to work, we want them to have dignified and rewarding employment” (Howard W. Hunter, 328).
- “What can we do to improve our family finances? May I suggest three important keys that will help us. They are *attitude*, *planning*, and *self-discipline*” (M. Russell Ballard, 328).
- “The foundation of self-reliance is hard work. Parents should teach their children that work is the prerequisite to achievement and success in every worthwhile endeavor” (Joseph B. Wirthlin, 329).
- “We call upon Latter-day Saints everywhere to strengthen and beautify the home with renewed effort in these specific areas: food production, preservation, storage; the production and storage of nonfood items” (Spencer W. Kimball, 329).
- “I ask you earnestly, have you provided for your family a year’s supply of food, clothing, and, where possible, fuel?” (Ezra Taft Benson, 329).

CONCLUSION

Ask students what our attitude should be about preparedness. What goals could you set to become prepared? Testify that we can learn to live within our means and follow the counsel to be temporally prepared.

15 MOTHERS' EMPLOYMENT OUTSIDE THE HOME

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW

"By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and the protection of their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. Disability, death or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation. Extended families should lend support when needed" ("The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102; or student manual, 83).

"And again, verily I say unto you, that every man who is obliged to provide for his own family, let him provide, and he shall in nowise lose his crown" (D&C 75:28).

PRINCIPLE

Marriage and family life improve when couples follow the counsel of prophets on supporting their family.

STUDENT MANUAL READINGS

Selected Teachings from "Mothers' Employment outside the Home" (237–40)

Selected Teachings from "Education" (77–78)

"The Family: A Proclamation to the World," the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (83–84)

WHAT TO TEACH

There is a cost when mothers work outside the home.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Group work.** Divide the class into five groups. Assign each group to read one of the passages from the student manual below. When students finish, invite them to summarize their passages. Responses might include:

Group 1. President Gordon B. Hinckley (student manual, 238–39) and "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" (student manual, 239–40).

- Nurturing and bringing up children is more than a part-time job.
- Mothers who work should be sure that it is to provide for necessities.
- The Lord will bless mothers whose circumstances force them to work.
- Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children.
- Some circumstances require individual adaptation.
- Extended families should lend support.

Group 2. Elder Howard W. Hunter (student manual, 240) and President Howard W. Hunter (“Provide Temporal Support,” student manual, 208).

- Wives carry a heavy load of work within the home.
- Women should get all the education and vocational training they can.
- Women have claim on their husbands for support.
- Husbands who for selfish reasons encourage their wives to work outside the home hamper their own spiritual progress.
- Men who abandon their families and fail to support them are not eligible for a temple recommend.

Group 3. President Ezra Taft Benson (student manual, 237–38).

- Mothers should be at the crossroads for their children, whether their children are six or sixteen.
- A family suffers when the mother is absent.
- Recent societal trends have fostered discontent in women who have chosen the role of wife and mother.
- It is propaganda that some women are more suited for work than for family.
- Women should not sacrifice their preparation for marriage just to prepare to make money.
- Children need more of mother than money.

Group 4. President Spencer W. Kimball (student manual, 237).

- Only in an emergency should women seek outside employment.
- Many divorces can be traced to the day the wife left home for the workforce.
- Two incomes raise the standard of living beyond the norm.
- No career approaches the importance of wife, homemaker, and mother.
- Some people afford luxuries but say they cannot afford children.
- Only a mother can fulfill the role of mother.

Group 5. Elders Boyd K. Packer and Richard G. Scott (student manual, 240).

- Do not entrust your children to others so you can do non-motherly work.
- It is a sin to fail to teach children.
- Mothers who work out of necessity are entitled to extra inspiration and strength from the Lord. Those who work for lesser reasons are not.

Turn with students to Elder Henry B. Eyring’s statement in the preface of the student manual (p. viii), and review the first paragraph together.

WHAT TO TEACH

“Do the very best you can.”

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Read the following statements. President Gordon B. Hinckley taught: “I recognize . . . that there are some women (it has become very many, in fact) who have to work to provide for the needs of their families. To you I say, do the very best you can. I hope that if you are employed full-time you are doing it to ensure that basic needs are met and not simply to indulge a taste for an elaborate home, fancy cars, and other luxuries” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 93; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 69; student manual, 239, 359).

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “You in these unusual circumstances qualify for additional inspiration and strength from the Lord. Those who leave the home for lesser reasons will not” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1993, 42; or *Ensign*, May 1993, 34; student manual, 240).

Read the following statement by Elder Boyd K. Packer, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, concerning exceptions to counsel from prophets: “I once learned a valuable lesson from a mission Relief Society president. In a conference, she announced some tightening up of procedures. A sister stood up and defiantly said, ‘Those rules can’t apply to us! You don’t understand us! We are an exception.’

“That wonderful Relief Society president replied, ‘Dear sister, we’d like not to take care of the exception first. We will establish the rule first, and then we’ll see to the exception.’ Many times I have borrowed from her wisdom, grateful for what she taught me” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1994, 25; or *Ensign*, May 1994, 20).

What additional insights on mothers’ employment did you gain from these statements?

WHAT TO TEACH

Obedience to counsel takes planning.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Discuss ways to support a family on a father’s income. Point out that this can require faith, eternal priorities, planning, determination, discipline, and sacrifice.

- *Faith and eternal priorities.* Have students read 1 Nephi 3:7, and ask: How can the principle in this scripture apply to having the mother remain in the home?
- *Planning.* Refer to Selected Teachings from “Education” (student manual, 77–78) and briefly review the importance of career planning and education in preparing for the future.
- *Determination.* Review the importance of not losing sight of the reasons for wanting to have the mother in the home. Remind students that unless we are determined to live this principle we can easily be persuaded to abandon it as a goal.
- *Discipline and sacrifice.* Remind students of the importance of distinguish between needs and wants. How can we determine the difference?

Story. Read the following article, “They Lied to Me about Life—Life Is What You Are.” Ask students to identify the article’s message.

“Right after my first novel was published I was interviewed by a large East Coast newspaper for a feature article. The reporters came to my home in Connecticut on a Saturday morning. They were two attractive and sophisticated New York women who had graduated from a prestigious Ivy League school. Both had achieved considerable success in journalism.

“The lead reporter was about 30, had been an editor of *Seventeen* magazine, had worked for several major publications, and was now a sought-after feature writer. She was dressed in the latest fashion and seemed the ultimately successful career woman.

"I must confess that I was a little chagrined as the morning progressed. I was trying so hard to give the appearance of a professional writer, but every few minutes one of my children would pop into the living room with a problem or a question. My boys were playing a noisy game in the family room, the stereo was on in the basement play room, and the phone would not stop ringing. Neighborhood friends ran in and out the doors, and finally, my 5-year-old (who had had enough of having to 'stay out of the living room') came bouncing in with a smile and plunked herself down on my lap.

"We finished the interview, which had taken about two hours, and the reporters got up to leave. The younger one asked if she could use my phone. As she left, the cool and sophisticated senior reporter walked over and sat down on the couch next to me.

"'There's something I want to tell you,' she said intensely.

"I looked at her in surprise. Very slowly, she said, 'I just want you to know that we were sold a lie.'

"'What do you mean?' I asked, totally puzzled.

"'I mean, when I went to [university] they lied to us,' she replied. 'They told us we were brilliant, and that we had the obligation to seek success. We were told not to throw our lives away on husbands and children, but to go out into the world and to succeed. We were told that only through a professional career could we "find ourselves" or live a worthwhile life.

"'I just want you to know that this morning I have realized it was all a lie. I have come to know that a career is not a life—it is only something you do until you find a life. Life is what you are.

"'I would like to tell you I would trade all my so-called worldly success for one day of living your life.'

"These and other incidents in my life have developed in me a strong, practical conviction that, whenever possible, it is of critical importance that a mother stays at home with her children" (Jaroldeen Edwards, in "Following Christ in Service to Others," *Church News*, 10 Mar. 1990, 8, 10).

CONCLUSION

President Gordon B. Hinckley counseled, "In terms of your happiness, in terms of the matters that make you proud or sad, nothing—I repeat, nothing—will have so profound an effect on you as the way your children turn out" (in Conference Report, Oct. 2000, 67; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 50). Couples who follow the counsel of the prophets concerning the importance of mothers staying home with their children when possible will be blessed. Repeat Elder Scott's statement that mothers who are in unusual circumstances and have no choice but to work outside the home will also be blessed.

16 KEEPING LOVE ALIVE

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW

“Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102; or student manual, 83). Paul taught, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Ephesians 5:25).

Elder David B. Haight of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, in his ninety-fifth year of life, said: “After we have been married 70 years, I can say to all of you that it gets better, that it gets better year after year, with the preciousness and the tenderness and the realization of some of the eternal blessings that lie ahead for us. And so to all of you I would say, and Ruby would join with me if she could be standing here, that life can be wonderful and so meaningful, but we have to live it in a simple way. We must live the principles of the gospel. For it is the gospel in our lives that makes the difference as we wend our way through life” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2000, 22; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 19).

PRINCIPLE

Couples nourish love in their marriages by following correct principles.

STUDENT MANUAL READINGS

Selected Teachings from “Marriage throughout the Years” (184)

Paragraph 7 of “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (83)

Selected Teachings from “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” (84–89)

“The Enriching of Marriage,” Elder James E. Faust (184–86)

“Hinckleys to Note 60th Anniversary” (186–87)

“How Do I Love Thee?” Elder Jeffrey R. Holland (158–62)

“A Union of Love and Understanding,” Elder Marlin K. Jensen (162–66)

WHAT TO TEACH

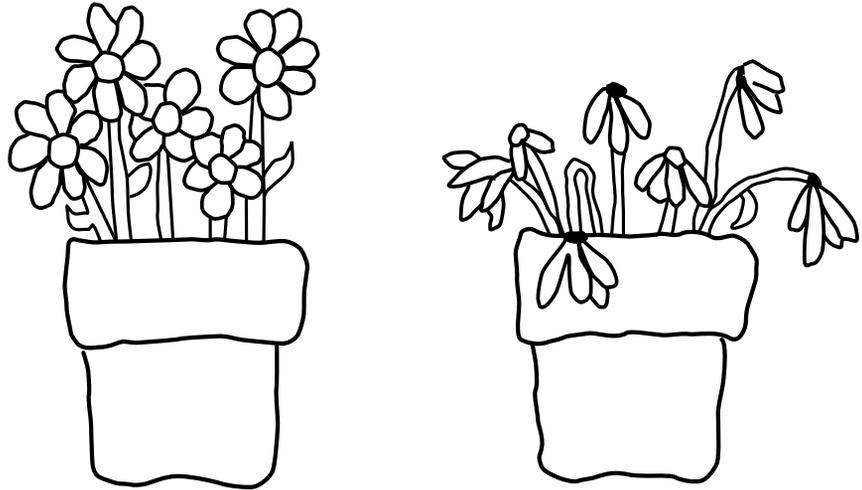
Maintaining love over time requires a long-term perspective and nourishment from both spouses.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Invite students to describe the love newlywed couples feel for each other. Read the following statement by Elder Boyd K. Packer, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “If you suppose that the full-blown rapture of young romantic love is the sum of the possibilities which spring from the fountains of life, you have not yet lived to see the devotion and the comfort of longtime married love. Married couples are tried by temptation, misunderstandings, separation, financial problems, family crises, illness; and all the while love grows stronger, the mature love enjoys a bliss not even imagined by newlyweds” (*The Things of the Soul* [1996], 106–7; or student manual, 142).

Explain that while this type of love is within reach, it takes real effort to achieve. Read the statement by Elder David B. Haight under “Doctrinal Overview” above. What is the “simple way” that helps us achieve a life together that is “wonderful and so meaningful”?

Show two potted plants, one that looks healthy and beautiful and another that is wilting or dead. Or draw two such plants on the board.



Ask what may have made the difference in the condition of the two plants. Then have students apply their answers to marriage. The following questions might help your discussion:

- What does it mean to nourish or nurture love in marriage?
- Why does a marriage require such ongoing care?
- Why do both partners need to be actively involved in nurturing a marriage?
- Is *work* a good word to describe the effort needed to build a lasting relationship? Why or why not?
- How can having fun be part of nurturing?
- What are some courtesies that spouses could use to strengthen their love for each other?

Conclude with the following statement by President Spencer W. Kimball:

“The tender flower would wither and die without food and water. And so love, also, cannot be expected to last forever unless it is continually fed with portions of love, the manifestation of esteem and admiration, the expressions of gratitude, and the consideration of unselfishness.

“. . . If one is forever seeking the interests, comforts, and happiness of the other, the love found in courtship and cemented in marriage will grow into mighty proportions. . . . Certainly the foods most vital for love are consideration, kindness, thoughtfulness, concern, expressions of affection, embraces of appreciation, admiration, pride, companionship, confidence, faith, partnership, equality, and dependence” (“Marriage and Divorce,” in *1976 Devotional Speeches of the Year* [1977], 150; or student manual, 172).

 **Discussion.** Turn to “A Union of Love and Understanding,” by Elder Marlin K. Jensen (student manual, 163–64), and read together the section “Developing Our Capacity to Love.” Read the following statements by Elder Jensen and after each, ask, Why is this so?

- “It may be our own capacity to give love that makes us most lovable” (student manual, 163).
- “Very little love can come from one who is not at peace with himself or herself and God” (164).

Summarize with Elder Jensen’s statement preceding that section: “If we want to make ourselves into worthy eternal companions, we can first concentrate on becoming unwavering disciples of the Master” (163).

 **Discussion.** Write on the board *Qualities That Can Strengthen a Marriage*. Add below the title the following references from the student manual:

- “How Do I Love Thee?” Elder Jeffrey R. Holland (158–62)
- “Hinckleys to Note 60th Anniversary” (186–87)
- “The Enriching of Marriage,” Elder James E. Faust (184–86)

Divide the class into three groups. Have each group read one of the references from the student manual and underline the qualities that can strengthen a marriage. Invite a representative of each group to write their findings on the board. Have the class suggest other qualities, and add them to the list on the board.

- Which of these qualities could be easily and quickly applied in a marriage? How?
- Which qualities would take more time to develop? Why?
- Which of these qualities have you seen in a married couple you admire?

Invite students to review the six questions under “Enriching a Marriage” by Elder Faust (student manual, 185) and silently rate themselves against each question on a scale of 1 to 10. Encourage them to ponder ways they can improve in their weakest area and set a specific goal they can work on during the week.

CONCLUSION

Share the following statement by President Hinckley: “I see my own companion of fifty-two years. Is her contribution less acceptable before the Lord than is mine? I am satisfied it is not. She has walked quietly at my side, sustained me in my responsibilities, reared and blessed our children, served in many capacities in the Church, and spread an unmitigated measure of cheer and goodness wherever she has gone. The older I grow the more I appreciate—yes, the more I love—this little woman with whom I knelt at the altar in the house of the Lord more than half a century ago.

“I wish with all of my heart that every marriage might be a happy marriage. I wish that every marriage might be an eternal partnership. I believe that wish can be realized if there is a willingness to make the effort to bring it to pass” (“Rise to the Stature of the Divine within You,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 97; or student manual, 79).

17 RESPECTING YOUR SPOUSE

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW

“Brethren, treat your wives with love and respect and kindness. And, wives, you treat your husbands with love and respect and kindness” (Gordon B. Hinckley, *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [1997], 209).

“Under the gospel plan marriage is a companionship, with equality between the partners. We walk side by side with respect, appreciation, and love one for another. There can be nothing of inferiority or superiority between the husband and wife in the plan of the Lord” (Hinckley, *Teachings*, 322).

PRINCIPLE

Applying the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ in a marriage is the best way to avoid the consequences of abuse.

STUDENT MANUAL READINGS

Selected Teachings from “Abuse” (3–5)

“Healing the Tragic Scars of Abuse,” Elder Richard G. Scott (5–8)

TEACHER ENRICHMENT

President Gordon B. Hinckley, “Personal Worthiness to Exercise the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, May 2002, 53–54 (or p. 69 in this manual)

Judy C. Olsen, “The Invisible Heartbreaker,” *Ensign*, June 1996, 22–29 (or p. 70 in this manual)

WHAT TO TEACH

Husbands and wives should be blessings to each other.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Ask students to imagine they are applying for a loan and need to list their assets. What kinds of things could be included in the list? What are some non-financial “assets” that a man and woman might bring to a marriage? Read the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley, then First Counselor in the First Presidency:

“I believe in the family where there is a husband who regards his companion as his greatest asset and treats her accordingly; where there is a wife who looks upon her husband as her anchor and strength, her comfort and security; where there are children who look to mother and father with respect and gratitude; where there are parents who look upon those children as blessings and find a great and serious and wonderful challenge in their nurture and rearing. The cultivation of such a home requires effort and energy, forgiveness and patience, love and endurance and sacrifice; but it is worth all of these and more” (“This I Believe,” in *Brigham Young University 1991–92 Devotional and Fireside Speeches* [1992], 80).

Discuss elements of President Hinckley’s statement.

WHAT TO TEACH

There are small irritations in any marriage that need to be worked out harmoniously.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Read the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley: “If husbands and wives would only give greater emphasis to the virtues that are to be found in one another and less to the faults, there would be fewer broken hearts, fewer tears, fewer divorces, and much more happiness in the homes of our people” (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, 322).

Explain that disagreements and irritations are common in marriage. Some of these come from differences in upbringing, preferences, or expectations. Making adjustments is a normal part of married life. There may be times when the counsel of a priesthood leader can help in overcoming differences.

Write on the board the words *effort, energy, forgiveness, patience, love, endurance, and sacrifice*. Ask students to suggest why each of these attributes would be needed in a successful family.

Explain that successful marriages require give and take as the partners work toward unity with each other while remaining in harmony with gospel standards. Husbands and wives should be a blessing to each other.

WHAT TO TEACH

There are various kinds of abuse.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Group work.** Have students turn to Selected Teachings from “Abuse” (student manual, 3–5) looking for kinds of abuse.

 **Discussion.** Conduct a discussion regarding kinds of abuse. Supplement the discussion with the following insights as appropriate:

“Spiritual abuse includes exercising unrighteous control, dominion, or compulsion.

“Emotional abuse includes name calling, demeaning statements, threats, isolation, intimidation, or manipulation.

“Physical abuse includes coercion, withholding resources, and physical violence such as pushing, choking, scratching, pinching, restraining, or hitting.

“Sexual abuse may be either emotional or physical and includes sexual harassment, inflicting pain during sexual intimacy, and the use of force or intimidation to make a spouse perform a sexual act” (*Responding to Abuse: Helps for Ecclesiastical Leaders* [1995], 4.)

WHAT TO TEACH

Abusive behavior from either the husband or the wife is not in harmony with gospel standards and must be avoided.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Have students turn again to Selected Teachings from “Abuse” (student manual, 3–5) and look for causes of abuse. These may include:

- “If a man does not control his temper, . . . he then becomes a victim of his own passions and emotions, which lead him to actions that are totally unfit for civilized behavior” (Ezra Taft Benson, student manual, 3).
- “Another face of pride is contention. Arguments, fights, unrighteous dominion, . . . spouse abuse, riots, and disturbances all fall into this category of pride” (Ezra Taft Benson, student manual, 3–4).
- “The exploitation of children, or the abuse of one’s spouse, for the satisfaction of sadistic desires is sin of the darkest hue” (Gordon B. Hinckley, student manual, 4).

Use the following questions for further discussion:

- How can pride lead to abuse?
- How can selfishness lead to abusive behavior?
- How can “wicked traditions of [one’s] fathers” (Alma 23:3) be a cause of abuse?

Discuss the following:

“The beginnings of both spouse and child abuse can be found in seemingly insignificant things, such as belittling the abilities and competency of another, constantly criticizing, being insulting or calling names, refusing to communicate, manipulating, causing guilt feelings, repeatedly making and breaking promises, intimidating, threatening physical harm, making unfounded accusations, or destroying property.

“Some have offended unknowingly. Others may not understand the far-reaching consequences of their behavior. However, when there is abuse, every member of a family, particularly the father and mother, must be willing to reconsider their individual relationships with other family members. In some cases simply realizing that behavior is damaging to someone else may be enough to cause an offender to change” (*Preventing and Responding to Spouse Abuse* [pamphlet, 1997], 3).

Have students return to Selected Teachings from “Abuse” to find ways of avoiding abuse. These may include:

- “When you love your wife with all your heart, you cannot demean her, criticize her, find fault with her, nor abuse her by words, sullen behavior, or actions” (Ezra Taft Benson, student manual, 3).
- “When there is recognition of equality between the husband and the wife . . . , then there will follow a greater sense of responsibility to nurture, to help, to love with an enduring love those for whom we are responsible” (Gordon B. Hinckley, student manual, 3).
- “There must be self-discipline that constrains against abuse of wife and children” (Gordon B. Hinckley, student manual, 4).

Share also the following statements. (You could use an overhead transparency, or read each one and write key words on the board.)

- “Nobody ever abused anybody else when he had the spirit of the Lord” (George Albert Smith, in Howard W. Hunter, in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 69; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 51; student manual, 208).
- “A priesthood holder is to be *patient*. Patience is another form of self-control” (Ezra Taft Benson, in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 62; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 47; student manual, 4).
- “There must be self-discipline that constrains against abuse of wife and children and self. There must be the Spirit of God, invited and worked for, nurtured and strengthened” (Gordon B. Hinckley, in Conference Report, Apr. 1991, 97; or *Ensign*, May 1991, 74; student manual, 4, 177).
- “Emancipation is possible. God can heal us, if we will submit to him” (Neal A. Maxwell, “*Not My Will, But Thine*” [1988], 63; or student manual, 4).

Share the following rebuke to abusers by President Gordon B. Hinckley: “Unfortunately a few of you may be married to men who are abusive. Some of them put on a fine face before the world during the day and come home in the evening, set aside their self-discipline, and on the slightest provocation fly into outbursts of anger.

“No man who engages in such evil and unbecoming behavior is worthy of the priesthood of God. No man who so conducts himself is worthy of the privileges of the house of the Lord. I regret that there are some men undeserving of the love of their wives and children. There are children who fear their fathers, and wives who fear their husbands. If there be any such men within the hearing of my voice, as a servant of the Lord I rebuke you and call you to repentance. Discipline yourselves. Master your temper. Most of the things that make you angry are of very small consequence. And what a terrible price you are paying for your anger. Ask the Lord to forgive you. Ask your wife to forgive you. Apologize to your children” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 91–92; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 68; student manual, 358).

WHAT TO TEACH

Victims of abuse can be healed through the power of the Atonement.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Explain that sometimes individuals come to marriage having suffered abuse in their childhood or youth. Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has given inspired counsel for the abuse victim. His counsel can also help spouses of former abuse victims understand how to help their partners continue their recovery. Refer students to Elder Scott’s article, “Healing the Tragic Scars of Abuse” (student manual, 5–8). Discuss some of the following questions:

- What are some typical scars that can be left from abuse?
- Can abuse from others be overcome? How?
- What are several principles of healing from abuse that Elder Scott mentions?
- What degree of responsibility in the healing process does the victim have? Explain.
- Can the abuser ever be forgiven of such a serious sin? Explain.
- How can the healing process be enhanced for the victim when he or she forgives the abuser?
- What caution does Elder Scott give about seeking help?

CONCLUSION

Have students read aloud together Doctrine and Covenants 121:41–43. Bear testimony that persuasion, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, love unfeigned, kindness, and pure knowledge enhance relationships. Their lack can lead to abusive behavior. Abuse in all forms leads to barren relationships. When couples exhibit Christlike conduct and treat each other with love and kindness, they are much more likely to achieve a happy marriage. Applying the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ is the best way to avoid the consequences of abuse.

Teacher Enrichment

PERSONAL WORTHINESS TO EXERCISE THE PRIESTHOOD



*President Gordon B. Hinckley,
Excerpted from Conference
Report, Apr. 2002, 64–65; or
Ensign, May 2002, 53–54*

The wife you choose will be your equal. Paul declared, “Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 11:11).

In the marriage companionship there is neither inferiority nor superiority. The woman does not walk ahead of the man; neither does the man walk ahead of the woman. They walk side by side as a son and daughter of God on an eternal journey.

She is not your servant, your chattel, nor anything of the kind.

How tragic and utterly disgusting a phenomenon is wife abuse. Any man in this Church who abuses his wife, who demeans her, who insults her, who exercises unrighteous dominion over her is unworthy to hold the priesthood. Though he may have been ordained, the heavens will withdraw, the Spirit of the Lord will be grieved, and it will be amen to the authority of the priesthood of that man.

Any man who engages in this practice is unworthy to hold a temple recommend.

I regret to say that I see too much of this ugly phenomenon. There are men who cuff their wives

about, both verbally and physically. What a tragedy when a man demeans the mother of his children.

It is true that there are a few women who abuse their husbands. But I am not speaking to them tonight. I am speaking to the men of this Church, men upon whom the Almighty has bestowed His holy priesthood.

My brethren, if there be any within the sound of my voice who are guilty of such behavior, I call upon you to repent. Get on your knees and ask the Lord to forgive you. Pray to Him for the power to control your tongue and your heavy hand. Ask for the forgiveness of your wife and your children. President McKay was wont to say, “No other success can compensate for failure in the home” (quoting from J. E. McCulloch, *Home: The Savior of Civilization* [1924], 42; in Conference Report, Apr. 1935, 116). And President Lee said, “The most important part of the Lord’s work that you will do, is the work that you do within the walls of your own home” (Harold B. Lee, *Doing the Right Things for the Right Reasons*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year [19 Apr. 1961], 5).

I am confident that when we stand before the bar of God, there will be little mention of how much wealth we accumulated in life or of any honors which we may have achieved. But there will be searching questions about our domestic relations. And I am convinced that only those who have walked through life with love and respect and appreciation for their companions and children will receive from our eternal judge the words, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Matthew 25:21).

THE INVISIBLE HEARTBREAKER

Judy C. Olsen, Ensign, June 1996, 22–29

Couple number one: “You know,” said David to his wife when she asked about their car’s crumpled fender, “your *problem* is you like to make a big deal out of nothing.”

Couple number two: “Why did you plan our date for Saturday?” asked Caroline. “That was a stupid thing to do. You know our date night is Friday.”

What do these couples have in common? One of the spouses in each situation is engaging in a form of abuse. Even though no yelling or physical violence occurred, these verbal jabs are typical of a widespread web of behaviors known as *emotional abuse*. Such behavior may well be the most common but least recognized of all forms of abuse because it has a certain acceptance within our society. In this seemingly invisible category of abusive behavior, men and women are about equally at fault, and the effects of such abuse on family members can be *just as severe* as other, more openly acknowledged kinds of abuse. Many hearts have been broken and lives severely damaged from living with the effects of ongoing emotional abuse. And if left uncorrected, it may also become the basis for other types of abusive behavior within a home and marriage.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, then Second Counselor in the First Presidency, spoke to married couples at a 29 January 1984 fireside broadcast from Temple Square. His counsel, as paraphrased in coverage of the event, was that “to make marriage all it can be, the couple must form a partnership based on the values of the gospel of Christ.” For a marriage to succeed, President Hinckley continued, “each married person should develop respect for his or her partner” as a cornerstone of the marital relationship (*Ensign*, Apr. 1984, 75).

Respectful treatment, especially in marriage, is essential to happiness and vital to our Latter-day Saint view of celestial partnerships, where “neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord” (1 Cor. 11:11). Worldly traditions, however, are not generally supportive of respectful and loving treatment for all mankind. Yet the Savior’s

teachings invite us to a higher standard: gentleness, meekness, love unfeigned, and kindness (see D&C 121:41–42). These qualities ought to form the foundation for our earthly relationships, which are to be patterned after the example he set.

On the other hand, emotional abuse prevents couples from living up to Christ’s higher standard. It seeks to perpetuate false traditions and inappropriate behavior such as “exercis[ing] control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men” (D&C 121:37) in subtle and seemingly socially acceptable ways. As the world hangs on to such standards, Latter-day Saints increasingly face the challenge to “come ye out from the wicked, and be ye separate” (Alma 5:57). Indeed, Saints who continue to mold their hearts to be Christlike will find an ever-widening gulf between the light, joy, and peace found in their homes and the darkened home environments of those who are unkind, harsh, and cruel.

To help Latter-day Saints better understand how these subtle and invisible forces may be affecting their homes and marriages, the following discussion will (1) explain behaviors that are considered to be emotionally abusive, (2) provide a yardstick by which couples can gauge the seriousness of the problem in their own lives, and (3) offer Christ-centered solutions that couples or individuals may begin to implement immediately and that will lead to healthier, happier marriage partnerships.

Defining Emotional Abuse

In a 1995 booklet published by the Church, *Responding to Abuse: Helps for Ecclesiastical Leaders*, we are told that emotional abuse of a spouse includes the following broad categories of problem behavior:

Name calling. Words such as *idiot* or *jerk*, sarcastic or exaggerated use of terms of endearment, unflattering nicknames, and insulting labels constitute name-calling. President Howard W. Hunter counseled that a husband “should always speak to his wife lovingly and kindly, treating her with the utmost respect,” for “marriage is like a tender flower . . . and must be nourished constantly with expressions of love and affection” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 51). Wives, too,

must do the same to their husbands. Sarcastic comments, the staple of TV sitcoms, are also considered to be verbally abusive and have no place in Latter-day Saint marriages.

Demeaning statements. President Hunter also said, “Any man who abuses or demeans his wife physically or spiritually is guilty of grievous sin and in need of sincere and serious repentance” (p. 51). Ways that both men and women might engage in demeaning behavior toward their spouses include the following:

- *Trivialization.* To intentionally overlook the substantial effort put into a project, whether it’s preparing a dinner for company or repairing the family car, is a way of trivializing the time, effort, and talent needed to accomplish what could very well be a necessary and selfless act of service. Demeaning a spouse in this way can be done even in an apparently thoughtful tone of voice. For example, after a husband had spent considerable time doing tax returns, his wife commented, “Taxes are really not as complicated as most people make them out to be. I’m surprised it took you so long.”
- *Put-down humor.* A partner with a quick wit can come up with many ways to embarrass and humiliate his or her spouse, who may then be accused, in an effort to deflect responsibility for any insult taken, of not having a sense of humor. “Jack’s on a diet,” said his wife. “His third this week.”
- *Faultfinding.* Criticism chips away at a person’s sense of worth. It is not done out of a genuine regard to help someone be a better person, as some claim. “You know, honey, if you’d learn to chop the vegetables a little finer, you could probably make a decent salad.”

Intimidation. A partner may use threats to intimidate the spouse in order to get his or her own way: “The day you hang that painting in the bedroom is the day I move out of it!” Venting anger in harsh words, shouting, stomping around the house, and throwing or breaking things are abusive. Less-noisy forms of signaling discontent, ill will, or censure—from snapping at others to displaying angry looks and other signs of belligerence—can also be intimidating and thus constitute abuse.

Isolation. Some partners seek to limit their spouse’s interaction either with them or with the outside world. Subtle manifestations of this include—

- *Withholding:* The partner fails to give needed information to the spouse, refuses to participate in mutual problem solving, holds back on displays of affection, or may be unwilling to spend time or converse with the spouse.
- *Preventing closeness:* Some partners seek to distance their spouses by perpetuating feelings of ill will or estrangement. If time spent together fosters the beginning of shared closeness, the partner may say or do something hurtful to create distance again.

One family took the children for a cookout. The day was delightful, and everyone had a good time. Finally it was time to go, and they began the short drive home. “Let’s stop for ice cream cones,” suggested the mother. Suddenly the father began shouting that he didn’t have time to waste like “some people he knew.” The outing had cost him enough already, he fumed, and he still had important things to do. Stunned, the family sat in fear and silence all the way home. The wife felt her feelings of shared fun evaporate into cold loneliness. She realized this had happened before.

Closeness is also prevented if one spouse refuses to participate in the sharing of emotions of pain or joy, whether it’s to offer comfort at the loss of a pet or to celebrate receiving a raise.

Setting inappropriate rules: Isolating and controlling a spouse can take the form of creating an often unspoken set of rules for him or her. The rules may be subtle, like setting time limits on telephone calls, disallowing certain people at the house, and limiting or forbidding the spouse to have money or to go places alone. Not-so-subtle rules may include things such as no phone calls, no visitors, or no Church callings. The partner tries to justify the rules, saying they make good sense, but the victimized spouse falls into an increasingly cold and lonely world.

Manipulation. Some methods used to manipulate others include acting pitiable, creating guilty feelings in others, or blaming others for problems.

One woman writes, “[My husband] does not come to family home evening because we do not meet his expectations and he claims the kids won’t sit still and listen.” This husband has neatly blamed his children for his own lack of involvement with them.

Another manipulative tactic is to disagree with or counter, for purely selfish reasons, the spouse’s decisions. The offending partner seeks to implement his own ideas not because they are better, but because they allow him to continue to feel in control or smarter than his spouse. Such controlling behaviors are often couched as concern, such as the wife who critically examined her husband’s apparel each time they left the house, suggested he wear a different tie or shirt for the occasion, then waited impatiently while he changed—even though by reasonable standards his choice of dress was appropriate.

Gauging the Seriousness of the Problem

If what you’ve read makes you feel uncomfortable, you may wish to simply ask your spouse to read this article and ask if he or she believes there is a problem in your marriage regarding these kinds of behaviors. *The degree of pain or unhappiness experienced by the spouse, as well as your own feelings of unease, determines the severity of the problem.* If the kind of emotional interaction in the marriage is satisfactory to both partners, and if love and joy are experienced by both, there is little cause for concern since occasional pardonable mistakes do not qualify as serious emotional abuse. However, if one person believes there is a problem, even if the partner disagrees, there *is* a problem. Those who abuse are often satisfied with the way things are and are insensitive and not motivated to make needed changes.

The following discussion points out the stages that victims of abuse may go through as they try to cope with what is happening to them. This information will help couples determine the extent of a problem.

As isolated incidents begin to form a pattern, tension builds up from accumulated hurts that have not been fully resolved. Feelings of fear, wariness, nervousness, or anxiety may be present. In time, the hurting spouse may actually become accustomed to being treated badly and fail

to realize that inappropriate behavior is occurring. Such persons may assume they are “too sensitive” or in some way deserve what they get. Nevertheless, in an effort to lessen the pain and establish a better relationship, they may increase efforts to be kind, pay compliments, or perform more acts of service in order to please their partners and “earn” a compliment or kindness in return. Such gestures are often taken for granted or ignored by the abusive partners, leaving the spouses to wonder if they will ever measure up or be “good enough” to be loved, no matter how much effort is put forth.

Next, a spouse may attempt to get help or understanding from the partner about the growing chasm between them, but is either ignored or told that he or she is imagining things. Such denial creates confusion in the abused spouse, and feelings of loneliness, frustration, despair, or even self-doubt may emerge.

At this point some people seek help from friends or priesthood leaders. However, because emotional abuse usually takes place in private, where there are no witnesses, it is often difficult to find anyone willing to believe that the problem is serious. In fact, the abusive partner can be well liked and considered charming by other people. Says one woman, “People from our ward often tell me how lucky I am to be married to such a nice guy. I am confused by this. It is very painful for me to be with him.”

This lack of a sympathetic witness to the pain often leads to efforts to cope alone. This may result in a number of behaviors attributed to other causes:

- **Fighting back.** Some people fight back by employing the same abusive tactics as their partners. There is much heated argument and recrimination in such homes.
- **Suffering in silence.** Other people respond by stifling their feelings. To keep peace in the home, they see no alternative except to go numb and brave it out. Often they have trouble either laughing or crying, for feelings may have closed down.
- **Diverting feelings.** Still others retreat into depression or ill health. Discouragement from trying to make one’s voice heard and trying to receive justice, coupled with a determination to honor temple marriage covenants, may contribute

to the belief that the situation is hopeless, that one must endure a dysfunctional marriage. The pain may turn into depression or a variety of other problems, sometimes lasting for years, because the underlying cause is not correctly diagnosed. In serious cases, thoughts of suicide may even result.

Once a pattern of emotional abuse has developed, there is a risk that in some cases such hurtful behavior will escalate into physical abuse. The transition often begins with seemingly playful or accidental invasions of the spouse's personal space: standing too close; stepping on toes; not-so-gently shoving, hitting, or slapping for "fun"; and teasing that does not stop when a spouse asks for it to stop. If this, too, is tolerated, *further serious physical abuse may follow*. Men and women continually experiencing these supposedly playful invasions of personal space need to take a firm stand with their partner and *seek help now*. A spouse who *does not tolerate* such treatment will often stop a partner from moving any further down the road toward physical abuse. There is no guarantee that things will get better by waiting, praying for the partner to change, or assuming the partner means it when he or she promises it won't happen again . . . and it happens again. Both partner and spouse may need help.

A Christ-Centered Solution

The Lord Jesus Christ has shown us how to live in peace and happiness with one another. "Come unto me" is his invitation, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. 11:28–29). He has set us an example that, when followed in marriage, will open the door to a more peaceful relationship.

While effective change most rapidly takes place when two people work together to solve the problem, a spouse need not wait to begin to make

changes that can set the course of a marriage aright. Whether a couple works together on the problem or one spouse goes it alone, there are steps that can be taken immediately.

Seeking Change as a Couple

The following steps can help a couple begin the process of change:

- 1. Meet together.** Set a time to discuss the problem where you won't be disturbed. Begin with prayer to invite the Lord to guide each of you in what you say and to help you find solutions. Pray to have an open mind and heart.
- 2. Evaluate the problem.** It may be helpful to begin the discussion with a review of this article. Couples may find initially that they have a hard time pinpointing exactly how and when hurtful behaviors happen. However, once such a discussion has been held, awareness increases and damaging patterns become more visible.
- 3. Decide to do something different.** Once problems have been identified, a couple can work together to help each other replace old habits and patterns of behavior with new ones. One way to do this is to agree on a signal, either verbal or nonverbal, that alerts the partner to an unfolding problem. This takes courage on the part of the offended spouse and patience on the part of the abusive partner. Each will probably need to pray together and separately for the Spirit of truth and understanding.
- 4. Review often.** Initially, couples will probably need to meet together often to discuss the process and refine their methods for dealing with negative behaviors. For many, the process is one of unfolding both the severity of the problem as well as the sweetness of the solution. Ultimately, the yielding of hearts to the principles of the gospel will bring couples true companionship and love.

18 FIDELITY IN MARRIAGE

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW

“Thou shalt not . . . commit adultery . . . nor do anything like unto it” (D&C 59:6).

“Fidelity to one’s marriage vows is absolutely essential for love, trust, and peace. Adultery is unequivocally condemned by the Lord.

“Husbands and wives who love each other will find that love and loyalty are reciprocated. This love will provide a nurturing atmosphere for the emotional growth of children. Family life should be a time of happiness and joy that children can look back on with fond memories and associations” (Ezra Taft Benson, “Salvation—A Family Affair,” *Ensign*, July 1992, 2; or student manual, 283).

“The high moral standards of this church apply to all members in every country. Honesty and integrity are taught and expected everywhere. Chastity before marriage and absolute fidelity to wife or husband after marriage are required of members of the Church everywhere. Members who violate these high standards of moral conduct place their Church membership in question anywhere in the world” (James E. Faust, in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 82; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 62).

PRINCIPLE

Strict fidelity in marriage is essential in honoring the covenants we have made with our spouse and the Lord.

STUDENT MANUAL READINGS

Selected Teachings from “Fidelity in Marriage” (111–14)

Selected Teachings from “Pornography” (264–67)

“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (83–84)

Note: This lesson may take more than one class period to teach.

WHAT TO TEACH

There are precautions we can take to help us honor our marriage covenants.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Ask students to turn to the section “Doctrine of Fidelity” in the student manual (111–12). Have them take turns reading President Gordon B. Hinckley’s statements. Invite them to feel free to comment after any paragraph.

Have students answer the following questions from the statements by Elder Ezra Taft Benson:

- In the marriage ceremony, which parties make covenants? (The spouses and God.)
- How important is fidelity in a marriage? (“Absolutely essential.”)

Ask students what the main point is in the statement by Elder Robert D. Hales.



Case studies. Read and discuss one or more of the following case studies. Ask students to identify behavior that qualifies as infidelity or could lead to it. The questions following each case study may help your discussion.

- Nathalie and Marc had a warm and affectionate relationship during the first year of their marriage. They were happy. Their first child was born early in the second year, and they both enjoyed being parents. Now, in the third year, they seldom hug or kiss or express any kind of physical affection for each other. Other than that their marriage is stable, they enjoy each other, and they work closely together to raise their child.

Nathalie, however, has developed a close friendship with their neighbor Gérard. There has been no physical intimacy between them except for a brief, one-time kiss. Because of the trials in their lives, Nathalie and Gérard find that they enjoy sitting together on the couch at Gérard's apartment and talking for an hour or two before Marc returns from work. Nathalie thoroughly enjoys being with Gérard and feels that she has complete control over her emotions. She is much happier in her own marriage since she has been receiving attention from Gérard. She is not concerned about breaking the law of chastity with Gérard because they have talked about it and each claims to love the Lord too much to do such a thing.

1. What is wrong with this relationship?
2. Is there any infidelity between Nathalie and Gérard? In what ways?
3. If Nathalie and Gérard's relationship goes no further physically, is it harmless?

- Hiro likes the world of academics and hopes someday to teach at a university. He enjoys the rich interchange of ideas found in that setting. Since he finished his undergraduate program, his work and financial obligations have prevented him from seeking an advanced degree. He is disappointed that his wife Yoshiko, with whom he shared so much during their courtship, no longer enjoys reading and talking about world issues. By sharing his books and ideas with his friends at work and being involved in a weekly book club, he has been able to fill his needs. Mika, a young woman from work, joined the club after hearing about it from Hiro. Hiro especially enjoys the insights that Mika contributes.

1. Is there infidelity between Hiro and Mika in this arrangement?
2. What are the potential dangers?
3. What can Hiro do to build a better relationship with his wife?

- After they married, Dave was surprised to discover that his new wife Joan liked to stay at home most of the time. Dave has always loved sports and the outdoors. Joan, though, loves keeping house and taking care of Dave and their baby. Dave plays for a local sports team, and sometimes Joan is unhappy with the number of evenings it keeps him away. Several weekends a month he goes fishing. Once he even saved his money for months to buy Joan a fishing pole and waders and tried to teach her to fish. She tried to show interest but never really enjoyed it. Dave wishes Joan were more like Trisha, a young woman at work who loves to play and talk sports. Trisha attends many of his sporting events.

1. What are the danger signals in this marriage?
2. What are possible solutions to the problem?

WHAT TO TEACH

Infidelity has painful consequences.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Ask students what the seeds of infidelity are in the case studies above. What are the costs of infidelity? Review the story of David and Bath-sheba and the heavy price that David paid for his adultery. Include the following scripture passages in your review:

- 2 Samuel 11:2–3. David chose not to turn from temptation when he saw Bath-sheba but instead lusted after her.
- 2 Samuel 11:4. David took advantage of his position as king to seduce Bath-sheba.
- 2 Samuel 11:5. Bath-sheba conceived a child because of their sin.
- 2 Samuel 11:6–13. David attempted to deceive Bath-sheba’s husband Uriah and conceal their sin.
- 2 Samuel 11:14–17. David conspired to cover the embarrassment of their sin by having Uriah killed in battle.
- 2 Samuel 12:1–7. Nathan the prophet exposed David’s sins by telling him a parable and saying “Thou art the man.”
- 2 Samuel 12:11–12. Nathan prophesied future punishments for David, all of which came to pass.
- 2 Samuel 12:15–18. David and Bath-sheba’s child died.
- Doctrine and Covenants 132:39. David has “fallen from his exaltation”; his family has been taken from him.

 **Group work.** Have students turn to “Costs of Infidelity” in the student manual (112–13). Divide the scripture section and the statements among class members and ask them to identify the costs of infidelity. Have them summarize their findings for the class.

Have students turn to Jacob 2:7–9, 31–35 and identify the costs of infidelity in these verses.

WHAT TO TEACH

Diligent effort is required to avoid infidelity.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Discuss with students the concept of prevention. Ask students to turn to the section “Precautions That Help Prevent Infidelity” in the student manual (113–14). Have them summarize on the board the steps we can take to avoid committing adultery or “anything like unto it” (D&C 59:6).

 **Case study.** Roberto, a married member of the Church with two young daughters, enjoys surfing the Internet late in the evening when everyone is asleep. He recently happened on a site with pornographic materials. Although it was offensive at first glance, he found himself drawn into it. For the next several evenings, after everyone was asleep, he returned to that site and additional sites with similar material.

One night his wife, Ana Maria, came into the room and caught him looking at pornography. She was devastated and became angry. She insisted on an appointment with the bishop and threatened to divorce Roberto. Roberto knows what he was doing was wrong but feels that Ana Maria was overreacting.

1. Where do you think Roberto erred?
2. Why is Roberto's behavior serious?
3. What can Roberto do to rebuild his wife's confidence in him and strengthen their marriage?
4. At what point would you recommend Roberto seek counseling?



Discussion. Have students turn to Selected Teachings from “Pornography” (student manual, 264–67). How does pornography harm a marriage? Divide the statements among the students and have them look for ways that pornography can destroy a marriage. Invite them to summarize their findings, and have a student write them on the board.

CONCLUSION

Write on the board the letters *L V G T T U*. State that these letters represent a way to insure that we never stray into infidelity. Have students read Doctrine and Covenants 121:45 to discover what these letters represent. (“Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly.”)

- What does the word *garnish* mean? (“Beautify” or “adorn.”)
- What are the benefits of virtuous thoughts? (see D&C 121:46).

19 INASMUCH AS PARENTS HAVE CHILDREN IN ZION

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW

“Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.

“As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.

“Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them” (Psalm 127:3–5).

“And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth” (Genesis 1:28).

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said:

“Inasmuch as parents have children in Zion . . . that teach them *not* to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents’ [D&C 68:25; italics added].

“That commandment places responsibility and accountability for the teaching of children squarely upon the shoulders of the parents. The proclamation to the world regarding the family warns that individuals ‘who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God’ [“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102]. Today I solemnly reaffirm that reality.

“In discharging these duties, we need both the Church and the family. They work hand in hand to strengthen each other. The Church exists to exalt the family. And the family is the fundamental unit of the Church” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2001, 85; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 70).

PRINCIPLE

“God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth’ (Genesis 1:28), a commandment that has never been rescinded” (M. Russell Ballard, in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 28; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 22).

STUDENT MANUAL READINGS

“Bear and Nurture Children,” in “The Great Plan of Happiness,” Elder Dallin H. Oaks (262)

“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (83–84)

Selected Teachings from “Parenthood: Creating a Gospel-Centered Home” (241–43)

WHAT TO TEACH

Under the Lord's plan of happiness we have the responsibility to bring children into the world.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Ask students how many of them have siblings. Ask: How is your life enriched by your brothers and sisters?

Share the first paragraph of Elder Dallin H. Oaks's statement in the student manual (p. 16).

- Why is the commandment to have children so important?
- What are some methods or philosophies used by Satan "to thwart the plan of God" in bringing children into the world?

If you have children, display a picture of your family or pictures of each child, and make a brief, positive comment about each.

Have the class read the section "Bear and Nurture Children" in Elder Oaks's talk, "The Great Plan of Happiness" (student manual, 262). Discuss the following questions:

- In what ways can children be considered our "ultimate treasures on earth and in heaven"?
- What did President Spencer W. Kimball say was the main reason for a married couple's refusal to have children? (Selfishness.)
- What are examples of values or priorities a married couple might put ahead of having children?
- Elder Oaks said a couple should have "all [the children] they can care for." What factors might we consider in pondering how many we can care for?
- According to President Gordon B. Hinckley, who is responsible for determining family size? ("The man and the woman and the Lord.")
- Why is it important that we not judge one another by the size of our families?

Have the class read the section "No Blessing Will Be Denied" (student manual, 262–63).

- What must we do to receive the blessings that seem to be denied to us now? (Stay true to our covenants.)
- According to Elder Oaks, when will these things be "set right?" (In the Millennium.)
- Why is it sometimes hard to keep this in perspective?

WHAT TO TEACH

"Bring up your children in light and truth" (D&C 93:40).

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH

 **Discussion.** Invite class members to think of the children they have or may eventually have. Ask them what they want most for their children, and list responses on the board. Ask: What can we do to help our children be righteous and faithful? Make a second list with their responses on the board.

 **Group Work.** Divide the class into groups and assign them readings from "Teaching Children the Gospel" and "Teaching Children to Work" in the student manual (pp. 248–51). Have each group identify two or three concepts relating to parental responsibility that impress them. Compare their findings with the second list on the board.



Discussion. Read the following statement by President Harold B. Lee:

“Our youth are in danger. Keep your home ties strong, brethren. See to it, as we have all tried to say, and as I have repeated it many times and some have quoted it in this conference, that ‘the greatest of the Lord’s work you brethren will ever do as fathers will be within the walls of your own home.’ Don’t neglect your wives, you brethren. Don’t neglect your children. Take time for family home evening. Draw your children around about you. Teach them, guide them, and guard them. There was never a time when we needed so much the strength and the solidarity of the home” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1973, 130; or *Ensign*, July 1973, 98).

- What responsibilities do you think comes under the heading “the Lord’s work”?
- What is the typical response of a father when people ask, “What kind of work do you do?”
- If a father had President Lee’s teachings in mind, how might his response be different?

While we cannot guarantee that our children will be faithful, there are things we can do to encourage them to be faithful. How can we make teaching the gospel to our children more effective? Divide the class into three groups and assign each of them one of the following sections of the student manual: “Family Home Evening” (pp. 243–44), “Family Council Processes” (pp. 244–45), “Good Marriages Bless Children” (pp. 245–46). Have them read their sections looking for specific ways we can make our teaching more effective. Invite them to report their findings to the class.

WHAT TO TEACH

Parents should constantly love their children and give their best efforts to parenting.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO TEACH



Discussion. Ask students to think of people they consider exemplary parents. List on the board attributes of such parents.

- Can parents be considered successful if some of their children go astray?
- What are the dangers of judging parents by their children’s actions?
- Why might parents measure their own success or failure by the behavior of their children?

President James E. Faust, a counselor in the First Presidency, cautioned: “It is very unfair and unkind to judge conscientious and faithful parents because some of their children rebel or stray from the teachings and love of their parents. Fortunate are the couples who have children and grandchildren who bring them comfort and satisfaction. We should be considerate of those worthy, righteous parents who struggle and suffer with disobedient children.

“One of my friends used to say, ‘If you have never had any problems with your children, just wait awhile.’ No one can say with any degree of certainty what their children will do under certain circumstances. When my wise mother-in-law saw other children misbehaving, she used to say, ‘I never say my children would not do that because they might be out doing it right while I am speaking!’ When parents mourn for disobedient and wayward children, we must, with compassion, ‘forbid the casting of the first stone’ [Harold B. Lee, *Decisions for Successful Living* (1973), 58]” (in Conference Report, Apr. 2003, 69–70; or *Ensign*, May 2003, 67).

Read together the statements by Elders Howard W. Hunter and Richard G. Scott on page 242 in the student manual.

- What insights do these readings provide as to what makes a successful parent?
- Why do you think children sometimes choose a path different from that of their righteous parents?



Discussion. In his vision of the tree of life, Lehi saw that Laman and Lemuel refused to eat the fruit. Read aloud the words Lehi spoke to his rebellious sons (see 1 Nephi 8:36–38).

- How would you describe Lehi’s teaching approach to his sons in verse 37?
- What impresses you most about what he said and how he said it?

Near the end of his life Lehi spoke again to his wayward sons. Read 2 Nephi 1:21–23.

- Why would a parent continue to reach out to a disobedient child in spite of years of evidence that the child might not repent?
- What do you think keeps parents from giving up on their children?
- How would you assess Lehi’s effectiveness as a parent?

Share the following counsel by Elder Neal A. Maxwell, who was then a member of the Seventy, and have students look for ways it can be applied to a parent’s responsibility.

“May I speak, not to the slackers in the Kingdom, but to those who carry their own load and more; not to those lulled into false security, but to those buffeted by false insecurity, who, though laboring devotedly in the Kingdom, have recurring feelings of falling forever short. . . .

“The first thing to be said of this feeling of inadequacy is that it is normal. There is no way the Church can honestly describe where we must yet go and what we must yet do without creating a sense of immense distance. . . .

“Some of us who would not chastise a neighbor for his frailties have a field day with our own. Some of us stand before no more harsh a judge than ourselves, a judge who stubbornly refuses to admit much happy evidence and who cares nothing for due process. Fortunately, the Lord loves us more than we love ourselves. . . .

“. . . We can allow for the agency of others (including our children) *before* we assess our adequacy. Often our deliberate best is less effectual because of someone else’s worst” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1976, 14–15; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1976, 12–14).

- How might this counsel help you measure your own success as a parent?
- How does this contribute to your understanding of your parents?
- How might it help you as you interact with other parents?

Ask students to summarize three or four main concepts from this lesson.

CONCLUSION

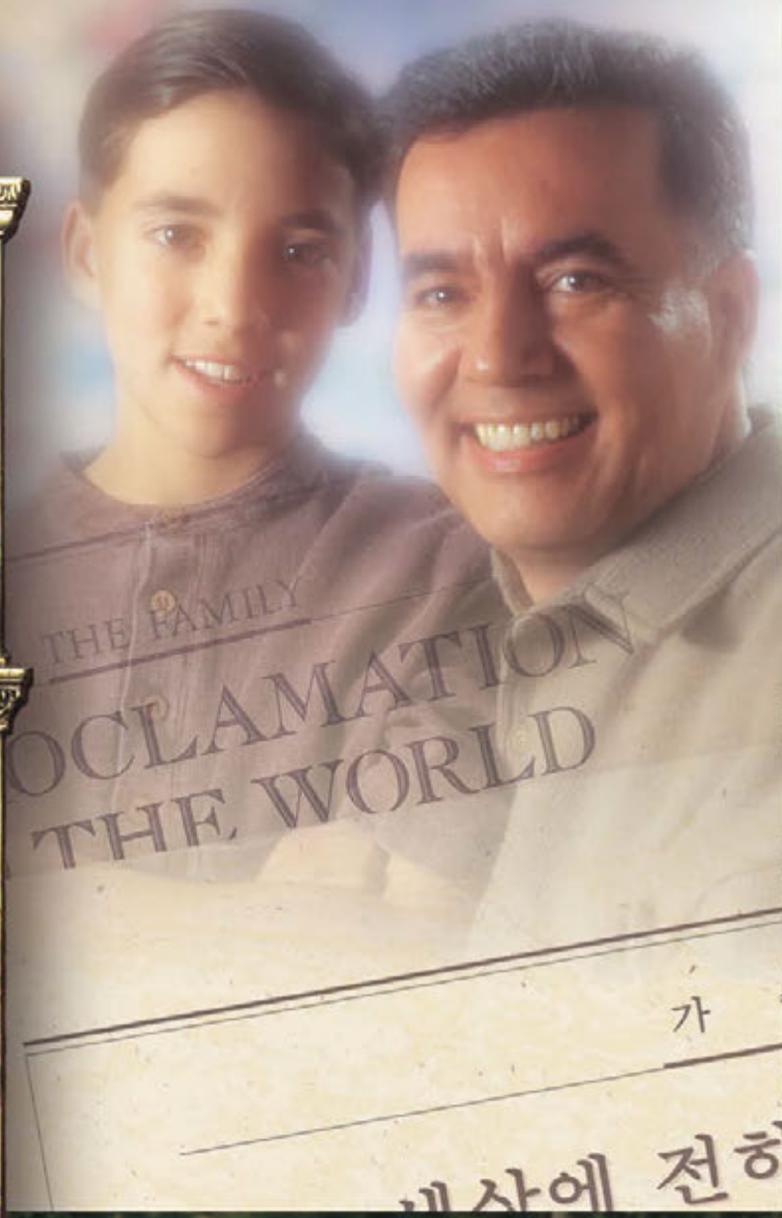
Share the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson:

“Husbands and wives who love each other will find that love and loyalty are reciprocated. This love will provide a nurturing atmosphere for the emotional growth of children. Family life should be a time of happiness and joy that children can look back on with fond memories and associations” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1982, 85; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 59).

Write the following phrase and reference on the board:

“Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord” (Psalm 127:3).

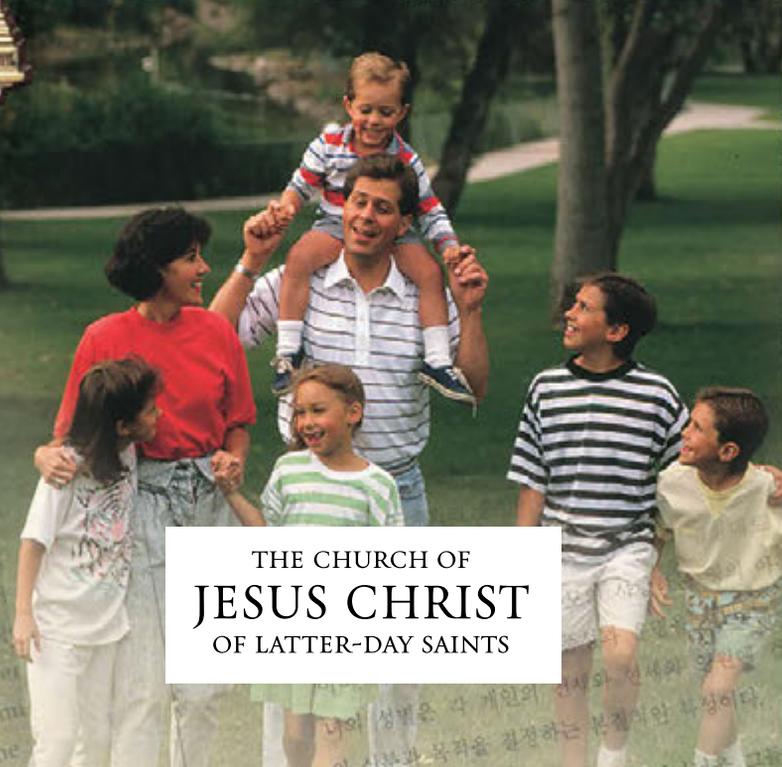
Bear testimony that bearing and rearing children in a setting of love is a divine opportunity. We become partners with Heavenly Father in furthering the advancement of His spirit children.



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