



Gospel Teaching and Learning Handbook

Updated September 2021

Teaching and Learning in Seminaries and Institutes



The Objective of Seminaries and Institutes

Our purpose is to help youth and young adults understand and rely on the teachings and Atonement of Jesus Christ, qualify for the blessings of the temple, and prepare themselves, their families, and others for eternal life with their Father in Heaven.

What should each learner experience as we fulfill the Objective of Seminaries and Institutes?

CONVERSION

Learners know, love, and follow Jesus Christ and His restored gospel.

RELEVANCE

Learners feel that what they are learning is meaningful and useful to personal circumstances, questions, and needs.

BELONGING

Each learner is safe and supported and their contributions are valued.

What is the role of a teacher in helping learners experience conversion, relevance, and belonging?

Love those you teach

Teach by the Spirit

Focus on Jesus Christ

Teach the doctrine as found in the word of God

Invite diligent learning



What are some practices teachers can develop in fulfilling their role?

Love those you teach

Pray for your students regularly.

Know each learner's name, circumstances, and learning needs.

Recognize and believe in each learner's divine identity and purpose.

Foster a safe learning environment of acceptance and respect.

Convey to learners that their contributions are valued and essential to the learning experience.

Teach by the Spirit

Prepare yourself to be an instrument of the Holy Ghost.

Ask questions and facilitate discussions that invite engagement, discovery, and introspection.

Guide learners in learning how to seek for and act on personal revelation.

Invite learners to search their memories for feelings about the truth and importance of the principles being taught.

Testify often and invite learners to share their feelings, experiences, and testimony.

Focus on Jesus Christ

Connect gospel principles to Jesus Christ and emphasize His example.

Assist learners in deepening their understanding of the roles, titles, symbols, attributes, and characteristics of Jesus Christ.

Guide learners in their efforts to recognize the Lord's power, mercy, and influence in the scriptures and in their lives.

Help students strengthen their relationship with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

Encourage learners to consciously strive to become like Jesus Christ.

Teach the doctrine as found in the word of God

Prepare yourself by diligently studying the scriptures and teachings of modern prophets.

Teach the scriptures and words of prophets with conviction and purpose.

Help learners understand the context and content of the scriptures and discover gospel doctrine and principles.

Focus on converting principles of the gospel and teach them in ways that build faith in Jesus Christ.

Help learners develop scripture study skills.

Invite diligent learning

Encourage daily scripture study.

Encourage preparation for learning experiences.

Help learners to be active participants in the learning process.

Help learners develop the ability to discuss gospel beliefs with others.

Help learners see how they can take effective righteous action in their personal circumstances.



How do teachers know if they are succeeding in helping learners experience conversion, relevance, and belonging?

Student Surveys

Self-Assessments

Classroom Observations
and Feedback

What help is available to assist teachers in providing learner experiences of conversion, relevance, and belonging?

Gospel Teaching and Learning
Teaching in the Savior's Way

Teacher Development
Resources

Inservice

Counseling with Peers
and Supervisors

As teachers strive to fulfill the objective by helping learners experience conversion, relevance, and belonging, they should be prayerful, seek the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and rely on Jesus Christ and His enabling power.



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Love Those You Teach

Everything the Savior did throughout His earthly ministry was motivated by love—His love for His Father and His love for all of us. Through the power of the Holy Ghost, we can be filled with this same love as we strive to be true followers of Christ. With Christlike love in our hearts, we will seek every possible way to help others learn of Christ and come unto Him. Love will be the reason and motivation for our teaching.



Pray for Your Students Regularly [1.1]

One of the most helpful things teachers can do to develop genuine love for their students is to seek the gift of charity through sincere prayer.

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

Associated Scriptures

John 17:9, 20–21
3 Nephi 17:15–17
Moroni 7:48

From Church Leaders

“Praying for others with all of the energy of our souls increases our capacity to hear and to heed the voice of the Lord.”

Elder David A. Bednar

(“Pray Always,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 43)

“When was the last time you knelt in prayer and asked the Lord to help you not just with your lesson but also to help you know and to meet the needs of each student in your class? No class is so large that we cannot pray for inspiration regarding how to reach each student.”

Brother David M. McConkie

(“Gospel Learning and Teaching,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 15)

Want Help?

- See teaching skill to help you pray and ask how you can help your students and follow the promptings of the Holy Ghost.

Know Each Learner’s Name, Circumstances, and Learning Needs [1.2]

The focus of your teaching should be the needs of the people you are teaching and the gospel principles that will meet those needs.

Look for ways to understand the backgrounds, interests, talents, and needs of the people you teach. Ask questions, listen carefully, and observe what learners say and do in different situations. As you pay careful attention to their spoken and unspoken messages, you will come to better understand their needs, their concerns, and their desires.

As you ponder the needs of those you teach, the Spirit will help you identify which principles, stories, or

scriptures will be especially meaningful to them. The Spirit will help you know how to teach them, what follow-up questions to ask, and how to help meet their needs.

Different learners have different learning styles and learning needs. Some are visual learners, while others learn by verbally participating. Some learners comprehend best by listening, while others prefer reading. Seek to understand the learning needs of the individuals in your class so that you can provide learning experiences that meet their needs and allow individuals to learn in a variety of ways.

Most teachers will have students in their classes who, to some degree, have limited abilities or physical or mental disabilities. Teachers need to be sensitive to all students and consider their individual needs and abilities as they prepare and present their lessons.

By observing and listening carefully to students, teachers can discern their needs and guide the learning experience under the direction of the Holy Ghost. As you seek inspiration about your class members' individual needs, remember those who are struggling or who do not attend regularly.

Associated Scriptures

John 10:14

3 Nephi 17:1–9

Joseph Smith–History 1:17

From Church Leaders

“A gospel teacher, like the Master we serve, will concentrate entirely on those being taught. His or her total concentration will be on the needs of the sheep—the good of the students. A gospel teacher does not focus on himself or herself. One who understands that principle will not look upon his or her calling as ‘giving or presenting a lesson,’ because that definition views teaching from the standpoint of the teacher, not the student. Focusing on the needs of the students, a gospel teacher will never obscure their view of the

Master by standing in the way or by shadowing the lesson with self-promotion or self-interest.”

President Dallin H. Oaks

(Dallin H. Oaks, “Gospel Teaching,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1999)

Want Help?

- See teaching skill to help you observe and ask about students' interest.

Recognize and Believe in Each Learner's Divine Identity and Potential [1.3]

When teachers love as the Savior loves, they see others as He sees them. Christlike love inspires a teacher to never give up in helping each young man and woman to become truly converted.

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

It is essential that gospel teachers focus on each learner's divine identity and potential, see them as contributors, and empower them to learn for themselves by faith. If the youth sense that you trust them, their confidence in their divine potential will grow, and they will surprise you with what they can accomplish.

Teachers with a sense of purpose, who truly love their students, will care too much about their progress and success to be satisfied with only a little effort. Such teachers will encourage with love and will lift their students to reach their potential as learners and disciples of Jesus Christ.

Associated Scriptures

1 Samuel 16:7

1 Corinthians 12:21–23

Doctrine and Covenants 138:53, 55–56

Abraham 3:22–23

From Church Leaders

“Many of [God’s] most noble spirits—perhaps...His finest team...were sent to earth at this precise time, the most crucial time in the history of the world, to help gather Israel.” They “are among the best the Lord has ever sent to this world.” They have “...the capacity to be smarter and wiser and have more impact on the world than any previous generation!”

President Russell M. Nelson

(“Hope of Israel,” June 3, 2018)

“As you work with the rising generation, you want to help your students understand their divine origin, their purpose in mortality, and who they can become. Your deepest desire is to help them rise to their divine potential.”

Sister Jean B. Bingham

(“Teaching Truth in the Language of Love,” [S&I Annual Training Broadcast, Jan. 19, 2021], ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

Foster a Safe Learning Environment of Acceptance and Respect ^[1.4]

When students know they are loved and respected by their teacher and other students, they are more likely to come to class ready to learn. Teachers and students can help create a climate conducive to the Holy Ghost by expressing love and gratitude for one another and for the Lord. When teachers and students love and respect the Lord, one another, and the word of God, learning is enhanced.

The acceptance and love that students feel from others can soften their hearts, reduce fear, and engender within them the desire and confidence necessary to share their experiences and feelings with their teacher and other class members.

Teachers should strive to create a feeling of belonging in each learner. To help foster this feeling a teacher can:

- Genuinely recognize that each student is needed and has a contribution to make.

- Value a variety of backgrounds and circumstances.
- Create experiences that allow students to draw strength from one another and from their shared desire to access the Savior’s peace, healing, and grace.
- Help students see that they are part of the Savior’s cause.

Sometimes our preoccupation with presenting a lesson can prevent us from expressing our love for those we teach. Sincere expressions of Christlike love have great power to soften the hearts of class members who are struggling. Often these individuals simply need to know they are needed and loved.

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

If a student is disruptive, it may be helpful to speak to him or her privately. In a spirit of love and patience, explain your expectations and your confidence that he or she can meet them. Teachers should remember to follow the Lord’s counsel and show “forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved” (Doctrine and Covenants 121:43).



Look for appropriate ways to show those who do not attend that you love and miss them. Teachers should maintain a positive and appropriate relationship with students and avoid giving undue attention to anyone in a way that could be misunderstood or misinterpreted or cause speculation or rumor.

Associated Scriptures

1 John 4:7–11, 20–21

2 Nephi 26:33

Doctrine and Covenants 88:133

From Church Leaders

“Teach our young people that in the Lord’s Church there is room for all to worship, serve, and grow together as brothers and sisters in the gospel.”

President M. Russell Ballard

(“The Opportunities and Responsibilities of CES Teachers in the 21st Century,” EGA 2016)

“Of all the help we can give these young people, the greatest will be to let them feel our confidence that they are on the path home to God and that they can make it. ...When they share with us what they are doing and feeling, we must ourselves have qualified for the Spirit. Then they will feel in our praise and our smiles the approval of God. And should we feel the need to give corrective counsel, they will feel our love and the love of God in it, not rebuke and rejection, which can permit Satan to lead them further away.”

President Henry B. Eyring

(“Help Them on Their Way Home” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2010)

Want Help?

- See teaching skill to help you identify a student’s premise by pausing, reflecting, and answering questions we ask ourselves.

Convey to Learners That Their Contributions Are Valued and Essential to the Learning Experience [1.5]

All learners need to feel valued, accepted, and that their contributions are a vital part of the learning experience. Feelings of belonging, openness, and connection will come as students feel safe to honestly explore their questions, express their feelings, and share their testimonies. These experiences are at the heart of coming to know and love God.

Teachers should listen carefully as students ask questions or share their thoughts or feelings.

Listening is an act of love. It requires that we care more about what is in another person’s heart than what is next on our agenda or outline. Be willing to set aside what you have planned, as prompted by the Spirit, and listen to class members’ concerns. Let them know through your words and actions that you are eager to hear them.

As you lovingly listen to those you teach, the Holy Ghost will help you learn from what they say. He will also guide you to know how to meet learners’ needs and increase their faith in Jesus Christ. This kind of listening also invites the Holy Ghost to fulfill His roles as teacher, testifier, and Comforter.

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

Associated Scriptures

Matthew 16:13–18

Alma 1:26

Doctrine and Covenants 88:122

From Church and S&I Leaders

“Valuing student’s contributions—respectfully listening to their comments and questions and responding with a validating comment—helps the students know that you care about their concerns and



needs rather than being focused on presenting the material you simply must get through that day.”

Sister Jean B. Bingham

(“Teaching Truth in the Language of Love,”
[S&I Annual Training Broadcast, Jan. 19, 2021],
ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

“Not only do they need what we have to offer, but we also need them. Teachers who create a sense of belonging genuinely recognize that each student has a contribution to make that will make the class a better experience....[This] teacher ...creates experiences that allow his students to draw strength from one another and from their shared desire to access the Savior’s peace, healing, and grace.”

Chad H. Webb

(“We Have Not Come This Far to Only Come This Far,” [S&I Annual Training Broadcast, June 9, 2020],
ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

Want Help?

- See teaching skill to help you communicate that you value students before they comment or as they raise their hand to comment.



Teach by the Spirit

Gospel teaching and learning takes place through the power of the Holy Ghost. Teaching and learning by the Spirit occurs when the Holy Ghost is performing His role or functions with the teacher, with the student, or with both. Only through teaching and learning by the Spirit will students come to understand and rely on the teachings and Atonement of Jesus Christ in such a way that they may qualify for eternal life.

Only through the Holy Ghost can we accomplish the ultimate goal of gospel teaching—to build faith in Jesus Christ and help others become more like Him. The Holy Ghost bears witness of the truth, He testifies of Christ, and He changes hearts. No mortal teacher, no matter how skilled or experienced, can replace the Spirit. But we can be instruments in God’s hands to help His children learn by the Spirit. To do this, we invite the influence of the Spirit into our lives and encourage those we teach to do the same.

Prepare Yourself to Be an Instrument of the Holy Ghost [2.1]

To be a Christlike teacher, perhaps the most important thing you can do is to follow the Savior’s example of obedience and live the gospel with all your heart—at home, at Church, and everywhere else. This is the principal way to qualify for the companionship of the Holy Ghost. You don’t have to be perfect, just diligently trying—and seeking forgiveness through the Savior’s Atonement whenever you stumble.



Powerful gospel teaching means not just preparing a lesson but preparing ourselves. Because the Spirit is the real teacher and the true source of conversion, effective gospel teachers—before they think about filling class time—focus on filling their hearts with the Holy Ghost.

Teachers have a responsibility to conduct their lives with integrity and to be worthy examples of the doctrine and principles they teach. In all circumstances, teachers should speak, serve, and live in a way that is consistent with a person who loves the Lord and has the companionship of the Holy Ghost.

Once they understand the crucial role the Holy Ghost performs in spiritual learning, teachers will do all they can to invite the Spirit to fulfill these functions. They will prayerfully seek to be thoroughly prepared for each lesson. They will seek to focus on their students’ learning experience and to be serene in their hearts rather than feeling upset and anxious about other things. They will exhibit a spirit of humble inquiry. They will also encourage their students to invite the Holy Ghost into their learning experience.

Associated Scriptures

Alma 17:2–3

Doctrine and Covenants 11:21

Doctrine and Covenants 42:13–14

From Church Leaders

“Our students cannot know of God, and so love as they must love, unless they are taught by the Holy Spirit. Only by the Spirit can they know that God loved us enough to send His Son to be the propitiation for our sins and that Jesus is the Son of God and that Christ paid the price of their sins. Only by the Spirit can they know that Heavenly Father and His resurrected and glorified Son appeared to Joseph Smith. Only by the Spirit can they know that the Book of Mormon is the true word of God. And only by inspiration can they feel the love of the Father and the Son for them in giving us the ordinances necessary to receive eternal life. Only by obtaining those witnesses, placed deep into their hearts by the Holy Ghost, will they be rooted on a sure foundation to stand steady through the temptations and trials of their lives.”

President Henry B. Eyring

(“To Know and to Love God” [an evening with President Henry B. Eyring, Feb. 26, 2010], 2)

Ask Questions and Facilitate Discussions That Invite Engagement, Discovery, and Introspection [2.2]

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

Asking effective questions is one of the most important skills a teacher can develop. Questions can engage students in the process of understanding the scriptures and help them identify and understand important gospel truths. Questions also help students reflect upon how the gospel has influenced their lives and to consider how they may apply gospel principles now and in the future. Asking effective questions can encourage students to invite the Holy Ghost into their learning experience through exercising their agency and fulfilling their role in the learning process.

It is worth great effort to carefully craft questions during lesson preparation that will lead to understanding and engage the minds and hearts of the students as they learn. When planning questions, a teacher should first determine the purpose for which they are asking a particular question (for example, a teacher may desire to have students discover information within a scriptural passage, to think about the meaning of a passage, or to share testimony of the truthfulness of a principle). The teacher should then thoughtfully design the question with that purpose in mind. A few carefully chosen words can make a great difference in whether or not a question results in the desired outcome.

Meaningful class discussions play a vital role in gospel teaching and learning. A class discussion occurs as teachers verbally interact with students and students



verbally interact with each other in a manner that fosters learning. A good discussion can help students learn the significance of seeking answers to important questions and the value of listening to and learning from the comments, ideas, and experiences of others. It can also help students maintain a level of concentration and participation in class that often results in a deeper understanding of the doctrine and principles of the gospel being discussed, as well as a more genuine desire in their hearts to apply the things they learn and feel.

Teachers can make sure they understand the students' answers by asking questions like "Can you help me understand what you mean by that?" or "Can you give me an example of what you mean?" Asking such follow-up questions will often invite a student to share more of what they are thinking and feeling and frequently invites a spirit of testimony in the response.

Each individual in your class is a rich source of testimony, insights, and experiences with living the gospel. Invite them to share with and lift each other. By observing and listening carefully to students, teachers can discern their needs and guide the discussion under the direction of the Holy Ghost.

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

Associated Scriptures

Luke 2:46

Doctrine and Covenants 50:22

Doctrine and Covenants 88:122

From Church Leaders

“To ask and to answer questions is at the heart of all learning and all teaching. The Master asked, answered, and sometimes chose not to answer questions in his ministry.”

President Henry B. Eyring

“The Lord Will Multiply the Harvest,” [an evening with Elder Henry B. Eyring Feb. 6, 1998]

“Stay open—stay open to the Spirit, especially. Leave some wiggle room in your lesson plan. If you need to shorten a lesson a little in order to bear your testimony and stimulate a discussion on a contemporary issue, please do so when the Spirit prompts and dictates that it is appropriate.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland

“Angels and Astonishment,” [S&I Annual Training Broadcast, June 12, 2019], ChurchofJesusChrist.org

Want Help?

- See teaching skill to help you create student self-evaluations about a doctrine, truth, or principle.

Guide Learners in Learning How to Seek For and Act On Personal Revelation [2.3]

Students should understand that they are attending class to come to know Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and to progress toward eternal life through a study of the scriptures and the words of the prophets.

Students should believe that through approaching the Lord in an attitude of inquiry and prayer, they can be taught and edified by the Holy Ghost. As teachers and students approach the study of the scriptures with the expectation to learn through the Spirit and from one another, they cultivate an environment that invites revelation.

The Holy Ghost can impress upon the minds and hearts of the students the significance of a doctrine or principle and can give the students a desire to implement the principle and the strength to do so. Teachers should make every effort to facilitate this experience for each student in their classes.

Helping others learn individually by the Spirit requires sensitivity to and trust in the Holy Ghost. He will guide discovery, understanding, and application of truth for both learners and teachers as they invite His help. One of the most important things you can do as a teacher is to help those you teach recognize the influence of the Holy Ghost. Help them associate their spiritual feelings with the influence of the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost reveals “things as they really are and as they really will be” (Jacob 4:13). As students are invited to look inward and evaluate their own understanding and conviction, they can become aware of what they already know and invite the Holy Ghost to help them identify what they need to know, feel, and do to draw closer to Jesus Christ and become more like Him. This awareness can increase students’ desire and confidence to recognize how the Lord teaches them individually and to act in faith.

Associated Scriptures

John 16:13

1 Nephi 11:1–11

Doctrine and Covenants 42:61

From Church Leaders

“Nothing opens the heavens quite like the combination of increased purity, exact obedience, earnest seeking, daily feasting on the words of Christ in the Book of Mormon, and regular time committed to temple and family history work.”

President Russell M. Nelson

(“Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives,” general conference, Apr. 2018)

“We also hear Him more clearly as we refine our ability to recognize the whisperings of the Holy Ghost. It has never been more imperative to know how the Spirit speaks to you than right now. In the Godhead, the Holy Ghost is the messenger. He will bring thoughts to your mind which the Father and Son want you to receive. He is the Comforter. He will bring a feeling of peace to your heart. He testifies of truth and will confirm what is true as you hear and read the word of the Lord.

I renew my plea for you to do whatever it takes to increase your spiritual capacity to receive personal revelation. Doing so will help you know how to move ahead with your life, what to do during times of crisis, and how to discern and avoid the temptations and the deceptions of the adversary.”

President Russell M. Nelson

(“Hear Him,” general conference, Apr. 2020)

Want Help?

- See teaching skill to help you pause and think, “What can I ask them?” or “What can I invite them to do?” before responding to a student’s question or comment

Invite Learners to Search Their Memories for Feelings about the Truth and Importance of the Principles Being Taught [2.4]

Some questions help students think about and understand gospel principles and doctrine, while others can cause them

to reflect on spiritual experiences and lead students to feel more deeply the truthfulness and significance of a gospel principle or doctrine in their lives. Many times, those feelings engender a stronger desire in the hearts of students to live a gospel principle more faithfully. In an address to CES religious educators, Elder Henry B. Eyring referred to these kinds of questions when he said: *“Some questions invite inspiration. Great teachers ask those. ...Here is a question that might not invite inspiration: ‘How is a true prophet recognized?’ That question invites an answer which is a list, drawn from memory of the scriptures and the words of living prophets. Many students could participate in answering. Most could give at least a passable suggestion. And minds would be stimulated.* *“But we could also ask the question this way, with just a small difference: ‘When have you felt that you were in the presence of a prophet?’ That will invite individuals to search their memories for feelings. After asking, we might wisely wait for a moment before calling on someone to respond. Even those who do not speak will be thinking of spiritual experiences. That will invite the Holy Ghost”* (“The Lord Will Multiply the Harvest,” 6).

Such questions invite students to reflect on the past, to “search their memories for feelings,” and to think of their spiritual experiences related to the gospel doctrine or principle being discussed. Often, these questions result in students sharing those feelings and experiences or bearing testimony of a doctrine or principle. These questions help bring the gospel from students’ minds down into their hearts. And when they feel in their hearts the truthfulness and importance of a gospel doctrine or principle, they are more likely to apply it in their lives.

Responses to questions of this nature can be especially personal and sensitive. Teachers should ensure that students never feel forced to answer a question, share their feelings or experiences, or bear testimony. In addition, teachers should help students understand the sacred nature of personal spiritual experiences and encourage them to share those experiences appropriately (see Doctrine and Covenants 63:64).

Associated Scriptures

John 14:26

Luke 24:31–32

Doctrine and Covenants 6:22–23

From Church Leaders

“The key to the remembering that brings and maintains testimony is receiving the Holy Ghost as a companion. It is the Holy Ghost who helps us see what God has done for us. It is the Holy Ghost who can help those we serve to see what God has done for them.”

President Henry B. Eyring

“O Remember, Remember,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 68)

“Along with the peaceful direction we receive from the Holy Ghost, from time to time, God powerfully and very personally assures each of us that He knows us and loves us and that He is blessing us specifically and openly. Then, in our moments of difficulty, the Savior brings these experiences back into our mind.”

Elder Neil L. Andersen

“Spiritually Defining Memories,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2020, 19)

Testify Often and Invite Learners to Share Their Feelings, Experiences, and Testimony [2.5]

The sharing of testimony not only blesses the person who bears testimony but can also strengthen the faith and testimonies of others. Testifying gives opportunity for the Holy Ghost to bear witness of specific doctrine and principles of the restored gospel.

Teachers should find opportunities to bear testimony of Jesus Christ often. Look for ways to speak of Him with reverence, adoration, and gratitude. Teachers should also find effective ways to invite students to share their testimonies of Jesus Christ with each other.

Asking questions that encourage learners to bear testimony of how the principles being taught connect them to Jesus Christ will invite the Spirit. As learners

ponder these questions, they will recognize times when they have seen the Lord’s hand in their lives.

When students have explained gospel principles and shared their experiences in applying them in their lives, they are often better prepared to testify of what they have come to believe. A testimony does not always begin with the phrase “I’d like to bear my testimony.” It can simply be a statement of what a person knows to be true, spoken with sincerity and conviction. It can be a simple affirmation of how a person feels about a doctrine or principle of the gospel and the difference it has made in his or her life. Students can understand more clearly how gospel principles can be applied and feel more inspired to apply them in their lives when they hear the teacher and other students bear testimony of the value of those principles.

Both teachers and students should have the opportunity to share their insights and understanding as well as personal experiences they have had with a doctrine or principle. They can also relate experiences they have witnessed in the lives of others.

As students and the teacher testify of how they have seen evidence of this principle in their lives, the Spirit can testify of its truth and inspire them to act.

Associated Scriptures

Alma 5:44–46

Doctrine and Covenants 18:34–36

Doctrine and Covenants 62:3

From Church Leaders

“There has never been a greater need for us to profess our faith, privately and publicly (see Doctrine and Covenants 60:2). ...We need to affirm the existence of God the Eternal Father, the divine mission of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and the reality of the Restoration. We must be valiant in our testimony of Jesus. ...We should use these opportunities to express our love for our Savior, our witness of His divine mission, and our determination to serve Him.”



President Dallin H. Oaks

(“Testimony,” general conference, Apr. 2008)

“Your strong testimonies will sustain the faith of your students and will help them develop their own testimonies of the gospel. Their testimonies will be one of the pillars that will help them to recognize the power of Christ’s divine atoning sacrifice in their own lives. As they act upon their testimonies in righteousness, I can assure you that their testimonies can become their shield against the adversary’s attempts to weaken their faith and instill disbelief in their minds throughout their lives. This foundation will give them the courage to boldly declare the truths of the gospel to the world.”

Elder Ulisses Soares

(“Striving to Become” [S&I Annual Training Broadcast, June 9, 2019], ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

Want Help?

- See teaching skill to help you create prompts that help students verbalize their feelings, experiences, and testimony.



Focus on Jesus Christ

There is nothing that teachers can do that will bless students more than to help them come to know and love Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. The best way to accomplish this is to place Jesus Christ at the center of every teaching and learning experience. As teachers and students “talk of Christ, ... rejoice in Christ, ... [and] preach of Christ,” the Holy Ghost can plant a witness of the Savior deeply in the minds and hearts of students. As students come to know the Savior for themselves, they will learn from Him, and intentionally strive to be like Him. They will be more likely to turn to Him for help, hope, and healing throughout their lives. They will be able to feel God’s love.

Connect Gospel Principles to Jesus Christ and Emphasize His Example ^[3.1]

A primary purpose of gospel principles, commandments, and the holy scriptures is to help all people come unto Christ (see Jarom 1:11). The Holy Ghost can help you learn to recognize truths about the Savior and His redeeming power in each principle, commandment, and prophetic teaching (see Jacob 7:10–11).

Teaching gospel principles provides a powerful opportunity to ask what we learn about Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. For example, when learning about principles of prayer, you can take time to ponder together Heavenly Father’s generosity and His desires to pour out blessings on His children (see Malachi 3:10).

When teaching a commandment, consider the impact of going beyond learning about the law to also learning about the Good Shepherd. What do His commandments teach us about Him? Commandments help us understand the Lord’s desires to bless and guide us, as well as the depth and completeness of His love for us individually. His love motivates us to keep His commandments.

Gospel principles point us to Jesus Christ. Living them helps us access the Savior’s power, mercy, and influence. When learning about gospel principles, focus on how they help us become more like Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. Teachers may unintentionally spend so much time describing details connected to the truths being taught that they miss opportunities to help learners come to know and love Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ more fully.

Another way to place Jesus Christ at the center of teaching and learning is to emphasize how He is the perfect example of all gospel principles. As teachers and students focus on the Savior’s perfect example, the Holy Ghost will testify of Him and inspire them to be more like Him.

At times, Jesus Christ’s example is referred to directly in the scriptures. We can help our students draw closer to Jesus Christ as we invite them to consider what they are learning from and about Him, especially His character and attributes. Even when the Savior’s example is not directly referred to in a scripture passage, we can help our learners make connections between what we are learning in the scriptural account and the Savior’s example.

Learning from Jesus Christ’s example will increase our ability to act with faith in Him. It will inspire a desire within us to experience His power in our own lives. As we learn to follow the example of Jesus Christ and connect our efforts to live the gospel to our love for Him, we will find joy in being His disciples.

As students learn of Jesus Christ, follow His teachings and example, and seek the blessings of His Atonement in their lives, they can gain strength and experience forgiveness, healing, and conversion.

Associated Scriptures

2 Nephi 31:7–10

Jacob 7:10–11

Alma 25:15–16

From Church Leaders

“[The Atonement of Jesus Christ] is the very root of Christian doctrine. You may know much about the gospel as it branches out from there, but if you only know the branches and those branches do not touch that root, if they have been cut free from that truth, there will be no life nor substance nor redemption in them.”

President Boyd K. Packer

(“The Mediator,” *Ensign*, May 1977, 56)

Want Help?

- See teaching skill to help students connect what they are learning with how Christ exemplifies the principle.

Assist Learners in Deepening Their Understanding of the Roles, Titles, Symbols, Attributes, and Characteristics of Jesus Christ ^[3.2]

Focusing on the Savior’s titles and roles will teach us about His divine character and attributes and help us come to know and love Him. As we continue to learn about the Savior with our students, we need to go beyond knowing what He said and did and also learn who He is.

Focusing on the titles and roles of Jesus Christ invites the Holy Ghost to deepen our understanding of and love for Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. We can help students reflect and see how Jesus Christ has fulfilled certain roles and titles in their own lives and the lives of those around them. As we learn about Their character and attributes, we can feel a greater desire to become like Them.

The scriptures also contain symbols, types, and shadows designed to teach us of Jesus Christ. We can find types of the Savior in the lives of prophets and other faithful men and women as they are recorded in the scriptures. Watch for ways to help students use this perspective to learn about the Savior in places where they might otherwise overlook Him.

Associated Scriptures

2 Nephi 11:4

Mosiah 3:3–10

Moses 6:63

From Church Leaders

“Study everything Jesus Christ is by prayerfully and vigorously seeking to understand what each of His various titles and names means personally for you. For example, He really is your Advocate with the Father. He will take your side. He will stand up for you. He will speak on your behalf, every time, as you choose to be more like Him.”

President Russell M. Nelson

(“Prophets, Leadership, and Divine Law” Devotional for Young Adults, Jan. 8, 2017)

Want Help?

- See [teaching skill to help you create search questions to help students identify roles, titles, symbols, attributes, and characteristics of Jesus Christ.](#)



Guide Learners in Their Efforts to Recognize the Lord's Power, Mercy, and Influence in the Scriptures and in Their Lives ^[3.3]

Our students “yearn to know more about the Savior” (Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “A Teacher of God’s Children,” January 28, 2011). Teachers can help students increase their understanding of His teachings, redeeming power, perfect love, and divine character.

Learners’ hearts will change as they move from talking about Jesus Christ to speaking of Him as their personal Redeemer that they have come to know, love, and trust. As you help learners see the Lord’s hand in blessing people in the scriptures, you will also be able to help them recognize the role He is playing in their lives. Consider together with your learners how the Savior is helping them find healing and answers or how He is giving them strength to face temptations and challenges.

As you help your learners recognize the Lord’s tender mercies in their own experiences and in the scriptures (see 1 Nephi 1:20), they will feel and know that the Lord is with them and will stand by them (see Doctrine and Covenants 68:6). They will see and feel the reality of the Lord’s love, power, and mercy in their personal needs and circumstances.

Teachers should keep in mind that a central intent of prophets has always been to testify of Jesus Christ. Teachers of the gospel should likewise look for every opportunity to testify of the Lord’s power, mercy, and influence in our lives. One way to do this is to encourage students to ask, “What does this scripture block teach about Jesus Christ that would help me understand and rely on His teachings and Atonement?”

As we focus on Jesus Christ’s character and attributes, the Spirit will testify of Him, bringing greater understanding and love for who He truly is and a greater desire to become like Him. As students learn of Jesus Christ, follow His teachings and example, and seek the blessings of His Atonement

in their lives, they can gain strength and experience forgiveness, healing, and conversion.

Associated Scriptures

2 Nephi 2:8

Alma 26:12

Isaiah 41:10

From Church Leaders

“In the end, the central purpose of all scripture is to fill our souls with faith in God the Father and in His Son, Jesus Christ—faith that They exist; faith in the Father’s plan for our immortality and eternal life; faith in the Atonement and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, which animates this plan of happiness; faith to make the gospel of Jesus Christ our way of life; and faith to come to know “the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom [He has] sent” (John 17:3).

Elder D. Todd Christofferson

(“The Blessing of Scripture,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2010, 34)

“Brothers and sisters, ...I invite you to feel more joy in your life: joy in the knowledge that the Atonement of Jesus Christ is real; joy in the Savior’s ability, willingness, and desire to forgive; and joy in choosing to repent. Let us follow the instruction to ‘with joy ...draw water out of the wells of salvation.’”

Elder Dale G. Renlund

(“Repentance: A Joyful Choice,” general conference, Oct. 2016)

Want Help?

- See [teaching skill to help you ask questions that focus on connecting the Lord’s power, mercy, and influence to the truths being taught.](#)

Help Students Strengthen Their Relationship with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ [3.4]



Teachers and students who love the Lord and who know of His love for them feel a genuine desire to be close to Him. Students should understand that they are attending class to come to know Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, to understand and rely on the Savior’s teachings and Atonement, and to progress toward eternal life through a study of the scriptures and the words of the prophets.

You can help learners foster and strengthen a personal relationship with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ through a careful study of Their words and by providing consistent encouragement to make and keep sacred covenants. You can also help those you teach increase their understanding and application of the principles of prayer. By pleading to the Father in the name of Jesus Christ, whether in heartfelt gratitude or in times of deep personal need, learners will come to know Heavenly Father and the Savior better.

One of the best ways to help learners strengthen their relationship with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ is to help them feel that they are children of a loving Heavenly Father who sent His Son to redeem them from sin. You can help your learners understand how to draw upon Jesus Christ’s atoning power, both in repenting and seeking

forgiveness, as well as in relying on the Savior’s enabling power in their daily lives and challenges.

Christlike teachers are not committed to a particular style or method; they are committed to helping people build faith in Jesus Christ and become more like Him.

To each one of us the Savior pleads, “Will ye not now return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted that I may heal you?” As we “talk of Christ, ... rejoice in Christ, ... [and] preach of Christ” every day, teachers will help their students come to know and love Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ for themselves. Students will feel the Savior’s “arm of mercy ... extended towards [them],” and they will “know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins” (3 Nephi 9:13–14; 2 Nephi 25:26).

Associated Scriptures

Matthew 11:28–30

John 17:3

Doctrine and Covenants 88:63

From Church Leaders

“Our ultimate quest in life is to prepare to meet our Maker. We do this by striving daily to become more like our Savior, Jesus Christ. And we do that as we repent daily and receive His cleansing, healing, and strengthening power.”

President Russell M. Nelson

(“Opening Message,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2020, 6)

“We improve our relationship with our Heavenly Father by learning of Him, by communing with Him, by repenting of our sins, and by actively following Jesus Christ, for ‘no man cometh unto the Father, but by [Christ].’”

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf

(“Of Things That Matter Most,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 21)

Encourage Learners to Consciously Strive to Become More like Jesus Christ ^[3.5]

The restored gospel enables us to become like Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. The Savior has shown the way. He has set the perfect example, and He commands us to become as They are (see 3 Nephi 12:48). As we learn of Him and seek to incorporate His attributes into our life, we and our students can achieve this goal through the power of Jesus Christ and His Atonement.

The scriptures describe Christlike attributes that are essential for you and your students to develop throughout your life. Christlike attributes are gifts from God. Help your students identify these attributes and understand that they come to us as we use our agency righteously. Teach your students to ask Heavenly Father to bless them with these attributes and seek His help with a desire and willingness to improve.

As you do these things, you can help learners increase their capacity to act in faith, both in and outside of class, as they intentionally strive to become more like Jesus Christ. Becoming is a process of change in our character and nature. It comes through the redeeming and strengthening power of Jesus Christ. Applied to the principle of faith in the Savior, it means that we increasingly become a more faithful person. Faith in Christ becomes an attribute of our character as we repeatedly and consistently grow in knowledge and understanding of faith in Jesus Christ, act with faith in Him to do what He would do, and seek His gifts and blessings to become like Him and His Father (see Kim B. Clark, “Doctrinal Mastery and Deep Learning,” Feb. 17, 2017; and “Deep Learning and Joy in the Lord,” June 13, 2017).

Invite learners to seek the help of the Holy Ghost in identifying ways they can become more like the Savior. Provide guidance and support to your learners as they prayerfully consider specific steps they can take in their efforts to become like Him.

Associated Scriptures

Matthew 5:48

1 Nephi 17:15

3 Nephi 27:27

From Church Leaders

“Now, my dear brothers and sisters, it takes both faith and courage to let God prevail. It takes persistent, rigorous spiritual work to repent and to put off the natural man through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. It takes consistent, daily effort to develop personal habits to study the gospel, to learn more about Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, and to seek and respond to personal revelation.”

President Russell M. Nelson

(“Let God Prevail,” general conference, Oct. 2020)

“Our personal responsibility is to learn what we should learn, to live as we know we should live, and to become who the Master would have us become.”

Elder David A. Bednar

(“Prepared to Obtain Every Needful Thing,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2019, 102)





Teach the Doctrine As Found in the Word of God

There are few things teachers can do that will have a more powerful and long-lasting influence for good in the lives of their students than helping them learn to love the scriptures and to study them on a daily basis.



Prepare Yourself by Diligently Studying the Scriptures and Teachings of Modern Prophets [4.1]

The Lord has commanded us to “teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:77) and to use the scriptures to “teach the principles of [His] gospel” (Doctrine and Covenants 42:12). The scriptures and words of latter-day prophets and apostles are the source of the truths we teach.

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

Your ability to teach with power from the scriptures comes in large measure from the time you personally spend studying them. This often begins as you set an example of daily scripture study in your own life.

Engaging in meaningful, personal scripture study every day qualifies you to offer personal testimony to your students of the value of the scriptures in their own lives. Such testimony can be an important catalyst in helping students commit to studying the scriptures regularly on their own.

Teachers should consistently strive to study the context, content, and doctrine and principles contained in the scriptures and the words of the prophets. As they do, they will grow in their understanding of the Savior’s gospel and Atonement and will be better able to bless the lives of their students.

Associated Scriptures

Proverbs 7:1–3

2 Nephi 4:15–16

Alma 31:5

From Church and S&I Leaders

“We have more control over our own preparation. We feast on the word of God in the scriptures and study the words of the living prophets. We fast and pray to invite the Spirit for ourselves and the person we would teach.”

President Henry B. Eyring

(“The Power of Teaching Doctrine,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 1999)

“Our efforts to teach do not begin with preparing a lesson or considering how it might be delivered or even reviewing the curriculum. Our efforts to teach do begin ad fontes, or ‘at the fountains.’ There is no better preparation for teaching than, as President Marion G. Romney said, drinking deeply from the spring right where the water comes out of the ground. If we want to teach the scriptures with power, if we want our students to feel the truth and importance of a passage, it surely must begin with a fresh, personal excitement inside ourselves.”

R. Kelly Haws

(“First Seek to Obtain My Word,” [S&I Annual Training Broadcast, Aug. 4, 2015], ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

Teach the Scriptures and Words of Prophets with Conviction and Purpose ^[4.2]

At every opportunity, inspire those you teach to turn to the word of God for guidance, answers to questions, and support. If learners will “feast upon the words of Christ,” the doctrine they find there will “tell [them] all things what [they] should do” (2 Nephi 32:3).

The scriptures and the words of the prophets contain the doctrine and principles of the gospel that teachers and students should seek to understand, teach, and apply. To those who teach the gospel in the latter days, the Lord instructed, “Teach the principles of my gospel, which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, in the which is the fulness of the gospel” (Doctrine and Covenants 42:12). The Lord also affirmed the importance of understanding and following the teachings of latter-day prophets. “Thou shalt give heed unto all his words and commandments which he shall give unto you as he receiveth them. ... His word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth” (Doctrine and Covenants 21:4–5).

When teachers and students love the word of God, learning is enhanced. A shared sense of purpose focuses efforts and gives direction to the classroom experience and invites the edifying influence of the Holy Ghost.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland reminded us that “Unless you feel passionately about something, you cannot possibly hope to make your students feel passionately about it. ... Remember, a student is not a container to be filled. A student is a fire to be ignited” (see “Angels and Astonishment,” June 12, 2019). We must teach the gospel with conviction and “out of our own changed hearts” (see President Henry B. Eyring, “We Must Raise Our Sights,” August 14, 2001).

Associated Scriptures

Joshua 1:8

Alma 31:5

Helaman 3:29–30

From Church Leaders

“[Our] lives can’t go forward on their prescribed courses without a foundation of scripture upon which to progress and build on.

“[Whether] it’s a class or a sacrament meeting, a stake conference or private study time, when we read or hear the scriptures, we are hearing the voice of God, and that is a special, sacred thing. That is a journey worth taking.

“God will be with you on your journey always. Just be sure to take Him and His word with you. Pray always to hear His voice in [the] scriptures.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland

(“The Institute Journey: To Take or Be Taken?” institute devotional, March 7, 2021)

“Your chief interest, your essential and all but sole duty, is to teach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as that has been revealed in these latter days. You are to teach this gospel, using as your sources and authorities the standard works of the Church and the words of those whom God has called to lead His people in these last days. ...

“You are not, whether high or low, to change the doctrine of the Church or to modify them as they are declared by and in the standard works of the Church and by those whose authority it is to declare the mind and will of the Lord to the Church.”

President J. Reuben Clark Jr.

(The Charted Course of the Church in Education, rev. ed. [1994], 10)



Help Learners Understand the Context and Content of the Scriptures and Discover Gospel Doctrine and Principles [4.3]

Understanding the context and content of the scriptures and the words of the prophets prepares teachers and students to recognize the messages of the inspired authors. The context and content clarify and illustrate gospel doctrine and principles recorded in the experiences and teachings of others.

Context is (1) the passages of scripture that precede or follow a verse or series of verses or (2) the circumstances that surround or give background to a particular scriptural passage, event, or story. The context is a means to understand the content of the scriptures. It provides background information that clarifies and brings a depth of understanding to the stories, teachings, doctrine, and principles in the scriptural text. Each scripture writer wrote as he was directed by the Holy Ghost, yet the writings were clothed in the imagery and culture of the writer. To understand their writings, teachers and students should mentally “step into their world” as much as possible to see things as the writer saw them.

The content is the story line, people, events, sermons, and inspired explanations that make up the scriptural

text. The content of the scriptures gives life and relevance to the doctrine and principles that are found in the scripture block. Coming to know the people described in the scriptures can inspire and encourage students to meet the challenges they face and to live with faith. The sermons that have so carefully been preserved in the holy scriptures are another very important part of the content.

With all the information that could be learned and taught, teachers should use wisdom in determining how much actual time is devoted to context and content and how much time to spend studying the doctrine and principles of the gospel. Teachers should provide sufficient context and content to help students understand the eternal truths found in the scriptural text, but not overemphasize such background and details to the degree that they become the core of the lesson.

Learning how to identify gospel doctrine and principles found in the scriptures takes thoughtful effort and practice. As principles and doctrine are identified, it is important that they are clearly and simply stated. A knowledge, understanding, and testimony of the doctrine and principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ will provide students with direction and sufficient strength to make choices that are consistent with Heavenly Father’s will.



A doctrine is a fundamental, unchanging truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Such truths as *Heavenly Father has a body of flesh and bones, baptism is necessary to enter the kingdom of God, and all men will be resurrected* are examples of doctrine.

A principle is an enduring truth or rule individuals can adopt to guide them in making decisions. Gospel principles are universal and help people apply the doctrine of the gospel to everyday living.

When students see the relevance of what they are studying in the scripture block to their own situations and circumstances, they are generally more motivated to learn and apply gospel teachings. They are also able to see how the scriptures provide answers and direction that can guide them in real-life situations.

Some gospel doctrine and principles are easier to identify because they are stated overtly. Such stated principles are often prefaced by phrases such as “thus we see,” “therefore,” “wherefore,” or “behold,” indicating that the scriptural author may be summarizing his message or drawing a conclusion. Many principles are not stated directly by the scriptural writer but are instead implied. Implied principles may come from an entire book of scripture, a chapter, or a single verse and may be couched in the scriptural story line, events, or parables. Identifying

implied principles includes recognizing the truths being illustrated in a scriptural account and stating them clearly and succinctly. This often requires time and careful thought.

Sometimes in class, doctrine and principles will be pointed out by the teacher. Other times the teacher will guide, encourage, and allow students to discover them for themselves. Teachers should diligently help students acquire the ability to identify doctrine and principles on their own.

As you teach, rather than simply imparting information, help the youth discover gospel truths for themselves in the scriptures and the words of the prophets. When they have questions, sometimes it is better to teach them how to find answers themselves, rather than answering the questions right away.

Associated Scriptures

Alma 12:32

Doctrine and Covenants 50:24–25

Doctrine and Covenants 101:78

From Church Leaders

“Searching in the revelations for connections, patterns, and themes ...broadens our perspective and understanding of the plan of salvation. ...This approach can open the floodgates of the spiritual reservoir, enlighten our understanding through His Spirit, and produce a depth of gratitude for the holy scriptures and a degree of spiritual commitment that can be received in no other way.”

Elder David A. Bednar

(“A Reservoir of Living Water,” Brigham Young University devotional, February 2007)

Want Help?

- See [teaching skill to help you create open-ended search questions that help learners discover gospel doctrine and principles for themselves and do not lead students to a specific response.](#)

Focus on Converting Principles of the Gospel and Teach Them in Ways That Build Faith in Jesus Christ ^[4.4]

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

When determining what to teach, a teacher should consider, “Of all the truths that could be emphasized in this block of scripture, which will help my students to draw closer to Heavenly Father and the Savior and lead to salvation?” Elder Henry B. Eyring counseled: “As you prepare a lesson, look in it for converting principles. ... A converting principle is one that leads to obedience to the will of God” (“Converting Principles” [remarks at an evening with Elder L. Tom Perry, Feb. 2, 1996], 1).

President Eyring also counseled: “There are two views of the gospel—both true. They make a terrific difference in the power of your teaching. One view is that the gospel is all truth. It is. The gospel is truth. With that view I could teach pretty well anything true in a classroom, and I would be teaching the gospel. The other view is that the gospel is the principles, commandments, and ordinances which, if kept, conformed with, and accepted, will lead to eternal life. This is also true.

“When I choose which of these views I will let dominate my teaching, I take a great step. If I take the view that the gospel is all truth, rather than that it is the ordinances and principles and commandments which, if kept, conformed with, and accepted, lead to eternal life, I have already nearly taken myself out of the contest to help a student withstand the sea of filth” (Henry B. Eyring, “Eyes to See, Ears to Hear” [CES symposium on the New Testament, Aug. 16, 1984], 6).

In all of these considerations, teachers should seek confirmation from the Spirit. The Spirit will help them better understand the intent of the inspired scripture writer, the needs of the students, and which gospel truths will help students draw nearer to their Heavenly Father and the Savior.

Effective teachers of the gospel believe that the scriptures were written in a way that draws us to them and that they have not only the ability to hold the attention of young people but also the power to change their lives. Therefore, they teach the gospel as found in the scriptures and teachings of modern prophets, clearly and accurately, and without speculating or sensationalizing.

Associated Scriptures

1 Nephi 15:14

Doctrine and Covenants 42:12

Doctrine and Covenants 133:57

From Church Leaders

“Our purpose as we seek to learn and to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ must be to increase faith in God and in His divine plan of happiness and in Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice and to achieve lasting conversion. Such increased faith and conversion will help us make and keep covenants with God, thus strengthening our desire to follow Jesus and producing a genuine spiritual transformation in us—in other words, transforming us into a new creature, as taught by the Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Corinthians. This transformation will bring us a more happy, productive, and healthy life and help us to maintain an eternal perspective.”

Elder Ulisses Soares

(“How Can I Understand?” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2019, 6)

Want Help?

- See [teaching skill to help you ask questions that help students identify and state converting principles](#).

Help Learners Develop Scripture Study Skills [4.5]

To help students be successful in their study of the scriptures, teachers can assist them in developing and utilizing a variety of scripture-study skills and methods. All of the following skills and methods, should be directed at helping students to learn by the Spirit, understand the scriptures, and discover and apply gospel doctrine and principles in their lives.

Mark passages. One of the most helpful ways for teachers and students to capture and retain the things they learn is by marking their scriptures. This can be done by underlining, shading, or outlining key words or passages in the scriptures. Electronic versions of the scriptures on ChurchofJesusChrist.org or in the Gospel Library app include tools to assist in marking passages.

Ask questions. Learning to ask questions and seek for answers as they study the scriptures is one of the most important scripture-study skills students can develop. By asking questions, students can be led to a better understanding of the context and content of the scriptures, as well as to the discovery and understanding of important doctrine and principles of the gospel. Students can learn to ask questions that will lead them to feel the truth and importance of what they are studying and to know how to apply what they are learning.

Liken scriptures. To liken the scriptures is to compare them to one's own life. Students can ask, "What circumstances and situations in my life are like the circumstances and situations in this passage of scripture?" or "How am I like the characters we are studying in the scriptures?" As students see the similarities between their experiences and those in the scriptures, they are better able to identify doctrine and principles of the gospel. They can also see how these principles can be applied in similar situations in their own lives.



Compare and contrast. A passage of scripture or a doctrine or principle is often clarified when it is compared or contrasted with something else. Noting the similarities or differences between teachings, people, or events can bring gospel truths into sharper focus.

Make lists. A list is a series of related thoughts, ideas, or instructions. Looking for lists in the scriptures can help teachers and students identify key points the writer is emphasizing.



Cross-reference. A cross-reference is an additional scripture reference that can provide added information and insight on the passage being studied. Cross-referencing or “linking” is connecting scripture references that help students understand a scripture passage or a doctrine or principle. Helpful cross-references can be found in the footnotes and other study aids, teacher and student manuals, and general conference talks.

Look for connections, patterns, and themes. Elder David A. Bednar said, “Searching in the revelations for connections, patterns, and themes builds upon and adds to our spiritual knowledge ...; it broadens our perspective and understanding of the plan of salvation” (“A Reservoir of Living Water” [CES fireside for young adults, Feb. 4, 2007], 2).

Ponder. Pondering means to meditate or think deeply about something, and often includes prayer. As students learn to ponder during their personal scripture study, the Spirit will often reveal truth to them and help them know how they can become more like Jesus Christ.

Teachers and students will generally use many of these skills and methods in class during the year. As they do so, teachers may occasionally pause and briefly discuss with their students the method or skill being used and encourage them to use it in their personal study.

Associated Scriptures

Ezra 7:10

2 Nephi 32:3

Doctrine and Covenants 1:37–38

From Church Leaders

“Because they expound the doctrine of Christ, the scriptures are accompanied by the Holy Spirit, whose role it is to bear witness of the Father and the Son. Therefore, being in the scriptures is one way we receive the Holy Ghost. ... Study the scriptures carefully, deliberately. Ponder and pray over them. Scriptures are revelation, and they will bring added revelation.”

Elder D. Todd Christofferson

(“The Blessings of Scripture,” general conference, Apr. 2010)

Want Help?

- See [teaching skill to help you create student self-evaluations that help them recognize their current understanding and abilities about scripture study skills](#).



Invite Diligent Learning

Gospel learning that fosters conversion and helps the gospel sink deep into the hearts of students requires more than diligent effort on the part of the teacher. Spiritual learning requires effort and the exercise of agency by the learner. Elder Henry B. Eyring taught, “True conversion depends on a student seeking freely in faith, with great effort” (“We Must Raise Our Sights,” 4). Elder David A. Bednar emphasized that the effort put forth by students invites the influence of the Holy Ghost into their hearts:

“A teacher can explain, demonstrate, persuade, and testify, and do so with great spiritual power and effectiveness. Ultimately, however, the content of a message and the witness of the Holy Ghost penetrate into the heart only if a receiver allows them to enter. ...

“A learner exercising agency by acting in accordance with correct principles opens his or her heart to the Holy Ghost—and invites His teaching, testifying power, and confirming witness” (“Seek Learning by Faith” [an evening with Elder David A. Bednar, Feb. 3, 2006], 1, 3).

Encourage Daily Scripture Study [5.1]

Occasional gospel study is not enough to fortify class members against the temptations and deceptions of the adversary. Gospel learning must be centered in daily efforts at home, including personal and family study.

Daily personal scripture study provides a consistent opportunity for teachers and students to learn the gospel, develop testimony, and hear the voice of the Lord. Teachers should consistently teach students the importance of daily personal scripture study.

Teachers can also encourage each student to set aside time every day for personal scripture study and provide regular opportunities in class to share some of the things they are learning and feeling. As teachers encourage daily scripture study, they should be careful to not embarrass or discourage any students who may struggle to study the scriptures on their own.

Students with reading or other learning disabilities should be given the option to study the scriptures in a format that may be better suited for their needs.

Associated Scriptures

2 Timothy 3:15–17

Helaman 3:29–30

Doctrine and Covenants 33:16

From Church Leaders

“As we seek to be disciples of Jesus Christ, our efforts to hear Him need to be ever more intentional. It takes conscious and consistent effort to fill our daily lives with His words, His teachings, His truths. ... We can go to the scriptures. They teach us about Jesus Christ and His gospel, the magnitude of His Atonement, and our Father’s great plan of happiness and redemption. Daily immersion in the word of God is crucial for spiritual survival, especially in these days of increasing upheaval. As we feast on the words of Christ daily, the words of Christ will tell us how to respond to difficulties we never thought we would face.”

President Russell M. Nelson

(“Hear Him,” general conference, Apr. 2020)

“Scriptures are like packets of light that illuminate our minds and give place to guidance and inspiration from on high. They can become the key to open the channel to communion with our Father in Heaven and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ.”

Elder Richard G. Scott

(“The Power of Scripture,” general conference, Oct. 2011)

Want Help?

- See teaching skill to help you assist students in creating a daily scripture study goal.

Encourage Preparation for Learning Experiences [5.2]

In order for students to feel the edifying influence of the Holy Ghost in their learning experience, they should be “in a preparation to hear the word” (Alma 32:6).

The scriptures speak of a state of preparation or readiness in the hearts and minds of those seeking spiritual learning. For example, Ezra, a priest and scribe in the Old Testament, “prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it” (Ezra 7:10). The book of Acts describes faithful Saints who “received the word with all readiness of mind” (Acts 17:11). During His visit to the people of Nephi, the Savior encouraged them: “Prepare your minds for the morrow, and I come unto you again” (3 Nephi 17:3).

A student can prepare to learn in a variety of ways, including:

- Praying for revelation
- Developing a desire to learn
- Repenting
- Studying
- Responding to questions that focus on what they will be studying in class
- Being willing to contribute
- Coming prepared to teach others

Perhaps the most important preparation students can make is their daily gospel living. As teachers demonstrate how they discover truth and center their lives on Jesus Christ and His gospel, they can help students become more self-reliant learners.

Associated Scriptures

3 Nephi 17:3

Doctrine and Covenants 88:78

Joseph Smith–History 1:11–13

From Church Leaders

“Each member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has an individual responsibility to learn and live the Lord’s teachings and to receive by proper authority the ordinances of salvation and exaltation. We should not expect the Church as an organization to teach or tell us everything we need to know and do to become devoted disciples and endure valiantly to the end. Rather, our personal responsibility is to learn what we should learn, to live as we know we should live, and to become who the Master would have us become. And our homes are the ultimate setting for learning, living, and becoming.”

Elder David A. Bednar

(“Prepare to Obtain Every Needful Thing,” general conference, Apr. 2019)

Help Learners Be Active Participants in the Learning Process ^[5.3]

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shared this familiar saying: “Giving a man a fish feeds him for one meal. Teaching a man to fish feeds him for a lifetime.” He then taught, “As parents and gospel instructors, you and I are not in the business of distributing fish; rather, our work is to help [those we teach] learn ‘to fish’ and to become spiritually steadfast.” While a teacher’s role is important, learners are ultimately responsible for their own learning.

As teachers prepare how they will teach, they should stay focused on the learner and not just on what the teacher will do. Rather than merely asking, “What

will I do in class today?” or “What will I teach my students?” a teacher should also approach lesson preparation thinking, “What will my students do in class today?” “How will I help my students discover what they need to know?”

Teachers should have faith that with proper guidance and encouragement, students can understand the scriptures, learn to identify doctrine and principles, explain the gospel to others, and apply gospel teachings in their lives.

For many students, putting forth such effort to learn from the scriptures may seem unfamiliar and somewhat difficult. However, teachers can help them understand, accept, and fulfill their role in gospel learning. Teachers can help students learn how to take an active role in their spiritual learning, both in class and at home, by encouraging them to:

- Develop a habit of daily scripture study.
- Prepare their hearts and minds for the influence of the Spirit.
- Discover how doctrine and principles are relevant to their personal lives.
- Deepen understanding of the scriptures through diligent study, meditation, and prayer.
- Ask questions and seek for answers that help them better understand the gospel and how it applies to their lives.
- Share insights, experiences, and feelings.
- Explain gospel doctrine and principles to others and testify of their truthfulness.
- Develop scripture study skills, such as marking, cross-referencing, and using the scripture study aids.

Students are edified when they are led to search the word of God to discover truths about Jesus Christ and His gospel for themselves. They should be given opportunities to explain the gospel in their own words and to share and testify of what they know and feel. This helps to bring the gospel from their heads down into their hearts. As students consistently experience learning the gospel in this way, they gain confidence

in their ability to study the scriptures for themselves and learn by the Spirit. They feel a desire to apply what they are learning in their lives. They are also better prepared to explain what they believe to others and to bear testimony of the doctrine and principles of the gospel.

Teachers should remember that the most meaningful relevance comes through the Holy Ghost to the individual hearts and minds of learners as they engage in the learning process and work to discover for themselves how truths of the gospel connect with their personal needs and circumstances.

Associated Scriptures

John 7:17

James 1:22

Doctrine and Covenants 58:26–29

From Church Leaders

“Most of the teaching in the world is based on one of the five senses—hear, see, touch, smell, or taste. In your classroom you can teach by the power of the Spirit. Such communication begins by your encouraging each one you teach to participate rather than be a passive listener. In this way you can assess their understanding of what is taught, create a feeling of ownership, and also learn from them. More important, their decision to participate is an exercise in agency that permits the Holy Ghost to communicate a personalized message suited to their individual needs. Creating an atmosphere of participation enhances the probability that the Spirit will teach more important lessons than you can communicate. That participation will bring into their lives the direction of the Spirit. When you encourage students to raise their hand to respond to a question, while they may not realize it, they signify to the Holy Ghost their willingness to learn. That use of moral agency will allow that Spirit to motivate them and give them more powerful guidance during your time together. Participation allows individuals to experience being led by the Spirit. They learn to recognize and feel what spiritual guidance is.”

Elder Richard G. Scott

(“To Learn and to Teach More Effectively,” Brigham Young University devotional, Aug. 2007)

Want Help?

- See teaching skill that helps you develop and ask questions that help learners connect what they have learned in their personal and family scripture study to the classroom experience.

Help Learners Develop the Ability to Discuss Gospel Beliefs with Others [5.4]



Explaining doctrine and principles, sharing insights and relevant experiences, and testifying of divine truth clarifies a person’s understanding of gospel doctrine and principles and improves their ability to teach the gospel to others.

Each individual in your class is a rich source of testimony, insights, and experiences with living the gospel. President J. Reuben Clark Jr. said: “There is scarcely a youth that comes through your seminary or institute door who has not been the conscious beneficiary of spiritual blessings, or who has not seen the efficacy of prayer, or who has not witnessed the power of faith to heal the sick, or who has not beheld spiritual outpourings of which the world at large is today ignorant” (The Charted Course of the Church in Education, rev. ed. [1994], 9). Students should be given the opportunity to share such experiences with the class. (Teachers may need to help students understand that some experiences are too sacred or personal to share in a classroom setting [see Alma 12:9; Doctrine and Covenants 63:64].)

When teachers believe what the Lord is saying about the youth through His chosen prophets, they can see every student as a living witness of Jesus Christ and His gospel. Teachers can create opportunities for students to share that witness.

Understanding of scripture is increased when students and teachers explain the scriptures to each other. Preparing to clearly and simply tell what a passage of scripture or what a doctrine or principle means encourages teachers and students to ponder the verses, organize their thoughts, and invite the Holy Ghost to teach them.

Both teachers and students should have the opportunity to share their insights and understanding as well as personal experiences they have had with a



doctrine or principle. They can also relate experiences they have witnessed in the lives of others.

As students explain, share, and testify, they are often led by the Holy Ghost to a deeper testimony of the very things they are expressing. Through the power of the Holy Ghost, their words and expressions can also have a significant impact on the hearts and minds of their peers or others who are listening.

Associated Scriptures

Alma 17:2–3

Doctrine and Covenants 100:5–6

Doctrine and Covenants 84:85

From Church Leaders

“A testimony is to be found in the bearing of it! ... It is one thing to receive a witness from what you

have read or what another has said; and that is a necessary beginning. It is quite another to have the Spirit confirm to you in your bosom that what you have testified is true. Can you not see that it will be supplied as you share it? As you give that which you have, there is a replacement, with increase!”

President Boyd K. Packer

(“The Candle of the Lord,” seminar for new mission presidents, June 25, 1982)

Want Help?

- See [teaching skill to help learners create or begin gospel conversations](#).

Help Learners See How They Can Take Effective Righteous Action in Their Personal Circumstances [5.5]

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

When students see the relevance of what they are studying in the scripture block to their own situations and circumstances, they are generally more motivated to learn and apply gospel teachings. They are also able to see how the scriptures provide answers and direction that can guide them in real-life situations.

Teachers should invite learners to seek the help of the Holy Ghost in identifying ways they can apply the gospel to their personal needs and circumstances. They can provide guidance and support to students as they prayerfully consider ways they can become more

like Jesus Christ. This can be accomplished using a variety of methods, including pondering, writing, and self-assessment. For example, students could be invited to think about the following:

- What personal applications can you identify from the gospel principles being learned?
- What does becoming more like the Savior look like at home? At work? At school? With friends?
- How will making inspired changes in your life help you come closer to Jesus Christ and experience joy?
- What potential challenges might you face as you seek to become more like the Savior?
- In what ways can the Savior help you increase your ability to take effective righteous action?

Teachers and students can share ideas about how gospel principles apply to a variety of situations. Teachers should help students identify and act on personal revelation. They should consider ways to help students recognize their growth and feel encouraged in their efforts. By so doing we can help students gain confidence in their own ability to learn by the Spirit and strive to become more like the Savior. We can help them see the rich blessings that come from following Jesus Christ.

Associated Scriptures

2 Nephi 31:10

Mosiah 4:9–10

Doctrine and Covenants 19:23

From Church Leaders

Teachers who are commanded to teach “the principles of [the] gospel” and “the doctrine of the kingdom” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:77) should generally forgo teaching specific rules or applications. ... Once a teacher has taught the doctrine and the associated principles from the scriptures and the living prophets, such specific applications or rules are generally the responsibility of individuals and families.”

President Dallin H. Oaks

(“Gospel Teaching,” general conference, Oct. 1999)

“We believe that through living the gospel of Jesus Christ we can become like the Savior, who is perfect.”

President Henry B. Eyring

(“Our Perfect Example,” general conference, Oct. 2009)



Gospel Teaching and Learning Handbook

Updated August 2021





Teacher Development Skills; Enhancing the Learner Experience

Updated August 2021

Love Those You Teach

CONVEY TO LEARNERS THAT THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS ARE VALUED AND ESSENTIAL TO THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE.

SKILL: COMMUNICATE THAT YOU VALUE STUDENTS BEFORE THEY COMMENT OR AS THEY RAISE THEIR HAND TO COMMENT.

Define

We can show love for our learners by communicating to them that we value their contributions. Sometimes when students comment, we may seem disinterested or may be distracted by thinking about what we are going to say next. It is easy to look away or begin looking through our scriptures as we think of how to respond. It is important to remember that students want to feel heard, acknowledged, and seen. We can help students feel this way by focusing completely on them as they share comments. One way to accomplish this is by turning your body to face them, making eye contact, and focusing on them for the entirety of their comment. Another way is to verbally express that you value their contribution even before they comment. When a student raises their hand, you could say something like, “Jordan, we love hearing from you. Please tell us what you’re thinking,” or, “Thabo, we are excited to learn from you. What would you like to contribute?” These simple actions can convey to learners that their contributions are valued and essential to the learning experience.



Model

Notice the body language of this teacher as he listens to a student’s comment. He is facing and looking at the student. He is not focused on another student, the scriptures, or anything else. Is there anything else you learn from this picture about communicating to students that they are valued?

[Click here to see a video of this model.](#)

Practice

This week, practice this skill by focusing on your conversations with other people and communicating that you value their contributions. Face the person and make eye contact as you talk with him or her. Remove any distractions, and focus entirely on the individual.

Incorporate

During your next lesson, apply this skill by facing your students, setting your scriptures down, and making eye contact with students as they share comments.

Discuss or Ponder

- What have you learned about the importance of both nonverbal and verbal forms of communication in expressing to others that you value them?
- What are some other ways that you can express to students that you value their comments?
- Take a moment and think of times when the Savior modeled this skill.

Want More?

- Gospel Topics, “Communication,” topics.
ChurchofJesusChrist.org
- Mark Ogletree, “Speak, Listen, and Love,”
Ensign, Feb. 2014, 14–17

FOSTER A SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT OF ACCEPTANCE AND RESPECT.

SKILL: PAUSE, REFLECT, AND ANSWER QUESTIONS WE ASK OURSELVES.

This training presents the first of three interconnected skills that will help us understand that students may see eternal truths from a different premise than we do. As we better understand our students, we will be more capable of responding to them with love and empathy as we help them build faith in Jesus Christ.

These trainings will include:

1. identifying a student's premise by pausing, reflecting, and answering questions we ask ourselves both during lesson preparation and as we focus on students' comments or questions in class;
1. seeking to clarify and understand the real intent of a student's questions, feelings, and beliefs; and
1. helping students examine or reframe their premise with an eternal perspective.

**The second and third trainings will be provided subsequently.*

This training will focus on the following skill:

- Identifying a student's premise by pausing, reflecting, and answering questions we ask ourselves both during lesson preparation and as we focus on students' comments or questions in class.

Define

Every student comes to class with different life experiences and relationships that shape the way they think and feel about gospel truths. These views create a starting point, often called a premise, for an individual's thinking. Identifying an individual's premise can help us teach truth with empathy and love, as Jesus Christ does. Different premises do not change the doctrine; rather, they allow us to see another person's perspective in a way that helps increase our understanding of each learner's needs to, in turn, increase faith in Jesus Christ.

During lesson preparation, teachers can consider eternal truths as they pause, reflect, and answer the following questions:

- How might the experiences and relationships of my students shape the way they think about, feel about, and live these truths?
- As we study this truth, could any of my students feel excluded, troubled, or hurt because of their circumstances?

While focusing on a student's comment or question during class or in a conversation, teachers can ask themselves:

- "What experiences and relationships might this student have that would cause him or her to think differently than I do?"
- "What else do I need to know to fully understand where he or she is coming from?"

These questions can invite the Holy Ghost and invite a Christlike spirit of discernment, love, and empathy in our interactions. They can also help us avoid reacting to students in a dismissive, judgmental, or defensive way. They can help us teach truth in a way that can bless the class and help others build faith in Jesus Christ.

Model (during lesson preparation)

While preparing a lesson on following the promptings of the Holy Ghost, I reflect on the following questions: "How might the experiences and relationships of my students shape the way they think, feel, and live these truths?" and "As we study this truth, could any of my students struggle or feel excluded, troubled, or hurt because their circumstances are not ideal in relation to this doctrine?"

Then I answer: "I may have students that feel they have never received a prompting before, or they don't feel that the Holy Ghost speaks to them. I may have some students who feel they are not worthy. There may be

times when my students are not sure if a prompting came from the Holy Ghost. There may be students that are tired of hearing stories from others about following the Spirit because they always seem too miraculous and those things never happen to them.”

Practice (during lesson preparation)

While preparing a lesson on 1 Nephi 3:7, “I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded”:

- Reflect and answer: “How might the experiences and relationships of my students shape the way they think, feel, and live these truths?” and “As we study this truth, could any of my students struggle or feel excluded, troubled, or hurt because their circumstances are not ideal in relation to this doctrine?”

While preparing a lesson on gender as an essential characteristic of our eternal identity and purpose in the lesson titled “Gender and Eternal Identity”:

- Reflect and answer: “How might the experiences and relationships of my students shape the way they think, feel, and live these truths?” and “As we study this truth, could any of my students struggle or feel excluded, troubled, or hurt because their circumstances are not ideal in relation to this doctrine?”

Model (during class)

While discussing the doctrine of the Sabbath day, a student comments, “My family enjoys watching sporting events on Sunday.” As you focus on your student’s comments, you think, “What experiences and relationships might this student have that would cause her to think differently than I do?” or “What else do I need to know to fully understand where she is coming from?”

Practice (during class)

While discussing missionary work, a student asks, “What is the big deal about every young man serving a mission?”

- Silently think, “What experiences and relationships might this student have that would cause him to think differently than I do?” and “What else do I need to know to fully understand where he is coming from?”

In a discussion on prophets and revelation, a student asks, “When is the Church going to catch up to the rest of the world with their policies?”

- Silently think, “What experiences and relationships might this student have that would cause her to think differently than I do?” and “What else do I need to know to fully understand where she is coming from?”

[Click here to see a video of this model.](#)

Incorporate

Choose one of the practices above to focus on for the next two weeks. Plan how you will continue to practice these skills. For example:

- With each truth you prepare, you can choose to take five minutes to pause, reflect, and answer the questions that help you identify a student’s premise.
- Before class, identify a student and think about a comment or question he or she may have with each truth. Then silently think, “What experiences and relationships might this student have that would cause him or her to think differently than I do?” and “What else do I need to know to fully understand where he or she is coming from?” This will prepare you to do this during class as you focus on the student’s comments and questions.

Discuss or Ponder

- What are you learning about teaching the truth with empathy as you practice identifying students’ premises before and during class?
- How can this practice help you teach more like Jesus Christ?

Want More?

- [Chad H. Webb, “Empathy” \(S&I Annual Training Broadcast, Jan. 26, 2021\), ChurchofJesusChrist.org](#)
- [Jean B. Bingham, “Teaching Truth in the Language of Love” \(S&I Annual Training Broadcast, Jan. 26, 2021\), ChurchofJesusChrist.org](#)

KNOW EACH LEARNER'S NAME, CIRCUMSTANCES, AND LEARNING NEEDS.

SKILL: OBSERVE AND ASK ABOUT STUDENTS' INTERESTS.

Define

Teachers can learn about their students' circumstances and identify some of their learning needs through observing and asking about their interests. It is often easiest to have these conversations before and after class, but they can also take place during class. There are a variety of ways teachers can do this. A teacher may notice a book, a project, a sticker, a piece of sporting equipment, or something else that a student brings to class. Or a teacher might remember an event the students were participating in and ask them about it. The questions we ask will help us come to know the students and their interests and could include phrases like:

- “Tell me more about ...”
- “What do you like about ...”
- “I am curious to know ...”

When teachers are sincere and genuine in their questions, they can learn more about their students' circumstances and learning needs, and the students will feel that their teacher really cares. When students feel their teacher genuinely cares about them, they are more likely to come to class ready to learn and share their insights and experiences with their teacher and others in class.

Model

1. Hermana Muñoz remembers that Rosa had a big soccer game that Rosa was nervous about. When she sees Rosa, Hermana Muñoz stops and asks her how she felt the game went.
2. Auro has his keys on the table. As you walk past, you notice a flag from a different country on his key chain.
 - You're curious and say, “Auro, tell me about the flag you have on your key chain.”
 - Auro shares that his sister went to Brazil on her mission, and he went with his family to pick her up at the end of her mission.

- You continue the conversation, asking, “What did you like about going to see your sister on her mission?”

[Click here to see a video of this model.](#)

Practice

Practice #1: In each of the following pictures, what do you see that can help you learn about the circumstances or learning needs of these students?

Practice #2: What questions can you ask to learn more about your students' interests?



Incorporate

In class this week, look for opportunities to ask students about their interests, events, or circumstances. Genuinely show you care about what you learn from them. Look for how it impacts that student's learning experience as a result. Take five minutes after class to write down what you learned about your students and how that can help you create learning experiences that lead to conversion, relevance, and belonging.

Discuss or Ponder

- What have you learned as you have practiced observing and asking about students' interests?
- How can observing and asking about students' interests show that you love your students?

Want More?

- Lori Newbold, "See the One" (S&I Annual Training Broadcast, June 13, 2017), [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)
- Chad H Webb, "We Have Not Come This Far to Only Come This Far" (S&I Annual Training Broadcast, June 9, 2020), [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)
- "Reaching the Individual" (video), [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

PRAY FOR YOUR STUDENTS REGULARLY.

SKILL: PRAY AND ASK HOW YOU CAN HELP YOUR STUDENTS AND FOLLOW PROMPTINGS FROM THE HOLY GHOST.

Define

Praying for your students regularly can help you feel more of God's love for them and increase your desires to provide a safe, inviting place where they can learn. It can also allow Heavenly Father to help you better understand their circumstances and needs. Although we cannot force spiritual matters or answers to prayers, praying for our students invites the direction of the Holy Ghost and can increase our capacity to help them. Acting upon the inspiration you receive can help you improve each student's learning experience. One way teachers can seek to increase love for their students is by considering what they already know about a student and then prayerfully pondering and asking how they might show more love toward that student. As they pray with these thoughts in mind, teachers should then seek to identify and act on the promptings of the Spirit.

Model

The following are a few examples of how you might pray and ask how to help an individual student and follow the promptings of the Holy Ghost:

- You notice that John has been reluctant to engage in class recently. You ask Heavenly Father how you could best help him. You feel that you should talk to him as he comes into class. You sense that you should ask him more about his current interests rather than just asking him about why he hasn't been participating as much recently. You plan to talk to him before class tomorrow.
- Maria has been regularly sharing her insights and testimony the last few weeks. Prior to the next class, you ask Heavenly Father how you might help her continue to progress. You have the thought to pair her up with a few of her classmates who don't share as often or who

struggle to openly share how they are feeling. In your lesson planning for tomorrow, you add a classmate sharing opportunity.

[Click here to see a video of this model.](#)

Practice

Use one or more of the following practices to improve your ability to pray for students and act upon the resulting promptings:

- Select a student who you feel does not have many close friends in class. Pray about how to best help him or her. Make a plan to act upon the impressions you receive.
- Select a student who shares a lot in class. Pray for him or her and about how to continue improving that student's learning experience. Act upon the impressions you receive as soon as possible.
- Select a student you have not seen in class recently. Pray for them, and ask the Lord how to best reach out to them and help them feel loved and needed. Come up with a plan based on the impressions you receive, decide when you could act upon that plan, and follow through.

Incorporate

Make an action plan to pray and ask how you can help your students and follow promptings from the Holy Ghost. You could consider the following suggested steps as you make an action plan:

- Choose and focus on one of the practices above.
- Determine how you will incorporate it.
- Schedule time to incorporate it.
- Ask Heavenly Father to help you.

Discuss or Ponder

Ponder what you have learned from this experience. Perhaps you could record some of these thoughts in a study journal. Consider the following questions:

- What efforts have I made previously to pray for my students?
- What have I learned in this process that could improve my ability to pray for my students and help them improve their learning experience?
- What will I do to continue to improve?

Want More?

- Neil L. Andersen, “A Classroom of Faith, Hope, and Charity” (evening with a General Authority, Feb. 28, 2014), [broadcasts.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/broadcasts)
- Chad H. Webb, “Above All Things” (S&I Annual Training Broadcast, June 12, 2019), [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org)
- “Love Those You Teach,” *Teaching in the Savior’s Way* (2016), 6

Teach by the Spirit

ASK QUESTIONS AND FACILITATE DISCUSSIONS THAT INVITE ENGAGEMENT, DISCOVERY, AND INTROSPECTION.

SKILL: CREATE STUDENT SELF-EVALUATIONS ABOUT A DOCTRINE, TRUTH, OR PRINCIPLE.

Define

Teaching by the Spirit includes helping students consider their own perspective, feelings, and experiences related to specific truths. This personal introspection and evaluation can invite the Holy Ghost to help each student see things “as they really are, and ... really will be” (Jacob 4:13) in their lives. Effective self-evaluations help students consider (1) their own current understanding of a particular truth, (2) why these truths are relevant for their own life and situation, and (3) how to better live these truths. You can invite this self-evaluation at any time during class through various means, including writing activities, discussion questions, and invitations to apply doctrine and principles.

Model

Here are a few examples of how you might create student self-evaluations:

- At the beginning of class, you could invite students to briefly record in a journal their current understanding of the law of tithing.
- At the end of class, you could invite students to reflect: “How has your understanding of the law of tithing changed since the beginning of class?”
- After identifying together various principles from a scripture block, you could ask students, “How would you rank these principles in your life in order of importance?”
- During a class discussion, you could ask students to think about how the Atonement of Jesus Christ has affected their life to this point.
- You could invite students to evaluate application: “Consider how you are currently doing in looking

‘unto [Christ] in every thought’ (Doctrine and Covenants 6:36). Write down what you feel is the next step for you in improving your relationship with Him in this regard.”

[Click here to see a video of this model.](#)

Practice

Use one or more of the following practices to improve your ability to create self-evaluations for your students:

- Look at an upcoming lesson plan. Select a doctrine you are planning to focus on. Practice writing two or three simple self-evaluations students can use to consider their current understanding of this doctrine or how their understanding has changed because of what they learned.
- Select a moment in an upcoming lesson when a class discussion is planned. Practice writing two or three questions that help students evaluate their own perspective and experience related to a principle that will be identified.
- Find a place in an upcoming lesson plan where you will focus on application. Rather than just inviting students to apply a particular doctrine or principle, practice writing two or three invitations that help them evaluate their current application and how to continue improving.

Incorporate

For each lesson plan this week, use a different self-assessment to help students learn from the Holy Ghost. Take time to identify what you learn from this experience, and practice again in your preparation and in your classes. Continue to practice, learn, and

refine your efforts to help improve your students' experiences and encourage their continued growth and progress.

Discuss or Ponder

Ponder what you have learned from this experience. Perhaps you could record some of these thoughts in a study journal. Consider the following questions:

- What have I done previously to help students self-evaluate?
- What have I learned in this experience that could improve my ability to help students self-evaluate?
- What will I do to continue improving?

Want More?

- Jeffrey R. Holland, “Angels and Astonishment” (S&I Annual Training Broadcast, June 12, 2019), ChurchofJesusChrist.org
- “Invite Diligent Learning,” *Teaching in the Savior’s Way* (2016), 29–30
- “Invite Diligent Learning” (3:34) (video), ChurchofJesusChrist.org

GUIDE LEARNERS IN LEARNING HOW TO SEEK FOR AND ACT ON PERSONAL REVELATION.

SKILL: BEFORE RESPONDING TO A STUDENT'S QUESTION OR COMMENT, PAUSE AND THINK, "WHAT CAN I ASK THEM?" OR, "WHAT CAN I INVITE THEM TO DO?"

Define

When a student makes a comment or asks a question, Elder David A. Bednar taught: "Instead of thinking, 'What am I going to tell them?' the focus should be, 'What would I ask them?' And not only 'What would I ask them?' but also 'What would I invite them to do?'" ("An Evening with Elder David A. Bednar" [evening with a General Authority, Feb. 7, 2020], [broadcasts.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org)). When a teacher asks the question "What can I ask them?" it invites the teacher to be guided by the Holy Ghost to either gain more information to see the learner more clearly or to know how to help him or her seek for and act on personal revelation.

When a teacher asks the question "What would I invite them to do?" it allows the teacher to connect with the Holy Ghost to know what invitation to extend, and it helps the student consider how to act on personal revelation.

Model

Look for how the teacher thinks before responding:

- After class, Maria waits to ask how she can tell the difference between her own thoughts and the promptings of the Spirit.
- Before I respond, I pause and think, "What can I ask that would invite her to seek her own answer through personal revelation?" and, "What can I invite her to do so she can learn the answer for herself?"

[Click here to see a video of this model.](#)

Practice

- In class Jafari asks the following question: "How can I use the Atonement of Jesus Christ to help me with things other than forgiveness?"
Before formulating your response, pause and think, "What can I ..."

NOTE: The practice is not asking the question or invitation but pausing and thinking, "What can I ask him or invite him to do so he can connect to the Holy Ghost and learn the answer for himself?"

- Annie says, "I'm never getting married. Too many members of my family are already divorced, so it's not worth it."
Before formulating your response, pause and think, "What can I ..."
- Nick asks, "What is the best thing I can do to prepare for a mission?"
Before formulating your response, pause and think, "What can I ..."

Incorporate

Each day this week, imagine a student asking you a question. Before you respond, silently say to yourself, "What can I ask or invite them to do that will connect them with the Holy Ghost to learn the answer for themselves?" Then, throughout the week, when a student asks you a question or makes a comment, pause and think what question or invitation you can ask them rather than what you will tell them.

Discuss or Ponder

- What is your typical response after someone asks you a question?
- What have you learned about guiding learners to seek and act on personal revelation?

Want More?

- [David A. Bednar, "An Evening with Elder David A. Bednar" \(evening with a General Authority, Feb. 7, 2020\), ChurchofJesusChrist.org](#)

TESTIFY OFTEN AND INVITE LEARNERS TO SHARE THEIR FEELINGS, EXPERIENCES, AND TESTIMONY.

SKILL: CREATE PROMPTS THAT HELP STUDENTS VERBALIZE THEIR FEELINGS, EXPERIENCES, AND TESTIMONY.

Define

As students share their feelings, experiences, and testimonies, the Holy Ghost will witness the truth of what they are saying, both to their own minds and hearts as well as to others. Prompts are one way to help them share. These prompts typically include two parts: The first part invites students to ponder their feelings, experiences, and testimonies and can be connected to other teaching tools, such as pictures, questions, case studies, video clips, or hymns. The second part provides an opportunity for students to begin sharing. This might be done by inviting students to consider how they would complete a partial phrase. The essential feature of these prompts is that they help students connect to the Holy Ghost to help them begin thinking about a way to verbalize their feelings, experiences, and testimonies.

Model

Picture Model



You are teaching Doctrine and Covenants 45:1–5, and the principle is “Jesus Christ is our Advocate with the Father.” You show students this picture of Jesus Christ

and use the prompt “If I could tell Jesus Christ one reason why I love Him, I would share ...”

Hymn Model

You are singing “I Know That My Redeemer Lives” together as a class. You invite students to look for their favorite lines that help them complete this phrase: “I know that Jesus Christ lives to ...”

[Click here to see a video of this model.](#)

Practice

Take the next five minutes and identify a picture, hymn, or video clip about Jesus Christ that connects to a principle or doctrine in an upcoming scripture block. Come up with a prompt that will help students think through and then share their feelings for, experiences with, or testimony of Jesus Christ related to the selected principle or doctrine.

Incorporate

Develop a prompt for each lesson this week that helps students share their feelings, experiences, and testimonies.

Discuss or Ponder

- How can providing a prompt help learners share their feelings, experiences, and testimonies?
- What have you learned about helping learners feel more confident in sharing meaningful testimony and feelings?

Want More?

- “Lead Inspired Discussions,” *Teaching in the Savior’s Way* (2016), 33–34
- “Ideas for Virtual Learning and Teaching,” ChurchofJesusChrist.org

Focus on Jesus Christ

ASSIST LEARNERS IN DEEPENING THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF THE ROLES, TITLES, SYMBOLS, ATTRIBUTES, AND CHARACTERISTICS OF JESUS CHRIST.

SKILL: CREATE SEARCH QUESTIONS TO HELP STUDENTS IDENTIFY ROLES, TITLES, SYMBOLS, ATTRIBUTES, AND CHARACTERISTICS OF JESUS CHRIST.

Define

As we seek to help students search for Jesus Christ in the scriptures, they can come to know and love Him. One way to create a search question that helps students identify a role, title, symbol, attribute, or characteristic of Jesus Christ is to include the following in your question: (1) the scripture passage, (2) what you want the student to seek (roles, titles, symbols, attributes, or characteristics of Jesus Christ), and (3) how students will discover these things for themselves. These questions should be brought up before you have students read the scripture passage so that the students are prepared to discover what they can learn about Jesus Christ.

Model

Review the following questions, and notice how they include the scripture passage, what the students will seek, and how students will discover it for themselves:

- As you read the story of the good Samaritan in Luke 10:25–37, what divine attributes of Jesus Christ can you see?
- As you study Doctrine and Covenants 29:1–8, find three different titles and roles of Jesus Christ that feel relevant to what you need right now in your life.
- As you read Acts 3:1–7, what do you notice about Peter that reminds you of Jesus Christ?

[Click here to see a video of this model.](#)

Practice

Read the following verses, and for each set of verses write a search question that helps students discover

roles, titles, symbols, attributes, and characteristics of Jesus Christ.

- Genesis 45:3–5
- Doctrine and Covenants 45:7–9
- 1 Nephi 3:1–7

Incorporate

Using what you learned in practice, think about the circumstances and needs of your students as you study to prepare your lessons this week. With one scripture passage in your lesson, write a search question that will help students discover the roles, titles, symbols, attributes, and characteristics of Jesus Christ to help them focus on Him. Write down the questions that come to you and, if you have time, practice asking those questions to someone before you ask any in class. This will help you refine your question before you use it with your students.

Discuss or Ponder

- What did you learn about becoming a Christlike teacher from this experience?
- How can this help our students and classroom discussions focus more on Jesus Christ?

Want More?

- Chad H Webb, “We Talk of Christ, We Rejoice in Christ” (S&I Annual Training Broadcast, June 12, 2018), ChurchofJesusChrist.org

CONNECT GOSPEL PRINCIPLES TO JESUS CHRIST AND EMPHASIZE HIS EXAMPLE.

SKILL: HELP STUDENTS CONNECT WHAT THEY ARE LEARNING WITH HOW CHRIST EXEMPLIFIES THE PRINCIPLE.

Define

Helping students place Jesus Christ at the center of their learning will help them have a more personal and powerful learning experience. One way we can do this is by helping students connect what they are learning to the life and example of Jesus Christ. You can do this by using connecting questions throughout a lesson. These questions help students connect the life and example of Jesus Christ to

- details of a scripture story,
- principles in the scriptures, and
- experiences in their own lives.

Model

Here are a few examples of how you might help students connect with the life and example of Jesus Christ:

- After reading a scripture story and discussing the details, you could ask, “What in this story reminds you of the life and example of Jesus Christ?”
- After identifying a principle, you could ask, “Where in the scriptures did Jesus exemplify this principle?”
- After analyzing a principle, you could ask, “When have you seen Jesus exemplify this principle in your life or on your behalf?”
- When discussing application of a principle, you could ask, “What from Jesus’s example helps you live this principle more fully?”
- You could also ask, “How would living this principle help you follow the example of Jesus Christ and become more like Him?”

[Click here to see a video of this model.](#)

Practice

Use one or more of the following practices to improve your ability to help students connect to the example of Jesus Christ:

- Consider this principle: “If we are obedient, despite trials, then God will help us.” In your preparation, practice connecting this principle to one or two examples of Jesus’s life in the scriptures.
- Look at an upcoming lesson plan. Select a principle you are planning to help students identify. Practice writing two or three simple questions to help students connect that principle to the example of Jesus Christ.
- Find a place in an upcoming lesson plan where you will focus on application. Practice writing two or three invitations that help students consider how the example of Jesus Christ could help them apply a principle.

Incorporate

Incorporate what you have practiced to help students connect what they are learning to Jesus Christ and emphasize His example. During the next week, choose one principle in each lesson that you will use to help students connect what they are learning to Jesus Christ and His example.

Discuss or Ponder

Ponder what you have learned from this experience. Perhaps you could record some of these thoughts in a study journal. Consider the following questions:

- What have I done previously to connect what students are learning in the scriptures to the life and example of Jesus Christ?

- What have I learned in this experience that could improve my ability to help students make these connections to Jesus Christ?
- What will I do to continue improving?

Want More?

- Neil L. Andersen, “We Talk of Christ” (general conference, Oct. 2020)
- Section 3.1, “Unit 3: Teach the One,” Inservice Leaders’ Resources

GUIDE LEARNERS IN THEIR EFFORTS TO RECOGNIZE THE LORD’S POWER, MERCY, AND INFLUENCE IN THE SCRIPTURES AND IN THEIR LIVES.

SKILL: ASK QUESTIONS THAT FOCUS ON CONNECTING THE LORD’S POWER, MERCY, AND INFLUENCE TO THE TRUTHS BEING TAUGHT.

Define

There is power that comes when we connect our efforts to live gospel principles to our Savior Jesus Christ. Take time in your preparation to ponder what the gospel principles in the scripture block help you know and understand about Jesus Christ. Then carefully create questions that invite students to consider what they can learn about His power, mercy, and influence from the truths being taught. In addition to helping students understand the doctrine, these types of questions can also help them see how living that doctrine will help them experience His power, mercy, and influence, as well as become more like Him. These types of questions may also help students consider how Jesus Christ will help them live that doctrine.

Model

Instead of asking...

- Why is it important to live the law of tithing?
- Why should we repent daily?

Try asking instead...

- What has living the law of tithing taught you about your Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ?
- What have you learned about the Savior’s mercy through daily repentance?

[Click here to see a video of this model.](#)

Practice

Practice by changing the following questions in ways that help students connect the Lord’s power, mercy, and influence to the truths being taught.

Instead of asking...

- Why is it important to study the scriptures daily?
- What power comes from attending the temple?

Try asking instead...

- _____
- _____

Incorporate

Look at your next lesson plan. Spend 10 minutes revising questions to help students connect the Lord’s power, mercy, and influence to the truths being taught.

Discuss or Ponder

- How have you learned to see that doctrinal principles become more meaningful as you connect them to the Lord’s power, mercy, and influence?
- How can this help our students better understand and rely on the teachings and Atonement of Jesus Christ?

Want More?

- Chad H Webb, “We Talk of Christ, We Rejoice in Christ” (S&I Annual Training Broadcast, June 12, 2018), ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
- Chad H Webb, “Empathy” (S&I Annual Training Broadcast, Jan. 26, 2021), ChurchofJesusChrist.org

Teach the Doctrine As Found in the Word of God

FOCUS ON CONVERTING PRINCIPLES OF THE GOSPEL AND TEACH IN WAYS THAT BUILD FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.

SKILL: ASK QUESTIONS THAT HELP STUDENTS IDENTIFY AND STATE CONVERTING PRINCIPLES.

Define

President Henry B. Eyring stated, “A converting principle is one that leads to obedience to the will of God” (“Converting Principles” [evening with a General Authority, Feb. 2, 1996], 1). One way to help students identify and state converting principles is to ask them a search question that encourages them to look for phrases that help us increase our faith in and obedience to the will of God. Another way to help them identify and state converting principles is to ask follow-up questions after a student has shared a story, experience, or explanation. Follow-up questions invite students to restate their comments in a simple way that builds faith in Christ and a willingness to obey the will of God.

Model

Search questions:

- As you search Doctrine and Covenants 121:41–46, what phrases do you see that could inspire you to obey and have faith in the will of God?
- As you read Joshua 1:5–9, what do you see that helps you want to do God’s will?
- What truths do you find in Matthew 7:7–12 that can help you build faith in Jesus Christ and follow Him?

These same questions can be changed slightly to form follow-up questions to help students state a converting principle.

- **Student’s experience:** Maria shares an experience in which asking a question in

prayer led to an answer she didn’t exactly want.

Teacher’s question: “In one phrase, what did you learn from that experience that could help others have faith in Heavenly Father and follow His direction?”

- **Student’s explanation:** Kyle just shared a wonderful but long explanation of what he learned in his scripture study the night before.
Teacher’s question: “In a simple statement, what did you learn that will help you draw closer to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ?”
- **Student’s story:** Katana shares a story about how she obeyed the law of tithing even when it was hard.
Teacher’s question: “In one sentence, what about that experience will help you continue to have faith in Christ when it might be hard to follow Him?”

[Click here to see a video of this model.](#)

Practice

Write search questions for the following scripture passages:

- James 1:5–6
- 2 Nephi 32:8–9
- Joseph Smith—History 1:11–13

Write a follow-up question for each scenario to help students state a converting principle:

- Elena just shared a great personal experience with following a prompting from the Spirit.

- Chris gave a great explanation on what he learned from the story of David and Goliath.
- Mele shared a personal story about turning to Jesus Christ when a family member passed away.

Incorporate

In this training you have practiced two skills that help the learner identify and clearly state converting principles: search questions and follow-up questions. As you think about your students, choose one skill to incorporate that will be most beneficial for them. This week, as you prepare each scripture passage, continually ask yourself, “How can I help the learner identify and state a converting principle?” You might write that question down as a reminder to keep with you as you prepare.

After you write a question that helps the learner identify or state a converting principle, try imagining how students would answer it. If you imagine them stating a converting principle, keep it. If you imagine them struggling to state a converting principle, alter the question so that it helps to achieve the intended outcome.

Discuss or Ponder

- What are you learning about helping students focus on converting principles?
- How can this practice help students teach the doctrine as found in the word of God?

Want More?

- David A. Bednar, “The Principles of My Gospel” (general conference, Apr. 2021)
- Henry B. Eyring, “The Power of Teaching Doctrine” (general conference, Apr. 1999)

HELP LEARNERS DEVELOP SCRIPTURE STUDY SKILLS.

SKILL: CREATE STUDENT SELF-EVALUATIONS THAT HELP THEM RECOGNIZE THEIR CURRENT UNDERSTANDING AND ABILITIES ABOUT SCRIPTURE STUDY SKILLS.

Define

Self-assessment is an important way students learn to exercise agency and take ownership of their learning experiences. Frequently having students assess their scripture study skills will help teachers know what type of learning experiences to create to help learners become self-reliant in their scripture study. These evaluations take many different forms, such as scales, open-ended phrases, or self-rating. They allow teachers to help students (1) evaluate their current scripture study experience, (2) identify what improvements they would like to make, and (3) then select a study skill that will help lead to their desired outcome.

Model

The following are models of different types of self-evaluation concerning scripture study skills:

- On a scale of 1 to 10, how confident do I feel about finding Jesus Christ in every chapter?
- I think I could be better at finding Jesus Christ in every chapter if I ...
- A study skill that could help me find Jesus Christ in every chapter is ...

[Click here to see a video of this model.](#)

Practice

Develop a scripture study skills self-evaluation that includes the three elements listed in the “Define” section. Invite someone to review it and share how helpful they think it would be.

Incorporate

Invite students to assess their personal scripture study skills on a weekly basis between now and the end of the school year.

Discuss or Ponder

- What are you learning about the importance of helping learners assess their own scripture study skills?
- How can helping learners evaluate their scripture study skills increase their capacity to have a more meaningful experience with the word of God?

Want More?

- “Lesson 5: Techniques of Effective Scripture Study,” *Scripture Study—The Power of the Word Teacher Manual*, ChurchofJesusChrist.org
- “Daily Scripture Study and Goals,” *Inservice Leaders’ Resources*

HELP LEARNERS UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT AND CONTENT OF THE SCRIPTURES AND DISCOVER GOSPEL DOCTRINE AND PRINCIPLES.

SKILL: CREATE OPEN-ENDED SEARCH QUESTIONS THAT HELP LEARNERS DISCOVER GOSPEL DOCTRINE AND PRINCIPLES FOR THEMSELVES AND THAT DO NOT LEAD STUDENTS TO A SPECIFIC RESPONSE.

Define

Open-ended search questions invite students to discover and understand truths in the scriptures for themselves rather than leading them to a predetermined or specific response. This approach can make a student's study of the scriptures more relevant and can allow the Lord to teach and inspire them personally. These questions (1) include an invitation for students to consider what stands out to them personally, (2) eliminate the need for students to look for something specific that the teacher has in mind, and (3) can allow students to ponder how truths identified and understood can be applied in their own lives. These questions could be used when inviting students to search verses to identify truths and in seeking to further understand truths they've identified.

Model

Here are a few examples of how you might help students discover and understand truths for themselves with open-ended search questions:

- Rather than inviting, "Find the verse where the Lord teaches us the importance of obedience," you could ask, "What principle stands out to you in these verses?"
- Rather than saying, "Jesus emphasizes our need to have faith in Him in these verses," you could ask, "What principles can we learn from the teachings and example of Jesus in these verses?"
- Rather than asking, "Can you see how the Lord is reminding us to pray always in this verse?" you could ask, "What message about prayer is the Lord trying to help you understand from this verse?"

[Click here to see a video of this model.](#)

Practice

Use one or more of the following practices to improve your ability to help students discover and understand truths for themselves:

- Look at Moroni 10:32–33. Practice identifying more than one principle to see how students might identify a variety of principles from these verses. Write down one question that would allow students to discover multiple principles.
- Consider a scripture block you are planning to study with students in an upcoming lesson. Rather than planning to have students read these verses and look for a specific principle you have already identified, practice writing two or three open-ended search questions to help them discover a principle for themselves.
- Look at an upcoming lesson plan. Select a principle students might identify from the verses being studied. Practice writing two or three simple questions to help them further understand this principle in a way that doesn't lead them to a predetermined or specific answer.

Incorporate

As you prepare your lessons this week, create two or three open-ended search questions that help learners discover gospel doctrine and principles for themselves and that do not lead students to a specific response. Write them down and try asking each one with a family member, with a colleague, or by yourself. Identify one question to ask in the classroom, and use it in your lesson.

Discuss or Ponder

Ponder what you have learned from this experience. Perhaps you could record some of these thoughts in a study journal. Consider the following questions:

- What have I done previously to help students learn through open-ended search questions?
- What have I learned in this experience that could improve my ability to ask open-ended search questions?
- What will I do to continue improving?

Want More?

- Chad H. Webb, “We Have Not Come This Far to Only Come This Far” (S&I Annual Training Broadcast, Jun. 9, 2020), [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org)
- Sections 2.1–2.3, “Unit 2: Teach the One,” [Inservice Leaders’ Resources \(learner-focused teaching\)](#)
- “Help Learners Find Scriptural Truths,” in “Teach the Doctrine,” *Teaching in the Savior’s Way* (2016), 21

Invite Diligent Learning

ENCOURAGE DAILY SCRIPTURE STUDY.

SKILL: ASSIST STUDENTS IN CREATING A DAILY SCRIPTURE STUDY GOAL.

Define

Helping students develop a habit of studying the scriptures daily will allow the Lord to teach, strengthen, and direct them in the ways that they need. You can assist students by helping them create a daily scripture goal. This can effectively be done by helping students to

- understand the promised blessings associated with daily scripture study,
- be prayerful in setting a daily scripture study goal,
- decide when and where to study the scriptures each day, and
- decide upon a scripture study method to use.

This could be done at the beginning of a term and revisited as necessary to help students continue to progress.

Model

Here are a few examples of how you might help students set daily scripture study goals as they seek to study the current year's book of scripture each day:

- Ask students to consider what blessings they have experienced by studying the scriptures daily.
- Invite students to search the scriptures or general conference talks for promises regarding the blessings that come from studying the word of God.
- Remind students to be prayerful in setting a daily scripture study goal. Have them seek the Lord's guidance in what they need most and how they feel they could improve upon their

previous efforts as they continue to learn and progress.

- Assist students in setting a daily goal of when and where to study by having them reflect upon their current daily routine. Invite them to consider a time and place for daily study where they can be alert, attentive, and focused.
- Help students decide how they would like to study the current year's book of scripture. Have them consider a variety of study methods. Invite them to set a specific goal, reminding them that these goals can be adjusted and adapted as they go forward.

[Click here to see a video of this model.](#)

Practice

Use one or more of the following practices to improve your ability to help students set daily scripture study goals:

- Personally review some of the promised blessings associated with studying the scriptures daily. These could be found in the scriptures themselves or in the messages of general conference talks. Select one of these promises to share with students as you plan to invite them to discover the promises for themselves in an upcoming lesson.
- Consider how you might invite students to be prayerful in setting a daily scripture study goal. Write down one or two questions you might ask students that would help them invite the Lord into their goal setting.
- Practice inviting students to decide when and where to study the scriptures daily. Write down

one question you could ask students to consider that addresses daily schedule, attentiveness, and eliminating distractions.

- Practice helping students select a scripture study method by giving them options and discussing the benefits of each one. Practice illustrating some of these approaches for students so they can see how they might adjust their own study to best meet their needs as they seek to study the current year's book of scripture each day

Incorporate

Prayerfully look over your class rolls while considering the examples in the model and practice sections of this training. Consider which examples will best help your students create a scripture study goal. Using one of the examples above or one of your own, start with a small change that helps your students develop a good habit of daily scripture study. Set a time when you can consistently follow up to see how it is going and help them revise their goal as necessary.

Discuss or Ponder

Ponder what you have learned from this experience. Perhaps you could record some of these thoughts in a study journal. Consider the following questions:

- What have I done previously to help students set scripture study goals?
- What have I learned in this experience that could improve my ability to help them set scripture study goals?
- How can I help my students be consistent with their scripture study goal?

Want More?

- Richard G. Scott, “The Power of Scripture” (general conference, Oct. 2011)
- David A. Bednar, “A Reservoir of Living Water” (Brigham Young University devotional, Feb. 4, 2007), speeches.byu.edu
- “Daily Scripture Study and Goals,” Inservice Leaders’ Resources

HELP LEARNERS DEVELOP THE ABILITY TO DISCUSS GOSPEL BELIEFS WITH OTHERS.

SKILL: HELP STUDENTS CREATE OR BEGIN GOSPEL CONVERSATIONS.

Define

The Lord has asked the youth and young adults to help gather Israel. Sharing their beliefs and testimonies with others will invite further learning and deepen their conversion to the Savior and His gospel. Some students struggle knowing how to begin these gospel conversations. Students can begin gospel conversations with others by (1) considering what they are learning about Jesus Christ and His gospel, (2) pondering who would benefit from the discussion, and (3) deciding how they will prompt a discussion with that individual. This can be done through a variety of methods, such as teaching a Come, Follow Me lesson, leading a class discussion, writing a note, sending a text message, or sharing an article about the Church. The purpose is not to share the belief or experience but rather to initiate a gospel conversation. Doing so invites others to ask questions and encourages further conversations in the future.

Note: If you have students who are fearful of doing this, consider how you can connect them to Jesus Christ and the help He will give them as they open their mouths to share His truth.

Model

Toward the end of class, invite your students to ponder who they would like to share something with. Invite them to write a quick note or send a text that will provide an opportunity for them to have a gospel conversation with that person when they see each other. For example, students could text:

- “We talked about something in seminary today that made me think of you. Remind me to tell you about it when I see you next.”
- “Hey, I’ve been thinking about the Savior’s ability to forgive. Can you help me think through some things about Him? If so, when would be a good time to talk?”

[Click here to see a video of this model.](#)

Practice

Come up with three other phrases you could use as examples to help students see how to begin a gospel conversation.

Incorporate

Share with your students some examples of what they could write to initiate a gospel conversation, and then practice sharing them in class. Have other students help them improve. Invite them to initiate the conversation when they are ready.

Discuss or Ponder

- What have you learned about helping learners create or begin gospel conversations?
- How can helping learners share their beliefs and testimonies with their families help their seminary or institute experience be a truly home-centered experience?

Want More?

- Russell M. Nelson, “How to Share the Gospel,” *New Era*, July 2011, 48.
- [Sharing the Gospel, ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

HELP LEARNERS BE ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN THE LEARNING PROCESS.

SKILL: DEVELOP AND ASK QUESTIONS THAT HELP LEARNERS CONNECT WHAT THEY HAVE LEARNED IN THEIR PERSONAL AND FAMILY SCRIPTURE STUDY TO THE CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE.

Define

To connect is to bring or join two things together. As teachers help learners connect their scripture study at home to the classroom, they are bringing or joining these two experiences together. There are many ways to do this. One way is to ask open-ended questions that (1) include students' personal or family experiences with their scripture study at home, (2) explore how those experiences connect to what they are learning in class, and (3) give them time to reflect and remember what they studied at home.

You can also prepare discussion questions for class that will help students take what they are learning in the classroom and use it at home. These questions are similar. You invite students to think about what learning experiences they had in class that day and how it can be useful at home. These questions can help us become more home-centered and Church-supported in the classroom and prepare the students to have more learning experiences outside the classroom.

Model

Questions that connect learning at home to experiences in the classroom:

- What have you learned in class today that is connected to what you are learning at home?
- What did you and your family learn about Jesus Christ this week?
- What questions have come to you as you have discussed these scriptures?
- What has been your favorite thing to learn as you or your family have studied these scripture passages?

Questions that connect learning in the classroom to experiences at home:

- What did you learn today that would be a blessing to you and your family?
- If you prepared a five-minute lesson on these truths, what would you focus on, and why?
- What experiences did you have today that would be useful for your family? What would you change or do differently to suit your family's needs?

[Click here to see a video of this model.](#)

Practice

Practice #1: Using the examples in the model (or one of your own), determine how you will connect what students are experiencing with their study at home to what they are experiencing in class based on the following example lessons.

- The lessons this week are in Doctrine and Covenants 94–97.
- The lessons this week are in Doctrine and Covenants 121–23.

Practice #2: Develop a question to connect what students are doing in the classroom to their experiences at home, based on the following example lessons.

- The lessons this week are in Doctrine and Covenants 129–32.
- The lessons this week are in Doctrine and Covenants 135–36.

Incorporate

Take three minutes before class each day for the next two weeks to look at a student's name on your roll. As you see the name, ponder what he or she might be learning in personal and family study at home. During class, ask the class or that individual student one of

the questions that you have practiced. You might also write down what you learn as you ask and listen.

Discuss or Ponder

- What have you learned about inviting diligent learning through this experience?
- What are other ways you have been able to connect what students are experiencing in their home study to what they experience in class?

Want More?

- Russell M. Nelson, “Opening Remarks” (general conference, Oct. 2018)
- [*Come, Follow Me*](#) (ChurchofJesusChrist.org)
- Teaching Videos (ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

Teacher Development Skills; Enhancing the Learner Experience

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