

We Have a Wonderful Legacy

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OBJECTIVE Each young man will understand that he is part of a wonderful legacy because he belongs to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

PREPARATION

1. Study the following scriptures: 2 Thessalonians 2:2–3, Matthew 24:11–12, Isaiah 24:5, 2 Timothy 4:3–4, and Amos 8:11–12.
2. Materials needed:
 - a. Copies of the scriptures (each young man should bring his own).
 - b. Pencils for marking scriptures.
3. If they are available in your area, prepare to show *The First Vision and Restoration of the Priesthood* from the videocassette *Moments from Church History* (53145).

NOTE This lesson is prepared to help teachers remind young people of their great heritage as members of the Lord's church on earth. The lesson could take two class periods to present.

**SUGGESTED
LESSON**

DEVELOPMENT

There Was a Great Apostasy

Adviser presentation

Explain that Jesus Christ established his church when he lived here on earth. He ordained Apostles and other leaders to lead the Church after his death. These leaders taught the gospel throughout the world and established many branches of the Church. However, some people began to change the teachings of the Savior, and many people were deceived.

Scriptures and discussion

Write the following references on the chalkboard:

2 Thessalonians 2:2–3

Matthew 24:11–12

Isaiah 24:5

2 Timothy 4:3–4

Amos 8:11–12

Ask the young men to find these scriptures and read them to learn what happened to the Church after the death of Jesus. After studying the scriptures, each person should be able to answer these questions:

- What happened to the Church that Jesus established when he lived on the earth?
- How did this happen?

You may want to use some of the following ideas in your discussion:

- In his letter to the Thessalonians, what did Paul say would happen to the Church before the second coming of the Savior? (There would be a falling away from the truth. See 2 Thessalonians 2:2–3.)
- Matthew recorded the Savior's prophecy about what would come to pass before His return to the earth. What was one of the things Jesus said would happen? (False prophets would deceive many. See Matthew 24:11–12.)
- What did Isaiah say would happen to the ordinances of the gospel? (They would be changed. See Isaiah 24:5.)

- Why would people turn from the truth? (They would seek teachers who told them what they wanted to hear, not necessarily the truth. See 2 Timothy 4:3–4.)
- What kind of famine did Amos say would come? (A famine of hearing the words of the Lord. See Amos 8:11–12.)

The Gospel Was Restored to Earth

Adviser presentation	Explain that this falling away from the truth was called the Apostasy. It lasted for many centuries. Then the time came when the Lord restored his true gospel with all its powers and blessings through the Prophet Joseph Smith.
Video presentation	Show the video presentation entitled <i>The First Vision</i> .
Scripture	Review with the young men Joseph Smith’s account of his vision as recorded in Joseph Smith—History 1:7–26. You may want to read portions of the account. You may want to assign a young man to tell the story.
Testimony	Bear your testimony that the gospel was restored through Joseph Smith. Tell of some experience or feeling that helped you to know this truth. Invite the class members to share experiences that have helped them know that the true gospel has been restored.

Because the Gospel Has Been Restored, We Have Great Blessings

Adviser presentation	Explain that many important things happened after Joseph Smith’s first vision. One of these was the restoration of priesthood power. The Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods were restored to the earth. While Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were translating the Book of Mormon in May of 1829, they decided to ask the Lord for guidance about baptism. They retired to the woods to pray, and while they were praying, John the Baptist descended from heaven, laid his hands upon their heads, and ordained them.
Scripture	Ask the young men to read Joseph Smith—History 1:69 to learn what John the Baptist said. Then review verses 70–72.
Adviser presentation	Explain that soon after the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood, Peter, James, and John, three of the Lord’s Apostles, conferred the Melchizedek Priesthood upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. This priesthood included the holy apostleship, which gave them the authority necessary to organize the Church. On 6 April 1830, Joseph Smith and about fifty others met in a log cabin on the farm of Peter Whitmer Sr. in Seneca County, New York. There they organized The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Section 21 of the Doctrine and Covenants was given at the time the Church was organized.
Scripture	Have the young men read Doctrine and Covenants 21:1–3.
Adviser presentation	Explain that from this organization has come the Church we know today. The Church makes it possible for us to know and worship the Lord Jesus Christ. We can go to meetinghouses and temples and be taught about the atonement of Jesus Christ. We can also partake of the sacrament, which reminds us of the great sacrifice Jesus made. We can learn and keep the commandments of God, which lead to happiness in this life and in the next. We can be sealed together as families in holy temples.
Video presentation	Show the video presentation entitled <i>Restoration of the Priesthood</i> .

We Have a Legacy of Faith

Adviser presentation	Explain that many of the people who joined the Church during the first years after its restoration were people of great faith and courage. They had many trials, especially as they were driven from their homes and forced to travel thousands of miles to establish homes in the desolate Salt Lake Valley. No matter where we now live, they have left us an example to follow.
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- What do you think enabled the pioneers to endure their severe trials?

Quotation

President Gordon B. Hinckley said that stories of the pioneers are expressions of “a marvelous but simple faith, an unquestioning conviction, that the God of Heaven in his power will make all things right and bring to pass his eternal purposes in the lives of his children.

“We need so very, very much a strong burning of that faith in the living God and in his living, resurrected Son, for this was the great, moving faith of our gospel forebears” (“The Faith of the Pioneers,” *Ensign*, July 1984, p. 6).

- What can you learn from stories about the pioneers that can help you in your life?

Conclusion

Quotation

Read the following testimony from President Joseph Fielding Smith:

“We believe that following a long night of darkness, unbelief, and departure from the truths of pure and perfect Christianity, the Lord in his infinite wisdom has again restored to earth the fullness of the everlasting gospel.

“We know Joseph Smith is a prophet; that the Father and the Son appeared to him in the spring of 1820 to usher in this final gospel dispensation; that he translated the Book of Mormon by the gift and power of God; that he received keys and authority from angels sent for this very purpose; and that the Lord revealed to him the doctrines of salvation.

“We announce that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the kingdom of God on earth, the only place where men may come to learn the true doctrines of salvation and find the authority of the holy priesthood” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1971, p. 5; or *Ensign*, June 1971, p. 4).

Testimony

Bear your testimony that the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored. Help the young men understand that because of their membership in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints they have a great legacy of faith and truth. Encourage them to develop stronger testimonies that this church is true, that it was restored through Joseph Smith, and that all the blessings of eternal life are available to the faithful.