

OBJECTIVE	Each young woman will learn how to accept and overcome opposition, sorrow, and disappointment.
PREPARATION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide paper and pencils for the class members. 2. Write the scripture references in the second section of the lesson on the chalkboard before class if possible. 3. Assign young women to present any stories, scriptures, or quotations you wish.
SUGGESTED LESSON DEVELOPMENT	<p>Introduction</p> <p>Have some of the class members tell the following stories.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Toni needed a scholarship in order to attend college. Her grades had been good, but now she needed only the best grades in order to get the scholarship. Toni studied hard all year and was prepared. <p>During the week of the final exams, she came down with a cold. Her head throbbed and her eyes burned. She took the tests, but because of her illness her ability to think was impaired.</p> <p>As a result, Toni just missed receiving the scholarship. "Why me?" she thought. "Why did this have to happen to me?"</p> 2. Michelle was only ten years old when her mother died. Her father was a good man, but he lacked the ability to keep the family together. Michelle was put in a foster home where she was treated as a servant, rather than as one of the family. She rebelled and was put in a home she liked, but because of the failing health of the mother she had to leave. <p>By age seventeen, Michelle had been in three foster homes. One day she told a school counselor, "No one has life as rough as I do. I don't even have a place I can call home."</p> 3. Janice was born with arthritis. When other children were learning to walk, she had casts on both legs. When other children were starting school, Janice was in the hospital undergoing her ninth operation. When other young women were starting to date, Janice, now deformed and confined to a wheelchair, was undergoing surgery for the twenty-first time. <p>She struggled hard and long to keep up with her schoolwork, but the moments of discouragement were many. "Sometimes I wonder why I am the one all this had to happen to," she told her mother.</p> 4. Brenda was an intelligent young woman and had lots of friends, both boys and young women, but she didn't date. She was elected to be a class officer in her senior year. As an officer, she was expected to attend the senior prom. When it came time for the prom, Brenda did not have a date. She felt humiliated. <p>"I can't think of anything more insulting," she cried. "Things like this don't happen to anyone but me!"</p> <p>(The conclusions of these stories will be given later in the lesson.)</p>
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did each of these young women have in common? (They faced opposition without understanding why.)

Writing activity Distribute paper and pencils. Ask each young woman to write a conflict, opposition, or problem she is now facing. Explain that no one will see her paper. The paper is for her benefit only.

Opposition and Sorrow Are Necessary to Give Us Experience

Teacher presentation Explain that many things in life have opposites. Ask the young women to name a few of these. Emphasize that besides the opposites in the physical aspects of life, our emotions have opposites, such as love and hate, contentment and jealousy, happiness and sorrow. This is not just coincidence. It is part of our Heavenly Father's plan for all things to have opposition.

Chalkboard Write on the chalkboard: *Why must there be opposition in all things?* Do not have the young women answer the question at this time.

Under the question, write *Doctrine and Covenants 122:7*. Explain that this section of the Doctrine and Covenants was given to Joseph Smith while he was a prisoner in Liberty Jail. Read this verse with the young women.

Scripture discussion Write the following references on the chalkboard and have them read. Discuss how each adds to our understanding of opposition.

Doctrine and Covenants 24:8
Doctrine and Covenants 29:39
Doctrine and Covenants 58:2–4
Doctrine and Covenants 136:31

Summary Explain to the young women that opposition and sorrow are necessary for us to progress. We should not be afraid of such experiences nor become discouraged by them. By staying close to our Father in Heaven, we will have the strength to overcome these afflictions, and they will be consecrated for our gain.

Each Young Woman Can Overcome Sorrow and Disappointment

Chalkboard discussion Explain that President Ezra Taft Benson described twelve ways in which we can overcome sorrow, disappointment, and depression. (See Conference Report, Oct. 1974, pp. 90–94; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1974, pp. 65–67.) Write each key word on the chalkboard and discuss it, using the quotations given below as needed. (All quotations come from President Benson's talk.) Encourage the young women to take notes. Explain that many problems may require only one or two of these solutions.

1. Repentance: "Sin creates disharmony with God and is depressing to the spirit. . . . Every law kept brings a particular blessing. Every law broken brings a particular blight. Those who are heavy laden with despair should come unto the Lord, for his yoke is easy and his burden is light."
2. Prayer: "Prayer in the hour of need is a great boon. From simple trials to our Gethsemanes, prayer can put us in touch with God, our greatest source of comfort and counsel."
3. Service: "To lose yourself in righteous service to others can lift your sights and get your mind off personal problems, or at least put them in proper focus. 'When you find yourselves a little gloomy,' said President Lorenzo Snow, 'look around you and find somebody that is in a worse plight than yourself; go to him and find out what the trouble is, and then try to remove it with the wisdom which the Lord bestows upon you; and the first thing you know, your gloom is gone, you feel light, the Spirit of the Lord is upon you, and everything seems illuminated.' (Conference Report, 6 Apr. 1899, pp. 2–3.)"
4. Work: "Work is our blessing, not our doom. . . . We should work at taking care of the spiritual, mental, social, and physical needs of ourselves and those whom we are charged to help. In the church of Jesus Christ there is plenty of work to do to move forward the kingdom of God. Every member a missionary, family genealogy and temple work, home evenings, receiving a Church assignment and magnifying it are but a few of our required labors."

5. Health: "The condition of the physical body can affect the spirit. That's why the Lord gave us the Word of Wisdom. He also said that we should retire to our beds early and arise early."
We should eat nutritious meals, get proper rest and exercise, and use wholesome recreation to provide a change of pace and lift the spirit.
6. Reading: "Many a man in his hour of trial has turned to the Book of Mormon and been enlightened, enlivened, and comforted."
"The psalms of the Old Testament have a special food for the soul of one in distress. . . . The words of the prophets, particularly the living president of the Church, are crucial reading and can give direction and comfort in an hour when one is down."
7. Blessing: "In a particularly stressful time, or in the anticipation of a critical event, one can seek for a blessing under the hands of the priesthood. . . . The sacrament will 'bless . . . the souls' (D&C 20:77, 79) of all those who worthily partake of it."
8. Fasting: "Periodic fasting can help clear up the mind and strengthen the body and the spirit. . . . To make a fast most fruitful, it should be coupled with prayer and meditation; . . . and it's a blessing if one can ponder on the scriptures and the reason for the fast."
9. Friends: "The fellowship of true friends who can hear you out, share your joys, help carry your burdens, and correctly counsel you is priceless. . . ."
"Ideally, your family ought to be your closest friends. Most important, we should seek to become the friend of our Father in heaven and our brother Jesus the Christ."
10. Music: "Inspiring music may fill the soul with heavenly thoughts, move one to righteous action, or speak peace to the soul. . . . Elder Boyd K. Packer has wisely suggested memorizing some of the inspiring songs of Zion . . . [to help] crowd out debilitating, depressive thoughts."
11. Endurance: "There are times when you simply have to righteously hang on and outlast the devil until his depressive spirit leaves you."
". . . While you are going through your trial, you can recall your past victories and count the blessings that you do have with a sure hope of greater ones to follow if you are faithful."
12. Goals: "Every accountable child of God needs to set goals, short- and long-range goals. A man who is pressing forward to accomplish worthy goals can soon put despondency under his feet, and once a goal is accomplished, others can be set up."

Teacher presentation Explain that these ideas can help us overcome sorrow, disappointment, despair, or discouragement. Ask the young women to choose one or more of the ideas to help them overcome the opposition they wrote on their paper.

Our Difficulties Can Increase Our Strength and Compassion

Chalkboard Write on the chalkboard the following thought by Elder Hugh B. Brown (quoted by Marvin J. Ashton, "What Shall We Do Then?" in *Speeches of the Year, 1975* [Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1975], p. 21):

"Noble characters do not alone bear trouble; they use it."

Teacher presentation Tell the young women that you are going to finish the stories told at the beginning of the lesson by telling them what actually happened to these women. If need be, briefly review the stories in the introduction.

- Stories
1. Since Toni did not have enough money to enroll in college, she decided to work and save for a year and then enter college. She got a job as a secretary at a special school for the handicapped. Because of this experience, she decided to become a speech therapist instead of going into business as she had planned. This work has taught her empathy, love, and patience and has given her the opportunity to serve.
 2. Through all Michelle's trials, she stayed close to the Church. She later met and married a returned missionary. "I'm not sure why I had to experience the things I did," she said. "Maybe it was to try my faith in the gospel. Whatever the reason, I know that I

appreciate my husband, children, and home more than some women I see. I am thankful I was able to hang on.”

3. Janice graduated from school and obtained a job as a secretary. Her mother takes her to and from work each day. She doesn't like being dependent on others but has learned to live with the problem. Her mother said of her: "Janice has developed a sweet, patient spirit. People seek her out for advice and counsel when they have problems. Their problems are usually minor compared to hers, but they go away cheered and Janice is happy she can help others in some way. She has been a blessing to many people; it has been many years since I have heard any complaint from her, even about the constant pain she is in."
4. Brenda went on to college, where she started dating. She now says of her high school prom experience: "I never thought I'd get over it, but I did. I have a husband and five beautiful children. The hurt of that experience was real, but it went away. When problems come to me now, I remember that experience and think, 'This too shall pass!'"

Story

Tell the following story about a young woman who, with the help of the Lord, overcame great opposition and became a faithful servant of the Lord.

Emily Ellen Swain Squires was born in England in 1852. Her mother was a member of the Church, and when Ellen was eleven years old, she was sent with some Church members to live with her mother's sisters in Utah. The rest of her family planned to join her when they had enough money. The journey was very long and hard, especially for an eleven-year-old girl who had left her mother and family in England.

She walked the entire distance across the plains to Utah, carrying a sack in which she gathered buffalo chips and sticks of wood for fuel. Her shoes wore out, so she was barefoot during most of the trip, and her feet were often cut and bleeding. Her dress was ragged and dirty. She was so lonely and the trip was so long that she wondered if it was worth even trying to keep going each day.

One day when she felt that she could go no farther, something happened to help her. She saw an abandoned ox standing by the trail watching the wagon train pass. No one stopped to look at him or talk to him. But Emily stopped and patted the ox's bony back and gave him some water. The ox willingly followed her, for he was lonely too. Emily was delighted that she had someone she could call her very own. She spent much of her time hunting for grass or other things for him to eat. He stayed by her side throughout the rest of the trip, and Emily found herself more cheerful than she had been at any other time on the trip. She was so absorbed in her new friend that she was able to partly forget her sore feet and tired body, and the trip did not seem so long. Soon she had arrived in Salt Lake City and was met by her relatives.

The ox became lost soon after she got to Salt Lake City, and she often wondered what happened to her strange friend. She grew to womanhood, married a righteous member of the Church, and had children. She continued to have opposition, but she overcame it all and served the Lord valiantly for many years. (See Laura Squires Robinson, "The Child's Journey," in *Treasures of Pioneer History*, comp. Kate B. Carter, 6 vols. [Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1953], 2:115–18).

- How did this young woman overcome the opposition in her life? How did the Lord help her? What do you think she learned from the experiences she had while traveling across the plains?

Teacher presentation

Explain to the young women that as they overcome opposition, they will be stronger, more mature, and more compassionate. Have the class members read Doctrine and Covenants 121:7–8. Invite the young women to share their own experiences with overcoming opposition, and bear your testimony.

Suggested Activities

1. As a class, visit a rest home or hospital.
2. For some special occasion or fireside, have a guest speaker who has overcome obstacles during his or her lifetime relate how these experiences have brought growth and strength.