

Notes

The Gospel of Jesus Christ



Your Purpose

As you teach, prepare your investigators to meet the qualifications for baptism taught in Doctrine and Covenants 20:37 and in the baptismal interview questions. This is best accomplished by inviting your investigators to make and keep the commitments listed below.

Baptismal Interview Questions

- Do you believe that God is our Eternal Father?
- Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Savior and Redeemer of the world?
- Do you believe the Church and the gospel of Jesus Christ have been restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith?

Commitments

- Will you continue to develop faith in Jesus Christ by continuing to learn about His gospel?
- Will you repent and pray for forgiveness of sins?
- Will you be baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on (date)?
Will you be confirmed and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost?
- Will you attend church with us this Sunday?
- May we set a time for our next visit?
- Commandments from lesson 4 that you choose to include.

Through Christ We Can Be Cleansed from Sin

God sent His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, into the world so that all of God's children would have the possibility of returning to live in His presence after they die. Only through the Savior's grace and mercy can we become clean from sin so that we can live in our Heavenly Father's presence. Becoming clean from sin is being healed spiritually (see 3 Nephi 9:13; 18:32).

Because of Christ's Atonement and Resurrection, all people will be brought back into the presence of the Lord to be judged according to their works and their desires (see 2 Nephi 9:10–16; Helaman 14:15–18; 3 Nephi 27:14–22; D&C 137:9). We will be judged according to the laws of justice and mercy.

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Justice is the unchanging law that brings consequences for actions—blessings for obedience to God’s commandments and penalties for disobedience. We all commit sin. Sin makes us unclean, and no unclean thing can live in God’s presence (see 1 Nephi 10:21; 3 Nephi 27:19; Moses 6:57).

The Savior satisfied the demands of justice for those who repent of their sins and endeavor to keep all of His commandments when He stood in our place and suffered the penalty for our sins. This act is called the Atonement. Because of this selfless act, Christ can plead with the Father on our behalf. Heavenly Father can apply mercy, withhold punishment from us, and welcome us into His presence. Our Heavenly Father shows mercy when He forgives us of our sins and helps us return to dwell in His presence.

However, Jesus did not eliminate our personal responsibility. He forgives our sins when we accept Him, repent, and obey His commandments. Through the Atonement and living the gospel we become worthy to enter the presence of our Heavenly Father permanently. We must show that we accept Christ and that we have faith in Him by keeping His commandments and obeying the first principles and ordinances of the gospel.

Sin

The notion of “sin” means different things in different cultures. In some cultures it is closely associated with the concept of committing crime. In others it applies only if one is caught doing something wrong and thus brings shame to a family or community. Clarify that sin is disobedience to God’s commandments and results in becoming separated from God. God knows all that we do and think, and we displease Him when we sin. Do not discuss your past transgressions. Discourage or ask investigators not to discuss their transgressions.

Scripture Study

God Sent His Son

Alma 11:40 John 3:16–17

Salvation through Christ

2 Nephi 2:6–8 Alma 34:8–9, 14–16
2 Nephi 9:21–24

Christ Is Our Advocate

D&C 45:3–5

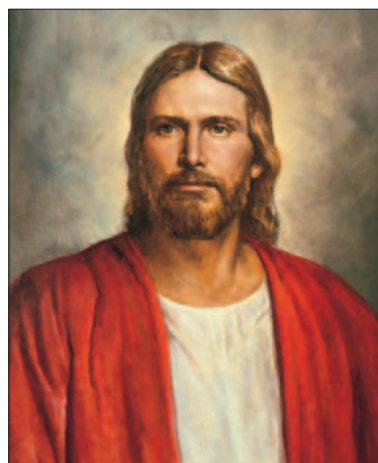
Mercy and Justice

Mosiah 15:9 Alma 42:22–25

Faith in Jesus Christ

The first principle of the gospel is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Having faith in Christ includes having a firm belief that He is the Only Begotten Son of God and the Savior and Redeemer of the world. We recognize that we can return to live with our Heavenly Father only by relying on His Son’s grace and mercy. When we have faith in Christ, we accept and apply His Atonement and His teachings. We trust Him and what He says. We know that He has the power to keep His promises. Heavenly Father blesses those who have faith to obey His Son.

Faith in Christ leads to action. It leads to sincere and lasting repentance. Having faith causes us to try as



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hard as we can to learn about and become more like our Savior. We want to learn what His commandments are and then obey them. Even though we will still make mistakes, we show our love for Him by striving to keep His commandments and avoid sin.

We believe in Christ, and we believe that He wants us to keep all His commandments. We want to show our faith by obeying Him. We pray in faith for strength to conquer temptation. We can also develop faith in a particular principle, such as the Word of Wisdom or tithing, by first believing in Jesus Christ strongly enough to obey His commandments. As we live a specific commandment, we learn the truthfulness of it by experience (see John 7:17). We also grow in faith by hearing the word of God (see Romans 10:17) and by reading the word of God (see Helaman 15:7–8).

As we obey God, He blesses us. He gives us power to meet life’s challenges. He helps us change the desires of our hearts. Through our faith in Jesus Christ, He can heal us, both physically and spiritually.

Scripture Study

Faith, Power, and Salvation

1 Nephi 7:12 Moroni 7:33–34
2 Nephi 9:23 Moroni 10:7
2 Nephi 25:23

The Doctrine of Faith

Alma 32 Bible Dictionary, “Faith”
Ephesians 2:8

Examples of Faith

Ether 12 Hebrews 11

Works and Obedience

1 Nephi 3:7 James 2:17–26
D&C 130:20–21

Faith unto Repentance

Alma 34

Repentance

The second principle of the gospel is repentance. Our faith in Christ and our love for Him lead us to repent, or to change our thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors that are not in harmony with His will. Repentance includes forming a fresh view of God, ourselves, and the world. When we repent, we feel godly sorrow, then we stop doing things that are wrong and continue doing things that are right. Bringing our lives in line with God’s will through repentance is a central purpose of our lives. We can return to live with God the Father only through Christ’s mercy, and we receive Christ’s mercy only on condition of repentance.

To repent, we recognize our sins and feel remorse, or godly sorrow. We confess our sins to God. We also confess very serious sins to God’s authorized Church leaders, who can help us repent. We ask God in prayer to forgive us. We do all we can to correct the problems our actions may have caused; this is called restitution. As we repent, our view of ourselves and the world changes. As we change, we recognize that we are children of God and that we need not continue making the same mistakes over and over. If we sincerely repent, we turn away from our sins and do them no more. We resist any desire to commit sin. Our desire to follow God grows stronger and deeper.

Sincere repentance brings several results. We feel God’s forgiveness and His peace in our lives. Our guilt and sorrow are swept away. We feel the influence of the Spirit in greater abundance. And when we pass from this life, we will be more prepared to live with our Heavenly Father and His Son.

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Even after we have accepted Christ and repented of our sins, we may fall short and sin again. We should continually try to correct these transgressions. In addition, we should continually improve—to develop Christlike qualities, to grow in knowledge, and to serve more effectively. As we learn more about what the Savior expects of us, we will want to show our love by obeying Him. Thus, as we repent daily, we will find that our lives will change and improve. Our hearts and our behavior will become more Christlike. We will come to feel great joy in repenting daily.

Scripture Study**We All Sin**

Romans 3:23

1 John 1:7–8

Repentance

Alma 34:8–17

D&C 58:42–43

D&C 61:2

2 Corinthians 7:9–10

Bible Dictionary,
“Repentance”**Redemption and Forgiveness**

Helaman 5:10–11

Mercy Claims the Penitent

Alma 12:32–35

Alma 42:13, 21–24

D&C 18:10–13

Baptism, Our First Covenant

Faith in Jesus Christ and repentance prepare us for the ordinances of baptism and confirmation. An ordinance is a sacred ceremony or rite that shows that we have entered into a covenant with God.

God has always required His children to make covenants. A covenant is a binding and solemn agreement between God and man. God promises to bless us, and we promise to obey Him. God sets the terms of gospel covenants, which we either accept or reject. Keeping covenants brings blessings in this life and exaltation in the life to come.

Covenants place us under a strong obligation to honor our commitments to God. To keep our covenants, we must give up activities or interests that prevent us from honoring those covenants. For example, we give up shopping and recreational pursuits on Sunday so we can keep the Sabbath day holy. We should desire to receive worthily the covenants that God offers us and then strive to keep them. Our covenants remind us to repent every day of our lives. By keeping the commandments and serving others we receive and retain a remission of our sins.

Covenants are usually made by means of sacred ordinances, such as baptism. These ordinances are administered by priesthood authority. Through the ordinance of baptism, for example, we covenant to take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ, always remember Him, and keep His commandments. As we keep our part of the covenant, God promises the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost, a remission of our sins, and being born again.



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Through sacred ordinances, such as baptism and confirmation, we learn about and experience God’s power (see D&C 84:20). Jesus taught that we must be baptized by immersion for the remission, or forgiveness, of our sins. Baptism is an essential ordinance of salvation. No person can enter the kingdom of God without being baptized. Christ set the example for us by being baptized.

Baptism by immersion is a symbol of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Savior. In a similar way, it represents the end of our old life of sin and a commitment to live a new life as a disciple of Christ. The Savior taught that baptism is a rebirth. When we are baptized we begin the process of being born again and become spiritual sons and daughters of Christ (see Mosiah 5:7–8; Romans 8:14–17).

We must be baptized to become members of the restored Church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and to eventually enter the kingdom of heaven. This ordinance is a law of God and must be performed by His authority. A bishop or mission president must give a priesthood holder permission to perform a baptism or confirmation.

Little children do not need to be baptized and are redeemed through the mercy of Jesus Christ (see Moroni 8:4–24). They are not to be baptized until they reach the age of accountability, which is eight years of age (see D&C 68:27).

Before baptism we show our willingness to enter a covenant to keep all the commandments for the rest of our lives. After baptism we show our faith by keeping our covenants. We also regularly renew the covenants we make when baptized by partaking of the sacrament. Partaking of the sacrament weekly is a commandment. It helps us remain worthy to have the Spirit with us always. It is a weekly reminder of our covenants. Jesus Christ introduced this ordinance to His Apostles just before His Atonement. He restored it through the Prophet Joseph Smith. The Savior commanded that priesthood holders should administer the sacrament in remembrance of His body and His blood, which was shed for us. By partaking of the sacrament worthily we promise always to remember His sacrifice, we renew our promises, and we receive anew the promise that the Spirit will always be with us.

Before Baptism

“Ensure that [investigators] have developed faith in Christ, repented of transgressions, and made sufficient changes in their lives to qualify as commanded in Doctrine and Covenants 20:37. Investigators should live the principles of moral worthiness, the Word of Wisdom, and commit to pay tithing. If missionaries feel additional preparation is needed, they should postpone baptism until the investigator meets the standard.

“Before baptism each investigator should receive all the missionary [lessons], meet the bishop or branch president, and attend several sacrament meetings” (“Statement on Missionary Work,” First Presidency letter, 11 Dec. 2002).

Scripture Study

Christ's Example

2 Nephi 31:4–18 Matthew 3:13–17

The Baptismal CovenantMosiah 5:8–10 D&C 20:37
Mosiah 18:8–10**Qualifications for Baptism**2 Nephi 9:23 Moroni 6:1–4
Mosiah 18:8–10 D&C 20:37
Alma 7:14–15 Acts 2:37–39
3 Nephi 11:23–27**The Lord Institutes the Sacrament**

3 Nephi 18:1–18 Luke 22:15–20

Promised Blessings of BaptismMosiah 4:11–12, 26 John 3:5
Moroni 8:25–26 Romans 6:4**The Sacrament Prayers**

Moroni 4 and 5 D&C 20:75–79

Partaking of the Sacrament

D&C 27:2 1 Corinthians 11:23–29

Necessity for Authority

D&C 22 Hebrews 5:4

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The Gift of the Holy Ghost

Jesus taught that we must be baptized of water and also of the Spirit. Baptism by water must be followed by baptism of the Spirit or it is incomplete. Only when we receive baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost can we receive a remission of our sins and become completely spiritually reborn. We then begin a new spiritual life as disciples of Christ.

After a person is baptized by water, one or more authorized priesthood holders lay their hands upon the person's head and confirm the person a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They then confer the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Those who receive the gift of the Holy Ghost and remain worthy can enjoy His companionship throughout their lives. The Holy Ghost has a sanctifying, cleansing effect upon us. The Holy Ghost testifies of Christ and helps us recognize the truth. He provides spiritual strength and helps us do what is right. He comforts us during times of trial or sorrow. He warns us of spiritual or physical danger. The Holy Ghost provides the power by which we teach and learn. The gift of the Holy Ghost is one of our Heavenly Father's most precious gifts. Through the power of the Holy Ghost we can feel God's love and direction for us. This gift is a foretaste of eternal joy and a promise of eternal life.

The priesthood authority needed to perform this ordinance, which was lost centuries ago through apostasy, was restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith. Only through membership in the Church can one receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. This authority makes the Church different from any other religion in the world. By the Lord's own declaration, it is "the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth" (D&C 1:30).

Guidance from the Holy Ghost

Explain to those whom you are teaching that Satan opposes God and entices people to commit sin. To retain the good feelings they have had while meeting the missionaries, they should read the Book of Mormon, pray, attend church, and obey the commandments. Explain that having the continued guidance of the Holy Ghost is one of the benefits of being baptized and confirmed.

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Scripture Study

Nature of the Holy Ghost

D&C 130:22–23
John 3:1–8

Galatians 5:22–23

Bible Dictionary,
“Earnest” and “Holy Ghost”

Blessings and Influence from the Holy Ghost

2 Nephi 32:1–5
2 Nephi 33:1–2

Moses 6:61
John 14:26

Topical Guide, “Holy Ghost, Comforter”
and “Holy Ghost, Gifts of”

Importance of the Gift of the Holy Ghost

2 Nephi 31:11–12, 18, 21
3 Nephi 18:36–37
3 Nephi 19:13

3 Nephi 27:19–20
D&C 19:31

D&C 33:15
Acts 19:1–6

Endure to the End

Once we have entered the strait and narrow path by our faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, and the ordinances of baptism and confirmation, we must exert every effort to stay on the path. We do so by continually exercising faith in Jesus Christ, repenting, making commitments, and following the Spirit.

Once we have been forgiven of our sins, we should try every day to remain free from sin so that we can always have the Holy Ghost with us. In the covenant of baptism, we promise our Father in Heaven that we will obey His commandments for the rest of our lives. If we fall short, we must repent in order to retain the blessings of the covenant. We promise to do good works, serve others, and follow the Savior’s example. In the scriptures this lifelong commitment is often called “enduring to the end.”

By following the gospel path, we can draw closer to God, conquer temptation and sin, and enjoy the gift of the Holy Ghost more abundantly. As we patiently, faithfully, and consistently follow this path throughout our lives, we will qualify for eternal life.

Faith in Christ; repentance; making, renewing, and keeping covenants; and being cleansed by the Spirit become a pattern of living. Our actions in daily life are shaped and governed by these principles. Peace and joy come by following this way, and we gradually grow in Christlike attributes. Eventually, as we follow this way and “press forward with a steadfastness in Christ . . . and endure to the end,” we are promised, “Ye shall have eternal life” (2 Nephi 31:20).

Scripture Study

Endure to the End

2 Nephi 9:24
2 Nephi 31:14–20

3 Nephi 27:16–17

Matthew 10:22

Blessings for Those Who Endure

1 Nephi 13:37

3 Nephi 15:9

D&C 14:7

Invitation to Be Baptized

The invitation to be baptized and confirmed should be specific and direct: “Will you follow the example of Jesus Christ by being baptized by someone holding the priesthood authority of God? We will be holding a baptismal service on [date]. Will you prepare yourself to be baptized on that date?”

Ideas for Teaching

This section has ideas for you to use in preparing for and teaching this lesson. Prayerfully follow the Spirit as you decide how to use these ideas. Add the ideas you select to your lesson plan. Keep in mind that these ideas are suggestions—not requirements—to help you meet the needs of those you teach.

Short Lesson Plan (3–5 minutes)

The gospel of Jesus Christ is the only way to eternal life. The first principles and ordinances of His gospel are faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. We must then endure to the end. By applying these principles throughout our lives, we follow the example of the Savior, learn to live His commandments, and develop Christlike attributes. We can be forgiven of our sins, and we will be able to return to live in the presence of our Father in Heaven.

- Through Christ We Can Be Cleansed from Sin
- Faith in Jesus Christ
- Repentance
- Baptism, Our First Covenant
- The Gift of the Holy Ghost
- Endure to the End

Commitments

- Will you continue to develop faith in Jesus Christ by continuing to learn about His gospel?
- Will you repent and pray for forgiveness of sins?
- Will you be baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on (date)? Will you be confirmed and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost?
- Will you attend church with us this Sunday?
- May we set a time for our next visit?
- Commandments from lesson 4 that you choose to include.

Medium Lesson Plan (10–15 minutes)

Our message is one of faith and hope. We love and worship Jesus Christ. He is central to God's plan for our happiness. Christ's atoning sacrifice makes it possible for us to have eternal life in the presence of God. As we live His gospel, He will mercifully forgive our sins. He will heal us and replace guilt and shame with peace and happiness in this life.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is simple. It begins with faith in Christ. We believe in Him, trust Him, and depend on Him. Such faith leads us to repent—to stop doing things that are wrong and continue doing things that are right. Our faith in Him also makes us want to show our love by keeping His commandments, including baptism. After baptism, He promises to give us the gift of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost will guide us, comfort us, and help us know the truth. We can know in our hearts

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and our minds when the Holy Ghost is with us. We will have feelings of peace, love, and joy. We will want to serve others. We will strive throughout our lives to please the Lord.

Jesus Christ has restored His gospel through a latter-day prophet. We learn about the gospel in the Book of Mormon, which you can read, ponder, and pray about. God will tell you by the power of the Holy Ghost that it is true. As you come to know it is true, you will want to repent and be baptized so that you may receive a remission of your sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Commitments

- Will you continue to develop faith in Jesus Christ by continuing to learn about His gospel?
- Will you repent and pray for forgiveness of sins?
- Will you be baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on (date)? Will you be confirmed and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost?
- Will you attend church with us this Sunday?
- May we set a time for our next visit?
- Commandments from lesson 4 that you choose to include.

Full Lesson Plan (30–45 minutes)

- Through Christ We Can Be Cleansed from Sin
 - God sent His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, into the world (see John 3:16–17).
 - Only through Christ’s grace and mercy can we become clean from sin (see 2 Nephi 2:6–8).
 - We are responsible to accept Christ, repent, and obey.
- Faith in Jesus Christ
 - We are to believe in Christ as the Savior of the world.
 - He wants us to accept and follow His teachings.
 - We receive blessings when we obey (see D&C 130:20–21).
- Repentance
 - Faith in Christ leads to repentance (see Alma 34).
 - We feel godly sorrow (see 2 Corinthians 7:9–10).
 - We stop doing things that are wrong and continue doing things that are right.
 - We confess our sins, and we confess serious sins to Church leaders, who can help us repent (see D&C 58:43).
 - We receive forgiveness; guilt and sorrow are replaced by peace (see Alma 36:17–21).

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- Baptism, Our First Covenant
 - An ordinance is a sacred rite by which we make covenants with God.
 - A covenant is a solemn agreement between God and His children.
 - Keeping covenants brings blessings.
 - We are baptized by immersion for the remission of sins (see Articles of Faith 1:4).
 - When we are baptized we begin a new life of commitment to Christ (see Romans 6:3–8).
 - Baptism must be performed by one holding priesthood authority.
 - We renew our covenants by partaking of the sacrament weekly (D&C 20:77, 79).
- The Gift of the Holy Ghost
 - Baptism by immersion is followed by baptism of the Spirit; the two are inseparable.
 - Priesthood holders confer the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands.
 - The Holy Ghost teaches us, cleanses us, comforts us, testifies of the truth, warns us, and directs us (see 2 Nephi 32:1–5; Mosiah 5:1–6; Moroni 10:5; D&C 36:2).
- Endure to the End
 - We must continue on the path once we have been baptized and confirmed.
 - We do our best to remain free of sin so that we can enjoy the gift of the Holy Ghost.
 - By faithfully following the gospel path of faith, repentance, making and keeping covenants, and receiving the Holy Ghost, we can qualify for eternal life (see 2 Nephi 31:14–20).
 - We must continually repent throughout our lives (see D&C 19:15–20).

Commitments

- Will you continue to develop faith in Jesus Christ by continuing to learn about His gospel?
- Will you repent and pray for forgiveness of sins?
- Will you be baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on (date)? Will you be confirmed and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost?
- Will you attend church with us this Sunday?
- May we set a time for our next visit?
- Commandments from lesson 4 that you choose to include.

Notes

Questions to Ask after You Teach

- What questions do you have about what we have taught?
- What does it mean to repent?
- Why is the gift of the Holy Ghost an essential part of the gospel?
- Why is it important for you to be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost?
- Was there anything about our Church meetings that you did not understand?
- What did you enjoy about our Church meetings?

Key Definitions

- **Confirmation:** The laying on of hands by those holding the Melchizedek Priesthood in order to become a member of the Church and to confer the gift of the Holy Ghost.
- **Covenant:** An agreement between God and His children. We do not act as equals in the agreement. God gives the conditions for the covenant, and we agree to do what He asks us to do. God then promises us certain blessings for our obedience. We receive ordinances by covenant. When we make such covenants, we promise to honor them. For example, members of the Church covenant with the Lord at baptism and renew those covenants by partaking of the sacrament. We make further covenants in the temple. The Lord's people are a covenant people. We are greatly blessed as we keep our covenants with the Lord.
- **Endure to the End:** To remain true to the commandments of God despite temptation, opposition, and adversity throughout life.
- **Eternal Life:** To live forever as families in God's presence (see D&C 132:19–20). Eternal life is God's greatest gift to man.
- **Gospel:** God's plan of salvation, made possible through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. The gospel includes the eternal truths or laws, covenants, and ordinances needed for mankind to return to the presence of God.
- **Grace:** The enabling power from Jesus Christ that allows us to obtain blessings in this life and to gain eternal life and exaltation after we have exercised faith, repented, and given our best effort to keep the commandments. Such divine help or strength is given through the mercy and love of Jesus Christ. We all need divine grace because of Adam's Fall and also because of our weaknesses.
- **Mercy:** The spirit of compassion, tenderness, and forgiveness. Mercy is one of the attributes of God. Jesus Christ offers mercy to us through His atoning sacrifice on conditions of repentance.
- **Restitution:** The return of something that has been taken away or lost. For example, the Restoration of the goepel is called a restitution (see Acts 3:19–21). The word *restoration* also refers to the restoration of the body (see Alma 41:10–15).

Other Terms That May Need Further Definition for Those You Teach

- Clean from sin
- Confession
- Forgiveness
- Prayer
- Sacrament
- Strait and narrow path
- Temptation