

# Each Person Is Divine and Eternal

OBJECTIVE	Each young woman will appreciate the divine and eternal nature of each person.
PREPARATION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pictures 13 and 14, Young Women of Different Nationalities, located at the end of the manual.</li> <li>2. Obtain several gloves of various styles and materials.</li> <li>3. Prepare a handout listing each of the following scripture references and the question for each young woman. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1 Samuel 16:7</li> <li>2. Matthew 25:40</li> <li>3. Romans 12:10</li> <li>4. Doctrine and Covenants 18:10</li> </ol> <p>Knowing the worth of souls, would you want to make even one person feel that he or she was not of worth?</p> </li> <li>4. Invite a mother and baby to visit the class. Ask the mother to take a few minutes and express her feelings about the great value of her child and the blessing of raising one of Heavenly Father's children.</li> <li>5. Assign a class member to relate the story in the third section of the lesson.</li> <li>6. Assign young women to present any stories, scriptures, or quotations you wish.</li> </ol>
SUGGESTED LESSON DEVELOPMENT	<b>All Human Life Is Eternal, Sacred, and Divine</b>
Picture identification	Show the picture of young women from many lands. Ask class members to identify each person's nationality. The answers are: picture 1, Australia; picture 2, Philippines; picture 3, Japan; picture 4, United States.
Object lesson	<p>Hold up several gloves. Point out that gloves come in various sizes, colors, fabrics, and from many parts of the world. Each glove has one major purpose—to cover the hand. The glove without the hand lacks life and purpose. Explain that the hand can be compared to the human spirit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the hand represents a person's spirit, what would the glove represent?</li> </ul> <p>Put on the various gloves and ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What connection do you see between the picture of the young women and the gloves?</li> </ul> <p>Explain that the mortal body, represented by the glove, covers a spirit child of God, represented by the hand. The outside coverings, our physical bodies, are as different as gloves, but inside we are all eternal spirit children of our Heavenly Father, created in his image. (See Boyd K. Packer, <i>Teach Ye Diligently</i> [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1975], pp. 230–37.)</p>
Chalkboard discussion	<p>Refer again to the picture of the young women.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What physical differences exist between these young women? Write responses on the left side of the chalkboard under the heading <i>Differences</i>: hair, eyes, skin color, facial features, dress.</li> </ul>

Discuss how people sometimes respond in a negative way to those who are culturally, socially, physically, or racially different from them. Have the young women suggest some of these negative responses, and write them on the right side of the chalkboard under the heading *Responses to Differences*: discriminate, avoid, feel sorry for, fear, call names, ignore.

Explain that our reaction to others is often based on physical appearance (the glove). But the eternal spirit (the hand) is of infinite worth. Our treatment of any individual should be based on the knowledge that each, regardless of race or culture, is divine and eternal.

Story

Distribute the pieces of paper containing the scripture references and the question. Make certain each class member has a copy of the scriptures. Instruct them to hold the paper until after the following story.

Angela clenched the paper in her hand and walked home thoughtfully. Sister Bentley's lesson on the worth of a soul had not been too different from most of her lessons. But something she had said had caused Angela to feel guilty.

Sister Bentley had said a lot about the danger of having exclusive groups of friends. She had talked about changing the word *exclusive* to *inclusive* and about including less-active people, shy people, and those who are from a different race or culture. Sister Bentley had sounded as if she thought teenagers ought to love everyone.

Surely Sister Bentley didn't mean we were to include Mary, thought Angela. She was always so quiet and antisocial. And didn't Sister Bentley know that Ingrid was a foreigner? No one could even understand her. Angela wondered if Sister Bentley had overheard her and her friends snickering at the clothes Julie had worn to church. Certainly everyone should be able to choose her own friends. Besides, some of the young women probably didn't even want to participate in Church activities. Why should we even bother them, she thought.

As Angela pondered why the lesson had made her so uncomfortable, she became aware of the crumpled paper in her hand. That was it—those scriptures and that final question Sister Bentley had asked. The scriptures were very clear, and the question demanded an answer.

Scripture reading

Ask the young women to find and read the scripture references on their slips of paper and then read the question.

- How do these scriptures make you feel about your actions toward others?

Explain that the Lord is the creator of all persons. He tells us in the scriptures that all his children are divine and eternal, and he wants us to love them without regard for their race, culture, or status.

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### **Birth Is Not the Beginning of Life**

Quotation

Explain that when a mother gives birth to a child, a spirit child of God is born into a mortal body. Elder Bruce R. McConkie said:

"We were born first as the spirit children of God, our Heavenly Father. We lived with him for a time. Our lives did not commence with this mortal existence. This mortal sphere is simply a change of status for the eternal spirit that had lived before in the presence of God, our Heavenly Father. Birth is a change of status. It is a new way of living" ("Households of Faith," *Ensign*, Apr. 1971, p. 6).

Mother and baby

Introduce the mother and baby. Have the mother express her feelings about the great value of her baby and the blessing of raising one of our Heavenly Father's children.

Explain that just as an infant is precious to its mother, each person is of infinite worth to our Father in Heaven.

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### **We Should Help Others Feel Loved and Valued**

Story

Have the assigned class member relate the following story of a seminary teacher who caused a miracle to happen.

"There was a girl in one seminary class who seemed to be helpless and almost hopeless. I tried to encourage her and draw her out; I sensed that she wanted desperately to belong

and to do something. But when she was asked to respond, give a prayer, or read a scripture, she would struggle for a while and then start to cry and return to her seat. There was some sympathy on the part of the class for her, but it is also true that there were some students who were often brutal in their comments.

“She almost never combed her hair, she had very poor clothing, and she frequently wore mismatched socks, if she wore any at all. If she arrived for class a little early, the chairs on either side of her would almost invariably be empty. If she got to class late, she could sit by someone because that would be the only seat open.

“I knew enough about her background to understand why she was the way she was. Her mother was a widow with almost no income.

“In that class were the student-body president of the high school and also a girl who had been elected the beauty queen. Besides being very handsome and intelligent students, they were talented otherwise and involved in many activities.

“One day I called the two of them into my office and asked if they would like to perform a miracle. They were interested. I told them some miracles were a little slow in developing, but they were miracles nevertheless. We then talked a little bit about the girl, and I made assignments. The student-body president was to smile and speak to her every time he saw her around school. That was all. He didn’t have to take her on a date; he didn’t have to stop and talk to her; he didn’t have to associate beyond that or single her out—merely the happy, encouraging ‘I think you’re great’ or ‘Hello, how are you today?’

“The beauty queen accepted the assignment of walking with the girl across the road from the high school to the seminary. That was all. She didn’t have to include her in her circle of friends other than to walk to and from the seminary every day. She would simply hurry to catch up with her or slow down to wait for her when they were coming across the street and just talk about whatever she wanted to talk about.

“The two of them went about their tasks quietly but enthusiastically, saying not a word to anyone else. The miracle was not long in coming. One day I knew there was something different about the girl. It took me most of the class period to figure out what it was. And then I saw what it was. She had combed her hair that day. That was an event!

“Over the next month or two the transformation continued. Our beauty queen became friendly and chatty with her during that time. She could never walk with her alone because she had her own friends following her. And so other girls were included in the group, and soon the girl was surrounded for those few minutes each day with the most popular girls at school.

“There are so many interesting details that could be related about the miracle. Our wallflower transformed herself, went to college, found good employment, married in the temple, and those who know her would never believe the ugly duckling of her youth” (Boyd K. Packer, *Teach Ye Diligently* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1975], pp. 149–50).

#### Discussion

- What caused this young woman to change so much?
- How can each of us help other people to feel loved and valued?
- What do you think the beauty queen and student body president learned about the worth of souls?

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#### Conclusion

#### Review

Review the question written on the young women’s slips of paper. Explain that as the young women reach out to those around them, they can perform miracles in other people’s lives and bring happiness into their own lives.

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#### Lesson Applications

1. Ask each young woman to offer friendship and love to someone who needs a friend. Follow up on this suggestion during the next few weeks.
2. If there is an investigator or less-active member in the class, consider having class members take a special interest in her so that she will feel more loved and valued.