

Recognizing Our Individual Worth

OBJECTIVE Each young woman will understand her worth as a daughter of God.

PREPARATION Assign young women to present any stories, scriptures, or quotations you wish.

SUGGESTED
LESSON
DEVELOPMENT

As Children of God, We Are All Important

Story

The following story was told by Elder Marvin J. Ashton:

“A few weeks ago on a day when this area was experiencing one of its worst snowstorms, and that is saying quite a bit because we had plenty of severe weather this past winter, a handsome young serviceman and his beautiful bride-to-be encountered extreme difficulty in getting to the Salt Lake Temple for their marriage appointment. She was in one location in the Salt Lake Valley and he was to come from another nearby town. Heavy snows and winds had closed the highways during the night and early morning hours. After many hours of anxious waiting, some of us were able to help them get to the temple and complete their marriage plans before the day was over.

“How grateful they, their families, and friends were for the assistance and concern in their keeping this most important appointment. My friend—we will call him Bill—expressed his deep gratitude with, ‘Thank you very much for all you did to make our wedding possible. I don’t understand why you went to all this trouble to help me. Really, I’m nobody.’

“I am sure Bill meant his comment to be a most sincere compliment, but I responded to it firmly, but I hope kindly, with, ‘Bill, I have never helped a “nobody” in my life. In the kingdom of our Heavenly Father, no man is a “nobody” ’ ” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1973, p. 20; or *Ensign*, July 1973, p. 24).

Discussion

- Why would Elder Ashton say that “in the kingdom of our Heavenly Father, no man is a ‘nobody’ ”?
- Why would someone feel like a nobody?
- Who are you in the kingdom of God?

Explain that as children of God we are all important. Elder Ashton, in continuing his talk, said that our Heavenly Father is displeased when we refer to ourselves as “nobody.” As children of God, we are “somebody.”

Scripture discussion

Have the young women turn to Doctrine and Covenants 18:10 to learn an important principle of the gospel.

- Why is each person so important to our Heavenly Father and his Son, Jesus Christ?

Make sure the young women understand that each person is a child of God, and he loves each of us more than we can comprehend. Jesus Christ values each of us enough to have sacrificed his life for us and suffered to atone for our sins.

We Each Have the Potential for Greatness

Quotation

Explain that many people feel they are so ordinary that they cannot make a significant contribution in this life. But the Lord has sent each person to earth with an important mission to perform. Bishop H. Burke Peterson said:

“One of the greatest challenges is to overcome the feeling that we are unimportant, that we are not special and unique. Do you think for a moment that Heavenly Father would have sent one of His children to this earth by accident, without the possibility of a significant work to perform? . . .

“My dear friends, you are a royal generation. You were preserved to come to the earth in this time for a special purpose. Not just a few of you, but all of you. There are things for each of you to do that no one else can do as well as you. If you do not prepare to do them, they will not be done. Your mission is unique and distinctive for you. Please don’t make another have to take your place. He or she can’t do it as well as you can. If you will let Him, I testify that our Father in Heaven will walk with you through the journey of life and inspire you to know your special purpose here” (“Your Life Has a Purpose,” *New Era*, May 1979, pp. 4–5).

Story

To help the young women understand that seemingly ordinary people can do great things, tell the following story.

George A. Smith was a young man when he was converted to the Church soon after the Church was established. At that time, the Saints in the state of Missouri were being severely persecuted, and many had been driven from their homes. In 1834 the Prophet Joseph Smith led a group of about two hundred men from Kirtland, Ohio, which was the Church headquarters, to Jackson County, Missouri. The men were called Zion’s Camp, and they covered a thousand miles on their march. Their purpose was to restore the Church members to their lands and homes.

George A. Smith was the youngest member of the group. He was a big, awkward boy of sixteen who did not look or feel like a soldier. His mother had made him a pair of pants out of striped mattress cloth and a backpack from checked apron fabric. His father had given him a new pair of boots and an old musket. After a few days of marching, George’s boots had worn bloody blisters on his feet, his pants were ripped, and his straw hat was crushed. He didn’t look very imposing. But George was able to sleep in the Prophet’s tent and hear much of his counsel and instructions to the men. He learned each day from the example and teachings of Joseph Smith.

The men marched many miles each day and could hardly sleep during the hot, muggy nights. Mosquitoes and flies made life miserable, and food was of poor quality and in short supply. George said that the water on the prairie was filled with little wiggly insects that he learned to strain out with his teeth as he drank. Many of the men complained loudly about the poor conditions, but George willingly followed all of the Prophet’s instructions.

When Zion’s Camp reached Missouri, they found that the governor would not support them, as he had promised to do, in their efforts to recover homes and lands. The purpose of the long, difficult march seemed to be frustrated, and the men were deeply disappointed. Some even turned against the prophet.

The value of the march, however, later became clear. Those who remained loyal to the Lord and his prophet through this long trial learned leadership skills and developed strength from their close association with Joseph Smith. Most of the early leaders of the Church were chosen from among the faithful men of Zion’s Camp.

George A. Smith, the awkward sixteen-year-old boy, was ordained an Apostle less than five years later. He later served with Brigham Young as a member of the First Presidency. His experience in Zion’s Camp prepared him for a lifetime of leadership. His only mistake had been to underestimate his potential greatness.

Discussion

- In what ways are we sometimes like young George A. Smith?

Explain that sometimes we cannot see how the Lord is blessing and preparing us. We may feel awkward and unimportant. But like George A. Smith, we can remain true to the Lord and his prophets and do our best, and someday we will know that the Lord has been preparing us to serve valiantly in his kingdom.

We All Have Weaknesses That Can Be Turned to Strengths

Teacher presentation

Explain that in this life, we all have weaknesses that keep us from being the best we can be. But we can do our best to overcome these weaknesses and develop strengths.

Story	<p>Tell the following story to the class:</p> <p>“If we have the desire to play the game of life well, if we keep trying and practising, we have to endure to the end. We have to be determined to overcome our faults and stay in there trying to score regardless of the handicap. In 1960 the Olympics were held in Melbourne, Australia. There on the winner’s platform stood a beautiful, tall, blond American girl. She was being given a gold medal. The boys whistled and said, ‘There’s a girl who has everything.’</p> <p>“Tears ran down her cheeks as she took the medal. Most people thought she was just touched by the victory ceremony. The thing most of the audience did not know was the story of her determination. At the age of five she had polio. When the disease left her body, she couldn’t use her arms or legs. Her parents took her to a swimming pool where they hoped the water would help her hold her arms up as she tried to learn to use them again. When she could lift her arm out of the water with her own power, she cried for joy. Then her goal was to swim the width of the pool, then the length, then several lengths. She kept on trying until she won the gold medal for the butterfly stroke in the Olympics at Melbourne, Australia. This is one of the most difficult of all strokes. What if Shelley Mann had got discouraged? What if she had not learned [to endure]?” (Norma Ashton, “Be a ‘Most Valuable Player,’ ” <i>Improvement Era</i>, Sept. 1965, p. 787).</p>
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did this disease affect Shelley Mann? • What personal characteristics influenced the way she acted? • What can we learn from her example?
Scripture discussion	<p>Read Ether 12:27 together.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why does the Lord give us weakness? • Who will help us make weak things become strong? • What must we do to receive the blessings promised in this scripture? <p>Explain that if we trust in the Lord and do all we can, we will be able to overcome our weaknesses and develop the strength we need to serve the Lord valiantly and well.</p> <p>You may want to share an experience you have had with overcoming a weakness and developing strength. The young women may also have experiences they would like to share.</p>

Conclusion

Scripture	<p>Reread Doctrine and Covenants 18:10. Bear your testimony that each young woman in your class is of great worth to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. Each of them has the potential to be a great servant of the Lord.</p>
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