
OBJECTIVE Each young man will understand that faith in Christ and hard work make missionary work rewarding.

PREPARATION

1. Prayerfully study Alma 17:6–11; 26:23–31, 35; and Doctrine and Covenants 1:19–23.
2. Materials needed:
 - a. Copies of the scriptures (each young man should bring his own).
 - b. A card or sheet of paper that lists for each young man the suggestions for spiritual and mental preparation given in the lesson.
 - c. Pencils for marking scriptures.
3. Optional: Arrange for a recently returned missionary to discuss the section “Following Counsel Brings Happiness.” Clear the individual with the bishop.

NOTE Help the young men understand that serving a mission is exciting and rewarding but that it requires hard work and dedication. The realities of missionary work should be pointed out in a positive way so as not to discourage missionary service but to let the young men know that they are expected to make a major effort.

**SUGGESTED
LESSON
DEVELOPMENT**

Introduction

Story

Tell the following story:

In one of the missions of the Church, there was a town that had been open to missionary work for many years. The town was small enough that it had been tracted over many times, and the people of the town knew the Mormon missionaries by sight. There had hardly been any conversions in the town for several years, and the missionaries who were assigned to the area thought of it as one of the least exciting assignments in the mission. In fact, most missionaries failed to work diligently when they were sent there because it had a reputation for being nonproductive.

The mission president was concerned about the town. He fasted and prayed because it seemed to him that there were people there who would accept the gospel. He and his assistants decided to replace the missionaries who were there with two who did not know the reputation of the area. The two missionaries who were selected had arrived in the mission field just a few months earlier. The change was made, and the mission president waited for their first weekly report letter.

The first letter reported much resistance to missionary work among the members and the nonmembers of the Church. The second letter outlined a campaign to show the members and nonmembers that the missionaries were dedicated to spreading the gospel. The missionaries had fasted and prayed. They felt impressed that they should not go to any member’s house except to get the names of referrals. As a result of their fasting and prayer, they felt that they should not return to their apartment from the time they left in the morning until they finished proselyting at night. They also concluded to leave their apartment an hour earlier than the recommended time. They read only missionary-related stories from the scriptures for the first weeks of their campaign.

Letters of the third, fourth, and fifth weeks told of hard work but no noticeable success in getting people to teach. The hours the missionaries were working increased until they were working twenty hours more per week than any other set of missionaries in the mission.

In the sixth week they reported that a family had shown some interest, and they began to teach them. The missionaries involved the members in teaching, and the family began to come to church. The Church members became excited about the possibility of their little branch getting some new members, and they began to ask their friends if the missionaries could come and teach them. The first family the missionaries had found were baptized and added their enthusiasm to the branch.

By the tenth week, the missionaries had so many people to teach that they had almost no time for tracting. The branch members were so excited about missionary work that they would stop the missionaries while they were walking down the street to tell them about new people who were interested. The missionaries continued their hard work, and the word spread to other missionaries throughout the mission. Soon the hours worked by missionaries rose within the whole mission. The town became a place where missionaries wanted to go because there was so much excitement about missionary work.

Discussion

- What made the difference in the missionary work in this town? (The dedication of the missionaries, their fasting and prayers to receive direction from the Lord, their hard work, and the involvement of the members.)
- How do you think the missionaries felt the first few weeks they were in the town?
- How do you think the missionaries felt about each other after their experiences in this town?

Missionary Work Is Exciting

Scripture and discussion

Have a young man read Doctrine and Covenants 1:19–23. The young men may want to mark this scripture.

- To what does “weak things of the world” refer?
- What does it mean to “trust [not] in the arm of flesh” (verse 19)?

Help the young men realize that most missionaries are relatively unlearned and untrained to teach the gospel. Yet through hard work and a strong testimony of the gospel, they are able to testify of the truth.

- What must a person do to be able to “speak in the name of God the Lord” (verse 20)?

Scripture story

Briefly relate the account of the four sons of Mosiah preparing for their mission to the Lamanites (see Alma 17:6–11). Explain that these young men had rebelled against the Church but were finally converted. When they realized how vital the gospel was, they wanted to share its blessings with others and try to make up for dishonoring the Church of God. They requested permission to preach the gospel among the Lamanites. They labored as missionaries there for fourteen years, suffering all kinds of persecution and hardships. However, they were finally able to help many Lamanites change their lives and learn the peace that comes from obeying the commandments. After the experience, the sons of Mosiah met Alma, the head of the Church, and reported their missions to him.

Scriptures and discussion

Have the young men read Ammon’s summary of his and his brothers’ work among the Lamanites in Alma 26:23–26.

- What were the Lamanites like when the mission began?

Refer to verses 23 and 24 for the answer.

- Are conditions for missionary work better or worse today?
- What did the Nephites think of the chances of converting the Lamanites? (The Nephites thought it was futile and wanted to destroy the Lamanites rather than preach the gospel to them.)

Have a young man read Alma 17:6–11.

- How did the sons of Mosiah prepare for their missionary efforts?
- What did the Lord tell them to do? (Show good examples [see verse 11].)

Read Alma 26:27–31.

- What were the methods used by the sons of Mosiah to finally touch the lives of the Lamanites?

Read Alma 26:35.

- How did Ammon and the other sons of Mosiah feel at the end of their missions?

Point out that their gratitude was more for the change in the lives of the Lamanites than it was for their own success as missionaries.

Adviser presentation

Explain that not every missionary will have experiences like the sons of Mosiah and suffer great privations and finally convert large numbers of people. The promise to missionaries is that they will have the opportunity to work hard for Heavenly Father. They will have feelings of joy as they give everything they have to the work of the Lord, but they are not promised that they will baptize many people. They will have the opportunity of knowing they are instruments of the Lord in giving people the opportunity to receive the blessings of the gospel. Explain that missionary work, when done with the right spirit, is exciting and rewarding and greatly increases one's spiritual strength.

Story

When Lorenzo Snow and his companions were sent by Brigham Young to Italy for the purposes of opening missionary work, they were initially overwhelmed with discouragement. As they struggled to find a prepared people, Lorenzo reported that "the spirit had revealed that the Lord had hidden up a people amid the Alpine Mountains" and that he would "commence something of importance in that part of this dark nation."

Acting on this impression, the missionaries traveled to the Piedmont valley in Northern Italy to teach the Waldenses—a stubborn but religious Protestant people. Like Ammon of old, the missionaries first attempted to prepare for teaching the people by winning their friendship and trust. This proved a difficult task, until 6 September 1850, when a series of events began that would open the hearts of the people to listen to the message of the foreigners.

On that day, the three-year-old son of the family with whom the missionaries were staying became critically ill. When Lorenzo and his companions saw little Joseph, the boy seemed beyond earthly help. Lorenzo described him: "His eye-balls turned upwards; his eyelids fell and closed; his face and ears were thin, and wore the pale, marble hue indicative of approaching dissolution. The cold perspiration of death covered his body, and . . . life was nearly exhausted." His mother sobbed while the father hung his head and whispered "Il meurt! il meurt!" (He is dying! He is dying!)

Lorenzo recognized an opportunity both to heal the boy and to speed the faltering missionary work. That night he spent "some hours" imploring God for direction. The following day he and his companion fasted and retired to a nearby mountain, where they "called upon the Lord in solemn earnest prayer, to spare the life of the child." Returning to the city about three o'clock, the elders administered to the boy. The father reported that improvement was almost immediate, and the following morning little Joseph Guy was entirely well.

Because of the tender mercies of God and the power of the priesthood, a little boy was saved. In addition, the hearts of many were softened, as doors were opened to the missionaries that had been firmly closed. An intense interest in the missionaries' message replaced the hostility previously shown toward Lorenzo Snow and his companions. Many joined the Church, beginning the great work of conversion in Italy (see Francis M. Gibbons, *Lorenzo Snow: Spiritual Giant, Prophet of God* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1982], pp. 60–71).

- What are some similarities between the experiences of Lorenzo Snow in Italy and Ammon among the Lamanites?
- How did Lorenzo Snow and his companions learn how to open people's hearts to the gospel?

Following Counsel Brings Happiness

Returned missionary discussion

Explain that the missionary committee of the Church has written a missionary handbook that provides instructions for missionaries. The suggestions in this section of the lesson will

help the Aaronic Priesthood holders know what is expected of missionaries. Help the young men understand why these suggestions will help them be most effective and that their willingness to give of themselves is what brings happiness in missionary work.

Have a recently returned missionary lead the discussion, or lead it yourself. Have cards or papers prepared with the following information for each young man to consider and take home with him.

Spiritual Preparation

1. Love your companion. Make him a part of all you do. Be with him at all times. Help him to succeed.
2. Pray individually and with your companion.
3. Ponder gospel principles. Spirituality is developed by studying the word of God.
4. Lose yourself in the work. Put out of your life all thoughts and discussions of home, school, girlfriends, and worldly things. Forget yourself in the service of others.
5. Fast only once a month, except in unusual circumstances.

Mental Preparation

1. Study the gospel.
 - a. Hold an hour study class with your companion every day.
 - b. Devote at least one hour each day to individual study.
 - c. Search the scriptures.
2. Have the attitude of success. Make up your mind to be successful. Successful missionaries develop a high degree of faith in the Lord.
3. Be affirmative in your thinking. Do not speak negatively of the weather, the people, the country, or the area. Be grateful to your Heavenly Father for the privilege of being called as a missionary.
4. Establish personal goals.
 - a. Establish goals for personal development.
 - b. Develop good communication skills.

Conclusion

Testimony and adviser presentation

Testify to the sacred nature of missionary work. You may want to include some of the following ideas:

Missionary work requires hard work and devotion to the Lord. Some missionaries will go to areas where there are many baptisms; some to areas where baptisms are scarce. The Lord measures success not by the number of baptisms but by the missionaries' selfless efforts to help those who have not yet accepted the gospel. Their measure of success will be how well they do what the Lord has called them to do. There will be more heartaches and happiness than they have experienced before. But they will also have extremely satisfying, spiritual experiences as they serve the Lord. These experiences can build a strong foundation for spiritual growth throughout their lives. They will build friendships with companions, other missionaries, members, and converts that will last eternally. They will find more happiness and joy than they thought possible.

Challenge

Challenge the young men to develop the traits of industry and self-sacrifice; the attitudes of success; and, most of all, closeness to Heavenly Father and the Savior.

Quorum activity

Encourage each young man to prepare one of his nonmember friends for the discussions so he can be present when the missionaries teach him. You may be able to arrange for the young men to go with the full-time missionaries assigned to your area. Coordinate these efforts through your ward mission leader. A large quorum could take several months to complete this activity, but it should be a worthwhile experience for the young men.