

Preparing for the Temple Endowment

32

OBJECTIVE	Each young man will prepare to receive his temple endowment and prepare to make this experience beautiful and sacred.
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PREPARATION	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Prayerfully study Doctrine and Covenants 124:40–41 and 105:18.2. Materials needed:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Copies of the scriptures (each young man should bring his own).b. Picture 10, Manila Philippines Temple (62591); picture 11, Temple Baptismal Font (62031; Gospel Art Picture Kit 504); and picture 12, Temple Celestial Room.c. You may want to obtain various pictures of temples from your meetinghouse library.d. A piece of paper and a pencil for each young man.e. Pencils for marking scriptures.3. Write on slips of paper the seven statements about the purpose of temples (found at the beginning of the lesson).4. Write on slips of paper the nine questions at the end of the lesson.5. Arrange well in advance to have the bishop teach this lesson, especially the section “Bishop’s presentation.” Provide him with the lesson outline, and help him in any way he wishes to set up the room, provide visual aids, or teach parts of the lesson. He can teach the quorums together or separately. He might even want to have the young women join the young men. Since this lesson covers such an important subject, it is longer than usual and more background material has been provided; therefore, either you or the bishop should prayerfully select which materials to use. Be sure to leave time for the question-answer period at the end of the lesson. This is a lesson on the endowment only, not on temple marriage (see lesson 33, “Celestial Marriage—A Preparation for Eternity”). This lesson might require two weeks, depending on local circumstances and the direction of the Spirit.6. If it is available in your area, you might want to show “Temples Are for Eternal Covenants” on <i>Family Home Evening Video Supplement 2</i> (53277).
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SUGGESTED LESSON DEVELOPMENT

Pictures, handouts, and discussion

Purposes of Temples

Display the pictures of various temples and of an ordinance room. Hand out to class members the following statements taken from an article by Elder John A. Widtsoe (“Looking Toward the Temple,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1972, pp. 56–57). Have the young men read each quotation in turn. Discuss the statements with the young men.

1. “*The temple is a house or home of the Lord.* Should the Lord visit the earth, he would come to his temple.”
2. “*The temple is a place of instruction.* Here the principles of the gospel are reviewed and profound truths of the kingdom of God are unfolded.”
3. “*The temple is a place of peace.* Here we may lay aside the cares and worries of the outside, turbulent world.”
4. “*The temple is a place of covenants,* which will help . . . us to go out from the temple with the high resolve to lead lives worthy of the gifts of the gospel.”
5. “*The temple is a place of blessing.* Promises are made to us, conditioned only upon our faithfulness.”

6. "The temple is a place where ceremonies pertaining to Godliness are presented. The great mysteries of life, with man's unanswered questions, are here made clear: (1) Where did I come from? (2) Why am I here? (3) Where do I go when life is over?"
7. "The temple is a place of revelation. The Lord may here give revelation, and every person may receive revelation to assist him in life."
- Chalkboard discussion
- List on the chalkboard some of the ordinances that are performed inside the temple:
1. Baptism for the dead.
 2. Priesthood ordinations for the dead.
 3. Endowments for the living and the dead.
 4. Sealing of couples for eternity for the living and the dead.
 5. Other sealing ordinances for the living and the dead.
- Explain that ordinances performed in the temple have symbolic meaning. In the ordinance of baptism, for example, we are buried in water and brought out again. This symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord. All temple ordinances are symbolic of gospel truths. Because more is taught in the temple than a person can comprehend in one visit, worthy members should return often to the temple where possible.
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- The Endowment Is Vital to Each Person's Exaltation**
- Story
- The ordinances of the temple were so important to one young Latter-day Saint girl that she went to great lengths to feel the spirit of the temple. Tell the following story in your own words:
- Dedication of the Nauvoo Temple took place on 30 April 1846 and the following three days. Few of those already on the trail to Winter Quarters returned for the dedication, but one who did was fourteen-year-old Elvira Stevens. Orphaned in Nauvoo and traveling west with her sister and brother-in-law, Elvira crossed the Mississippi River three times to attend the services, the only member of her wagon company to do so. "The heavenly power was so great," she wrote, "I then crossed and recrossed to be benefitted by it, as young as I was." Elvira had not yet received the temple ordinances, but the spiritual power of the edifice itself and the circumstances of its dedication remained prominent memories of her brief and troubled life in Nauvoo. (See Carol Cornwall Madsen, *In Their Own Words* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1994], p. 23.)
- Chalkboard discussion
- Explain that the better prepared the young men are, the better they will understand the endowment when they go to the temple. This lesson will help prepare them and give them suggestions for further preparation.
- Write the word *endowment* on the chalkboard. Ask the young men to define it.
- When we say that a university has received a large endowment, what has it been given? (A financial gift.)
 - The Lord promises the elders of the Church that if they sanctify themselves, they "shall be endowed with power" (D&C 43:16). What does this mean?
 - The Lord promised the elders of the Church, "I have prepared a great endowment . . . to be poured out" (D&C 105:12). What was he promising? (Many gifts or blessings.)
- On the chalkboard write, *Endowment means a gift of spiritual blessings.*
- Scripture and discussion
- Ask the young men to explain why they think the endowment is necessary. Have them read, mark, and discuss Doctrine and Covenants 124:40–41.
- Quotation
- Read the following statement:
- "Let me give you a definition in brief. Your endowment is, to receive all those ordinances in the house of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being enabled to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the holy Priesthood, and gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell" (Brigham Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954], p. 416).

Chalkboard discussion

Write *Doctrine and Covenants 124:40–41* on the chalkboard. Place the following words and phrases below the reference in this way:

Doctrine and Covenants 124:40–41
 Exaltation in the presence of God
 Continued faithfulness
 Eternal marriage
 Temple endowment
 The holy priesthood
 Gift of the Holy Ghost
 Baptism
 Repentance
 Faith in Jesus Christ

Bear testimony that the temple endowment is essential to each person's exaltation. It is a necessary step in order to gain exaltation in the celestial kingdom and attain godhood.

Requirements for a Temple Recommend

Bishop's presentation

The bishop may wish to show his temple recommend book to the young men (and young women, if present) and explain that he has been ordained to be a common judge in Israel. To obtain a temple recommend, a Church member must have a personal worthiness interview each year with a member of the bishopric and a member of the stake presidency. The bishop may wish to read from the temple recommend book the specific questions that will be asked, or he may paraphrase them in simple terms. He should invite the class members to privately examine their own lives to see if they could qualify for a temple recommend. If not, they should begin to make themselves worthy.

The bishop might explain that honesty in the interviews is vital. The young people are really responding to Heavenly Father through his representatives.

The bishop might explain that each young person will be interviewed individually and must sign the recommend to indicate that he or she has answered all questions correctly and honestly. The bishop witnesses that signature. Later a member of the stake presidency will interview the individual and must also sign the recommend.

Discussion

Discuss how young people can prepare to be interviewed for their temple recommends and to receive their own endowments. Relate the preparations to the purpose of the endowment already discussed earlier in the lesson, and help the class members bring out the following points:

1. Study the scriptures. Especially review Genesis 1–3; *Doctrine and Covenants 124:40–41; 132; Moses 1–5; and Abraham 4–5*.
2. Be prayerful.
3. Obey the Word of Wisdom.
4. Live a morally clean life.
5. Pay a full tithe.
6. Sustain the General Authorities and the local authorities of the Church.
7. Be honest in all your dealings.
8. Avoid apostate groups or teachings.

	<p>9. Repent of wrongdoing.</p> <p>10. Love your fellowmen.</p>
Testimony	<p>Bear your testimony of the joy and satisfaction that come to those who live worthy to enter the temple to receive their endowment and who remain worthy of these blessings throughout their lives.</p>

Questions Concerning the Temple	
Discussion	<p>This is an ideal opportunity to answer any appropriate questions the young people have concerning the endowment. Included here are nine questions often asked by young people preparing to go through the temple. Use any or all of the information that follows.</p> <p>Hand out the slips of paper containing the questions. Have the class members read their questions one at a time. Then discuss the answers.</p> <p>1. What kind of help can a young man expect when he goes to the temple?</p> <p>"[You] should . . . know that when you go to the temple for the first time, you will not be left unattended. Temple officiators, receptionists, and others assigned to labor therein will assist you to make your temple experience a beautiful and meaningful one" (ElRay L. Christiansen, "Some Things You Need to Know about the Temple," <i>New Era</i>, June 1971, p. 27).</p> <p>2. Can my family, fiancée, or friends go through the ceremony with me?</p> <p>Certain activities in the temple are done separately. But for anyone going to the temple for the first time, a father, mother, brother, sister, teacher, or friend with a valid temple recommend may accompany him.</p> <p>3. What will I need to take to the temple?</p> <p>A temple recommend and a new pair of authorized garments.</p> <p>4. Will I need temple clothing?</p> <p>All necessary clothing is available at the temple or can be purchased from a garment distribution center.</p> <p>5. What clothing should be worn to the temple?</p> <p>When entering the temple, one should wear modest clothing. Sunday best is appropriate. After receiving the endowment, a person's wardrobe should always be modest, whether worn in the temple or not.</p> <p>People who enter the temple to participate in sacred ordinances change from their Sunday clothes to simple, clean, white clothing. Elder Hugh B. Brown explained:</p> <p>"Here we will not only lay aside the clothing of the street, but the thoughts of the street, and will try not only to clothe our bodies in clean white linen but our minds in purity of thought. May we profit by the spoken word and what is more lasting and more impressive, receive instruction from the Spirit" (quoted in ElRay L. Christiansen, "Some Things You Need to Know about the Temple," <i>New Era</i>, June 1971, p. 26).</p> <p>6. Why does everyone wear the same kind of clothing in the temple?</p> <p>"In the temples all are dressed alike in white. White is the symbol of purity. No unclean person has the right to enter God's house. Besides, the uniform dress symbolizes that before God our Father in heaven, all men are equal. The beggar and the banker, the learned and the unlearned, the prince and the pauper sit side by side in the temple and are of equal importance if they live righteously before the Lord God, the Father of their spirits. It is spiritual fitness and understanding that one receives in the temple. All such have an equal place before the Lord" (John A. Widtsoe, "Looking Toward the Temple," <i>Ensign</i>, Jan. 1972, p. 58).</p> <p>7. Why is wearing the temple garment at all times so essential?</p> <p>The temple garment is identified with the temple endowment and covenants that are made. In Revelation, John wrote: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (Revelation 16:15).</p>

President Joseph F. Smith also stated:

"The Lord has given unto us garments of the holy priesthood, and you know what that means. And yet there are those of us who mutilate them, in order that we may follow the foolish, vain and (permit me to say) indecent practices of the world. In order that such people may imitate the fashions, they will not hesitate to mutilate that which should be held . . . sacred. . . . They should hold these things that God has given unto them sacred, unchanged and unaltered from the very pattern in which God gave them. Let us have the moral courage to stand against the opinions of fashion, and especially where fashion compels us to break a covenant and so commit a grievous sin" ("Fashion and the Violation of Covenants and Duty," *Improvement Era*, Aug. 1906, p. 813).

8. Why is the temple endowment kept from public view?

The ordinances of the temple are so sacred that they are not open to the view of the public. They are available only to those who qualify through righteous living. They are performed in places dedicated especially for this purpose. Their sacred nature is such that discussion in detail outside the temple is inappropriate.

"Many blessings come to those who receive and respect these sacred ordinances, which are so necessary for exaltation. Participation in temple work provides dynamic, vivid, useful instruction in gospel principles, and the temple is a place for contemplation and prayer.

"The temple is a sanctuary from the world, a bit of heaven on earth, and one should continue to live worthily so that he can go to the temple often and renew his covenants" (ElRay L. Christiansen, "Some Things You Need to Know about the Temple," *New Era*, June 1971, p. 27).

9. Why are the ceremonies in the temple so different from our normal Sunday worship?

Because they are more symbolic in nature. Therefore, when we go to the temple we should be prepared for an experience that is quite different from our usual worship services.

Conclusion

Scripture and testimony

Have the young men read and mark Doctrine and Covenants 105:18. Bear testimony to the truth of this scripture, as well as to the importance of the endowment.

Challenge

Challenge each young man to commit himself to righteous choices concerning dating and courtship and to living the commandments of God in order to be worthy of a temple recommend.