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Feasting on the Words of Christ

OBJECTIVE

Each young man will understand how studying the scriptures will increase his spirituality and strengthen his faith and testimony.

PREPARATION

1. Prayerfully study 2 Nephi 31:20; Alma 32:26–43; 3 Nephi 17:2–3; Moroni 6:4; 10:3–4; and Doctrine and Covenants 18:33–36; 88:62–63.
2. Materials needed:
 - a. Copies of the scriptures (each young man should bring his own).
 - b. Pencils for marking scriptures.

SUGGESTED LESSON DEVELOPMENT

Quotation and discussion

Scripture Study Helps Us Stay Closer to Heavenly Father

- Have you ever felt like Heavenly Father was not listening to your prayers or that he was far away and not concerned about you?
- What do you think causes those feelings?
- How can we overcome those feelings and feel closer to Heavenly Father again?

Read the following about what one Church leader did to feel greater spirituality:

When he was an Apostle, President Spencer W. Kimball said: “I find that when I get casual in my relationships with divinity and when it seems that no divine ear is listening and no divine voice is speaking, that I am far, far away. If I immerse myself in the scriptures the distance narrows and the spirituality returns” (*What I Hope You Will Teach My Grandchildren and All Others of the Youth of Zion* [address delivered to seminary and institute faculty, Brigham Young University, 11 July 1966], p. 6).

Explain that the testimony of President Kimball is powerful and plain. He “immerses” himself in the scriptures in order to increase spirituality. We cannot expect to achieve and maintain a close relationship with God, without studying the scriptures. That is why, as President Kimball has said, “The General Authorities have urged us all with increasing frequency and in a spirit of love to adopt a program of daily gospel study in our homes, both as individuals and as families” (“How Rare a Possession—the Scriptures,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1976, p. 2).

- How can studying the scriptures help us increase our spirituality and stay close to God?

Story

The following story told by President Marion G. Romney indicates that scripture reading can bring greater spirituality to anyone who reads with real intent:

“I remember reading [the Book of Mormon] with one of my lads when he was very young. On one occasion I lay in the lower bunk and he in the upper bunk. We were each reading aloud alternate paragraphs of those last three marvelous chapters of Second Nephi. I heard his voice breaking and thought he had a cold, but we went on to the end of the three chapters. As we finished he said to me, ‘Daddy, do you ever cry when you read the Book of Mormon?’

“ ‘Yes, Son,’ I answered. ‘Sometimes the Spirit of the Lord so witnesses to my soul that the Book of Mormon is true that I do cry.’

“ ‘Well,’ he said, ‘that is what happened to me tonight.’

“ . . . This book was given to us of God to read and to live by, and it will hold us as close to the Spirit of the Lord as anything I know” (*Look to God and Live: Discourses of Marion G. Romney*, comp. George J. Romney [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1971], pp. xii–xiii).

- What did President Romney say about the scriptures and staying close to the Spirit?

- Have any of you had a spiritual experience while reading the scriptures?

Help the young men understand that studying the scriptures will help us know what Heavenly Father and Jesus want us to do. Understanding and living by their teachings will help us remain closer to Heavenly Father and Jesus.

We Can Be Nourished by the Word of God

Chalkboard activity

Have the young men read the following scriptures, and have them identify the words that describe how we should approach the scriptures. As they respond, place the following on the chalkboard:

Scripture	Key Word	Meaning
2 Nephi 31:20	Feast	To feed sumptuously
3 Nephi 17:2–3	Ponder	To consider carefully
Moroni 10:3–4		To weigh in the mind
D&C 88:62–63		To meditate or reflect
Moroni 6:4	Nourish	To provide with food or other substances necessary for life and growth

Scriptures and discussion

Read 2 Nephi 31:20.

- What does Nephi instruct us to do with the word of Christ? (To feast upon it.)
- What does it mean to feast?

Help the young men understand that the word *feast* means to feed or partake sumptuously. To feast is more than to nibble or sample. A feast brings to mind a banquet or dinner in which there is more to eat than can be enjoyed in one sitting.

Read 3 Nephi 17:2–3.

- What did the Savior tell the Nephites to do in order to better understand his words?

Explain that Jesus recognized that an understanding of his words usually involves more than learning them or reading them for the first time.

- What does it mean to ponder? (To weigh in the mind; to consider or examine carefully.)

Read Moroni 10:3–4.

- What does Moroni exhort us to do with the words of the Book of Mormon?
- What is the promise to those who ponder the scriptures and ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, and with faith in Christ?

Read Doctrine and Covenants 88:62–63.

- What does Jesus invite us to do with his sayings?
- What is his promise to those who do these things?

Read Moroni 6:4.

- Why were the names of those who had been baptized taken? (To remember them so that they might be “nourished by the good word of God.”)
- What does it mean to nourish?

Help the young men understand that the word *nourish* means to provide with food or other substances necessary for life and growth.

- What is the relationship of feasting, pondering, and being nourished?

Help the young men understand that a person who feasts on and ponders the scriptures will be nourished spiritually. A person will be nourished by the Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost,

and come to know the voice of Christ if he (1) feasts on the words of God, (2) weighs them carefully in his mind, and (3) asks God in the name of Christ concerning them.

Reading the Scriptures Strengthens Our Faith and Testimony

Scripture and discussion

Have the young men read Alma 32:26–43.

- What is the first step toward developing faith? (To awake and arouse our minds to make an experiment and desire to believe [verse 27]. This is like preparing the soil before planting.)
- What is the second step? (To plant the seed.)
- What is being compared to the seed? (The word of God.)
- How can we tell that the seed is good? (It will sprout and begin to grow. It will begin to enlarge our soul, enlighten our understanding, and begin to be delicious.)
- What happens if the young plant is not nourished? (It will not take root and will eventually be scorched by the sun and wither.)
- What happens if the plant is nourished? (It will grow and produce fruit of which we can partake.)
- How are faith and testimony like the plant? (They must be nourished in order to grow and develop.)
- How can we nourish the plant? (By faith [verse 41] and by further feasting on the word of God.)

Explain that these passages clearly teach that planting the word of God in our hearts is a key to the development of faith and testimony.

The Prophet Joseph Smith stated, “Faith comes by hearing the word of God, through the testimony of the servants of God” (*History of the Church*, 3:379).

Conclusion

Adviser presentation

Explain that from the scriptures we learn that nourishment is given by the power of the Spirit to those who humbly feast on and ponder the scriptures. As we read the scriptures, we can feel the Spirit, feast on the word of Christ, and come to know and recognize the voice of the Lord.

Challenge

Challenge the young men to feast on the word of Christ and then nourish other Church members with the word of God while at home, while home teaching, and in giving talks.

Suggested activity

Choose a topic, such as the Atonement, the fall of Adam, or the gift of the Holy Ghost. Have the young men refer to the Topical Guide in the Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Version of the Bible and read some of the verses listed. This will help them experience studying the gospel principles or doctrines topically. Have them also use the Bible Dictionary on a topic of your choice so that they learn how much they can use the scriptures to learn to understand the gospel.