Section 1 is a preface (given out of chronological order) to the rest of the Doctrine and Covenants.

Does it change our understanding of this section if we think of it as the preface to the never-published Book of Commandments? How or why not?

What do you find in this section that might be a kind of preparation for reading the other revelations? What attitudes toward revelation in general do you find enjoined here?

**Doctrine and Covenants 1**

**Verses 1–2:** The Church was barely eighteen months old when this revelation was received. Why is it addressed not only to the Saints, but also to the rest of the world?

Why do you think the Lord uses the metaphor of *escaping* his eye?

What do you make of the fact that no one can escape being seen and that no one can avoid seeing?

**Verse 3:** Who are the rebellious? How will they hear the voice of the Lord? How will hearing the voice of the Lord pierce them with sorrow?

When have we heard the voice of the Lord? When have we felt as if our iniquities were spoken on the housetops? In
other words, when does hearing the voice of the Lord reveal our secret acts?

**Verses 4–5:** To what does “the voice of warning” refer to in verse 4?

**Verse 6:** To what does the word *this* refer to in the phrase “this is my authority”? For what is it authority?

**Verses 7–10:** How do those sent out with the message of the restoration seal the unbelieving and rebellious? What does *seal* mean here?

Why doesn’t the section say something about them also sealing the righteous?

**Verse 12:** Given the subject matter of this section, what do you think the Lord is admonishing us to do when he tells us to prepare for that which is to come?

What does it mean to say that the Lord is nigh? Is he nigh temporally or spiritually?

**Verses 13–14:** What does it mean to say that the Lord’s sword is “bathed in heaven”? (The phrase is from Isaiah 34:5. Does reading that phrase in its original context help?)

What does it mean to be cut off from among the people?

**Verse 15:** To whom does the word *they* refer? Who is the Lord referring to when he says “*they* have strayed”?

How does one stray from an ordinance? How might we stray from our ordinances?

Is the Lord speaking of two things or of one thing when he says “*they* have strayed from mine ordinances, and have
broken mine everlasting covenant”? In other words, are breaking the everlasting covenant and straying from the Lord’s ordinances the same thing?

Verse 16: What does it mean to seek the Lord? (Recall that the Book of Mormon frequently uses related phrases.) Is seeking the Lord the same as remembering him?

What is the Lord’s righteousness? How would it be established? How might we seek to establish it?

What does it mean to say we each walk in our own way? What does it mean to say that our idols have images “in the likeness of the world”? What substance does an idol have? How do our idols have that substance?

Verses 17–18: Why did the Lord call Joseph Smith and the “others” mentioned?

In what sense are those callings a response to calamity? What calamity? Did calling Joseph and others stop that calamity?

Verses 19–23: What are the weak things? What are the strong? Why does the Lord describe them that way? Why does the Lord want the weak things to break down the strong? How will they do so? By what power?

In this context, what does it mean to counsel our fellows? What is wrong with doing so?

The Lord speaks of speaking in the name of God, increasing faith, establishing his everlasting covenant, and proclaiming the fulness of the gospel, on the one hand, and trusting in the arm of flesh and counseling each other, on the other? How are these alternatives to each other?
Why is it important for faith to increase in the earth? What is the everlasting covenant? What is the fulness of the gospel?

**Verse 24:** How can we understand the Doctrine and Covenants as a collection of commandments when many of the revelations in them contain nothing that commands us or someone at the time of the revelation to do something? Is there a way of understanding the word *commandment* more broadly than we usually do?

Why does this verse begin as it does? Why point out that God is the source of this revelation? Wouldn’t a person already have to believe that this was from God in order to believe this verse?

What does it mean to say that these are given in our weaknesses, after the manner of our language? Over and over again in the Book of Mormon we see references to the weakness of the people writing the book. Why is the word *weakness* singular rather than plural, both here and in the Book of Mormon? How does that change the meaning? Why does the Lord bring up our weakness here? Why is it important for those reading the Doctrine and Covenants to know what this verse teaches?

**Verses 25–28:** How can we use the Doctrine and Covenants to do these things for us? How, for example, can it show us that we are in error or that we have sinned? How can the revelations of this book give us wisdom? How might they give us “knowledge from time to time.”

Why is the word *knowledge* followed by the qualifier “from time to time” when the word *wisdom* is not?
How do wisdom and knowledge differ here, or do they?

**Verse 29:** How does this verse fit into its context? Is it another part of the list that begins in verse 20?

How does Joseph’s power to translate come through the mercy of God?

**Verse 30:** This verse too seems to follow from something, but from what?

How does the Doctrine and Covenants give us power to lay the foundation for the Church? (Is this a repetition of the idea in verse 6?)

What does it mean to say that the Church is true? We can easily speak of sentences or claims being true, but how can a church be true? Think of other ways in which we use the word *true*, besides using it to describe sentences or beliefs. For example a line can be true. Do those other ways of using the word help us understand what it might mean to say that the Church is true?

What does it mean to say that the Church is living? What would it mean for a church to be dead?

Why does the Lord add “speaking unto the church collectively and not individually”?

**Verse 31:** What does it mean that the Lord cannot look on sin with the least degree of allowance? Isn’t that a message of despair: if we have any sin at all, doesn’t that mean he will not look on us at all? What is our alternative?

**Verses 32–33:** How do we repent?
What does it mean to *do* rather than *keep* the commandments?

What does it mean to lose what light we have? How does failure to repent rob us of our light?

If the Lord’s Spirit won’t always strive with us, he must now be striving with us. How so? Is that a message of hope?

**Verses 34–36:** Verses 34–35 say the Lord is willing to make these things known to all, that he is no respecter of persons. How might knowing this help us have faith in the Lord’s voice of warning, in the revelations, the restoration, etc.?

What does the Lord being no respecter of persons have to do with the fact that peace will soon be taken from the earth? What are several possible meanings of the phrase “peace shall be taken from the earth”?

What is the devil’s dominion? Why so?

Why does the revelation use the word *Idumea* to mean “the world”? The name occurs four times in the Old Testament (twice in Isaiah 34:5–6, and once each in Ezekiel 35:15 and 36:5). Does the Old Testament context help explain what the Lord says here?

**Verse 37:** How do we go about searching the commandments in the Doctrine and Covenants? What does it mean to say that a commandment is true? To say that it is faithful? How do commandments contain promises?

**Verses 38–39:** Like verse 24, this begins with the Lord pointing out that these are his words. Why? What is his word that will not pass away? How can a word be fulfilled? How can it
be fulfilled by someone speaking, by a voice? Of what does the Spirit bear record?

“To abide” means more than merely “to last.” It means “to live with,” “to dwell.” What might the word abide tell us about our relation to truth?