

**OBJECTIVE** The young men will understand the nature and purpose of patriarchal blessings.

- PREPARATION**
1. Prayerfully study Genesis 25:19–34; 26:34–35; 49:8–12, 22–26; 2 Nephi 4:5–9; and Doctrine and Covenants 107:39, 53–57.
  2. Materials needed:
    - a. Copies of the scriptures (each young man should bring his own).
    - b. Pencils for marking scriptures.
  3. Bring a letter to show the young men.
  4. Optional: Invite the stake patriarch to talk about the declaration of lineage and the difference between natural and ordained patriarchs.

**SUGGESTED  
LESSON  
DEVELOPMENT**

**What Is a Patriarchal Blessing?**

Object lesson

Display the letter.

- How would you like to receive a personal letter from the Lord?
- What would you like the Lord to tell you in such a letter?

The young men might mention advice about their problems or what the future will bring. Spend only a few minutes on this activity.

- How many of you have received a patriarchal blessing?

Quotation

Ask the young men to listen for what a patriarchal blessing contains as you read the following statement made by President David O. McKay and his Counselors (Stephen L. Richards and J. Reuben Clark Jr.) in 1957:

“Patriarchal blessings contemplate an inspired declaration of the lineage of the recipient, and also, where so moved upon by the Spirit, an inspired and prophetic statement of the life mission of the recipient, together with such blessings, cautions, and admonitions as the patriarch may be prompted to give for the accomplishment of such life’s mission” (quoted by Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 558).

Chalkboard discussion

- What do patriarchal blessings contain?

List the young men’s answers on the chalkboard, which may include—

1. A statement or declaration of lineage.
2. A prophetic statement of our life’s mission.
3. Admonitions or warnings.
4. A comfort, a guide, and a protection.

Scripture and discussion

- Who can call and ordain a patriarch?
- Who is the patriarch in our stake (or district)?

To find the answer, have a young man read Doctrine and Covenants 107:39 aloud. Explain that patriarchs are evangelists and must be ordained under the direction of an Apostle. The prophet, who is the senior Apostle on earth, has extended to stake presidents this authority to ordain patriarchs.

Quotation

Have a young man read Joseph Smith’s definition of an evangelist:

	<p>“An Evangelist is a Patriarch, even the oldest man of the blood of Joseph or of the seed of Abraham. Wherever the Church of Christ is established in the earth, there should be a Patriarch for the benefit of the posterity of the Saints, as it was with Jacob in giving his patriarchal blessing unto his sons” (<i>Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith</i>, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 151).</p>
Scriptures and discussion	<p>Ask a young man to read aloud Doctrine and Covenants 107:53–57. Explain that Adam desired to bestow his last blessing upon his posterity before his death.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why would Adam want to give a blessing to his descendants?</li> </ul>
	<p>Read and discuss 2 Nephi 4:5–9.</p>
	<p>Explain that the Lord can reveal the future for our benefit. The Lord knew the hearts of Laman and Lemuel, and he knew what choices they would make. He could predict that because of them their posterity would eventually go astray. He then offered their posterity hope for the future because eventually they would discard the false teachings of their fathers passed down from Laman and Lemuel and would believe again.</p>
	<p>Have the young men analyze the other blessings. Point out that the gift of prophecy is given to patriarchs so that they, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, can give such blessings.</p>
	<p>Ask a young man to read Genesis 49:8–12 (Judah’s blessing), then verses 22–26 (Joseph’s blessing). Explain that Judah and Joseph, two of the twelve sons of Israel, received important blessings. Look in each blessing for one important item that has affected the world.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do these blessings indicate the inspiration Jacob received for each of these two sons?</li> </ul>
	<p>Briefly list on the chalkboard how Joseph’s and Judah’s blessings were fulfilled. Help the young men understand that through Judah’s descendants came Christ. Through Joseph’s descendants came Lehi, whose journey fulfilled the prophecy concerning the “branches over the wall” when he and his family crossed the ocean (wall) and came to the promised land.</p>
Quotation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the fulfillment of these two blessings affect us today?</li> </ul> <p>Ask the young men to listen to Elder Bruce R. McConkie’s explanation of their relationship to Jacob or Israel:</p>
	<p>“Nearly every member of the Church is a literal descendant of Jacob who gave <i>patriarchal blessings</i> to his 12 sons, predicting what would happen to them and their posterity after them. . . . As inheritors of the blessings of Jacob, it is the privilege of the gathered remnant of Jacob to receive their own patriarchal blessings and, by faith, to be blessed equally with the ancients” (<i>Mormon Doctrine</i>, 2nd ed. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966], p. 558).</p>
Adviser presentation	<p>Explain that every worthy member of the Church is eligible to receive an inspired, personal blessing from the Lord through the patriarch. This blessing will include an inspired statement of the person’s lineage, as well as personal blessings and admonitions.</p>

### **Patriarchs Give Blessings**

Visitor or quorum discussion	<p>As an optional activity you may have the stake patriarch explain the difference between the types of blessings given by an ordained patriarch and the blessings a father gives as patriarch of his family.</p>
Discussion and adviser presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the two kinds of patriarchs in the Church who may give blessings? (A father gives a father’s blessing and an ordained patriarch gives patriarchal blessings.)</li> </ul>
	<p>Explain that every priesthood bearer who enters the covenant of celestial marriage becomes a patriarch to his own family. However, fathers’ blessings are different from those given by ordained patriarchs.</p>
Sharing experiences	<p>Give the young men time to share instances when their fathers have given blessings to them or to someone in their homes. Point out how these blessings may be used to heal the sick, to calm fears, to bless someone before leaving home, or to help solve problems.</p>

### Realization of Blessings Requires Our Faithfulness

Adviser presentation	<p>Explain that anciently under the patriarchal order certain rights, privileges, powers, and blessings, collectively called the birthright, were passed down from the father to his first-born son.</p>
Scripture and chalkboard discussion	<p>Have the quorum members follow as you read Genesis 25:19–34 and 26:34–35. Suggest that they listen for answers to the following question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What did Esau do to show that he despised his birthright?</li> </ul> <p>Record the young men’s answers on the chalkboard. Include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. He sold his birthright or blessing for a dish of food. (Note the symbolism of selling our birthright in God’s kingdom through seeking after the fleeting pleasures of the moment.)</li> <li>2. He married outside his religion.</li> <li>3. He caused his parents grief because of his indifference.</li> </ol> <p>Point out that Esau’s actions showed that he was not worthy of the birthright blessings.</p>
Adviser presentation	<p>When Jacob received this patriarchal blessing, he also received the birthright blessing that usually came to the oldest son born into the family, even though he was hours younger than Esau. As a result, Jacob became the primary inheritor of his father’s lands and wealth. He also became the patriarch and spiritual leader of the family through this blessing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you think led Esau to give up his birthright blessing? (He must not have really believed it was important. He put temporal things before spiritual.)</li> </ul>
Chalkboard discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What far-reaching blessings did Jacob receive that Esau forfeited?</li> </ul> <p>Help the quorum members bring out that—</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. He became Israel, the father of the great family through which the blessings of Abraham would come.</li> <li>2. Through his lineage, all the nations of the world would be blessed.</li> <li>3. Through his lineage, the Savior would come.</li> <li>4. Through his lineage, Israel would be gathered on earth from all over the world.</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do some young people in our day “sell their birthrights”?</li> </ul> <p>Point out the similarities between patriarchal blessings and birthright blessings. Both give promises based on faithfulness and both can be lost through neglect.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What might be a modern “mess of pottage,” something of a worldly nature, for which people give up spiritual blessings?</li> <li>• What are some of the ways in which a person today might lose or give up his birthright blessings?</li> </ul> <p>Summarize the young men’s answers on the chalkboard. These should include the following:</p>

<p>Not keeping the Word of Wisdom</p> <p>Immorality</p> <p>Lure of wealth or status</p> <p>Selfishness</p> <p>Dishonesty</p> <p>Indifference to the gospel</p> <p>Marrying outside the covenant</p> <p>Worldliness</p>
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## Conclusion

Adviser presentation and discussion

Explain that the Aaronic Priesthood holders may receive their patriarchal blessings when they, their parents, and the bishop feel they are ready. In order to receive a patriarchal blessing the following steps are necessary:

1. Make an appointment with the bishop to receive from him a written recommend that must be presented to the stake patriarch.
  2. The bishop's interview will center on worthiness and preparation for a patriarchal blessing.
  3. Contact the stake patriarch for an appointment to receive the blessing. It is important to ask the patriarch what to do to prepare for the blessing. He may suggest fasting, prayer, and specific scripture study before giving the blessing.
- After a blessing has been received, what should be done with it?

Explain that a patriarchal blessing is like a set of personal scriptures for the individual alone. It will require continued study in order to fully understand it. Remind the young men that each blessing is personal. They should not pass their blessings around for others to read, and they should discuss the contents of their blessings with their friends and extended family only if they are prompted by the Spirit to do so. Remind the young men that they should also seek personal blessings from their own fathers, especially when they feel the need. In addition, they should always strive to live worthy of their blessings. (Note that the patriarch will make a copy of each blessing for Church headquarters for safekeeping and official storage.)

Challenge

Challenge each young man who has not yet obtained his patriarchal blessing to prepare himself to receive it. Challenge each young man who has received his blessing to refer to it often and seek for answers to his own specific problems.