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AN ANALYSIS OF THE TEACHING AIDS PROVIDED FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL  
TEACHERS IN THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

by

Kevin D. Whitehead

A thesis submitted to the faculty of

Brigham Young University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Religious Education

Religious Education

Brigham Young University

December 2009

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## BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

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of a thesis submitted by

Kevin D. Whitehead

This thesis has been read by each member of the following graduate committee and by majority vote has been found to be satisfactory.

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## ABSTRACT

### AN ANALYSIS OF THE TEACHING AIDS PROVIDED FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Kevin D. Whitehead

Religious Education

Master of Arts

Teaching is, and always has been, important in the work of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As one of the auxiliaries of the Church, the Sunday School has made an ongoing effort to provide effective teaching aids for its teachers in order to improve instruction in the Church. This work documents and examines change in principles of gospel teaching over the course of a century. By comparing teaching aids provided for Gospel Doctrine teachers in different time periods with guidelines found in the scriptures and words of modern prophets this work seeks to increase understanding of themes and fundamentals of inspired teaching in the Church.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work could not have been possible without help from many people. I acknowledge the faithfulness of thousands of Latter-day saints who have labored in the Sunday School to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ, improve the work, and build the Kingdom of God on earth. I express sincere gratitude to Brothers Esplin and Merrill who invested themselves in helping me to improve the composition. I am grateful to Brother Daniel Judd, my chair, who gave me the idea and the opportunity. His patience and confidence lifted me throughout the process. I express thanks to my family—including my children, parents, siblings and in-laws—who offered ongoing encouragement and numerous prayers in my behalf. I am especially grateful for my dear wife Melany. She is my best friend and greatest support. I love her with all my heart. Lastly, I acknowledge the hand of the Lord in all that is good in this work. Without Him I am nothing.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### **Importance of Teaching in Christianity**

Religion, from the Latin *religāre*, conveys the idea of tying or binding one thing to another. Christianity holds that God invites mankind to be one; one with Him and unified with each other (see John 17:20-21). Christianity’s invitation to consummate unity is extended in many ways. Among the most important is teaching. Teaching is integral to Christianity. It is a vital contributor to its existence. It is the mainspring of its growth. It is an agent of conversion. It is incident in worship. It is a vehicle for doctrinal transmission. It is the copula between generations and the potential link between the believer and the incredulous. Whether directly through revelation or indirectly through mortal servants, Christianity maintains that the Lord has provided instruction—which includes at its core the invitation for mankind to bind themselves eternally to their Creator.

### **Importance of Teaching in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints**

Like other Christian religions The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints values the command to teach the gospel to all mankind (see Matthew 28:19-20; Alma 13:6; D&C 88:78).<sup>1</sup> Teaching is, and always has been, important in the work of the Church. Inspired teaching and learning is prerequisite to receiving ordinances essential to entrance and ultimate salvation in the Kingdom of God.<sup>2</sup> Although the “best and most effective teaching, of course, comes from the home, where parents accept responsibility for that sacred trust” the Church stands as a resource to help parents teach their children the gospel.<sup>3</sup> The mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of

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<sup>1</sup> All biblical citations in this work are taken from *The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments*, King James Version (KJV), (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989).

<sup>2</sup> See Russell T. Osguthorpe, “Teaching Helps Save Lives,” *Ensign*, November 2009, 17.

<sup>3</sup> “For the Strength of Youth,” *LDS Church News*, December 1991, 16.

Latter-day Saints is to “‘invite all to come unto Christ’ (D&C 20:59) ‘and be perfected in him’” (Moroni 10:32). This mission has three specific dimensions: proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, perfect the Saints, and redeem the dead.”<sup>4</sup> Fulfilling the mission of the Church is, in large measure, a process of teaching. Whether proselyting among the living, doing missionary work beyond the veil, being taught through ordinances, educating in the classroom or obtaining revealed instruction from God Himself, teaching is inherent in every major aspect of the work of the Church. President David O. McKay stated that “no greater responsibility can rest upon any [member of the Church] than to be a teacher of God’s children.”<sup>5</sup>

### **Importance of the Sunday School as an Auxiliary of the Church**

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints consists of two types of organized entities: priesthood quorums and other organizations which are auxiliary to the priesthood. “Auxiliaries” are organizations within the Church which, under the direction of priesthood authority, assist priesthood quorums in carrying out the mission of the Church. The auxiliaries of the Church are “the Relief Society (women, eighteen and older), Sunday School . . . young women (twelve through eighteen), young men (twelve through eighteen), and primary (all children eighteen months through eleven years).”<sup>6</sup> The Sunday School formally became an auxiliary of the Church in the early 1860’s when President Brigham Young established it as a Churchwide program.<sup>7</sup> Sunday School in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is provided for members of the Church and interested non-members 12 years of age or older.

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<sup>4</sup> *Temple and Family History Leadership Handbook*, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1992), 1; Ezra Taft Benson, “‘Come unto Christ, and Be Perfected in Him’,” *Ensign*, May 1988, 84.

<sup>5</sup> *Gospel Ideals: Selections from the Discourses of David O. McKay* (Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1953), 175.

<sup>6</sup> Irene H. Ericksen, “Auxiliary Organizations,” *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 1-4 vols., edited by Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 89.

<sup>7</sup> During that era it was called the Deseret Sunday School Union and remained as such until changing to the Sunday School in the 1970’s. See *Ibid*, 90.

Each Sunday, ward members assemble at the meetinghouse chapel for prayer and hymn singing, following which those twelve years and older attend age-group classes for religious instruction while younger children attend primary. The Sunday School courses provide a forum for discussions, socialization, and the integration of gospel principles into everyday life. The adult curriculum includes a Gospel Doctrine course based on the standard works, a Gospel Essentials class, and elective alternative classes on family history, teacher development, and family relations. The courses of study between twelve and eighteen are coeducational and focus on gospel principles, teachings of the Savior, Church history, scripture study, and the lives and teachings of the modern prophets.<sup>8</sup>

The Sunday School has two primary purposes. “[1] Teach the gospel of Jesus Christ and [2] strengthen individual families by encouraging them to study the scriptures, obey the commandments, receive essential ordinances, and keep the associated covenants.”<sup>9</sup>

### **The Role of the Gospel Doctrine Class within the Sunday School**

The Gospel Doctrine class is one of many courses housed within the Sunday School organization. It is provided for the adult members of the Church and non-members who are interested. Instructors are drawn from the lay membership who voluntarily respond to formal Church assignments to teach. The curriculum provided for instructors is the Gospel Doctrine manual. The scriptures are the text for class members. The purpose of the Gospel Doctrine class is identical to that of the Sunday School.

### **The Role of Teaching Aids within the Gospel Doctrine Class**

The Church has placed emphasis not just on teaching but on the need for effective teaching. Elder Dallin H. Oaks, of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has taught that each member of the Church “is, or will be, a teacher” and has “a vital interest in the content and effectiveness of gospel teaching.” Effective teaching, he went on to say, is important to each “of

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<sup>8</sup> B. Lloyd, Poelman, “Sunday School,” *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 1-4 vols., edited by Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1424.

<sup>9</sup> *Church Handbook of Instructions: Book 2, Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998), 241.

us [finding] our way back . . . to our Heavenly Father.”<sup>10</sup> The Church’s “teacher improvement materials provide a strong and effective means of improving . . . teaching skills.”<sup>11</sup> Another way to speak of teacher improvement material is the term “teaching aid.” The expression “teaching aid” will be defined as any item or idea provided to assist a teacher in the process of teaching. Teaching aids provided for Gospel Doctrine teachers, including, suggestions found within Gospel Doctrine manuals, addresses or articles authored by Church leaders for teachers, and teacher improvement manuals, have a significant influence on how well the Gospel Doctrine class fulfills the object of its design.

### **Statement of the Problem**

It is a fundamental teaching of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that God has and will continue to reveal His will to His people. The Prophet Joseph Smith Jr. stated, “we believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God” (Articles of Faith 1:9).<sup>12</sup> William W. Phelps, an early Church leader, in his celebrated hymn *The Spirit of God*, penned a line that captures the pattern the Lord has followed in making known His divine will by revelation. “The Lord,” he wrote, “is extending the Saint’s understanding.”<sup>13</sup> This phrase connotes that “the restoration of all things” is a process and not an event (D&C 27:6; 86:10). Joseph Smith received a revelation in 1833 that reiterates the idea and provides insight into the

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<sup>10</sup> “Gospel Teaching,” *Ensign*, November 1999, 78.

<sup>11</sup> “History of Teacher Improvement,” Sunday School Homepage, The official website of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, <http://www.lds.org/pa/display/0,17884,5124-1,00.html>. (June 19, 2009).

<sup>12</sup> “A statement by Joseph Smith published in the Times and Seasons March 1, 1842, in company with a short history of the Church that was popularly known as the Wentworth Letter. See *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 7 vols., (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1932-1951) 4:535-541.” (Introductory Note to *The Pearl of Great Price*, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981).

<sup>13</sup> *Hymns of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985), no. 2.

reason behind such a pattern, “For he [God] will give unto the faithful line upon line, precept upon precept; and . . . *will try you and prove you herewith*” (D&C 98:12 [emphasis added]). The Latter-day Saints believe this to be true both individually and institutionally. It follows, therefore, that the continued development and expanding understanding of the Church and its auxiliary organizations would be no exception.

This thesis will seek to address the following question: *What changes can be observed in the teaching aids for the Gospel Doctrine course of study and how well do they fit with the standards of gospel teaching found in the scriptures and the teachings of latter-day prophets?*

One important facet of the Sunday School auxiliary is the Gospel Doctrine course. The way the Gospel Doctrine course conveys its standards of effective teaching is a significant indicator of its objectives and overall direction. Since teaching aids document standards of effective teaching given to Gospel Doctrine teachers, they are an apparent source for investigating the expansion of understanding. Consequently, this study will limit itself to the examination of written aids aimed at teacher improvement—i.e. articles and addresses directed to teachers, teaching aids found within Gospel Doctrine manuals, official Church publications prepared for teachers, and teacher improvement manuals. Related questions that present themselves and which this thesis will seek to address are as follows. Are there fundamental similarities or differences in teaching aids provided to teachers since the inception of the Gospel doctrine class in 1906? Is there evidence of an unfolding of understanding concerning what constitutes effective gospel teaching? Has there been an unfolding of understanding concerning the teacher’s divine commission? Can that unfolding be documented in the teaching aids? How do current teaching aids compare with those in the past, and to what degree do those aids draw upon principles and doctrines of teaching found in the scriptures and the instruction of latter-day prophets?

### **Statement Addressing the Problem**

This thesis will address the questions cited above from two different perspectives: 1) From the purview of a select survey of past and current teaching helps provided for what is now called the Gospel Doctrine course of study. 2) From the purview of selected portions of the standard works of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the most recent official Church publications on teaching. The data gathered will be used to answer the questions stated above.

### **Methodology and Delimitations**

First, a brief survey of teaching helps from key time periods will be taken. The four periods of time to be included are: 1906-1916 representing the beginnings of Sunday School for adults; 1920-1940, which was typified by further innovations and consolidations for the Gospel Doctrine class; 1970-1980, a period distinguished by worldwide expansion, the implementation of the standard works themselves as the text for Gospel Doctrine, and further efforts in correlation; and, finally, teaching aids available from 1999-2009 for Gospel Doctrine teachers. This effort is not intended to create a history of the Gospel Doctrine curriculum or its teaching aids, but rather to observe changes to some of the principles, objectives, and methods of teaching that were being emphasized to improve teaching at a given time period. Following the documentary portion, an analysis will be made focusing on three questions. 1) What was fundamental in past teaching helps? 2) What is fundamental in current teaching helps? 3) How do the findings from the previous two questions, mentioned above, relate with revealed help for teachers of the gospel found in the scriptures and the teachings of latter-day prophets?



## Review of Related Literature

The body of work that pertains to the development of the Gospel Doctrine class is primarily found in its official publications—the *Juvenile Instructor* and the *Instructor*.<sup>14</sup> These are largely historical sketches of the Sunday School movement in general and do not represent any specific analysis on the Gospel Doctrine course or its curriculum.

The only official history of the Sunday School is the *Jubilee History of Latter-day Saints Sunday Schools* which covers the initial fifty years of the movement in the Church.<sup>15</sup> The record begins with a brief history of the “General Sunday School Movement” which transitions into the first Sunday Schools of the Church. It goes on to detail the formation, growth, and attainments of the Deseret Sunday School Union. Additionally, addresses and agendas from early Sunday School conventions were incorporated. The bulk of the information in this lengthy volume is documentation of each of the Sunday Schools that existed at the time of the Jubilee. This includes information on dates of organization, officers, attendance, and geographic boundaries. This history lacks any mention of curricular structure or pedagogical practice.

Related graduate studies include Ronald L. Knighton’s 1968 master’s thesis *A Comparative Study of the Teaching Methods in the L.D.S. and Non-L.D.S. Sunday School Movements in the United States Prior to 1900*.<sup>16</sup> His writing included an abbreviated history of the Sunday School movement and then a somewhat more extensive comparison of teaching methods provided for Sunday School children between 1780 and 1900. He delimited the study to

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<sup>14</sup> See Hill, George R. “Deseret Sunday School Union,” *Improvement Era*, November 1956, 800-801; Conway A. Ashton, “The Rise and Progress of Our Sunday Schools,” *Instructor*, April 1936, 133-135; Adam S. Bennion, “The Sunday School: Its Development and Present Day Problems,” *Juvenile Instructor*, March 1920, 107-113; J. N. Washburn, “Ye Have Need That One Teach You’: A History of the Sunday Schools of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” *Instructor*, January-November 1949.

<sup>15</sup> *Jubilee History of Latter-day Saints Sunday Schools 1849-1899* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union, 1900), 9-12.

<sup>16</sup> Ronald L. Knighton, “Comparative Study of the Teaching Methods in the L.D.S. and Non-L.D.S. Sunday School Movements in the United States Prior to 1900,” (Master’s Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1968).

a comparison between Sunday Schools that belonged to the American Sunday School Union and those within The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The study concluded that the majority of pedagogical methods used by Sunday Schools outside the Church were also adopted by L.D.S. Sunday Schools. Both groups were committed to teacher training. However, the study reported that, by the turn of the century, Sunday Schools within the Church were using a slightly wider variety of methods than their counterparts outside the Church.

Also in 1968, Keith L. Smith produced a Master's thesis titled *An Historical Study of Adult Education Programs of Brigham Young University From 1921 to 1966*.<sup>17</sup> While the purpose of this study was not to address religious education, Smith makes mention of the Sunday School movement. A few select passages give examples of experiments in religious education for adults in America that preceded the formation of the Gospel Doctrine class in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This was important to supporting the idea that while religious education for adults did not originate with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints it was among the first institutions to emphasize a complete program of Sunday instruction for members of all ages.

Jerry Rose, in 1973, wrote his master's thesis at Brigham Young University regarding the history of priesthood correlation in the Church. The title of the thesis is *The Correlation Program of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints During the Twentieth Century*.<sup>18</sup> The study includes several references to the Sunday School such as shifts in organization, updates in curriculum, changes to meeting schedules, adjustments to policy, and the realignment

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<sup>17</sup> Keith L. Smith, "An Historical Study of Adult Education Programs of Brigham Young University From 1921 to 1966," (Master's Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1968).

<sup>18</sup> Jerry Rose, "The Correlation Program of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints during the Twentieth Century," (Master's Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1973).

of stewardships. Certain portions of this study are helpful in understanding the larger goals and aims of the administration in regard to the work of the Sunday School.

In 1976, Stephen Hedquist authored a Master's thesis at Brigham Young University entitled *The Teacher Training Program Administered by the Sunday School of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*.<sup>19</sup> This work contained a section on the philosophical foundations of education in the Church, followed by a terse historical perspective on the beginnings of the Sunday School. The majority of the writing focused on presenting a historical view of the teacher training program up until 1971. While Hedquist does an excellent job of outlining the texts, programs, and the general focus of teacher improvement in the Church, only on occasion does he offer any detail concerning actual content of the manuals or methods suggested for teachers.

## **Conclusion**

Out of the various works mentioned above, none have had a focus on the Gospel Doctrine course of study for adults. Furthermore, there has not been a serious look at the ongoing development of the idea of effective teaching within the teaching helps provided by the Sunday School. Additionally, it appears there has been no major work in the academic field that has analyzed teacher improvement for the Sunday School in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints beyond the 1970's. Finally, there has not been an attempt to examine teacher improvement materials provided for the Sunday School in comparison with the scriptures and the words of modern prophets which are the primary source of direction for all that is done in the Church. Therefore, there is an apparent need for this study.

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<sup>19</sup> Stephen Hedquist, "The Teacher Training Program Administered by the Sunday School of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (Master's Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1976).

## CHAPTER TWO: HISTORICAL SETTINGS

### **Introduction**

As with any significant development in a major institution, the rise of the Sunday School in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints did not come about independent of historical influences. This chapter will seek to provide historical background to the beginnings of the Sunday School in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. By doing this, it is intended that the reader will better be able to understand the genesis of the Gospel Doctrine class as well as the beginnings of the international Sunday School movement—which influenced both the inception and the maturation of Sunday School within The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

### **The Sunday School Movement in England**

The origin of the Sunday School movement in global Christianity took place in England during the latter part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Among the factors that contributed to bring about the movement, three are particularly notable. First, a significant increase in population (from about 5½ million to 9½ million from 1700 to 1800) prompted a general migration from rural areas to “new [centers] of industrial expansion.”<sup>1</sup> The relocation of so many became a source of far reaching “social trauma” which particularly impacted the working class.<sup>2</sup> A second factor that contributed to the rise of the Sunday School movement was what one writer described as the “cold and unemotional” religion of the English Church in the early part of the eighteenth

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<sup>1</sup> Philip B. Cliff, *The Rise and Development of the Sunday School Movement in England*, (Surrey England: Robert Denholm House, 1986), 12.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

century.<sup>3</sup> This included the apathy of the Church toward religious education and the “almost entire loss” of traditional means to promote religious socialization, especially among working class families flooding into manufacturing towns.<sup>4</sup> A third condition, to which the Sunday School was a response, was the nearly overwhelming level of illiteracy and lack of education among the poorer classes during the period surrounding the Napoleonic wars.<sup>5</sup>

While there were numerous experiments with Sunday instruction before Robert Raikes,<sup>6</sup> his efforts became the impetus for a national movement in England that would eventually spread to the United States and many other lands. Born in 1736, Robert Raikes was a native of Gloucester England. Son of a newspaper publisher, Raikes eventually became the proprietor of the *Gloucester Journal* which he inherited from his father. In addition to his work with the newspaper, Raikes became involved in prison reform. As a result, Raikes was well acquainted with the frequently deplorable condition of the working class and those who had been penalized on account of causes related to poverty. Raikes saw the two major sources of crime as unemployment and ignorance. The solution, he felt, lay in prevention.

Raikes committed himself to ameliorate the condition of those in poverty. He invested time teaching inmates in the Bridewell common prison in Gloucester. He instructed prisoners

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<sup>3</sup> Ellwood P. Cubberley, *The History of Education: Education Practices and Progress Considered as a Phase of the Development and Spread of Western Civilization*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1920), 617.

<sup>4</sup> Cliff, *The Rise and Development of the Sunday School Movement in England*, 12; see also Robert W. Lynn, Elliott Wright, *The Big Little School: Sunday Child of American Protestantism*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 7; see also Ford K. Brown, *Fathers of the Victorians: The Age of Wilburforce*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 4.

<sup>5</sup> See Robert K. Webb, “Working Class Readers in Early Victorian England” *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 65, No. 256 (Oxford University Press: Jul., 1950), 333.

<sup>6</sup> “Schools of a similar character apparently with all the features of [Raikes’] agency were organized in upper Egypt, in Armenia, and elsewhere in the East more than fourteen centuries before 1780. All the way along the intervening centuries there were repeated revivals of this agency of religious instruction with more or less success” (Clarence H. Benson, *A Popular History of Christian Education*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1943), 120; see also Lewis G. Pray, *The History of Sunday Schools and of Religious Education, From the Earliest Times*, (Boston: Wm. Crosby and H. P. Nicolas, 1947), 133. John Wesley had endeavored to establish a movement in Savannah as early as 1737 which was introduced in England in 1763, but those efforts did not amount to anything at that time (see Cubberley, *The History of Education*, 617).

how to read and write and employed those who were literate in teaching those who were not.<sup>7</sup> Further, Raikes personally paid the debt of many who had been imprisoned because of destitution.<sup>8</sup> However, this was only the beginning of his influence on the condition of the “deserving poor.”

In the latter part of the eighteenth century Raikes began to grow concerned with the burgeoning number of working class children without proper education or supervision. At that time there were no public schools in Europe. Education was primarily limited to the “privileged classes.”<sup>9</sup> Many working-class children were employed six days a week and left to their own devices on Sunday. Among Raikes’ chief concerns for these children were the lack of opportunities for education and the growing problem of unguided activities desecrating the Sabbath. Because Raikes was aware of other individuals who had established instruction meetings for children held on Sunday, in July 1780 he ventured to start his own experiment. He hired a few women at a shilling a day to gather neighborhood children into their homes and teach reading, catechism and then later escort them to church for preaching.<sup>10</sup> In addition to this, Raikes began to publish children’s literature aimed at education. Three years later on November 3, 1783, with the support of local clergy, he made a public announcement of the experiment to improve education for children of the lower classes by establishing Sunday Schools.<sup>11</sup> “His printed description of the Sunday School idea,” published in his own newspaper, was the beginning of a “national impulse” to educational reform.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Pray, *History of Sunday Schools*, 134.

<sup>8</sup> *Christianity, Society and Education*, ed. John Ferguson, (Southampton: Camelot Press Ltd, 1981), 1-2.

<sup>9</sup> Benson, *Popular History of Christian Education*, 121.

<sup>10</sup> *The Development of the Sunday School, 1780-1905: Official Report of the Eleventh International Sunday-School Convention, Toronto Canada, 1905* (Boston: International Sunday School Association, 1905), 8.

<sup>11</sup> Cliff, *Rise and Development of the Sunday School Movement in England*, 28.

<sup>12</sup> Cubberley, *The History of Education*, 617.

As the word spread, others gained interest in the initiative. The movement caught the attention of prominent individuals, including, the Earl of Salisbury, John Newton, William Cowper, Thomas Scott, William Wilberforce, and William Fox. William Fox, for instance, was a London businessman who had a “vision of a great moral and religious transformation” which could be enacted by facilitating Bible literacy. Fox felt that by doing this, virtue would be fortified, ignorance would be diminished and men could be brought to “cheerfully submit to their stations.”<sup>13</sup> Fox sought to rally the support of influential Christians to organize a society that would “provide the common people with sufficient education to enable them to read the Bible.”<sup>14</sup> About this time Fox observed the growth and success of Raikes’ program and shifted his support as a means “to best accomplish his [own] purpose.”<sup>15</sup>

The movement was also bolstered by the work of certain reformers such as John Wesley. Unlike so many of the clergy at the time, Wesley was highly supportive of the Sunday School idea.<sup>16</sup> Based on his own experience and the strength of the movement, Wesley began to establish educational societies for children within larger Methodist congregations “wherever there were ten or more” potential students.<sup>17</sup> Wesley’s advocacy of the endeavor not only increased fervor in England but also had significant influence on the similar movement in North America.

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<sup>13</sup> Lynn and Wright, *The Big Little School*, 7.

<sup>14</sup> Benson, *Popular History of Christian Education*, 124.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> The non-evangelical party within the Church of England was one source of opposition to the Sunday School movement. During the 1780’s the Archbishop of Canterbury had initially voiced his approval of the Sunday School idea. However, within a short time he had recanted. As the turn of the century approached, there was increasing concern within the established Church that Sunday Schools were infusing the poor with insubordinate ideas liable to seriously disrupt the caste system or even foster revolution as had been recently witnessed in France (see Lynn and Wright, *The Big Little School*, 9).

<sup>17</sup> Benson, *A Popular History of Christian Education*, 125-126.

As more people became aware of the movement, interest spread rapidly throughout the British Isles.<sup>18</sup> Promotional organizations were started and publishing houses were enlisted to aid in the cause.<sup>19</sup> “In 1785, ‘The Society for the Support and Encouragement of Sunday Schools in the Different Counties of England’ was formed with the view to establishing a Sunday School in every parish in the kingdom, and the Queen headed a subscription list, following a general appeal for funds.”<sup>20</sup> By 1787 estimates of students attending Sunday School in England and Wales numbered 234,000.<sup>21</sup> By 1818 the count had risen to 425,000; in 1830, it was estimated that the number of students was between 800,000 and 1,500,000; by 1833, attendance had climbed to over 1,500,000; by 1851, it had reached 2,600,000; and that number had ballooned to over 6,000,000 by 1911.<sup>22</sup>

The Sunday School movement in England brought about benefits both within and without its borders. First, the Sunday School movement in England did much to tutor the State System of Education.<sup>23</sup> Further, Sunday Schools became a mollifying agent in the ongoing conflict between the classes. Through Sunday School work individuals of varying status were able to come together in mutual service.<sup>24</sup> The movement confronted wealthy Christians with their responsibility to the poor. These mild forms of reconciliation may have “spared England the

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<sup>18</sup> For example, “The earnest but slight efforts of Wilberforce . . . [in] 1790 grew in twenty five years into an immense reform movement, well organized and superbly directed, conducted with the most practical strategy . . . using agencies and resources of a size, number and power not fully recognized.” The work of Evangelicals under the influence of Wilberforce and others brought about “the establishment of . . . societies for charity, benevolence and education that could be made contributory to moral reform” (Brown, *Fathers of the Victorians*, 4-5).

<sup>19</sup> J.M. Price and others, *A Survey of Religious Education*, second ed. (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1959), 65.

<sup>20</sup> Cubberley, *The History of Education*, 617.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> K. D. M. Snell, “The Sunday-School Movement in England and Wales: Child Labour, Denominational Control and Working-Class,” *Past & Present*, No. 164 (Aug., 1999) (Oxford University Press, 1999), 126.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*



woes of a violent revolution.”<sup>25</sup> Additionally, the Sunday School movement laid the foundation for the modern missionary societies which have helped spread Christianity throughout the globe.<sup>26</sup> The Sunday School movement influenced similar enterprises including the undertaking that followed in North America. Finally, the Sunday School movement changed the lives of millions of young children by offering the precious gift of literacy accompanied, in many cases, by new faith.

### **The Sunday School Movement in America**

America, in many ways, was a seedbed for spiritual and educational developments. Despite the diversity of opinion on other matters, the founders of the American nation shared a general zeal for learning and religious virtue. Although church and state were kept starkly separate, faith and education often went “hand in hand.”<sup>27</sup> The perceived relationship between biblical teachings and a virtuous citizenry was strong. Therefore, instruction from the Bible was considered essential to the bedrock upon which a stable society was built. Moreover, many Americans sought freedom to worship God according to their own conscience, which promoted tolerance for religious experiments. Consequently, the modern Sunday School movement “found more congenial conditions and fewer obstacles in America than in Great Britain.”<sup>28</sup>

The genesis of Sunday Schools in America occurred at least as early as the latter part of the eighteenth century.<sup>29</sup> Sabbath Schools sprung up intermittently in various communities largely distant from one another. Edwin Wilbur Rice observed,

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<sup>25</sup> A. Kenneth Curtis, J. Stephen Lang, Randy Peterson, *The 100 Most Important Events in Christian History*, (Grand Rapids MI: Revell, 1991), 139.

<sup>26</sup> Benson, *Popular History of Christian Education*, 129.

<sup>27</sup> Edwin Wilbur Rice, *The Sunday School Movement and the American Sunday School Union*, (Philadelphia: American Sunday School Union, 1917), 41.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, 40.

<sup>29</sup> Depending on how they are defined, “the first Sunday Schools in America can be traced back [at least] as far as 1785 to communities such as in Accomac County Virginia where William Elliot gathered children for instruction on

. . . schools of a character like to those founded by Raikes with all their essential features were to be found in America long before his day. These schools had many of the features as well as the form common to the modern Sunday school which entitled them to be counted forerunners of the modern movement. True they were sporadic instances. The movement by Raikes gave popularity to the new form and led to its almost universal adoption. Claims have been made for the early existence of many such schools. [One] need note only the following: Norwich and Bethlehem, Connecticut, Roxbury, and Plymouth Massachusetts among the Schwenckfelders and at Ephrata Pennsylvania Philadelphia under Zinzendorf and Mrs. Greening and perhaps Savannah Georgia by Wesley.<sup>30</sup>

Although Raikes is attributed with founding a lasting movement, American workers should be given “credit for successfully experimenting.”<sup>31</sup>

Individual Sunday Schools were founded for various reasons. Many originators were compelled by the conviction that the Christian faith was to be shared with all. Sabbath instruction for youth served as a vehicle to this end. The spirit of philanthropy moved many others to extend support to the poor by founding charity schools. These schools were held on the Sabbath and often used the Bible as a text. Additionally, some felt the apprentice system, which in most cases included intellectual education, was failing to meet adequate instructional standards. This was coupled with the perception that working class children and youth were engaging in behavior and manners that were, in eyes of their observers, defiling the Sabbath.<sup>32</sup> In many cases, Sunday School filled the educational and social vacuum.

However, the rise of the modern Sunday School movement in America was not bereft of difficulty. While education was generally valued, both the idea of administering education to the public and the means by which it was to be accomplished remained an ongoing question. This

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reading and scripture study and memorization. Additional schools and societies were formed in various parts of the country from 1786-1814 including South Carolina (1790), Maryland (1804), Rhode Island (1791), New York (1792), New Jersey (1794), Pennsylvania (1809), Massachusetts (1809) and Delaware (1814).” (Benson, *Popular History of Christian Education*, 131-134).

<sup>30</sup> Rice, *The Sunday School Movement*, 43.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, 42.

<sup>32</sup> See Anne M. Boylan, *Sunday School: The Formation of an American Institution, 1790-1880* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), 7-8.

included queries as to the propriety and educational value of Sunday School. Traditional forms of instruction such as teaching in the home and employing private tutors competed with schooling offered on Sundays.<sup>33</sup> More particularly, the sentiment of both clergy and laity in some communities was that teaching reading and writing, even from the Bible, should be reserved for days other than the Sabbath.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, there were ebbs and flows of support for God's word because of irreligion. For example, a general torrent of skepticism and low morals during the later part of the eighteenth century had a stifling influence over areas of religious endeavor during the same period.<sup>35</sup> Despite opposition, committed parties continued to establish schools in various parts of the nation.

Sunday Schools, established late in the eighteenth century, ended up filling a variety of functions. "Some paid teachers to impart basic literacy to working children; others were staffed by volunteers who taught reading, writing, and religion to poor or black children; . . . still others were essentially variants on catechism classes for church members' children."<sup>36</sup> Generally speaking, schools established early on in the movement were geared toward children among the poorer classes, many of whom worked throughout the week. There they could be kept off the streets on the Sabbath and receive both a basic secular and moral education.

One of the first efforts at systematized education came in 1790 when some of the leading men in the city of Philadelphia put together what they nominated the "First Day Society."<sup>37</sup> Borrowing heavily from the British model of Sunday Schools, the First Day Society organized schools based on the philosophy that a better educated working class made for better servants

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<sup>33</sup> See Rice, *The Sunday School Movement*, 41-42.

<sup>34</sup> See Ronald L. Knighton, *A Comparative Study of the Teaching Methods of the L.D.S. and non-L.D.S. Sunday School Movements in the United States prior to 1900*, (Master's Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1968), 10.

<sup>35</sup> Rice, *The Sunday School Movement*, 41.

<sup>36</sup> Boylan, *Sunday School*, 9.

<sup>37</sup> R. G. Pardee, *The Sabbath-school Index*, (Philadelphia: J.C. Garrigues and Co. 1868), 16.

and better citizens. The founders of the society saw the system of schools they were seeking to establish as playing an important part, not only in the lives of individuals but also in the larger success of the young republic to which they belonged. The organizers felt that “without an educated populace, public virtue would soon disappear, liberty would degenerate into anarchy, and the republican experiment would fail.”<sup>38</sup> Their first school was opened for operation in March, 1791.<sup>39</sup>

Not long after the First Day schools began to proliferate, protestant evangelical schools also began to emerge. The new evangelical schools differed fundamentally from First Day schools and others like them. The chief purpose of the evangelical schools was, as their name suggests, Christian conversion. Efforts to teach reading were seen as means to that end—particularly that students would be able to read the bible with an evangelical interpretation.

The organizers of these schools were generally very dedicated Christians—“many of whom had only recently experienced religious conversion during the revivals of the Second Great Awakening.”<sup>40</sup> The most significant difference between evangelical schools and those with a “fundamentally educational organization” was their extraordinary growth and “geographical dispersion.”<sup>41</sup> These schools, which laid the foundation for modern church schools, were notably prosperous. It was not long before they were enrolling tens of thousands of both students and teachers. The success of these schools can be attributed to at least three major reasons.

One reason for the significant growth of evangelical schools was due in part to the rise of “Protestant activism during the Second Great Awakening.” This new style of Protestantism urged new converts to work for the salvation of others. This enthusiasm promoted the

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<sup>38</sup> Pardee, *The Sabbath-school Index*, 16; see also Boylan, *Sunday School*, 8.

<sup>39</sup> Pray, *History of Sunday Schools*, 205.

<sup>40</sup> Boylan, *Sunday School*, 9-10.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

proliferation of Protestant voluntary associations, which ranged anywhere from “denominational missionary societies” to “interdenominational Bible and tract societies.”<sup>42</sup> In these societies members did the teaching and recruiting themselves.<sup>43</sup> Several means of recruitment were employed to improve numbers, including, the distribution of Sunday School publications, visits to the homes of potential students, and incentives such as awarding books for recitation, good attendance or good behavior.<sup>44</sup> As experiments in proselyting developed, Sunday Schools became a progressively more important part of protestant missionary efforts.

A second reason for the remarkable growth of Sunday Schools was an emerging realization concerning the potential of children to learn. Theories in child psychology began to support the idea that children were exceptionally teachable from a very young age. This opened the door for the idea that they were also prime candidates for evangelization and even conversion.<sup>45</sup> This contributed to increasingly larger numbers of children being invited to participate in Sunday Schools at an increasingly younger age.

A third condition that contributed to the significant growth was the inclusion of students from church going families. Republican sentiment, which tended to foster equality among the classes, prepared the way for a broader “social representation”<sup>46</sup> in Sunday Schools. No longer limited to the “poor and unchurched,” more and more devout parents from various walks of life enrolled their children in Sunday Schools. While the inclusion of church going youngsters did increase patronage to the schools, it also brought about the gradual division of Sunday Schools

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>44</sup> See F. Allen Briggs, “The Sunday-School Library in the Nineteenth Century,” *The Library Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (The University of Chicago Press, April., 1961), 167.

<sup>45</sup> See Boylan, *Sunday School*, 14-15.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 17; see also Lynn and Wright, *The Big Little School*, 10-11.

into two subcategories. Mission schools generally were patronized by non-church goers while church schools represented individual denominations.<sup>47</sup>

During the first years of the movement teachers were generally compensated for their services. Sunday Schools with paid teachers coexisted for some time with “free day schools and new evangelical Sunday Schools.”<sup>48</sup> As in Britain, the expense of salaried teachers eventually became too great to be sustained. Volunteer teachers became necessary for the “extension” and continuation of the Sunday School movement.<sup>49</sup> After 1810 most of teaching in American Sunday Schools was done by volunteers.<sup>50</sup> By 1816 several Sunday School unions, sustained by the work of volunteers, had been organized in major eastern cities such as New York and Boston.<sup>51</sup>

The continued spread of Sunday Schools from the more densely populated east to the frontiers of the west was made possible, in part, by the “union principle.” The idea rested upon cooperation of several varying Christian societies in symphony with a strict non-denominational understanding. Five non-denominational societies, founded between 1815 and 1826, were the chief executives of the union principle. They included the American Sunday School Union (discussed hereafter); the American Education Society which focused on theological studies and training future ministers; the American Home Missionary society which assisted poor congregations by funding pastors and sending them to new settlements in the west; the American Bible Society, which distributed millions of copies of the testaments throughout the frontier; and the American Tract Society which dispensed upwards of 200 million books and pamphlets prior to the Civil War. Since reaching out to the vast numbers of citizens spread across immense tracts

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>49</sup> Benson, *Popular History of Christian Education*, 136.

<sup>50</sup> See *The Development of the Sunday School*, 8.

<sup>51</sup> Benson, *A Popular History of Christian Education*, 136-137; See also Pardee, *The Sabbath-school Index*, 16.

of wilderness was a nearly impossible task for any one institution, the union principle was adopted by these five societies to harness the labors of all to accomplish the larger goal of evangelizing the republic. While each society naturally competed for support, their activities were necessarily complementary.<sup>52</sup>

In terms of the actual institutionalization of the Sunday School in America, the American Sunday School Union was the most influential of the various societies. Formed in 1824, the American Sunday School Union was designed to “embrace all the unions and all the schools connected with the churches calling themselves evangelical in the United States”<sup>53</sup> and unite them in the cause of Christian conversion.<sup>54</sup> The broad vision of the Union was to magnify the efforts of Sunday School societies throughout the land, distribute publications focused on religious education, and establish Sunday Schools “wherever there [was] a population.”<sup>55</sup> Within eighteen months from its origin, the American Sunday School Union had instituted “four hundred branches in twenty two of the twenty four states, nine of these being state unions.”<sup>56</sup>

The volunteers and leadership of the American Sunday School Union had a tremendous missionary zeal and took seriously the commission to make religious instruction available to as many as possible. One example that reflects the massive scope of the Union’s missionary activities was the campaign to the Mississippi Valley. In 1830 the suggestion was made that upon “reliance on divine aid” the Union would resolve to “establish a Sunday School in every destitute place” throughout the entire Mississippi Valley.<sup>57</sup> The valley of the Mississippi, as defined by the Union, stretched “from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to the Rocky Mountains, and

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<sup>52</sup> See Lynn and Wright, *The Big Little School*, 19-20.

<sup>53</sup> Pray, *The History of Sunday Schools*, 213.

<sup>54</sup> See *Christianity, Society and Education*, Ed. John Ferguson, 183-184.

<sup>55</sup> “American Sunday School Union: Constitution,” *The American Sunday School Magazine*, July 1824, 28.

<sup>56</sup> Benson, *Popular History of Christian Education*, 156-157.

<sup>57</sup> Rice, *The Sunday School Movement*, 196.

from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico.”<sup>58</sup> It “compromised an area then estimated at one million three hundred thousand square miles with a population of approximately four million, one-tenth of which was believed to be children and youth.”<sup>59</sup>

As a result of generous contributions in money and time from numerous individuals, the Mississippi Valley enterprise was at least partially successful. It was reported that over half of the 8,000 to 10,000 new settlements in the valley were furnished with Sunday Schools. Additionally, the Union recorded large numbers of both students and teachers who had declared conversion to Christ.<sup>60</sup> Yet, the impact was not as great as had been hoped. The campaign was never fully carried out. Despite the areas in which the endeavor failed, the challenge itself was what was needed to spur a massive coalition of supporters into action and further ignite the movement.<sup>61</sup>

In addition to evangelization, the American Sunday School Union had a broad influence on national education. For example, the Union made significant contributions to prepare the way for a system of public schools in the United States. This included the effort to make education ubiquitous, not just available to the privileged. The Sunday School movement, headed by the American Sunday School Union, helped to enthrone literacy in American education by pursuing massive projects in publishing, distribution and the establishment of local libraries.<sup>62</sup> Many associated with the Sunday School movement campaigned for support of a public school system in order to relieve the burden of the Sunday School which was still providing both religious and

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<sup>58</sup> Lynn, and Wright, *The Big Little School*, 18.

<sup>59</sup> Benson, *A Popular History of Christian Education*, 157.

<sup>60</sup> Rice, *The Sunday School Movement*, 200-201.

<sup>61</sup> Lynn, and Wright, *The Big Little School*, 18.

<sup>62</sup> Briggs, “The Sunday-School Library in the Nineteenth Century,” 167. See also Benson, *Popular History of Christian Education*, 161.



secular training in many cases. This helped facilitate the move to “universal tax-supported public education” which would, over time, spread throughout the United States.<sup>63</sup>

As the number of institutions under its auspices grew, the administration of the American Sunday School Union sought to manage its expanding empire less through the agency of its limited force of workers and more through its publications. The American Sunday School Union “took advantage of the ongoing revolution in printing to publish affordable books, tracts, texts, and magazines reflecting the manager’s views.”<sup>64</sup> In order to avoid the pitfalls of theological debate and the divisive issues of the day, including slavery, the Union sought to maintain a politically neutral and non-denominational tenor in all their writings and publications.<sup>65</sup> From the perspective of the administration, the Union was at the center of the entire evangelical community, “whose members, though widely scattered, were bound together by participation in a common institution and use of common literature.”<sup>66</sup> Their outlook was not without justification. By the later part of the 1860’s the American Sunday School Union, as part of its institutional history, had reported organizing 100,928 schools, founding 1,118 churches, and distributing publications valuing \$9,000,000.<sup>67</sup> Yet, ironically, the ideology that at one time held the Union together would ultimately become a major part of its dissolution.

Near the median of the nineteenth century, the Union began to face problems “arising from their attempt to speak for all evangelical Protestants in a society divided by denominational and sectarian loyalties.” It was not long before sectarian groups began to start their own printing establishments, robbing the American Sunday School Union of its monopolistic power. As the power of press became more diversified, the Union had to “increasingly compete with

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<sup>63</sup> Boylan, *Sunday School*, 19-20.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>65</sup> Knighton, *A Comparative Study of the Teaching Methods*, 12; See also Boylan, *Sunday School*, 71.

<sup>66</sup> Boylan, *Sunday School*, 73.

<sup>67</sup> *The Development of the Sunday School*, 557.

denominational organizations for book and magazine customers, donations, and auxiliaries.” This competition was reflective of the various opinions that existed among Protestants on theology, how to reach the unchurched masses, and over the appropriate way to deal with the pressing social issues of the day.<sup>68</sup> These and other seemingly irreconcilable differences became wedges in the rift between the whole of the American Sunday School Union and the denominations that made up its individual parts.<sup>69</sup>

This emerging division between the American Sunday School Union and various Protestant societies eventually led to what could be called the “convention movement.” As result of dissatisfaction with the direction of the Sunday School movement, by the 1860’s several visions of reform began to come into view. For example, Edward Eggleston, editor of the *National Sunday School Teacher* and a Methodist Pastor,<sup>70</sup> was one of the principal proponents of the idea of national, state and local Sunday School conventions which were entirely independent of the American Sunday School union. One of the chief features of these conventions was the “teacher institute.” Teacher institutes focused on the growing trend of professionalizing religious instruction, adapting techniques used in public schools for Sunday Schools. “Interdenominational collaboration” during the conventions was made possible by focusing on educational methods and minimizing theology.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> “Whereas the Union’s officials argued that the ties that bound Protestantism together were more important than the doctrines that divided them, those who formed denominational unions felt that the doctrines of their individual Churches were incompatible with the theological orientation of the American Sunday School Union.” (Boylan, *Sunday School*, 77).

<sup>69</sup> In addition to external problems, internal difficulties caused further dissolution of support for the union. The 1857 economic panic, for example, combined with the financial fraud of one of the American Sunday School Union’s chief executives (Fredrick Porter) struck at the foundation of the organization which caused significant instability for the next five years. See “The Late Defalcation in the American Sunday School Union,” *New York Times*, October 9, 1857, Wednesday, 5.

<sup>70</sup> Addie G. Wardle, *History of the Sunday School Movement in the Methodist Episcopal Church*, (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1918), 138.

<sup>71</sup> Boylan, *Sunday School*, 85-87.

Although promoting evangelism remained a prominent feature in the conventions, the means by which it was carried was being revisited. There was a growing distrust of revivalism and its emphasis on “elusive feeling” and an increasing reliance on reason to lead an individual to “see their sinfulness and confess their faith.”<sup>72</sup> Whereas mass prayer meetings, upbeat music, and revival style preaching were retained by some institutions, such as the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), the new generation of Sunday School workers seemed to concentrate on developing expertise and efficiency in the field of teaching. This included establishing schools with trained teachers, systematic lessons, and a stress on the staged growth of each student toward lasting conversion. Pan-denominational journals started to show up emphasizing “system, order, teacher training, and pedagogy,” including careful instruction on how to implement the newest methods used in secular schools.<sup>73</sup> It was during this era of change that the leadership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints began to seriously look at adopting Sunday School as an auxiliary to its organization.

### **Sunday School in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints**

Sunday School in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was first held in Kirtland, Ohio. Although germane records are sparse, individual accounts help substantiate its existence. For example, Helen Mar Whitney recounted her Sunday School experience in Kirtland:

Among other pleasing recollections were our Sunday Schools, where I used to love to go and recite verses and whole chapters from the New Testament, and we received rewards in primers, etc., which I think were more highly appreciated in those days than they are at the present time. At ten o'clock we would form in line and march with our teachers up to the temple. The thought that I could never see

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 92.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 88-90.

or enjoy them again would make me sad, as a child, when we were driven away from Kirtland to Missouri, and sometimes I would cry bitterly.<sup>74</sup>

Sunday School was also used as a missionary tool in England in the mid 1800's. While presiding over the British Mission in 1840, Brigham Young advocated that Sunday Schools be used to spread the gospel and strengthen existing members.<sup>75</sup> When the main body of the Church was relocated to Nauvoo Illinois, small Sunday School groups continued to meet "regularly."<sup>76</sup> However, it was not until sometime after the Saints had reached the Salt Lake valley that religious training took on any official or enduring structure.

In 1949 Richard Ballantyne, a convert from the Relief Presbyterian Church of Scotland, built a large one room addition onto his home, furnished it with some simple benches and invited local children to attend Sabbath school. In accord with the Sunday School movement in Great Britain, Ballantyne had personally established a Sunday School in Earlston Scotland prior to his conversion to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Once settled in Salt Lake City Utah, he renewed his efforts to provide religious training for children each Sunday. Ballantyne's own words reflect his motivations concerning the formation of the school:

I felt that the Gospel was too precious to myself to be withheld from the children. They ought to have the privilege of Gospel teaching, and that was the main purpose—to teach them the Gospel—because I felt it was very precious to me and I thought it would be precious to them; and it was my duty to do that.<sup>77</sup>

The initial program of study was accentuated by regular catechism and lessons taken directly from the scriptures—particularly the New Testament. The first group of students included

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<sup>74</sup> Quoted in David O. McKay, *Gospel Ideals: Selections from the Discourses of David O. McKay* (Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1953), 215 - 216.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 216.

<sup>76</sup> See B. Lloyd Poelman, "Sunday School," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 1-4 vols., edited by Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1424. Statements from individuals such as Seymour B. Young, Emmiline B. Wells, and others affirm that Sunday School was carried out in Nauvoo (see *The Sunday School Handbook*, [Deseret Sunday School Union, 1925], 11.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

children from several families of prominent Church leaders including, President John Taylor, President Wilford Woodruff, Elder Parley P. Pratt, and Elder Franklin D. Richards.<sup>78</sup>

Following the success of this first Sunday School, others schools were soon created. Much like the school formed by Richard Ballantyne, these early Sunday Schools were generally founded by individual members of the Church who had a personal interest in the moral training of children.<sup>79</sup> However, difficulties caused by major events such as the Utah War and local disturbances such as Indian attacks disrupted already sporadic attempts to initiate Sunday Schools. Somewhat more minor but nevertheless real challenges included finding qualified instructors, obtaining age appropriate materials, and securing a suitable location for teaching.

During the 1850's, Sunday Schools were principally established in association with individual wards of the Church. For instance, the Thirteenth Ward in Salt Lake City was the first to establish a Sunday School following a major policy decision made by the bishops of the city "to counter the post-Civil War Denominational academies with Mormon Sabbath schools."<sup>80</sup>

Historian Ronald Walker summarized,

A typical Sunday might find the children meeting at the Thirteenth Ward Assembly Rooms, where they listened to short talks, sang, and recited inspirational prose and poetry. Leaders might also 'catechize' the youth with questions drawn from the Bible, Book of Mormon, or LDS church history, liberally awarding prizes for both correct answers and proper conduct.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> See *Jubilee History of Latter-day Saints Sunday Schools 1849-1899*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union, 1900), 9-12.

<sup>79</sup> B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930), 5: 479. There were many children taught by individuals in their homes on Sundays of which there is little or no official record. For example, based on personal accounts, George G. Zimmerman of Lehi, taught Sunday School for about a year during 1952 in the local log school house until forced to forgo further instruction due to "Indian troubles." Previous to Zimmerman, others were mentioned as carrying on similar activities in Lehi. A formal ward Sunday School in Lehi was not organized until 1966 (see Andrew Fjeld, *The Lehi Sunday School History*, [Lehi: Free Press Publishing Co, 1956], 1-2.)

<sup>80</sup> Ronald W. Walker, "Young Heber J. Grant's Years of Passage," *BYU Studies*, vol. 24, Number 1 - Winter 1984, 42-43.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

Notwithstanding the success of individual wards, prior to the 1860's there was no general organization of Sunday Schools in the Church.<sup>82</sup>

In 1866 George Q. Cannon a member of the Quorum of the Twelve and a personal secretary to President Brigham Young, became “intensely interested” in Sunday School work. Because he felt that one of the Church’s highest priorities was to teach the gospel to its youth, Elder Cannon created a magazine specific to that purpose which he named the *Juvenile Instructor*.<sup>83</sup> The magazine was “designed to educate the rising generation of the Latter-day Saints, and to give support to the Sunday School movement” within the Church.<sup>84</sup> In 1867, President Brigham Young initiated the Parent Sunday School Union in order to provide oversight and direction to the operation of Sunday Schools within the Church. George Q. Cannon was selected to be its first president.<sup>85</sup> This central body would later be renamed the Deseret Sunday School Union.<sup>86</sup>

In 1872 the Deseret Sunday School Union became an active organization and monthly meetings were held.<sup>87</sup> Staff requirements became uniform for each Sunday School, calling for a

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<sup>82</sup> See *Jubilee History*, 13.

<sup>83</sup> During a general conference address delivered in the Tabernacle in Ogden Utah on Sunday morning, January 18th, 1885 President Cannon spoke regarding the Sunday School movement in the Church. In the course of the address he reflected back on the beginning of his interest in the movement: “For many years, while laboring in the ministry abroad I saw how small was the amount of fruit resulting from the labors of myself and other Elders in the world; that we labored sometimes for years and were only able to bring into the Church a comparative few, and then, out of those that were converted and brought into the Church, there was a large percentage who did not remain, but who lost the faith and fell away. I became convinced in my mind that more satisfactory results and a larger amount of fruit could be obtained by devoting attention to the cultivation of our children, and for years before I had the opportunity, I had resolved in my own mind that if I were ever permitted to remain at home long enough I would devote attention to the cultivation of the young.” (George Q. Cannon, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886), 26: 138.)

<sup>84</sup> Roberts, *Comprehensive History*, 5: 479.

<sup>85</sup> George Q. Cannon was later named the General Superintendent of the Deseret Sunday School Union when it was renamed in 1872.

<sup>86</sup> See Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890-1930*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 136.

<sup>87</sup> Documentation of the Deseret Sunday School Union’s organization was included in the *Juvenile Instructor* in 1901 and continued to be included in the *Instructor* until it was discontinued in 1970. The basic organization included a general superintendency and a general board. The General Superintendency commonly consisted of three members. The General Board usually included multiple members. Anywhere from two to seven general board

superintendency, support personnel such as a librarian, secretary, treasurer, chorister, and teachers sufficient to meet the needs of the school.<sup>88</sup> The Deseret Sunday School Union provided publications addressing various issues germane to Sunday School work, including topics for lessons, “punctuality, grading, prizes and rewards, use of hymns and songs composed by members of the Church, recording and increasing the attendance, developing an elementary catechism, and libraries.”<sup>89</sup> Additionally, the Deseret Sunday School union facilitated the publication of administrative procedure and resources for classroom use, resulting in greater “uniformity” in both management and message.<sup>90</sup>

In 1877, the First Presidency made the sacrament a regular part of Sunday School for “all children under eight years of age as well as [older children] who had been baptized and confirmed members of the Church.”<sup>91</sup> This decision to place the sacrament alongside normal classes further established religious instruction for youth as a fixed part of Sabbath worship. In the early part of the 1890’s the Deseret Sunday School Union made strides in teacher improvement. These included establishing a teacher training class at the Brigham Young Academy taught by Dr. Karl G. Maeser and instituting a model Sunday School in certain communities to help Sunday School workers understand the operation of an ideal organization.<sup>92</sup> In 1891 the annual “Nickel Day” was instituted which provided each member the opportunity to

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members were assigned to administer over one of the various departments within the Union. Each department focused on a particular age group in the Sunday School. At different times other officers were listed as part of the official organization such as treasurers, secretaries, business managers and advisors to the general board, etc. (see “Editorial Thoughts,” *Juvenile Instructor*, March 1901, 178; *Instructor*, February 1970, 39.)

<sup>88</sup> See *Latter-day Saints Sunday School Treatise*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Salt Lake City: The Deseret Sunday School Union, 1898), 9.

<sup>89</sup> See Poelman, “Sunday School,” *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 1427.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> Poleman, “Sunday School,” *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 1426; See also Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints’ Book Depot, 1854-1886), 19: 93-94.

<sup>92</sup> *Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, May 26, 1892, vol. 275, Selected Collections, Church Historians Office. *Journal History of the Church*, 2002, 2.; See also Karl G. Maeser, *Sunday School Work* (Salt Lake City: Joseph Hyrum Parry Printing, 1892), 20-21.

make a voluntary contribution of five cents or more to improve the work of the Deseret Sunday School Union and the Stake Sunday School organizations.<sup>93</sup> In 1893 annual Sunday School conferences were established, the first being held November 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> in the Sevier Stake of Zion. These meetings included reports made by officers from the various schools in the Stake, demonstration of methods pertaining to class exercises, and “remarks of encouragement and instruction.”<sup>94</sup>

The Deseret Sunday School Union was influenced by and adopted certain characteristics of the larger Sunday School movement in America and abroad. The *Juvenile Instructor*, which became the official organ of Church Sunday Schools, closely resembled other publishing projects carried out by the American Sunday School Union. George Q. Cannon’s proposed model for a Sunday School had been based on the “international movement” and the Church “authorized members of the Sunday School general board to participate in national and international Sunday school conventions.”<sup>95</sup> In September 1898, for instance, George Reynolds, a member of the Sunday School union board, “visited . . . Omaha, Nebraska, where he attended meetings of the Trans-Mississippi Sunday School Congress as one of several delegates from the Deseret Sunday School Union.”<sup>96</sup> As a result of that conference and the proposals that followed,

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<sup>93</sup> The Stake Sunday School organization received twenty percent of the amount collected by the schools of their Stake for general expenses (see *Jubilee History*, 31).

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>95</sup> Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 137. As an example, compare the organization proposed in the *Latter-day Saints Sunday School Treatise*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Salt Lake City: The Deseret Sunday School Union, 1898), 9, versus the organization outlined in Pray, *The History of Sunday Schools*, 247.

<sup>96</sup> Bruce A. Van Orden, *Prisoner for Conscience' Sake: The Life of George Reynolds* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1992), 184. The Church also authorized delegates to attend international conventions. For example, In June 1902, Reynolds “represented the Sunday School union board at the International Sunday School Convention in Denver Colorado” (Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 137).



the Deseret Sunday School Union hosted “a huge general Sunday School convention” held in Salt Lake City over the course of three days in November of 1898.<sup>97</sup>

By the turn of the century the Sunday School organization had taken its place as a significant auxiliary organization in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The number of students in attendance, teachers, and local Sunday Schools had steadily increased. In 1849 there was 1 school, 1 teacher, and just 30 students. By 1872, 200 schools had been established with 1,408 teachers and 14,781 students. By 1899 the number of Sunday Schools had risen to 982 with a volunteer teaching force of 13,932 and an enrollment of 119,998.<sup>98</sup> Each Sunday School when “fully organized” housed six departments:

Kindergarten, or infant is composed of the youngest members of the school; the primary grade, as a general rule, includes the children who have advanced from the kindergarten up to the age of eight years; the first intermediate includes children from eight to twelve years; the second intermediate, from twelve to sixteen years; preparatory theological, pupils advanced beyond the grades mentioned; and higher theological, all pupils not embraced in other departments.<sup>99</sup>

As other auxiliaries also began to mature, Sunday schedules became busier. Sunday morning, for example, was a favored time to schedule meetings. As a reflection of the value that the leadership of the Church placed on religious instruction, in 1898 the First Presidency issued a Church-wide directive setting aside Sunday mornings specifically for Sabbath school. The message stated:

The general consensus of . . . leading officers of the Church who have given this subject attention is to the effect that the breaking up of the Sunday Schools even for one Sunday has an injurious effect; and these schools are so important and they are doing so great an amount of good that we feel convinced that it is unwise to permit them to be suspended. . . . It is our desire that the superintendents of Sunday Schools be permitted to conduct their schools every Sunday morning

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid; see also Andrew Jenson, “November 28, 1898,” *Church Chronology: A Record of Important Events Pertaining to the History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1914).

<sup>98</sup> *The Sunday School Handbook*, 12.

<sup>99</sup> *Jubilee History of Latter-day Saint Sunday Schools*, 58.

without any interruption whatever, even on the Sabbath days when general or quarterly conferences may be held.<sup>100</sup>

This is one of many examples of administrative clarifications and adjustments that would help define the Church's increasing commitment to Sunday School work.

## **Conclusion**

The Sunday School movement which started in England and eventually spread to the United States brought about significant changes in the world. A great endowment for the literacy of millions of people was established. Because of the movement a truly significant number of people became acquainted with the literature and moral teachings of the Bible. As a result of the movement many organizations for the amelioration of the poor were created and perpetuated. For so many who had only known destitution, the hope of education became a reality. The prospect of a public educational system was brought out of obscurity. The movement's impact, particularly in terms of personal religious experience, is incalculable. Untold thousands who at one time wallowed in the despair of unbelief were lifted by faith in the Christian message. Many churches, sects, and denominations were enriched and started systems of education, literary distribution, and proselytization based on the movement. Specifically, the movement was the catalyst for the systemization of religious instruction and Sabbath day worship in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. With the support of the Deseret Sunday School Union and under the inspired direction of priesthood leadership Sunday School work had only

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<sup>100</sup> James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-75), 3: 303.

just begun to develop in the Church.<sup>101</sup> Many important changes would transpire in the next hundred years.

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<sup>101</sup> Elder Joseph F. Smith, then President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, gave the following statement that is representative of the vision that the leadership of the Church continued to unfold: "The object of our Sunday Schools and the object of our Church schools, the great, the paramount object, is to teach our children the truth, teach them to be honorable, pure minded, virtuous, honest and upright, and enable them by our advice and counsel and by our guardianship over them until they reach the years of accountability to become the honorable of the earth, the good and the pure among mankind, the virtuous and the upright, and those who shall be worthy to enter the house of God and not be ashamed of themselves in the presence of angels, if they should come to visit them" (In *Conference Report*, April 1903, 97).

## CHAPTER THREE: THE PARENTS' CLASS

### **Introduction**

In conjunction with the history of the Sunday School movement up to the 20<sup>th</sup> century provided previously, this chapter will contain some brief historical detail concerning the beginnings of the Gospel Doctrine class. However, the chapter will also seek to weave in examples of suggestions provided by the Deseret Sunday School Union to aid teachers during the era. This approach will hopefully accomplish two things. First, it will help readers understand how the Gospel Doctrine class came to be. Second, it will highlight elements considered important to effective gospel teaching during the era.

The teaching aids during this period were distinguished by a few characteristics. First, the manuals were principally informational and offered little in regard to direction for the instructor. Second, a teacher training department was not established until the end of the decade in 1916. Third, suggestions for teachers were shaped by the circumstances of the day. Because the Parents' class was going through the process of being implemented in the various wards and branches of the Church, many of the suggestions were intended to help establish purpose and policy and less to offer suggestions on how to teach effectively. Most suggestions related to subject matter. Recommendations on how to teach were fairly sporadic. What is documented in this chapter is a reflection of what was being communicated to teachers and supervisors in order to establish productive adult Sunday School classes.

### **Sunday School for Adults**

Prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Sunday School in America was primarily established for the education of children and youth. Nevertheless, there were adult Sunday School classes provided

by different groups at various times throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For example, Ann Boylan, in her book *Sunday School: The Formation of an American Institution*, notes that during the first half of the century a few evangelical societies offered adult schools which provided “weekend classes for working adults.”<sup>1</sup> The International Sunday School Association reported that by the middle of the century advanced Bible classes for older students and adults began to form within its ranks.<sup>2</sup> While there were some infrequent incidents of adult Sunday School classes during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, apparently none of them developed into a larger more permanent association.

According to its official report in 1907, the International Sunday School convention recognized just one adult Bible class among all of its Sunday Schools. However, the next several years were attended by an exponential increase in interest. By 1914 there were 41,939 adult Sunday School classes organized with as many as 2½ million estimated members.<sup>3</sup>

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was a frontrunner in providing an official Sunday School class for adults.<sup>4</sup> Although there were some instances of adults meeting together on Sundays to study the gospel during the 1800’s, up until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Sunday School “remained an organization only for children.”<sup>5</sup> As Richard Cowan and Arnold Garr observed, “In the nineteenth century, when adult Bible literacy was widespread, participants [in Sunday School] were mostly children and young adults; at the turn of the century, classes for adults were added to curb the decline in Bible literacy.”<sup>6</sup> Prior to the national explosion of interest, the Deseret Sunday School Union initiated the “Parents’ Department” into its formal

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<sup>1</sup> Anne M. Boylan, *Sunday School: The Formation of an American Institution, 1790-1880* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), 13.

<sup>2</sup> *The Development of the Sunday School, 1780-1905: Official Report of the Eleventh International Sunday-School Convention, Toronto Canada, 1905* (Boston, International Sunday School Association, 1905) 12.

<sup>3</sup> *Organized Sunday School Work In America 1911-1914: Official Report of the Fourteenth International Sunday School Convention* (Chicago: International Sunday School Association, January 1914), 216.

<sup>4</sup> Richard O. Cowan, *The Church in the Twentieth Century* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985), 70.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 71-72.

<sup>6</sup> Donald Q. Cannon, Richard O. Cowan, Arnold K. Garr, “Sunday School,” *Encyclopedia of Latter-day Saint History*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 1200.

organization in 1906. This department would provide support for its corollary the “Parents’ Class”—the first official Sunday School class for adults in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

### **Beginnings of the Parents’ Class**

The Parents’ Department and the Parents’ Class came into being during a time of considerable change. Previous to its inception, there had been a significant movement to restructure all the auxiliary departments of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. An important part of the movement began with what Elder Francis M. Lyman termed the “re-baptism” of auxiliary work. “Beginning in 1897 the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association, recognizing the need for many local units to awaken from comparative lethargy, revitalized its program in such a way that other auxiliaries took note and the general reform movement soon became all-inclusive.”<sup>7</sup>

In the wake of pervasive change, the Parents’ Department was unanimously adopted in the April 1906 General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It was done in an attempt to bring “parents, as a whole, in closer touch with the Sunday School,”<sup>8</sup> which had been solely intended for children and youth to this point.

The Weber Stake Sunday School Board was the first to experiment with classes for adults. Under the direction of David O. McKay, Superintendent of the Weber Stake Sunday School, “a parents’ convention . . . was held in the Ogden Tabernacle, and attended by Church

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<sup>7</sup> James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 2nd ed., rev. and enl. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1992), 463.

<sup>8</sup> “Sunday School Outlines of the Parents’ Department,” (Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union, 1906) Americana Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections Library, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 1.

President Joseph F. Smith.”<sup>9</sup> The intention of the convention was to establish classes for parents that would be “uniform in character and purpose.” Though the results were slow to come at first, these efforts were noticed by other stakes. Soon the Morgan and Box Elder Stakes had also adopted similar programs. The brethren of the General Sunday School Union Board and the First Presidency of the Church “watched the movement through the various stages of its growth” and became so impressed with its “value to the Sunday School cause, that a committee of the General Board was appointed to canvas the entire matter with the idea of making the parents’ class general throughout the Church.”<sup>10</sup> Church leadership ratified the decision to make the Parents’ Class ubiquitous. The committee reported their labors at the General Conference, held in April, 1906. The report stated that among the chief benefits of instituting parent classes would be greater “harmony between parents and teachers, and more uniform action for the welfare of the child, so far as its Sunday School life is concerned.”<sup>11</sup>

The object of a course for parents was “first, to aid the parents in general culture; and secondly, to bring about a closer relationship between the home and the Sunday School, that parents may give more efficient aid in the general work of the Sunday School.”<sup>12</sup> Part of the instruction in these classes pertained to the home, with such topics as: “the environment of the home,” “the effect of one family’s actions upon another’s,” “the influence of rewards and punishments as incentives to action,” and “the power of love as a disciplinary factor in the home.”<sup>13</sup> The other category of instruction would focus on helping parents better assist their

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<sup>9</sup> Jeanette McKay Morrell, *Highlights in the Life of President David O. McKay* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1966), 63.

<sup>10</sup> “Sunday School Outlines of the Parents Department,” 1-3.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

children in attending, participating in, and preparing for Sunday School. This would include their punctuality, memorization tasks, and lesson preparation.

In regard to selecting a teacher, it was suggested, “a suitable person should be selected as a supervisor, who will direct and control the exercises and discussions in a wise way.”<sup>14</sup> The supervisor of the course had a minimal role in presenting and vested the majority of his energy in coordinating and facilitating. The recommendation was that the supervisor “be a man of wide experience in travel and as a husband and father, be well versed in the doctrines of the Church, have a faculty of drawing people to him and understanding of what it is to be a supervisor, for the latter is in no sense a teacher or a lecturer.”<sup>15</sup>

The meetings for parents were to be held at the same time their children were attending Sunday School. Parents were encouraged to participate with their children in both opening and closing exercises. After the general opening exercises, the Parents’ Class made their way to a room apart and called roll. Normally, the classes were divided into two periods. The first was aimed at helping parents better understand what their children were to be learning in preparation for the coming week. At the beginning of each class, the parents were to break out into smaller groups. Each cluster of parents would receive a summary of a lesson that a particular age group would be studying the following week. The various age groups were called “departments.” The different departments were as follows: Kindergarten Department, ages 4-6; Primary Department, ages 7-8; Intermediate Department, ages 9-12; Second Intermediate Department, ages 13-16, and Theological Department, ages 17-20. The parents were to “decide, before coming to school, which child or children [they desired] to help during the coming week, so that [they could] sit

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>15</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, February 1908, 75.



with the group considering this particular lesson.”<sup>16</sup> The supervisor was to assign a different parent each week to outline a lesson for a given department and present it to the other parents interested in that age group. By attending the appropriate summary parents could be apprised of a lesson that they could reinforce with a particular child or children in their family. This section of the class usually consumed the first fifteen minutes.

The second portion of the parent class was to focus on the “development and application of topics for the home.” This section was scheduled for 45 minutes, or the remainder of the class. The lesson outlines intended for the second portion of the Parents’ Class were formulated after an innovative pattern developed by a young teacher named David O. McKay. Newly returned from a mission to Scotland, David O. McKay was made a member of the Weber Stake Sunday School Board in 1899. Up to this point, there had been little direction from leadership concerning the teaching that was going on in the Sunday Schools. David’s sister, Jeanette McKay, recalled that there was a “great need for reorganization in preparation and presentation of lessons.”<sup>17</sup> In response to previous efforts, which had been largely unorganized and unallied, David O. McKay instituted a plan for the Weber Stake Sunday School based on practices he had implemented as an instructor at the Weber State Academy.<sup>18</sup> The plan included “a careful grading of students, and a definite course of study for each department, with an adequate teaching force in each ward, and corresponding supervisors for every department of the stake board.”<sup>19</sup> In addition to these changes, Brother McKay stressed the need for an organized approach to presenting lessons. The

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 8-9.

<sup>17</sup> Jeanette McKay Morrell, 1953. “Boyhood of President David O. McKay,” *The Relief Society Magazine*, October: 732-733.

<sup>18</sup> See Mary Jane Woodger, “David O. McKay's Progressive Educational Ideas and Practices,” *The Journal of Mormon History* vol.30 no.21 (Mormon History Association 2004), 214.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

pattern, simply stated, was to select an aim (objective), develop it, and then help the students apply it to their lives.<sup>20</sup>

Each lesson was to be completed in one Sunday, but an additional Sunday could be taken “to do full justice to the lesson,” if needed. The class proceeded with a “paper or a short talk on the lesson assigned” and then continued with a “general discussion on how to apply in the homes the truth of this lesson.” At the conclusion of the discussion, “one question, and the most important one” would be asked—“How can this be applied in the home?” The supervisor was to ensure that the application portion became “the most important part of the recitation.”<sup>21</sup>

While members were guided in their lesson preparation by curriculum, the composition and presentation were, in large part, left up to them. The logic behind the method of letting the class members teach and participate in discussions was that “members who think and act are those who get the most good out of class work.”<sup>22</sup> Members were encouraged to “devote two or more hours a week”<sup>23</sup> in preparation for the coming class. The presentations, discussions, and applications came from regularly published lesson outlines. The curriculum referred members who were presenting that week to the “suggestion and illustrations,” “helpful references,” and “aim” sections of the lesson outlines. The “proposition for discussion,” “summary,” and “application” sections were specifically recommended for the supervisor and to the other class members in their general preparation. The summary was left to the supervisor to decide if the suggested applications were in harmony with the papers being presented. It was assumed that

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<sup>20</sup> David O. McKay, “The Lesson Aim: How to Select It; How to Develop It; How to Apply It,” *Juvenile Instructor*, April 1905, 242.

<sup>21</sup> “Sunday School Outlines of the Parents Department,” 10.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>23</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, March 1906, 135.

supervisors would help class members see clearly two things by the end of the lesson—“what” it was they were to apply and “how” they were to apply it.<sup>24</sup>

At the incipient stages of development, the Parents’ Department had very ethically based lesson outlines. Despite the Parents’ Department’s stated philosophy that the course of study would not focus on the business or social branch but rather more on the “religious branch”<sup>25</sup> of life, the lesson outlines did not always reflect this ideal. One particular lesson consisted of discussing the impact of environment on children. The lesson started by bringing up examples of notable persons who had risen above their environment, such as Abraham Lincoln, James A. Garfield and Thomas A. Edison. The lesson outline went on to list multiple principles and concepts that could potentially be used in discussion. The principles were both secular and religious but not necessarily scriptural; they included maxims such as “example is stronger than precept;” “industry and compliance with God’s laws are the foundation for wealth;” “a fountain cannot rise higher than its source;” “art is nature made by man’ therefore study good paintings and sculpture;” and “make the surroundings of the child neat and clean, that his thoughts may be pure and lofty.”<sup>26</sup>

Many lessons typical of this era drew heavily from classical and contemporary literature and philosophy. Lesson material was found in various manuals and in the Sunday School’s own journal, the *Juvenile Instructor*, “which [the Church] purchased from the Cannon family in 1900.”<sup>27</sup> In a particular set of lesson suggestions found in the May 1906 edition of the *Juvenile Instructor* one could find citations from various writers, philosophers and theologians including Emerson, R.W. Alger, Doddridge, A.E. Stores, Virgil, Shakespeare, Scott, Byron, Goethe, and

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 10-11.

<sup>25</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, March 1906, 134.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 174.

<sup>27</sup> Allen and Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 465.

Milton. In a subsequent outline, found in the same volume, the ratio of secular references to scripture was 28 to 3.<sup>28</sup>

### **Changes under the Deseret Sunday School Union**

By 1907 the Deseret Sunday School Union was already scrambling to make adjustments to their first version of rules, suggestions and lesson plans. Many lesson plans were extremely top-heavy in regard to the quantity of suggested principles and ideas to be discussed. To counterbalance the surfeit of concepts contained in each lesson outline the Deseret Sunday School Union affirmed that “it always was the intention that only a single principle or truth should be discussed at each session of a Parents’ Class, and that the application of such principle or truth in the home should be emphasized at the same session.”<sup>29</sup> These types of adjustments would become a standard part of the counsel that was unfolded to the teachers and workers of the Sunday School in the early part of the century.

One of the efforts to bring the various Sunday Schools into greater harmony was a monumental General Sunday School convention held on Thursday, April 4, 1907. David O. McKay, now an Apostle and second assistant to President Joseph F. Smith in the General Superintendency of the Deseret Sunday School Union, organized the gathering. The business that transpired at the meeting is summarized by one of Elder McKay’s statements on that occasion:

The object of this convention is to bring about some unity in our work . . . for the purpose of getting closer together, that the General Board may be in closer touch with the stake boards, and that the stake boards may get in closer touch with the local boards. We need unity of effort in everything that pertains to the development of the child's soul . . . . We would like to exchange ideas. We want your suggestions . . . . We would like every point to be discussed . . . so that you

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<sup>28</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, May 1906, 306.

<sup>29</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, July 1907, 438.

may go out from this convention, knowing what the decision of your department upon each particular subject is.<sup>30</sup>

The convention was a seminal effort in correlation and shaped the direction of the Parents' Department and the Deseret Sunday School Union as a whole.

Being propelled by the energy created by the convention, 1908 brought further refinement to the Parent's Department. The Weber Stake Sunday School was typical of units in the Church where a Sunday School program was operating well. The Weber stake issued a publication that advised the creation of a Stake committee which consisted of the following "standing committees": Rules, Attendance, Reception, Class Work, Discipline, Library, Music, Ways and Means, and the Visiting Committee.<sup>31</sup> "Under the tutelage of . . . trained stake [committee] members, the ward teachers were given training in the selection of an aim, in organizing, and presenting . . . each lesson, so as to make vivid application of the aim to each class member."<sup>32</sup>

The Class Work Committee was responsible for "the number and nature" of teaching outlines and worked hand-in-hand with local Sunday School workers. Curriculum was developed on the local level. It was edited, revised and refined on the stake level.

Individual teachers had a large role in deciding what should be taught. The local workers would create lesson outlines with aims that they thought would be most useful to those in their Sunday School classes.<sup>33</sup> They would submit both "individual" and "co-operative" outlines to the Stake Sunday School Board for revision.<sup>34</sup> Then when the stake had received and revised all of

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<sup>30</sup> George R. Hill, "President David O. McKay: Father of the Modern Sunday School," *Instructor*, September, 1960 315.

<sup>31</sup> "Rules for the Guidance of Members of the Weber Stake Sunday School Board and the Government of Sunday Schools Throughout the Stake," (Deseret Sunday School Union, Salt Lake City, May, 1908), Americana Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections Library, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 4.

<sup>32</sup> Hill, "President David O. McKay: Father of the Modern Sunday School," 314-315.

<sup>33</sup> Morrell, *Highlights in the Life of President David O. McKay*, 58-60.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

the local contributions, they would send out lessons with aims that they thought to be the most useful and appropriate. Teachers had the flexibility to use these revised outlines or to draw on their own, based on their best judgment. The policy was that “individual aims may be used by the teachers of the various schools when they fail to receive aims sent out by the Board. Also, where teachers feel that their aims are better than those selected by the Board.”<sup>35</sup>

The Weber Stake issued several additional suggestions for preparing and teaching outlines. The chosen aim was to be “placed at the end of the outline”<sup>36</sup> in order to guide supervisors and presenters in helping class members understand and apply the most salient truths. Teachers were to “arrange the seating of [their] classes so that [their] pupils [would] be in front of the teacher.”<sup>37</sup> While teaching, “teachers should dispense with their outlines” with the understanding that “neither lessons nor stories should be read in departments but be presented in the teacher’s own language.”<sup>38</sup>

With the formation of the Parents’ Department, the Deseret Sunday School Union lauded the success they had already experienced in the establishment and commencement of the parents’ classes. However, in addition to the feeling of accomplishment, the Union also noted that organization of the department and lesson outlines, to this point, had been chiefly experimental and would continue to be refined. They welcomed feedback from those supervising and participating in the program. One of the changes resulted in the addition of a “suggestive paper or talk” to the brief skeletal outlines that had been previously provided. While somewhat more prescriptive, the method was adopted

because it has been observed that in many instances the old outlines failed to bring from classes such definite, concrete suggestions as could be applied in the

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

home; so that, while it is not desired to curtail in the least the individual resourcefulness of any teacher or member, it is believed that the greatest good to the greatest number will come from the presentation of such subject matter as is given in these papers and outlined lessons.<sup>39</sup>

In subsequent volumes of the *Instructor* the section written for the Parents' Department often included lectures by professionals in practicable fields which pertained to the home.

One of the objectives of the Sunday School Union in 1908 was to make each department distinctive. Interestingly, the Parents' Department was to differ from other departments in that they would not

indulge in theological discussion, unless the question concerning doctrine propounded in the scriptures . . . will materially aid the department in some definite, specific way, in the suggested course of study. This is urged . . . because it is firmly believed that the great aim of the work will be better served by avoiding such discussions and devoting the time of the Parents' Department exclusively to matter and kindred matter provided for them.<sup>40</sup>

Later in this same message, the Department Board clarified what they meant when they suggested that parents' classes forbear from theological discourse and discussion. Those subjects that lent themselves to digression, in other words "matter which will not tend to make our men and women better fathers and mothers, and our homes more influential for good" was to be abstained from. The direction was to "avoid doctrinal . . . philosophic, psychological, and sentimental discussion unless it shall have a direct and applicable bearing on the temporal and spiritual welfare of our homes." Thus, while the children were studying scripture and theology the parents were studying how to build up the home in "science, in art, and in righteousness."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, July 1908, 33.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 33-34.

## **Influence on the Home and the Community**

In 1908 and following years the amount of instruction and training published for teachers was limited. One of the first lesson manuals, *Parent and Child*, was published for the Parents' Department and made available upon request to Sunday Schools throughout the Church.<sup>42</sup> While lacking any direct training on methodology or pedagogy, *Parent and Child* primarily contained "essays and lessons on vital subjects."<sup>43</sup> Any instruction to Sunday School workers was published principally in the *Juvenile Instructor*. However, even in the Department's official section of that magazine there was no exhaustive rubric for teaching. One of the reasons that a more rigid set of rules was not published, was the General Board's desire not to inhibit the genius or the inspiration of the teacher. "It has never been the policy of the General Board to make rules and regulations for Sunday School work whereby the individuality of the teacher would be inactive; therefore, no guide for parents' class work have been published."<sup>44</sup>

Among the few imperative methods for classroom instruction that the Department did publish was the philosophy that the class would teach each other dialogically. The supervisor or instructor's chief role was to keep the discussion moving. The General Board felt that the greatest capital in the classroom was the sum of the sagacity of individual members.

The united wisdom and experience of an entire class, if brought to the observation of its members will be of more value to the class as a whole than the ideas or experience of any one person. If a short talk or lecture is wanted let it come from some member of the class. We think this is better than if the supervisor did it himself. When a member of the class asks a question, it is better to have some other member answer than for the supervisor to do so. Of course the latter will see to it that the answer is a proper one. The supervisor is to preside and direct the class activity; in other words, let the class do the work while the supervisor points out and directs the way.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> *Parent and Child : A Series of Essays and Lessons for Use in the Parents' Department of the Latter-day Saints Sunday Schools*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union, 1908).

<sup>43</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, March 1908, 118.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, 119.



The Supervisor, as a sidelight, could help point out the way but was not to eclipse either the message or the input coming from the members of the class.

As the Parents' Class became general in the Church, the Board for the Parents' Department began to receive more feedback from leadership in various units. Consequently, additional cautions and recommendations began to spring up in subsequent volumes of the *Juvenile Instructor*. For instance, it was reported that some of the members had begun to read their essays in place of giving a lesson. In response, the General Board issued four suggestions. First, they encouraged workers and supervisors to teach members that the outlines and essays were teaching helps and not meant to be given verbatim. The principle was to "make independent thinking the primary object; the outline and essay are only aids." Second, supervisors were expected to be thoroughly familiar with the lesson material so they could, in their own words, point out those portions of the lesson that should be discussed. Third, supervisors were to reiterate to the members of their classes that the application of the truths in the homes was the chief object of the lessons. And fourth, the supervisors were not to rush through lessons, nor were they to drag them out. If more time was needed to thoroughly discuss and apply a subject then it was to be taken.<sup>46</sup>

In 1910 a second edition of *Parent and Child* was issued.<sup>47</sup> While the first edition emphasized improvement inside the home, the second edition focused on more external issues—centering mostly in the community. For example, the lesson titles themselves reflect the content: "Proper Balance in Pastimes;" "Our Holidays;" "The Dance;" "The Theater;" "Concerts and Recitals;" "The Public Lecture;" "The Public Library;" "Sunday Observance;" "The Excursion;" "Refreshment Stands;" "The Street Corner Habit;" "The Saloon Evil;" and "Games of

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<sup>46</sup> See *Juvenile Instructor*, April 1908, 158-159.

<sup>47</sup> *Parent and Child : A series of Essays and Lessons for Use in the Parents' Department of the Latter-day Saints Sunday Schools*. Vol.2 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union, 1909).

Chance.”<sup>48</sup> This movement from domestic affairs to addressing local concerns in lesson plans reflected a burgeoning view that issues in the community, as much as the home, needed to be addressed.

It was suggested that the outlines which were provided could be followed as they were written while also allowing the teacher the flexibility to render the lesson as they thought best. The Department explained that they would publish the different lessons in logical order. However, it was encouraged that the Sunday School workers decide which lessons would go best together and then calendar their topics several weeks in advance. In this way, the local instructor could tailor the schedule of suggested topics to best meet the needs of those in his or her class.

As 1910 progressed, problems in some of the parents’ classes began to surface. One of the leading issues was digression. In some cases instead of conducting a positive and edifying discussion, the parents’ classes would digress to arguments, complaints, backbiting or gossip. There was enough evidence through observation and feedback to merit the General Board to address the issue via the *Juvenile Instructor*. In the February 1910 issue of the *Juvenile Instructor* the General Board pleaded for the parent class to not deviate from its intended purpose. “The Parents’ Class” the Board appealed, “must be more than a mere debating society, or a good-natured club where people get together to gossip over the evils of the home and community. It must be—if it lives up to its high mission—a living power for good in the community; a power which not only talks, but acts.” In contrast to a mere social gathering, the Board went on to explain, “the parents’ class is a betterment league. Its main purpose is to bring

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<sup>48</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, January 1910, 14.

about needed reforms in the homes and the community. The topics and outlines are but guideposts to action.”<sup>49</sup>

The Department Board cited a positive example to show what could and ought to be done as a result of conducting the Parents’ Class. The Cache Stake parents’ classes took up the subject “late hours” and through their discussion came to understand that many young people were loitering at the ice-cream parlors after the dances and shows concluded. It was decided that “keeping late hours” potentially led to several other problems or vices. In response to the issue “a committee was appointed from the various classes in Logan.” As a result of their work the “committee had an ordinance drafted, under its direction” which dictated that ice-cream parlors in Logan were to close at 11:00. This had a marked effect on the “late hours” some of the youth kept and the stake felt that a significant step had been taken in addressing the issue.<sup>50</sup>

Examples of parents’ classes becoming involved and striving to resolve local issues in their respective communities became increasingly common. Many of the parents’ classes began to move beyond application in the home to application in the realm of community and politics. Much of this stemmed from encouragement given by the Parents’ Department. For example, the department made it clear that “as stated, again and again, the parents’ movement takes each and every enlisted member from the seclusion of his home direct to the picket lines of allied forces for community betterment.”<sup>51</sup> In another instance, an article encouraged local classes to “find out what things in your community are doing the most to make wayward boys and girls, and go after these things.”<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, February 1910, 66.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, 67.

<sup>51</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, March 1910, 117.

<sup>52</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, July 1911, 405.

A more forceful example of exercising influence in the community can be seen in the efforts of several stakes to band together in espousing the temperance movement that was sweeping through various parts of the country at the time. After holding a joint Sunday School convention on April 10, 1910 in the Barratt Hall, the Millard, Pioneer, Salt Lake, and Tooele Stakes unanimously adopted and published the following statement:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Sunday School workers of the Millard, Pioneer, Salt Lake and Tooele Stakes, in convention assembled, that we endorse the action of the Parents' Department of this convention in the resolve to wage a campaign against the unrestricted sale of liquor at the various pleasure resorts of our vicinity; and that we, and each of us, here and now pledge our influence, our efforts, and our suffrages as citizens to the securing of such rigid regulations of this unwholesome traffic as shall protect, at least in part, the growing army of young people that frequent these places.<sup>53</sup>

In another instance the *Juvenile Instructor* carried a reminder that encouraged parents to vote “dry” or in favor of policies that promoted temperance.<sup>54</sup> These examples are just a sampling of the many efforts by various Parents' Classes to quell the fire of alcohol trafficking that they felt had begun to kindle in their young people and their communities.

It was not long before the General Board began to laud the efforts of parents' classes. In one issue of the *Juvenile Instructor* the author unmistakably mentioned “long agitation upon the part of the Church and these classes against saloon evil, finally induced both of the great political parties to declare themselves in unmistakable terms in favor of effective temperance reform.” The Board touted that the whole community had “been aroused from a drowsy indifference regarding the existence of this evil, to a serious discussion as to the best method of its abolition.”<sup>55</sup> In this same spirit, the Board encouraged local parents' classes to “[keep their] work

<sup>53</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, May 1910, 237 [emphasis in original].

<sup>54</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, July 1911, 405.

<sup>55</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, January 1911, 24.

before the public” with the idea that by involving the press a greater influence could be had for good in the community.<sup>56</sup>

Despite the perceived success of the parents’ classes in the community, the General Board was quick to seek a proper balance in their efforts. Perhaps in what was a response to a perceived pendulum swing gone too far, the Parents’ Department clarified the distinction between the role of the parents’ classes and betterment leagues in the community. Parents’ classes and betterment leagues “should work in harmony for the [improvement] of the morals of the community.” The Parents’ Class should “arouse the people to a better life and a better observance of the moral law” and betterment leagues should handle legal execution by “securing rigid enforcement of the law.”<sup>57</sup> While Parents’ Classes were emphatic about positive change, ultimately, it was the feeling of the General Board that “the place to begin reform [was] in the home.”<sup>58</sup>

Much of the influence that permeated Latter-day Saints homes during this time period came from the discussion of largely practical material found in contemporary teaching aids. For instance, the April edition of the *Juvenile Instructor* in 1911 carried a lecture on child growth outlining some contemporary ideas on physiology and the growth of children. Lesson suggestions followed. The suggestions centered primarily on addressing habits that affect the health of children.<sup>59</sup> After two additional lectures on the physical and emotional growth of children and teenagers, a third lecture sent the parents to the *Doctrine and Covenants* to

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<sup>56</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, October 1911, 590.

<sup>57</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, July 1910, 355.

<sup>58</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, August 1910, 412.

<sup>59</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, April 1911, 214-216.

investigate parental responsibility. The balance of the time was spent on highlighting statistics, tendencies, and behaviors of developing youth with suggestions on how parents might respond.<sup>60</sup>

In August of 1911 the lessons for the Parents' Department began to be published in the *Juvenile Instructor* as opposed to the lessons previously found in *Parent and Child* volumes one and two. The reason for this, the Board explained, was primarily to help keep parents "abreast of the times." "Our work," the committee recommended, "is to study living subjects" and this was advisedly best done by issuing new lessons in the monthly publication. Resultantly, the set of topics offered for possible discussion were representative of the larger movement toward secularized practicality—vividly marked by such topics as "Home Making as a Business Proposition" and "Making the Home Modern in the Best Sense."<sup>61</sup>

The 1912 editions of the *Juvenile Instructor* yielded lessons with similar themes. A typical title "Music in the Home" discussed the effects of music on young people. The lesson suggestions, among other things, advocated that parents help children develop a love for good music, assist them in learning to play a musical instrument and create a healthy awareness of evil influences in the contemporary music of the day such as Ragtime and Vaudeville.<sup>62</sup> March's edition focused on art in the home, which was a broader topic that discussed several aspects of beautifying the home and the community.<sup>63</sup> In April, there was a suggested book list for children.<sup>64</sup>

Despite the practical approach of the Parents' Class during this era, homemaking was not necessarily viewed as an end in itself. Teaching the practical implications of gospel principles in the home was seen as a way to empower parents to become more fully involved in the proper

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<sup>60</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, June 1911, 339.

<sup>61</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, August 1911, 470-474.

<sup>62</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, February 1912, 87-88.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, see 153.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, see 208-209.

teaching and rearing of their children. This included the hope that the Parents' Class would enable fathers and mothers to reinforce the spiritual lessons being emphasized in their children's Sunday School classes. Messages from the highest echelons of Church leadership continued to stress that children and youth be taught the fundamental principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. For example, President Joseph F. Smith in an address to the Sunday School Workers entitled, "The Simplicity of the Gospel in Sunday Schools" stated, "one of the greatest principles connected with the Gospel of Jesus Christ that should be taught to children in the Sunday Schools, is the fact that Jesus Christ was and is the Son of the Living God." After establishing the need to teach children the doctrine of the divine Sonship of Jesus Christ and their relationship to Him, President Smith went on to encourage teachers of youth to teach the principles of faith, repentance, baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands.<sup>65</sup> The approach of the Parent's class during this era was ultimately to support the spread of the gospel message by enriching parenting and teaching in the home.

A familiar statement by President Charles W. Penrose published during this same time, was telling of the ideas that pervaded the curriculum given to parents' classes at that time. Penrose stated, "Parents' Class should be dealing with the practical problems connected with the home, not studying theology."<sup>66</sup> However, the Parents' Department committee went on to clarify:

Does this mean that we are not to teach the gospel? Not at all. Our work is the gospel from end to end. *It is the gospel as applied to our homes . . .* we study together the problems most vital to parents. How to build our homes; How to reduce our bills and our drudgery; How to make our homes attractive; What books to buy, what pictures, what music; How to keep children at home; How to clothe them; How to care for their bodies, their minds; How to teach them the Gospel; How to protect them from community evils; How to train the principles

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<sup>65</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, May 1911, 270-273.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, 270.

of morality; What pleasures to give them and how. *There is no phase of life but is open to the parents' class.*<sup>67</sup>

By 1912 the Parents' Department was beginning to take on a singular identity—one that was characterized by a zeal for sensible principles that could be applied in the home or the neighborhood. For the next four years the Parents' Department would continue to issue lesson outlines focused on family, domestic and community life, covering everything from “Training the boy and the girl into Habits of Economy and Industry” to “Flower, Vine and Shrub Day.”<sup>68</sup> It was not until 1916 that there would be any significant shift in curriculum or teacher training.

Between 1912 and 1916 there were a few notable occurrences in the Parents' Department and the Deseret Sunday School Union as a whole that helped transition the movement to a higher level of efficiency. At a Sunday School convention held in Salt Lake City on January 11, 1914, a influential speech was given. Joseph Leo Muir, a prominent public educator and member of the Church, spoke in response to what he felt were central issues plaguing the Parents' Department—namely, “(1) the vicious habit of wrangling and disputing in the class meetings upon trivial and insignificant points, and (2) the present tendency of our organization to scatter its efforts over the whole field of human ills.”<sup>69</sup> Muir suggested that the Parents' Movement must be characterized by certain concepts and features.

It must be in the first place intelligent and enlightened, seeking reverently all truth, for it presumes to dispense wisdom for the guidance of men in the performance of the greatest duty of life [i.e. gaining salvation through knowledge]. . . . Secondly, the Parents' Movement must be reverent, approaching its task in humility, seeking God's guidance and the light of divine truth in all matters. . . . The third element of personality which the Parents' Movement must possess is calmness and moderation . . . . It must be unhampered by agitation and

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 271 [emphasis in original].

<sup>68</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, April, 1914, 177. Joseph Leo Muir went on to become state superintendent of Public Instruction, mayor of Bountiful, President of the Los Angeles LDS Stake from 1927-1939, and President of the Northern States Mission from 1939 to 1943. (See biographical note on *Leo J. Muir papers: 1914-1964*, MSS 313, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo.)

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 103.



or irritation, free from exasperation and haste, tolerant of human frailties . . . .  
Fourth the parents' class must be persevering.<sup>70</sup>

Muir continued by outlining the progress that he felt the Parents' Department had made since its inception. His remarks, published in the *Juvenile Instructor* for all Sunday School workers by the Deseret Sunday School Union, reveal the direction and priorities of the Parents' Department during this season:

In our brief day we have cried, 'Down with saloons;' we have hit at the cigarette and tobacco evil; we have talked of the soda fountain and the moving picture shows; we have petitioned town councils, county commissioners, and state legislatures upon liquor traffic, gambling and horse racing. In Davis stake we are just coming to success in a vigorous campaign against 'rag dancing'. . . . The Parents' organization has urged improvement in private and public libraries; it has recommended changes in the management and curricula of our schools; it has busied itself in the spring of each year in the town cleanup, and the graveling of sidewalks; it has attempted to reform our priesthood meetings and to stimulate attendance at our sacrament meetings.<sup>71</sup>

In his concluding remarks, Muir declared his confidence in the divine nature and destiny of the movement: "The Parents' organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ought to become one of the greatest reform movements of the world." Why? Because "it has the guidance and inspiration of the priesthood of God. It sprang into existence at the call of a most sacred purpose."<sup>72</sup>

In June of 1914, Second Assistant General Superintendent Stephen L. Richards reinforced the need for Sunday School workers to attend the Semi-annual Union meetings. He emphasized their worth by stating, "it is a time when we come together to consider various topics of Sunday School interest throughout the stakes of the Church." But more importantly the stake union meeting started taking on a new role, "these union meetings are the places where we hope to teach teachers to be better teachers"—an aspect of the union meeting that to this point had not

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<sup>70</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, February, 1914, 102.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

been fully utilized. Speaking of the union meetings, Superintendent Richards explained, “these are the workshops in which we hope, by the efforts of those who have been appointed to have charge over them, to make our teachers efficient.”<sup>73</sup> The effort to train teachers had been minimal leading up to 1916, yet change was coming.

In an even more comprehensive effort to improve teacher training a special meeting of Superintendencies and Stake Boards, was held in April, 1915. In that meeting Elder David O. McKay emphasized “that the slogan for the year had been ‘Efficiency—Spirituality.’ The cry [for both teacher and student] had been home preparation with text books as the means. Now it was asked that the Stake Boards teach the teachers how to teach, and six means had been suggested: (1) Stake Board Meetings (2) Union Meetings (3) Local Board Meetings (4) Visitations, (5) Libraries, and (6) the *Juvenile Instructor*.<sup>74</sup> At this meeting it was voted upon that there was to be a shift from a superabundance of lesson material—what they were to teach—to a better balance of training and material provided on “how to teach.”<sup>75</sup>

In addition to the move toward teacher improvement, the Deseret Sunday School Union began to foster a spirit of correlation. This had implications for the Parents’ Department. By September of 1915, the General Board advised parents’ classes to “turn their attention to the reinforcing of the auxiliary organizations of the Church” by becoming more familiar with the “spirit and purpose of each youth organization” and then going on to visit and give feedback to the leaders of the organization as to the fitness of the “exercises and discussions” that were taking place. In other words, they were encouraged to take an active role in what and how their children were being taught while in Sunday School.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 366.

<sup>74</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, May 1915, 293.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, September 1915, 583.

In that same spirit of correlation and sharing, one of the efforts of the Parents' Departments was to increase the size of the local libraries for the Sunday Schools. They wanted to get a number of good books in the hands of the parents on a wide variety of subjects from art and science to health and child rearing. Most parents had access to local libraries and to increase the variety of books available some stakes instituted traveling libraries. Each parent was asked to periodically donate a book to the library to ensure that there was a good selection. Parents were also encouraged to build up their own home libraries and be well versed in several subjects.<sup>77</sup>

### **A New Emphasis on Effective Teaching**

By 1916 the Deseret Sunday School Union had changed its emphasis on teacher improvement and correlation. In January of that year uniform fast Sunday lessons were implemented. This was a union-wide change. The idea was that a topic would be provided by the General Board and then each Sunday School was to focus its exercises (opening and closing) and lessons on that topic, leaving time for testimonies at the end. This was the beginning of opportunities for all Church members to learn central doctrines of the Kingdom together. It was yet another impetus to better bring the growing Church within the realms of the scriptural injunction to be of “one faith,” and “one baptism” (Ephesians 4:5).

In addition to greater correlation, 1916 saw the formation of the Teacher Training Department. Some of its first instruction was concerning the local board. The local board was an organization of officers and teachers in each ward. Each local board was advised to meet at least monthly—weekly if possible. Here teachers could receive instruction and help regarding the “art of teaching.” As the meetings began to be revitalized it was reported that

. . . young men and young women who have enlisted as ‘raw recruits,’ who scarcely know how to take the first step in the preparation of the Sunday School

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<sup>77</sup> See *Juvenile Instructor*, November 1915, 723-724.

lesson, have been greatly encouraged and strengthened by the assistance rendered them at these weekly meetings. Experienced teachers, too, have been made better and the spiritual status of the school greatly enhanced.”<sup>78</sup>

Along with these meetings a regular “Teacher-Training” section was added to the monthly messages that appeared in the *Juvenile Instructor*. These messages contained instructions for teachers, teaching helps, suggestions, and articles written on different methods of teaching. The decision to include a teacher training section in the *Juvenile Instructor* was also accompanied by the creation of a teacher training class. A text was provided, and was often written by one of the General Board members. Teacher training classes in the local wards were encouraged and all the auxiliaries, not just Sunday School teachers, were invited. Each monthly article articulated and expounded a principle of teaching. Fundamental principles of teaching, that otherwise had to be obtained through hard experience, were provided in the teacher training section.

In April’s edition of the *Juvenile Instructor*, the Teacher Training Department issued an article, authored by Adam S. Bennion, a member of the General Board of the Deseret Sunday School Union, entitled the “Preparation of the Teacher.”<sup>79</sup> This article stressed the necessity of starting early and avoiding a mere perfunctory reading of lesson material the night before. It was proffered that lesson preparation begin a week in advance so that underlying themes, “forceful” applications, and “vivid” examples might come to mind throughout the week.<sup>80</sup> The caution in this approach was to ensure that the teacher refresh his or her preparation of the lesson so that the most important points could be easily recalled and presented. Bennion recommended that the teacher reread the previous lesson so as to be able to review with the students important truths. Then, the teacher was to read through the assigned lesson “carefully,” looking up difficult words

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<sup>78</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, February 1916, 94.

<sup>79</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, April 1916, 237.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

and correlating historical facts and geographical information.<sup>81</sup> This material could then be used to properly frame the lesson for the student—adding understanding through context.

The next challenge was to find the central thought or “aim” of the lesson. The truth could be a single word or phrase or an entire string of thoughts. The discussion was to be inspired by and revolve around this idea. The fourth consideration is to find relevant applications and illustrations. “To prepare properly, the teacher is constantly alert to find interesting material” better enabling the students to make the link between the truths recorded anciently and the application of those truths in their current lives. Finally, the teacher was to come up with specific and meaningful assignments each week for each student to have prepared for the following week. This gave each student a “responsibility” and a vested interest in the forthcoming lesson.<sup>82</sup>

In the Teacher-Training section for May 1916 student preparation was considered. The article focused on a few main points. First, the teacher needed to believe that student preparation was possible. Second, the question of “how does one get the students accustomed to and enthused about their personal preparation?” was answered. According to the article this was accomplished in large part by the enthusiasm of the teacher and his or her efforts to consistently train the students and then follow up with them. Third, the process of creating or obtaining a pointed question for the students to think on during the week was explained. The question should be one that will inspire discussion the following week. An example of a preparatory question given for the Parents’ Class was “If your boy of fifteen was smoking what would you do with him?” Fourth, the teacher was to ensure that class members who had prepared had opportunities to share.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 238.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 238.

<sup>83</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, May 1916, 311-312.

June's Teacher Training entry highlighted several principles that would help teachers focus their lessons. Those principles included, "Knowledge must be adapted to the capacity of the learner;" "teachers should avoid talking merely to entertain or amuse, but should aim to develop and fix valuable ideas;" and "superintendents and supervisors should offer helpful suggestions rather than destructive criticism."<sup>84</sup> Also in June, Adam S. Bennion suggested that focusing a lesson depends largely upon finding a central truth that can be brought to the hearts and lives of the members of the class.<sup>85</sup> In one final example, August's edition contained an article by David O. McKay which provided three recommendations for teachers: "to awaken in the mind . . . a love for the truth; to guide [the student] in the search for truth; and to render proper assistance in his efforts to incorporate and apply the truth in his daily life."<sup>86</sup>

The foregoing examples illustrate a joint effort between the Parents' Department and the other divisions of the Deseret Sunday School to improve teaching and thus have a greater impact on the lives of the members of the Church. This change would come to impact not only the quality of instruction in the parents' classes but would also become an impetus in rethinking several aspects of the department, eventually influencing the curriculum itself.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Parents' Department went through several changes since its inception in 1906. Its chief purpose was to help the youth of the Church by aiding parents in developing refined, intelligent, gospel centered homes. Secondary purposes included establishing vibrant and wholesome communities by unified initiatives and empowering parents to assist in the religious and secular education of their children by inviting them to directly participate in their

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<sup>84</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, June 1916, 382.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*, 382-383.

<sup>86</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, August 1916, 526.

child's learning experience. In the formative years of the Parents' Department, major developments included the issuance of several manuals of instruction, the improvement of regular publications of lesson outlines and teaching helps in the *Juvenile Instructor* and a greater push for community involvement which resulted in positive local policy changes in a number of communities. These germinal years were also the beginning of a correlated effort to improve teaching and curriculum within the Desert Sunday School Union. While there were some suggestions regarding teaching methods during this decade, the majority of the suggestions were related to procedure or prescribed subject matter for the classroom. However, these experimental efforts helped lay the foundation for future success and undoubtedly brought the Desert Sunday School Union and its members into greater harmony with the Lord's injunction to instruct "more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God" (D&C 88:78).

## CHAPTER FOUR: THE GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASS

### 1920-1930

In 1920 Adam S. Bennion, then superintendent of Church schools, articulated what he felt was the greatest challenge faced by the Sunday School. It was that the Sunday School had yet to develop “such an efficient teaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as [to] establish a testimony in the hearts of . . . the Latter-day Saints resulting in their living a complete Latter-day Saint life.”<sup>1</sup> In other words, the purpose of the Sunday School auxiliary of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was to improve teaching in order to increase conversion. During this era several experiments in teacher improvement were undertaken with this goal in mind.

*Teacher training.* The Teacher Training Department provided a number of different proposals for the teacher training course. Teacher training classes were expanded twice; once, to make training available to all Sunday School teachers and officers in a local unit, and again to encompass all the other auxiliaries and their personnel.<sup>2</sup> The initial thought was that all teacher training could be handled by the Sunday School General Superintendency and the Sunday School General Board based on the assumption that “general principles and methods of teaching were as applicable to one organization as to another” and that therefore there was need for only one teacher training organization.<sup>3</sup> In 1928, the policy shifted when “the general authorities of the Church approved the recommendation that teacher training be handled by each of the

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<sup>1</sup> “The Sunday School: Its Development and Present Day Problems,” *Juvenile Instructor*, March 1920, 112.

<sup>2</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, vol. 53, December 1918, 645; see also *Juvenile Instructor*, March 1919, 134.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*



auxiliaries for their own workers.”<sup>4</sup> The plan called for each auxiliary to carry out more “sharply defined” training in order to better match the needs of each organization.<sup>5</sup>

Notwithstanding the move to specialized training, a general teacher training course continued to be made available. The teacher training course had two parts. First, an inservice section was prepared to help “present teachers to apply effectively the best teaching methods.”<sup>6</sup> Second, a preservice section was provided to enable “prospective teachers to become efficient before they teach.”<sup>7</sup> Current teachers were expected to attend a monthly union meeting taught by the local Sunday School officers and which focused on teacher improvement. Further enrichment was made available by training materials which could be studied at home and through training appointments with local officers.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, they were to observe classes in session and be given opportunities to teach their colleagues in union meeting.

The course for perspective teachers was divided into two segments, theory and practice. The theory segment was scheduled from October to April and the practice section from April to September. The theory portion of the course gave pre-teachers opportunities to study methods in lesson preparation, classroom management, and pedagogy. Throughout the practice course prospective teachers were given opportunities to conduct a class under the direction of a called teacher. Other trainees would observe. In subsequent meetings the teachers in training would discuss what they learned from their experiences and their observations.<sup>9</sup>

*Changes in curriculum.* The curriculum for the Parents’ Class also experienced several changes. During the period leading up to 1930 there was fairly equal representation of both

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<sup>4</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, September 1928, 492.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, October 1928, 557.

<sup>9</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, May 1929, 274.

practical and theological lesson topics which eventually led to dividing the Parents' Class into two separate classes. In 1926 the "Parents' Theological Class" and the "Home-Community Class" were created. The former accentuated the doctrines and principles of the gospel and the latter was "devoted to the study of applied religion, child welfare, social problems, and the relation of the subjects to home life."<sup>10</sup> This bifurcated approach continued until the later part of the 1920's.

The practical curriculum prepared for the Parents' Class took its patrons through a variety of subjects. Among the favored texts was the third volume of *Parent and Child* by Dr. Mosiah Hall which was intended to be a springboard into useful discussions on child rearing.<sup>11</sup> This volume, which relied primarily on common sense and secular authority, was a collection of short chapters on subjects pertaining to children's health, child psychology and general parenting advice. The class also made use of Milton Bennion's *Citizenship: An Introduction to Social Ethics* (a text book designed for use in public schools) in order to enrich understanding of civil society, its fundamental institutions and the moral reasons behind the duties of citizenship.<sup>12</sup> Other publication utilized during this era included a 77 page pamphlet, compiled under the direction of the Deseret Sunday School union, entitled *Talks to Parents On Home and Life Problems*. This pamphlet covered a broad mixture of subject matter; drawing on material from various fields of study such as the social sciences, child psychology, personal finance, religion,

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<sup>10</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, November 1925, 593.

<sup>11</sup> Mosiah Hall, *Parent and Child : Volume Three, Child Study and Training* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School, 1916). Mosiah Hall, professor of education, was Utah's state inspector for high schools and a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He worked under the direction of the General Superintendency and the Parents' Class committee of the Deseret Sunday School Union Board. See "Autobiography of Mosiah Hall," *Through the Halls of History*, (William Halls Family Organization, 1975) <http://www.hallsfamily.org>.

<sup>12</sup> Milton Bennion, *Citizenship: An Introduction to Social Ethics* (Yonkers-on-Hudson: World Book Company, 1927). Milton Bennion was a member of the Deseret Sunday School Union General Board for forty years from 1909 to 1949. From 1943 to 1949 he served as the sixth general superintendent of the Deseret Sunday School Union.

and history.<sup>13</sup> Supplementary lesson outlines for teachers were often prepared by the different members of the general board and ranged anywhere from honoring Arbor Day to addressing the patriotic duty of purchasing Liberty Bonds in support of the allied cause during World War I. To be prepared for these types of lessons, instructors were encouraged to read broadly; consulting books, manuals and government pamphlets written on the subject before going into the classroom.<sup>14</sup> This variety of practical topics accorded well with the Latter-day Saint doctrine that any measure of knowledge—in any of field of learning—which blesses mankind “came from God.”<sup>15</sup> As with all learning the course material was expected to be integrated into daily life.<sup>16</sup>

Like the temporal topics then being offered to the adult members of the Sunday School, the theological side of curriculum was also influenced by the precept of pragmatism. Writers for the Deseret Sunday School Union experimented with different approaches to teaching theology and applying it to daily practice. The trend during this period can be captured by the general officers’ recommendation that each principle be “discussed mainly from a rational and [experiential] point of view.”<sup>17</sup> They went on to explain, that “if theological or authoritative aspects do not receive the same amount of attention it is because those phases have been so well covered in other courses.”<sup>18</sup> Despite the shift in focus from doctrine to implication, scriptural

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<sup>13</sup> Mosiah Hall, *Talks to Parents On Home and Life Problems* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1924).

<sup>14</sup> See for example *Juvenile Instructor*, April 1917, 19 or *Juvenile Instructor*, November 1925, 592. This recommendation to indulge in independent reading was a precedent that extended into the 1930’s and beyond. Nothing makes a more reassuring or compelling teacher “as to have a religious instructor exhibit interests and knowledge beyond theological limits, interests in the here and now as well as the hereafter. A teacher who reads the best current literature has a decided advantage in the classroom. Church teachers should read the Improvement Era, Reader’s Digest, Atlantic Monthly, Harper’s Forum, Scribner’s, American, National Geographic, and other periodicals.” Through public libraries or a joint fund among teachers to purchase and circulate these publications, efforts should be made to make this kind of literature available (*Instructor*, January 1934, 25-26).

<sup>15</sup> Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, selected and arranged by Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976), 251.

<sup>16</sup> See James 1:22, King James Version.

<sup>17</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, November 1929, 639.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

teachings were not abandoned. It was expected that the teachers supplement the lesson “with as much material as possible from the standard works of the Church and other Church literature.”<sup>19</sup>

As an example of this trend, in May of 1919 the Parents’ Department began an in depth study of the Ten Commandments.<sup>20</sup> This series, which spanned nearly two years, was composed by Nathan T. Porter, a member of the Parents’ Department general committee. The course consisted of multiple sub-lessons based on implications derived from each of the Ten Commandments. As an example, the initial four lessons were based on the first commandment and addressed the false deities of chance, class, pleasure, and wealth. Direct reference to scripture was limited in these early lessons. While one of the Ten Commandments was mentioned at the outset of each group of outlines, it was rarely referenced beyond that point. Only on occasion would the outline guide the teacher to consult other scriptures for insight or understanding during the lesson. The bulk of the reference material was commentary by the author. As a result, the tone of the different lessons was most often rhetorical and philosophical, featuring questions that typically led class members along a single line of reasoning.

The phrasing and tone of the author can be illustrated by a set of examples in the text of two different lessons. A statement from a lesson on wedded companionship illustrates the sometimes obfuscate nature of the material:

The secret of existence lies in the power to endure. The secret of the power to endure is found in the secret of the thing that ties this to that. The thing that ties this to that is simply the extension of the unbreakable hold upon things had by God Himself. In a sentence, it is the fixity and eternity of relationships—the divine in the infinite.<sup>21</sup>

In a lesson on the first commandment, Porter sets up a definition with questions following for discussion:

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<sup>19</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, November 1929, 639.

<sup>20</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, May 1919, 225.

<sup>21</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, February 1922, 87.

What is meant by the expression, “organic law”? The law or laws by virtue of which a government or organization exists. In what sense, then, is the First Commandment an organic law? Could there be a world, a universe, and a God Supreme unless that God was the fixed, or set source of authority, the dominating entity, the personal embodiment of power and control? Is it a rational conception that God could be all this and at the same time be subject to a divided allegiance? Explain the statement that a single allegiance is of necessity a corollary of a single supremacy.<sup>22</sup>

While Porter’s work can easily be linked to scriptural concepts, for the most part, it did not draw upon the word of the Lord nor did it direct teachers to incorporate scripture into the lessons.

Whereas these efforts were undoubtedly meant to expand understanding and application of the commandments, the rational philosophical approach may have, in some cases, created confusion and led classes to focus on peripheral issues rather than understanding and applying the doctrine of the gospel.

Though the curriculum passed through seasons of experimentation on how best to infuse scriptural teachings in the lives of the members, overall, there was a progressive trend toward the more frequent use of scripture and the words of modern prophets. For example, uniform fast Sunday lessons began to concentrate on introspective questions designed to prompt thought and research. Sample questions include, “Why do I believe that baptism by immersion is required by the Lord?” or “Why do I believe that the unique plan of our missionary system is evidence of the wisdom of the Lord?”<sup>23</sup> Gospel Doctrine teachers were encouraged to urge class members “to study scriptural passages” and to “prevail upon [them] to search out other passages for themselves.”<sup>24</sup> Further, the teacher aids suggested that teachers invite class members to “search their own souls for inspirational reason for their belief in this principle.”<sup>25</sup> The members of the

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<sup>22</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, May 1919, 256.

<sup>23</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, February 1922, 83.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

class were referred to upwards of 18 different scriptural passages relating to the subject and one chapter of *Articles of Faith* by Dr. James E. Talmage. Students were also asked to earnestly study and then go to the Lord and “pray fervently” so that they could gain an assurance of the truthfulness of the principle.<sup>26</sup> On fast Sunday they would be given opportunity to share their insights, feelings and testimony.

In August of 1923 the *Juvenile Instructor* featured for the first time a lesson on “Marriage” which had as its primary source *Gospel Doctrine* by President Joseph F. Smith and references from the standard works of the Church.<sup>27</sup> Additionally, the topics of study for the Parents’ Department for 1924 contemplated temple work and its associated doctrines. The lessons came from Genealogical Society outlines. These outlines were largely based on scriptural statements from all four standard works and the teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith recorded in the History of the Church.<sup>28</sup> When the Parents-Theological Department was formed in 1926 it used the *Doctrine and Covenants* as its principal text. Each of these elements help illustrate that in the 1920’s there was a shift in both the curriculum and in the suggestions provided for teachers to utilize the scriptures more fully in the teaching and learning process.

*Suggestions for the classroom.* During the 1920’s, fresh reminders for the classroom were scattered throughout various volumes of the *Juvenile Instructor*. Several of the concepts being suggested for teachers in the 1920’s were based on the premises affirmed in the years just prior to the decade. For example, Howard W. Driggs, a member of the Teacher Training Department General Board asserted that “without expression there can be no growth, no education.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, June 1923, 295.

<sup>28</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, November 1923, 569.

<sup>29</sup> See *Juvenile Instructor*, January 1917, 24. Several articles provided in later volumes of the *Juvenile Instructor* by the Teacher Training Department were based on the ideas of Martin G. Brumbaugh, *The Making of a Teacher; A Contribution To Some Phases of the Problem of a Religious Education*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Philadelphia: The Sunday School Company, 1905). For an example where Brumbaugh teaches the idea cited, see pages 241-243.

Student expression—facilitated by questioning or recitation—was thought to be an important indicator of whether teaching was effective. The recitation method was seen as a form of socialized learning. It was a chance for members of the class to receive instruction from one another through learner presentation, dialogue, and testimony. It was carried out by having each member report on a previously assigned topic coupled with the teacher asking additional questions to draw out more information and create discussion. Each class member was to “listen attentively to the discussion, and . . . participate in intelligent questions and answers concerning the principles and aims of the lesson.”<sup>30</sup> The teacher training department emphasized the need to prepare students for their presentation while improving questioning skills which would help the discussion pass “rapidly from one member of the class to another.” This approach allowed the recitation to flow smoothly and avoid monotony.<sup>31</sup> Questioning skills included asking questions that were “clear, concise, and definite.” Also, it was recommended that questions follow a logical progression to bring the student to central points of the subject being discussed. Questions that allowed for a “yes” or “no” answer or queries that “conveyed to the mind” of the student the answer were generally to be avoided.<sup>32</sup>

Notwithstanding encouragement provided by the teaching aids, the recitation method did not come naturally to many teachers and students. In a letter from a Sunday School in Arizona it was asked how a teacher could avoid merely drawing out an “immediate” verbal expression and help his or her class members, “think, feel, . . . and live” gospel truths? The department’s response says much about the outcomes they hoped for by following prescribed methods. “The effort of a teacher should be to get pupils to participate, to join in the discussion, to convert

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<sup>30</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, November 1919, 586.

<sup>31</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, May 1917, 242.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 77-78; see also Brumbaugh, *Making of a Teacher*, 241-243.

themselves—to teach themselves in class. This done, the effects of the lesson are more likely to carry over into conduct than if the teacher merely preaches the time away.”<sup>33</sup>

In addition to the recitation method, teachers were offered various ideas on how to keep a class focused. For example, it was recommended that instructors use familiar objects and real life examples to help class members make a connection with the concept being taught.<sup>34</sup> The Teacher Training Department advised teachers to use illustrations, such as stories or examples, in order to reinforce central ideas. Illustrations were felt to be most effective when they were drawn from the “experiences and observations” of the class members.<sup>35</sup> Milton Bennion (the Sunday School Superintendent) in an article entitled “Getting at the Core of the Subject” noted that teachers frequently fell into the trap of focusing too much on the historical detail of scripture while bypassing the principles taught by the Savior and His prophets.<sup>36</sup> Bennion observed,

. . . the uneventful details in the life of Christ and His apostles are sometimes given as much time and attention as are the great principles they taught. This is one of the great mistakes of historians and biographers, as well as of teachers. In teaching doctrine the same error appears as over emphasis upon the letter and oversight of the spirit. . . . The core of religious principles is found in their spirit—that which lifts the mind to aspirations of high attainment and noble service to God and fellow men. The letter of the law and of form and procedure may be necessary, but these are always to be interpreted in the light of their spiritual significance. It is the spiritual significance of the religion the teacher should emphasize.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, May 1919, 254.

<sup>34</sup> In order “to get these results, he must constantly study life, constantly search for everyday instances and illustrations which illuminate and give practical meaning to his lessons. He must know his texts, of course; but no book bound teacher can ever connect up effectively with the life around him. For only as he makes close-to-life comparisons, can he give the really successful lesson.” (Ibid, 130-131.)

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 242.

<sup>36</sup> Milton Bennion was a prominent educator in the state of Utah. He was “deeply interested in Sunday School work and became a member of the Deseret Sunday School Union Board in 1909, and upon the reorganization of the general superintendency Oct. 30, 1934, was selected as First Assistant to Supt. George D. Pyper.” (Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia: A Compilation of Biographical Sketches of Prominent Men and Women in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, vol. 4 [Salt Lake City: Andrew Jensen History Company, 1920], 205.)

<sup>37</sup> Milton Bennion, “Getting at the Core of the Subject,” *Juvenile Instructor*, April 1917, 191.



In regard to teaching implements, the department urged superintendents to provide blackboards for each classroom. Teachers were encouraged to write the theme of each lesson on the blackboard in “plain, bold script,” to act as continual guide “to speaker and listener as to when the discussion is moving out of bounds.”<sup>38</sup> In connection, lecturing was designated as a method of last resort—useful in stimulating thought and rounding up discussion.<sup>39</sup> Finally, it was pointed out to Sunday School workers that lack of teacher preparation often leads to “empty lapses” in the lesson which tend to diminish attention.<sup>40</sup>

Related to maintaining focus was utilizing a variety of methods. There were six basic methods, not new to education, but nevertheless, popular during this time period: 1) the reading method—reading in class, either individually or as a class; 2) the story method—telling stories to teach; 3) the problem project method—class members are given a problem where they must come up with a solution; this could be expanded upon by making a plan of action based on the solution of how it could be implemented as individuals or as a class; 4) the lecture method—one person speaking on a given subject; 5) the topical method—conducting a recitation (short reports followed by questions and discussion) by means of specially assigned topics or reports; and 6) the discussion method—conducting discussion through asking questions. Although the discussion method was touted as one of the best ways to provide members of the class “ample opportunity for socialized self expression, for natural, well guided growth” the conclusion of the Teacher Training Department was that “the best method [was] a variety of methods.”<sup>41</sup>

Though during this time period the majority of teaching helps were geared toward teachers in general, on occasion an article or suggestion in a lesson would focus on teaching

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<sup>38</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, May 1919, 256.

<sup>39</sup> See *Ibid*, 193.

<sup>40</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, February 1927, 85.

<sup>41</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, November 1928, 633.

adults. In one such teacher improvement piece, Adam S. Bennion pointed out some particulars of teaching adults. His first observation was that even though adults may need less novelty and excitement, they still respond best to the factors of interest—“the vital, the unusual, the concrete, the uncertain, the similar, the antagonistic, the animate.”<sup>42</sup> Because adults tend to have a fondness for talking, adult classes should especially feature group discussions with the caution that “tact should be employed to guard against the ever-present talker with poor terminal facilities.” Significant attention should be given to ensuring that “new and invigorating material” is brought in for the discussion. This can combat the tendency for the discussion to diminish to tangential, insignificant or vague musings. Adult discussion should be “confined to levels upon which evidence can be secured. ‘Arm-chair philosophy’ may be comfortable—but it all too frequently lulls people into intellectual slumber.”<sup>43</sup>

*Suggestions for teachers.* Personal preparation for teachers was a regular topic in the *Juvenile Instructor*. The suggestions for personal preparation were largely spiritual. Any exceptions to this was normally in the realm of the intellect. As an example of the latter, teachers were encouraged to truly know the lesson before entering the classroom—“not merely by having read it with your eyes but by having argued it out in your own mind and to your own satisfaction. Then, and only then, are you in a condition to reason out and discuss the lesson with your class.”<sup>44</sup> However, this type of suggestion was rare in comparison to pleas for spiritual preparedness.

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<sup>42</sup> These factors were borrowed from a survey taken by the Public Speaking Department of the University of Chicago. See Adam S. Bennion, *Principles of Teaching*, (Salt Lake City: The General Boards of the Auxiliary Organizations of the Church, 1952), 77. This was a reprint of the original edition Adam S. Bennion *Fundamentals in Teaching Religion*, (Salt Lake City: The General Boards of the Auxiliary Organizations of the Church, 1952). In a Union Meeting some years later (October, 1932) the sponsoring department suggested that the solution to the problem of decreased student interest during class was to sustain “curiosity, by creating suspense and by keeping the outcome uncertain until the climax is reached.” *Instructor*, October 1932, 566-567 .

<sup>43</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, February 1929, 91.

<sup>44</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, January 1923, 23.

It was suggested that success in the classroom started with the teacher. Teachers who genuinely loved their work and their students would be surprised how members of the class would respond in like manner.<sup>45</sup> Sincerity was lauded as a cardinal attribute but only as it was channeled into “living by the word of God” and “by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of his servants who are the head—the president of the Church, and those who preside over . . . the wards and stakes of Zion.”<sup>46</sup> Regular study habits were recommended; upwards of thirty minutes a day. “No successful teacher ever trusts to old preparation—neither does he rely solely on the ‘inspiration of the moment,’” therefore, consistent study as part of lesson preparation was imperative.<sup>47</sup> A sister principle to knowledge was the development of character—who and what a teacher was becoming. Adam S. Bennion in his lesson written for the Teacher Training Department for September of 1928, made the following statement.

Many of the finest messages in life are ‘caught’ not taught. There is an inescapable force attached to what we really are. The living up to all the principles of the gospel gives the teacher a dynamic power which harbors no subdued apology. Doubt, uncertainty, questionable habits, all keep one from the position of complete trust and leadership. . . . Just as it impossible for water to make its way through a dirty, clogged pipe, so it is for the Spirit to flow through a channel of unrighteous desires.<sup>48</sup>

These examples are just a few of many and reflect some of the feeling about the importance given to teacher preparation during this period of time.

*Changes in teaching theory.* Preceding 1930 there was an increased emphasis on the psychology of learning and pedagogical theory. This included enlisting the ideas of specialists—

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<sup>45</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, January 1926, 3.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

<sup>47</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, vol. 63, September 1928, 499. In relation to this, Adam S. Bennion discussed the potential drawbacks to use of outlines. Bennion acknowledges that outlining is not in any sense a substitute for inspiration—“it is merely a guarantee, by way of preparation, that the teacher has done his part and can in good conscience ask for that spiritual aid and guidance which he then is entitled to.” He further acknowledges that there are two major difficulties when outlining. First is that if it is overly complex it can result in a lack of clarity. Second he acknowledges the danger of becoming rigidly bound to the outline, “in which case his teaching becomes mechanical and labored” (*Juvenile Instructor*, October 1928, 561).

<sup>48</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, September 1928, 499.

both in and out of the Church—in the field of educational psychology to contribute to the teaching improvement material. Articles and suggestions for teaching discussed a variety of subjects, including: appealing to sense organs, rewards and behavior, the psychology of habits, the condition of attention, association of ideas, imagination, thinking and reasoning, emotion, the will, and individual differences.<sup>49</sup> Teachers were instructed in such methods as the fundamentals of helping students make cognitive connections. As an example, it was recommended that teachers have class members compare “the founding of the Church at Kirtland with the founding of the Church at Antioch” based on facts and information that they already possessed—not only to reiterate basic details but more importantly to identify larger themes and patterns.<sup>50</sup>

Identifying the different sources of student motivation was a topic at the forefront of teacher improvement. What was it that truly moved students to learn and change their lives? One of the ideas propounded by the department was that the most powerful lessons are those which involve “both the intellect and the emotions” but “appeals primarily to the will and calls for action.”<sup>51</sup> This concept of helping class members put into action what they were being taught was highlighted at least as much as any other idea during this period. Related to this topic was the question, what keeps the interest of those being taught? Teacher training lessons sought to tie the various methods of teaching to one of the seven factors of interest—“the vital, the unusual, the uncertain, the concrete, the similar, the antagonistic, and the animate.”<sup>52</sup> At the time, these terms represented what was thought to be influential in determining an individual’s internal desire to stay engaged in the learning process.

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<sup>49</sup> See “How We Learn,” *Juvenile Instructor*, March 1923, 145; *Ibid*, April, 196; “Association of Ideas” *Juvenile Instructor* June 1923, 309.

<sup>50</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, August 1923, 414.

<sup>51</sup> “How to Make a Lesson Carry Over” *Juvenile Instructor*, October 1928, 570. This particular article quotes and was based around ideas found in George H. Betts, *How to Teach Religion*, (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1926). For example the lesson cites Betts’ query, “are the lessons we teach translated continuously into better conduct, finer acts, and stronger character, as shown in the daily run of the learner’s experience?” (see page 58).

<sup>52</sup> *Instructor*, October 1932, 569.

Throughout this and other periods there was an ongoing task taken on by the officers of the Deseret Sunday School Union to utilize and adapt the latest educational theory while still staying true to the spiritual direction provided by the living prophets. In order to assist in guiding the overall orientation of the Sunday School the General Authorities of the Church consistently contributed articles to the *Juvenile Instructor*. In one such article President Heber J. Grant made the following statement about priorities in learning.

. . . ‘the Spirit giveth life’ and . . . ‘the letter killeth.’ It is not the amount of food that we eat, but it is the food that we digest; it is not the amount of reading and study that we do in the schools, but it is that that we receive under the inspiration of the Spirit of the living God. I would sooner that a teacher was able to inspire the [class members] with a knowledge and a testimony of the divinity of the work in which we are engaged, than the teacher who would have [class members] learn, off by heart, chapter after chapter of the Bible or of the Book of Mormon.<sup>53</sup>

Along the same lines, Elder Stephen L. Richards in an article “The Deseret Sunday School Union: Its Aims and Objects” suggested that the fundamental purposes of the Sunday School were,

with the Lord’s help, to give knowledge of God and His law, to teach by precept and example the joyous living of the Gospel, and to set up in the souls of youth and adult a resistance against the poison of sin. These are the things we propose to do, but of ourselves we can not do them. We can only plant the seed. God must make the harvest. We can not give testimony, but we can prepare for it. Nothing spreads testimony like testimony itself. It is contagious. If it burns within your heart and warms you, its glow will radiate from you and shed light upon doubting souls around you.”<sup>54</sup>

Though every angle of pedagogy was considered in order to better instruct the members of the Church the repeated message from the leadership centered on facilitating the witness of the Spirit.

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<sup>53</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, February 1926, 61.

<sup>54</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, May 1928, 239.

*Changes in policy.* Several significant adjustments and recommitments took place during the end of the 1920's. In November 1927, the Council of the Twelve announced changes that were to be implemented throughout the Church in the Sunday School program. The Parents' General Board was expanded from four to seven regular members.<sup>55</sup> It was clarified that the Bishop, not the Superintendent, was the presiding officer in all Sunday School matters. Bishops, as a result, took over the administrative role of calling and releasing of teachers and directing the Sunday School.<sup>56</sup>

There were also changes in scheduling, curriculum, and course offerings. Sunday School was to be held from 10:00 to 12:00 AM each Sunday morning. All courses of study were to be based on either the Standard Works or a text book that was previously assigned by the General Authorities of the Church. The Parent's Department had its name changed to the Gospel Doctrine Department and classes under the previous construct were consolidated to become simply the Gospel Doctrine class.<sup>57</sup> Members holding the Melchizedek Priesthood, as well as sisters of corresponding ages, were invited to attend.

In regard to teacher training supervisors, leaders were encouraged to assign teachers based on "special aptitude, interest, training and experience" to work with the Gospel Doctrine Department.<sup>58</sup> The Uniform Fast Sunday lessons were to be discontinued. However the method of permitting the students to "develop through their own expression," was to be retained along with periods of "self-examination" and "self appraisalment" in order to develop conviction and testimony was to be implemented in every class.<sup>59</sup> A renewed emphasis on clear and relevant

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<sup>55</sup> The officers of the Board at that time were Howard R. Driggs (Chairman); N.T. Porter, Henry H. Rolapp, E. G. Gowans, Seymour B. Young, Charles H. Hart, and George N. Child.

<sup>56</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, May 1928, 256.

<sup>57</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, November 1927, 620-627.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

application was also advised. Time was to be provided for testimony and reflection on what class members truly believed and why they chose to live the gospel.

A special effort “to stimulate” class members in their “study, preparation, and development of each Sunday’s lesson” was to be implemented starting in 1928.<sup>60</sup> It included the distribution of a suggestion for study one week in advance by way of individual leaflets. At the end of each lesson, teachers were to make assignments for next week’s lesson. At that time “the leaflets containing suggestions, questions, and problems designed to stimulate and direct pupils’ study and preparation of the lesson of next Sunday should be distributed and the pupils interest in reading the bulletin and in making the preparation suggested, should be aroused.”<sup>61</sup>

### **1930-1940**

In order to have a name which better reflected its contents, in November 1929 the Deseret Sunday School Union changed the name of the *Juvenile Instructor* to the *Instructor*.<sup>62</sup> The *Instructor* became a metaphor for the emphasis of the Sunday School during the 1930’s. The magazine itself continued to carry a variety of material to illuminate minds, young and old alike with illustration, literature, poems, humor, short stories, editorials, news, and messages from the leaders of the Church. It would continue to carry most of the lessons for all the different Sunday School classes. More specifically, it carried a selection of articles written to an ever growing audience of instructors. Though the change in name did not represent any revolutionary shift in accent, it did reflect the increasingly defined efforts of the leadership to foster effective teaching throughout the various departments of the Sunday School—including the Gospel Doctrine Department.

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, November 1927, 620-627.

<sup>62</sup> The *Juvenile Instructor* had been the official publication of the Deseret Sunday School Union since 1901.

*Curriculum.* One aspect of the teaching aids was built into the curriculum itself. The setup of the outline, the suggested questions, the objective, and the ideas for application were all aids designed to assist the teacher in fulfilling the purposes of Sunday School work. The stated purpose of the Gospel Doctrine class was to “emphasize the special opportunities and responsibilities adults have to apply gospel principles to the betterment of home and community conditions.”<sup>63</sup> This section will highlight a sampling of lessons and seek to highlight some of the different attempts to assist teachers to reach the objectives of the Gospel Doctrine class.

During the first part of the 1930’s the teaching helps were found less in the teacher’s curriculum and more in the teacher training material. In September 1930 the *Instructor* featured a lesson on “Gossip and Destructive Criticism” which focused on showing the evil effects of gossip on all who are involved or touched by it.<sup>64</sup> Near the beginning, the outline pointed teachers to several scriptural references such as Leviticus 19:16, Proverbs 18:8, and Ephesians 5:4; which were cited without instruction. Their position at the forefront of the lesson implied that they were leading ideas and could be referred to throughout the lesson. The references were followed by a section of “suggested groupings” designed to help the class consider the different ramifications of gossip.<sup>65</sup> Each group had a main point with several support sub-points that could be drawn upon to enrich discussion. For example, there was a section on the “psychological foundation for gossip.”<sup>66</sup> Its sub-points included the idea that “gossip rests upon selfishness and a lack of sympathetic understanding,” that “gossip is based upon a careless indifference to the well being of others,” and that “ignorance of the effects of idle words is responsible for much

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<sup>63</sup> “Ultimate Objectives of the Whole Sunday School Course of Study,” *Instructor*, December 1934, 534.

<sup>64</sup> *Instructor*, September 1930, 543.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*



gossip.”<sup>67</sup> Other topics covered the impact of gossip on reputation, the spiritual standing of the gossiper and, by way of application, how to “cure” oneself of the habit of gossiping.<sup>68</sup> This skeletal type of outline was common during this era. As a teaching aid it prompted teachers to rely on their preparation, questioning skills, and the participation of class members in order to flesh out the lesson.

In November 1931 a new course of study was announced for the Gospel Doctrine class and was entitled “The Breadth of Mormonism.”<sup>69</sup> It consisted of lesson topics which were much more doctrinal in nature than earlier years.<sup>70</sup> The outlines provided for teachers were oriented to supply subject matter for discussion while not necessarily suggesting means or methods on how to facilitate it. The outlines would generally start with an introductory paragraph and then simply list sub-topics for discussion. In 1933-1934 the Gospel Doctrine class shifted to a study of the “Message of the Doctrine and Covenants.” Lessons were published and distributed to the membership quarterly. Helps for the study and presentation of the lesson were printed in the *Instructor*. In addition to Sunday School lesson material, the curriculum incorporated the *History of the Church*, and the *Doctrine and Covenants Commentary* by Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl.<sup>71</sup> Like the previous three years, there was very little pedagogical help built into the teacher’s lesson guide.<sup>72</sup> For example, the “Lesson Enrichment” for the fourth Sunday lesson in October 1934, gave background and context to section 101 of the Doctrine and Covenants. It

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> *Instructor*, November 1931, 588.

<sup>70</sup> Subjects for the first six months included, Vitalized Religion, Man’s Inability to Discover God, How to Know God, The Nature of God, Relationship of Man to God, Man’s Premortal Existence, The Nature of God’s Commandments, The Son and His Mission, The Savior’s Mission to the Nephites, Christ’s Appearance to Joseph Smith, The Book of Mormon, Authority to Act in the Name of God, Sacredness of the Human Body, The Marriage Covenant, Life Beyond the Grave and so on.

<sup>71</sup> Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 7 vols., introduction and notes by B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1932-1951); Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, *The Doctrine and Covenants : Containing Revelations Given to Joseph Smith, Jr., the Prophet, with an Introduction and Historical and Exegetical Notes* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1932).

<sup>72</sup> See *Instructor*, August 1933, 261.

also offered explanation of certain key phrases such as “mine indignation is soon to be poured out without measure upon all nations.”<sup>73</sup> The remainder consisted of summary statements and cross references which enhanced understanding of the section but offered little in regard to engaging learners or helping class members apply what they were learning.<sup>74</sup>

The subject being considered during 1935 and 1936 was the New Testament.<sup>75</sup> In 1935 the lessons focused on the “character of the Master” by studying what “he said and did” as recorded in the New Testament.<sup>76</sup> In contrast to the earlier part of the decade, each lesson was followed by questions, problems, references and explanatory notes. Also, instead of concentrating on doctrinal facts or the organization of the Church, these lessons represented the Gospel Doctrine Department’s renewed emphasis on application. To facilitate this kind of focus, the lessons concentrated on “the Master’s attitude toward his fellows—his manner of living.” This particular compilation of lessons was intended to be less “informational” and more “inspirational.”<sup>77</sup> To illustrate, in 1936 adjustments were made to the presentational format of lessons in the Sunday School. Among the more notable changes was the number of suggestions for teachers. For example, the lesson for the third Sunday in January focused on “the reality of the historical Christ.”<sup>78</sup> The material included suggestions for the teacher to make several assignments one week in advance. These assignments included the invitation for someone to sing “I Know that My Redeemer Lives,” to have someone read a short statement ‘Here is a Man,’ and to have each class member read the lesson quarterly so they could “come prepared to discuss the

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<sup>73</sup> Doctrine and Covenants 101:11.

<sup>74</sup> “Indignation of the Lord Kindled Against the Wicked—The Millennial Reign,” *Instructor*, October 1934, 358-359.

<sup>75</sup> For 1936 the title of the course was “Teaching and Testimony of New Testament Writers.” David O. McKay was the author of the quarterlies. The committee made it a point to inform the members of the class that this course would be “characteristically Latter-day Saint” (503) and was prepared under the direction of the department committee (George M. Cannon [chairman], Fredrick J. Pack, & Mark Austin) (*Instructor*, November 1935, 503).

<sup>76</sup> “Objectives for a Study of the Character and Teachings of Jesus of Nazareth,” *Instructor*, November 1934, 501.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *Instructor*, January 1935, 505.

questions which appear at the end of the lesson.”<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, teachers were invited to appoint four members of the class to take two minutes and share in their own terms one of the main sections of the lesson. This lesson also included reminders not to guide the class beyond the purlieu of the objective and to seek to make a connection between the main truth and personal righteousness.<sup>80</sup>

In 1937 the Gospel Doctrine department put in place additional adjustments written into the curriculum for teachers. During January 1937, a particular lesson considered, “The Decadent Church.”<sup>81</sup> Its objective focus was Jesus’ statement “by their fruits ye shall know them.”<sup>82</sup> For this particular lesson the Gospel Doctrine department provided commentary to enrich the understanding of the teacher. The commentary included history laced with ethics to illustrate the objective. For instance, one explanation for teachers stated that “the decadence of the early Christian Church was a natural result of its conduct . . . an individual that places his hand on a hot stove is always burned.”<sup>83</sup> Other teaching helps included scriptural citations and terminology that the teacher should be familiar with before presenting; such as, ensuring that they understood what the term “decadent” meant. In 1937 teaching aids also started to include a suggestion for the “point of contact” or, in other words, how the lesson could be made applicable or relevant to the students. In this instance, teaching aids suggested that the class consider how the term “decadence” applies to the individual as opposed to an entire Church. At the end suggestions for assignments were offered.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 505-506.

<sup>81</sup> *Instructor*, January 1937, 21.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid; Matthew 7:20.

<sup>83</sup> The commentary went on to point out that because the Church became “financially mad” and “promised its members remission of sins upon payment of sums of money,” religious and academic training were placed by the wayside; the “zenith” of the Churches power also became the nadir of the laity’s spiritual and intellectual wellbeing. (*Instructor*, January 1937, 21).

<sup>84</sup> see Ibid.

In 1938 the Gospel Doctrine class began a study of the Book of Mormon. In a lesson entitled “The Brother of Jared Sees the Savior” the objective was to inform students that “our spirits existed before they came to this world.”<sup>85</sup> The text for the lesson was Ether chapters 3-5 and the quarterly pamphlet. This particular lesson is typical of many of the lessons for this year in that it provided a “suggested outline of narrative.”<sup>86</sup> This was essentially a quick reference of the major occurrences in a given story, such as “Brother of Jared prepares sixteen small stones; molten them out of a rock; asks the Lord to touch them that they might give forth light for the journey” and so forth.<sup>87</sup> After the narrative the lesson provided “suggestions for supplementary material” which advised the teacher to have a class member “review briefly the biographies of Jared and his brother” with the help of the *Dictionary of the Book of Mormon* by George Reynolds.<sup>88</sup> The helps for the teacher finished with a set of suggested “questions on gospel topics.” Some examples are, “What is spirit? See Doctrine and Covenants 131:7-8” or “Have a member discuss the four stages of individual existence as taught by our Church.”<sup>89</sup> Although this particular lesson did not suggest a project for class members, many contemporary lesson outlines did.<sup>90</sup> Lessons through 1939 followed the same basic pattern of stating an objective, offering an outline for the narrative, listing additional resources, providing instructional questions and suggesting an applicable project.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> *Instructor*, November 1938, 292.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> George Reynolds, *A Dictionary of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: J. H. Parry, 1891), 158-163.

<sup>89</sup> *Instructor*, November 1938, 530.

<sup>90</sup> The project for the lesson that covered Alma chapter 13 suggested that the teacher invite the men in the class to trace their priesthood lineage back to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and subsequently Peter, James and John. (see *Instructor*, August 1938, 437) The suggested project for the Gospel Doctrine class as a whole during 1939 was to read *The Book of Mormon* in its entirety before the end of the year (*Instructor*, May 1939, 200).

<sup>91</sup> The course of study for 1939 in Gospel Doctrine was to be a continuation of the study of The Book of Mormon with special emphasis on the visit of the Savior to the Nephites. The following note of instruction was given to teachers. “Instructors are urged to continue to teach the gospel [given to] the Nephites rather than to spend the class time in proving the authenticity of the Book of Mormon” (*Instructor*, November 1938, 530).

*Teacher training.* During the 1930's teacher training was an important part of the array of teaching aids made available for Sunday School instructors. This included periodic articles in the *Instructor* and the teacher training class. The teacher training program followed the same schedule as many of the public schools at the time. It started in October and concluded in late April or early May. The teacher training class drew upon several different texts, which included Joseph Merrill's *Some Fundamentals of Mormonism*, Adam Bennion's *Principles of Teaching*, as well as John T. Wahlquist's *Teaching as the Direction of Activities*.<sup>92</sup> By this time teacher training was continuing to carry both instruction for new teachers and ongoing inservice for more seasoned teachers.

During the 1930's there was an increased sense of comparison between standards of instruction in the public school and Sunday School. This posture was reflected in both the teacher training material and the teacher training course. In one teacher training article, John T. Wahlquist, a member of the General Board and a public educator by profession, commented on the high turnover of teachers in the Sunday School. Because of the regular change in personnel, Wahlquist explained it was vital that a teacher training course be conducted on a continuing basis with the intention that "we can give prospective teachers some insight into teaching and make conditions in the Sunday School more nearly comparable to conditions in the day school."<sup>93</sup>

Wahlquist further stated, that "whether the teacher will it or not, she is in open competition with

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<sup>92</sup> Joseph F. Merrill and John T. Wahlquist, *Some Fundamentals of Mormonism*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union, 1937); Adam S. Bennion, *Principles of Teaching*, (Salt Lake City: Desert Book, 1921); John T. Wahlquist, *Teaching as the Direction of Activities*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union, 1934). Although the texts chosen for teacher training were generally attributed to one author, the refinement of the finished manuscript was usually a corporate effort. For example, the original manuscript of *Teaching as the Direction of Activities* had been read and criticized by Albert Hamer Reiser, David O. McKay, and George D. Pyper. (see *Instructor*, August 1934, 351). In addition to training texts supplied by members of General Board, supplementary texts were commonly used during the 1930's. In 1934 for example, the ancillary text to what was printed in the *Instructor* was Henry C. Morrison, *The Practice of Teaching in Secondary School*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931). However, the use of secular texts was not suggested without reservation, the Teacher Training Department made it clear that because "educational literature is ordinarily restricted to the secular school . . . adaptations of the content must be made to the Sunday School" (*Instructor*, April 1936, 144).

<sup>93</sup> *Instructor*, January 1939, 10.

the day school teacher.” The solution to the turnover problem, according to Wahlquist, was simply to train teachers properly so that they have success in the classroom and, as a consequence, desire to stay with teaching.<sup>94</sup> In an effort to modernize Sunday School teaching, the teacher training section in July, 1937, focused on the idea that in order for the teaching in the Sunday School to be most effective, “equipment and skill in the use of that equipment comparable to that found in [public schools]” would be required.<sup>95</sup> The Teacher Training Department stressed that, where possible, the Gospel Doctrine class acquire and use quarterlies, blackboards, maps, pictures, and films.

One of the themes of the Teacher Training articles during the 1930’s was student participation. Along these lines, the featured quote for the opening of the Teacher Training class in 1932 was “Jesus never did for his disciples what they could do for themselves.”<sup>96</sup> The Teacher Training department put forward that a teacher could measure the quality of his or her teaching by the degree to which class members participated. Teachers were urged to utilize all their “ingenuity to provide opportunities for student activity: study, planning, speaking, [and] doing.”<sup>97</sup> In order to motivate students to participate, one article advocated the use of “common sources of motivation.”<sup>98</sup> Among the sources of motivation that the article identified were curiosity, imagination, confidence, desire for approval, desire to do things, and the instinct for leadership. However, as a warning the article stated that interest creating devices should never be

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<sup>94</sup> see *Ibid*, 10-11; After receiving a B.S. and M.S. from the University of Utah and a Ph.D. from the University of Cincinnati, John T. Wahlquist worked in the public school system in Uintah County, Weber County, Ogden, and eventually became an instructor at the University of Utah. He served on the Deseret Sunday School Union Board starting in 1932. (see Andrew Jensen, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia: A Compilation of Biographical Sketches of Prominent Men and Women in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, vol. 4 (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jensen History Company, 1936) 228.

<sup>95</sup> see *Instructor*, July 1937, 291.

<sup>96</sup> *Instructor*, November 1932, 623.

<sup>97</sup> *Instructor*, October 1932, 566.

<sup>98</sup> “Motivation and the Use of the Project in Sunday School Teaching,” *Instructor*, October 1931, 596.

used for their own sake, but should have a “direct relation” to the aim or objective of the lesson.<sup>99</sup>

The Teacher Training Department recognized participation as a fundamental principle of religious education. This concept was reinforced by scriptural observations followed by pragmatic suggestions for classroom. For example, John Henry Evans, known for his bibliographic work on the prophet Joseph Smith, observed that much could be learned from studying how God teaches his children.<sup>100</sup> Evans, in an article written for the Teacher Training department, examined how the Lord taught Joseph Smith through his First Vision and those events which lead up to it. Evans, observed that the Lord provided a situation which got Joseph “thinking and feeling over his spiritual state.” This led Joseph to formulate questions in his mind concerning what he was to do and how he was to go about it, and finally Joseph was led to act on his “desire and his thinking in the situation.”<sup>101</sup> In this way the Lord prepared Joseph to receive that most significant revelation. In like manner, teachers were encouraged to present situations or offer challenges that stirred class members to seek for knowledge and then inspired them to implement that which they learned into their lives.<sup>102</sup> “Learning implies doing” explained one teaching aid. “Effortless learning is unknown. . . .the Lord himself can teach us only as our experience grows and we make the effort to learn.”<sup>103</sup> Beyond theory, it was posed that the teacher let the class take a survey of all the tasks and responsibilities that were necessary for it to function—i.e. roles, order, preparation of lessons, talks, assignments, looking after absent class

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> “Evans's Church callings included being a member of the Salt Lake Stake Sunday School board when the stake comprised the entire county. He was likewise a member of the General Board of Religion Classes and participated on the LDS Church Correlation and Social Advisory committees, where he performed major service in preparing courses of study and writing manuals for the priesthood and auxiliary organizations of the Church” (Larry C. Porter in John Henry Evans, *Joseph Smith, an American Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1989), x).

<sup>101</sup> *Instructor*, August 1936, 318.

<sup>102</sup> See Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> *Instructor*, October 1932, 566.

members, use of necessary books, activities outside of class, etc.—and then to organize under the direction of the teacher to fulfill those tasks. It was also suggested that teachers set aside time periodically for members of the class to ask questions that had not been fully answered in the course of normal class discussion; making a particular effort to let the class contribute answers.<sup>104</sup>

Along with classroom participation, the project method was suggested for use by teachers. The project method was felt to be a valuable tenet in religious education based on the principle that one must “do” to learn in the gospel. Christ “taught His disciples by doing and having them do, sending them out to teach and perform all kinds of loving service.”<sup>105</sup> Examples of appropriate projects included “better administration of the Sacrament, better two and a half minute talks . . . improvement of the buildings and grounds, Christmas presents to the missionaries . . . the payment of fast offerings and tithes” and so forth.<sup>106</sup> Once a need had been identified, a group plan of action was to be prepared, correlated with priesthood leaders, and carried out.<sup>107</sup>

In accordance with the theme of student participation, the teacher training article for April 1932 touted “experience” as one of the great sources of instruction.<sup>108</sup> The article explained that all other fields of learning draw upon experience as a chief method of instruction, but often religious training did not. To infuse their classrooms with “life,” teachers must recreate “for their pupils the profound religious experiences which have stirred the souls of men from the beginning

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<sup>104</sup> See *Ibid*, 566-567.

<sup>105</sup> *Instructor*, January 1931, 597.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid*; This article based much of its comments on concepts taught in Edwin L. Shaver, *The Project Principle in Religious Education: A Manual of Theory and Practice for Church-school Leaders*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924); and Mason Crum, *The Project Method in Religious Education*, (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1924).

<sup>108</sup> “Utilizing Religious Experiences as Aids in Teaching,” *Instructor*, April 1932, 211.



of time.”<sup>109</sup> In order to do this, teachers must fill their own lives with such experiences which will naturally come to permeate their teaching.<sup>110</sup>

The article went on to identify three main classes of experience: 1) “actual experience,” 2) “vicarious experience,” and 3) “memory experience.”<sup>111</sup> Actual experience is the most powerful of the three. It consists of actually going and engaging in a religious episode such as an act of service, an ordinance, a teaching opportunity, a meeting and so forth. Vicarious experience consists of experiences that we can “imitate by action, as in drama or pageant, or by imagination as by seeing a picture or hearing a story.”<sup>112</sup> The memory experience is evoked by using any type of aid in teaching that would act as a stimulus to “recall past experiences and ideas” helping the student reconstruct those experiences, thoughts and feelings and “re-live” them.<sup>113</sup> While this article identified, defined, and extolled the different classes of experience, it offered little concrete example of how to use experience in the classroom or how to help members have experiences of their own.

A principle related to educating through facilitating personal experience was what a teacher training article for July 1932 called “the point of contact” or “common ground.”<sup>114</sup> Reaching an individual at their point of contact is appealing to the “knowledge, experience or way of thinking” of that class member in a way that naturally leads into learning that fulfills the objective.<sup>115</sup> The Teacher Training department gave as examples Paul’s use of the alter of the unknown God in his discourse on Mars hill and the Savior’s use of water in his conversation

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> See Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, 212.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> *Instructor*, July 1932, 387; see also generally Patterson Du Bois, *The Point of Contact in Teaching* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1900).

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well.<sup>116</sup> In order to find this common ground the teacher must be familiar with the members of the class, their knowledge, and their way of thinking. This can be discovered in several ways. The department offered a few suggestions for teachers to become acquainted with class members, such as through class discussion, association with members outside of class, or during a class social.<sup>117</sup>

In contrast to more student centered methods, lecturing was still considered a powerful means of delivery. However, this was not without qualification. In regard to presenting an effective lecture the teacher training text emphasized several points. The lecturer should strive for clarity and direction; not only stating their objective but then restating it in different terms for those who may not have caught it the first time. Clear sub-points will strengthen the argument. The most powerful conclusion will include a reiteration of the main points. Most speeches succeed or fail based on the "illustrations and demonstrations" of the main points. In order to be effective in this regard, lecturers were advised to couple each abstract principle with "a homely, practical, concrete illustration or analogy."<sup>118</sup> An informal conversational style usually holds the attention of listeners better than more reserved approaches. The teacher giving the lecture should be willing to pause for question and discussion if the class members are not following. Maintaining appropriate proximity was sanctioned; i.e. not moving too far away or standing too close to the audience. Teachers were reminded to encourage learners to take notes as well as provide time for questions and open forum discussion.<sup>119</sup>

In addition to developing effective techniques, teachers were encouraged to pursue their own personal development. In a teacher training section on growth and teaching, Sunday School

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<sup>116</sup> see Acts 17:23; see also John 4: 7-14.

<sup>117</sup> *Instructor*, July 1932, 387.

<sup>118</sup> *Instructor*, November 1933, 499.

<sup>119</sup> See *Ibid*, 498-499.

workers were exhorted to conduct periodic self-evaluations. Beginning teachers were advised to conduct self-evaluations frequently and seasoned teachers, intermittently. Criteria for a successful teacher included “attractive personality, pleasing voice, robust health, acceptable personal appearance, tact, poise, enthusiasm, initiative, self-control, sense of humor, open-mindedness, and adaptability.”<sup>120</sup> However, it was purposed that the “most satisfactory rating scale is the one of the teacher’s own construction.”<sup>121</sup> For the purpose of suggesting other criteria upon which teachers could draw to evaluate themselves, Wahlquist provided a list of common failings of regular school teachers. Wahlquist then pointed out three weaknesses he felt were most common to Sunday School teachers: 1) “Lack of ability to carry on”—a teacher who is easily discouraged by difficulties with supervisors or students. 2) “Lack of singleness of purpose”—a teacher who has too many outside interests, i.e. business, family, social obligations etc. 3) “Lack of sympathetic understanding of the pupil”—the teacher who fails to relate with class members because he or she is “out of sympathy with what [they] love and cherish most.”<sup>122</sup>

The Teacher Training Department linked the progress of both instructors and students with personal study. The Deseret Sunday School Union had been encouraging teachers and learners to prepare themselves for class by study virtually since its inception in the 1870’s. This concept was revisited several times throughout the 1930’s. One article stated that home study was largely a “myth” for students.<sup>123</sup> A significant contributor to the issue was the failure of teachers to train students on how to study effectively. Deeper still was the fact that teachers often were ineffective in their own personal study. Therefore, the Teacher Training Department sought

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<sup>120</sup> *Instructor*, January 1934, 22.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid*, 23.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid*, 24.

<sup>123</sup> “How to Study and How to Supervise Study,” *Instructor*, October 1931, 598.

to educate teachers on the principle of efficient study so they could then act, not only as instructors but as examples for members of the Sunday School.<sup>124</sup>

The Teacher Training Department submitted that effective study was brought about by creating proper conditions and establishing certain habits. Creating proper conditions consisted of “finding a place with good ventilation, good lighting, which eliminates noise and distraction.” It was recommended that study take place at a desk, “with a chair that is neither too comfortable or too unpleasant.”<sup>125</sup> Supplies necessary to recording thoughts and insights should be on hand. Before engaging in study, “one should seek to free themselves from worries or preoccupying thoughts.”<sup>126</sup> After the right conditions have been established, it was suggested to “think yourself empty” and “then read yourself full.”<sup>127</sup> In other words, to first write down everything you know or can think of pertaining to the subject you are about to study. After you have exercised your memory to the full extent, then read all you can on the subject, underlining and documenting relevant and interesting material. While studying, the article proposed that individuals read critically, looking for the aim of the author, his or her supporting evidence and then ascertaining if the data the author provided justifies the conclusions made. The article advocated asking critical questions throughout the study session such as “Do you agree or disagree?,” “Why?,” or “What can you add?”<sup>128</sup> Additionally, beginning a study with a precise purpose is important.

Being directed by a purpose can help the reader discern between the relevant and the

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<sup>124</sup> See “How to Study and How to Supervise Study,” *Instructor*, October 1931, 597-599. This article referenced F. M. McMurry, *How to Study and Teaching How to Study*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1909), Harry L. Miller, *Directing Study: Educating for Mastery by Creative Thinking*, (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1922). See chapter two for example; pages 59-89, and John Dewey, *How We Think*, (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1910). The choice to reference Dewey’s work is representative of the movement which began near the turn of the century and which sought to understand education in terms of science. In his preface Dewey asserts, “This book represents the conviction, that the needed steady and centralizing factor is found in adopting as the end of endeavor, that attitude of mind, that habit of thought, which we call scientific.” (iii). All three books were written specifically to address issues in the realm of public education.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid*, 597-598.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid*. 598.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid*.

unimportant. The Teacher Training department felt that by improving the quality of study in general, both teacher and student would be rewarded with greater success in understanding and living the gospel.<sup>129</sup>

Because empowering individuals with the skills to study effectively was important, the Teacher Training Department recommended the method of “directed study” for the classroom.<sup>130</sup> The method of directed study was essentially that a teacher could foster proper study habits in a student by allowing them to practice in class. This method of directed study called for several transitions between instruction and individual study. For example, after the teacher presents an introduction he or she asks an individual or a group to study a certain portion of the material being discussed that day, with the assignment to return prepared to share with the class. Along with the assignment, the teacher takes time to instruct class members individually on skills that could be utilized to carry out the task—adjusting the assignment to the capacity of each individual or each group.<sup>131</sup>

Pupils who work to fulfill assignments are engaged in valuable learning experiences all the time they are preparing. Thus they are being taught beyond the classroom. . . . They will never learn it, if their learning is limited to passivity in a 45 minute class period once a week. A person can attend Sunday School faithfully all his life and remain a religious illiterate, if he does not exert himself to study and learn under his own power.<sup>132</sup>

The individual’s study at home would then become an extension of the assignment given in class, but this time with an increased skill set. The expected outcome was improvement—both in the quality of student presentation and erudition at home.

As part of its efforts to better prepare teachers the Teacher Training Department also addressed lesson planning. Although the lesson material was already organized for instructors,

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<sup>129</sup> See *Instructor*, January 1939, 10.

<sup>130</sup> “How to Study and How to Supervise Study,” *Instructor*, October 1931, 599.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> *Instructor*, October 1939, 436.

the Teacher Training Department emphasized the value of each teacher taking the suggested content and methods and coming up with their own outline. In 1934 John T. Wahlquist, in his teacher training manual *Teaching as Direction of Activities*, addressed the topic of lesson preparation. Wahlquist suggested that after the teacher had gathered the needed information, they use two parallel columns to assist in the organization of the lesson; one for content and the other for methodology.<sup>133</sup> The written lesson plan should include a statement of the adaptation (change of behavior) desired, a statement of the aim or objective, a concise delineation of the subject matter in one column and a listing of methods in the other column (including “questions, exercises and problems”) and, finally, materials and an assignment for the coming class.<sup>134</sup>

In creating lesson outlines, the Teacher Training department included guidance concerning lesson objectives. The subject matter selected by the teacher is a means to the end of establishing the objective. The objective should act as the deciding factor of what to include by way of facts, stories, and illustrations. If the material did not contribute to the objective then it was advised that it be omitted. Teaching aids should be used to deepen the impressions of the lesson on the minds of the students. The department suggested that pictures, audio recordings, maps, diagrams, slides, movies and the blackboard can be valuable aids in reaching an objective. No one aid is more important than the others and they can effectively be used in combination. However, teaching aids should only be used if they contribute to clarifying and empowering the message of the objective.<sup>135</sup>

Other advice pertaining to lesson planning included reemphasizing that instructors teach from the approved lessons. While methods printed in the instructor were suggestive, the lesson

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<sup>133</sup> see “Lesson Planning”, *Instructor*, January 1934, 16.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid*, 18.

<sup>135</sup> See “Reinforcing the Object,” *Instructor*, May 1932, 267-268.

material was not.<sup>136</sup> In regard to a teacher's doctrinal focus, it was suggested that a teacher should seek to "keep constantly before the students" God's plan of salvation as a "single unit, from before the council in heaven to the eternities of the future" in order to create context for all other truth.<sup>137</sup> Also teachers were advised to keep their teaching simple and avoid "religious hobbies"—i.e. overemphasizing any doctrine or practical aspect of the gospel at the expense of the whole.<sup>138</sup> Addressing teachers President J. Reuben Clark, then first counselor in the First Presidency stated, "The Lord made the gospel so that I think it was Isaiah who said, 'The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.' Please, teachers, do not build it into something which is difficult and complicated. It is simplicity itself."<sup>139</sup> Finally, it was proposed that teachers "specialize" certain aspects of each lesson to help meet the needs of individual class members. Doing this was seen as an important part of reaching the ultimate objective; that is, the conversion of individual souls.<sup>140</sup>

*Teaching theory.* Teaching theory is at the heart of all associated methodology. To the degree that it makes its way into the hearts and minds of individual teachers there is significant influence on several aspects of the teaching and learning process: What and how the teacher prepares; what the teacher does in his or her discretionary time; how a teacher adapts to conditions that present themselves during the actual presentation of a lesson; the expectations a teacher sets for his or her students and so forth. What follows is a sampling of some of the ideas presented to Sunday School teachers during the 1930's.

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<sup>136</sup> see *Instructor*, November 1936, 479.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid*, 501.

<sup>138</sup> see *Instructor*, October 1938, 475; see also Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine: Selections from the Sermons and Writings of Joseph F. Smith*, compiled by John A. Widtsoe (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939), 116.

<sup>139</sup> J. Reuben Clark, "The Function of the Sunday School—To Preserve and Heighten an Appreciation of the Gospel," *Instructor*, June 1934, 246.

<sup>140</sup> *Instructor*, August 1932, 447.

What is it that penetrates and changes human hearts? The message from the various departments of the Deseret Sunday School Union seemed to encompass several approaches. Teachers were advised to marshal the major avenues of learning and harness every useful medium. One article quoted Elder Orson F. Whitney,

There is only one way into the Kingdom of Heaven, but there are many ways into the Human Heart; and the Church of God, in its mission of promulgating Truth and turning souls to Righteousness, has constant need of and legitimate use for, every avenue of entrance thereto. Poetry, music, the arts in general, as well as science and philosophy—all these can be used as auxiliaries in the preaching of the gospel.<sup>141</sup>

In addition to utilizing the arts and sciences in making the way for the gospel message, teachers were encouraged to invite class members to exercise their own power of choice to actively live the gospel. This was commended as a simple way to have the gospel become meaningful and treasured. As one writer put it, “meanings are a result of self-activity;” the gospel will have little meaning until it is experienced.<sup>142</sup> Finally, the overarching—though sometime unexpressed—belief of how to penetrate human hearts centered in the example of the Savior. While in earlier years teaching aids had forged a connection between behavioral psychology and influencing others, President J. Reuben Clark, reiterated where the true source of knowledge resided, in regards to the matter: “He who would study the psychology of reaching the hearts of [others] need study only the Master and his work.”<sup>143</sup>

Various principles articulated in the field of educational psychology were also utilized by the various departments to broaden the minds of teachers in the Sunday School.<sup>144</sup> One of those

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<sup>141</sup> Orson F. Whitney, *Saturday Night Thoughts* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1921), 261.

<sup>142</sup> *Instructor*, July 1933, 388.

<sup>143</sup> J. Reuben Clark, *Instructor*, June 1935, 245.

<sup>144</sup> *Instructor*, vol. 69, March 1934, 132; The following is an outline of the suggested course work for 1934 and should offer a glimpse into the nature of what was being presented to teachers during this particular decade. The Laws of Learning: 1) The Law of Readiness, 2) The Law of Exercise, 3) The Law of Effect. The Conditioned Response: 1) Pavlov’s Experiments 2) Watson’s Study of Babies 3) Application in Child-Training. Intelligence its nature and Measurement: 1) Attempts to define Intelligence, 2) Intelligence testing with representative tests, 3) The



concepts was the principle of apperception. Apperception was explained as communicating the conceptual in terms of experiences which are practical and familiar—taking learners from the known to the unknown. Too often “lessons are left abstract when they should be concrete to relate to life” explained one writer. “Many discussions are theoretical, in the clouds, when merely relating the principles to everyday experiences would make them practical, down to earth.”<sup>145</sup> Under the purview of this principle, teachers were encouraged to help students call upon their experiences to aid the learning process. “The more vivid, the more frequent, and the more recent experiences” are most powerful when used to create an association between the present idea and “past familiarity.”<sup>146</sup>

Along with the principle of apperception, the *Instructor* contained several recommendations on the use of variety. “Teachers, who make the most of the short time they reserve for their own contributions, who are prepared, who vary the exercises at each sign of boredom or fatigue, and who emphasize pupil-participation are the most interesting and most successful teachers.”<sup>147</sup> In an article by Albert H. Reiser, member of the General Board for the Libraries and Secretaries, he posits that teachers should consider using teaching aids that go beyond mere visual sensory experience. The resourceful teacher “strives to bring all the senses of his pupils into action in the processes of learning. He uses hearing, seeing and doing methods.

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Distribution of Intelligence, 4) How can we recognize intelligence levels in Sunday School teaching? The Inheritance of Human Traits: 1) Nature vs. Nurture, 2) Studies of Families: Edwards and Jukes, etc., 3) Mendelism, 4) Why must we educate each generation? A cross-section of the books included in the bibliography were: E.H. Cameron, *Viewpoints in Educational Psychology* (New York: The Century Co., 1930); F.N. Freeman, *Mental Tests: Their History, Principles, and Application*, (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1926); J.B. Watson, *Psychology from the Standpoint of a Behaviorist*, (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1923).

<sup>145</sup> *Instructor*, September 1933, 390.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 389.

The latter include tasting, feeling, lifting, smelling, manipulating and all other doing processes.”<sup>148</sup>

One common belief that survived into the 1930’s, despite many educational experiments to the contrary, was that after a certain age adults could not learn.<sup>149</sup> This was a particularly relevant issue for the Gospel Doctrine class. Many of the general officers of the Sunday School took issue with the concept. John T. Wahlquist was one of them. Although Wahlquist did acknowledge that some adults may have decreased capacity to learn as they advanced in years, “undoubtedly adults can and do profit much from religious instruction.”<sup>150</sup> Oftentimes, even those that have slowed in their learning find their faith sustained by reference to the “old and familiar.”<sup>151</sup> Yet, paradoxically, some adults who are more intellectually inclined can be driven from the classroom to private study by “incessant repetitions of the familiar.”<sup>152</sup> While many “need to be relieved of the shackles which keep them within too narrow bounds; many do not wish to be disturbed, having established a nice serviceable equilibrium and others need the stimulus to test their God-given potentialities on vital problems.”<sup>153</sup> Because of these possibilities, teachers of adults, perhaps more than teachers of younger students, must study individual differences and strive to adjust aspects of the instruction for the various members of the group.

*Suggestions for teachers.* Recommendations for teachers in the *Instructor* for November 1935 addressed the need to find a balance between the spiritual requirements and secular standards. Teachers were encouraged from the outset to “attain a spiritual plane” which implied

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<sup>148</sup> “How Broad is the Field of Visual Aids?” *Instructor*, October 1933, 451.

<sup>149</sup> John T. Wahlquist, “Some Psychological Considerations for Religious Teachers,” *Instructor*, February 1934, 76.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid*, 76-77.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid*, 77.

that teachers take their understanding and preparation from merely an intellectual level to a spiritual one. Doing so will more indelibly impress upon each class member an “assurance to the soul which the profound truths of these lessons are intended to awaken.”<sup>154</sup> Along similar lines, prayer meetings were “highly recommended” to help foster the Spirit of the Lord in minds and hearts of the workers before they began to teach.<sup>155</sup>

*Vision.* Defining success in any institution can be difficult. The leadership of the Church as well as the general officers of the Deseret Sunday School Union made continuous efforts to communicate the vision of success to workers and members of the Sunday School. At least part of the definition in the 1930’s centered in individual change, as represented by statements such as “the final test of teaching is the production of changes in the behavior in the pupils taught.”<sup>156</sup> At a presentation given in a general meeting for Sunday School workers, Elder Stephen L. Richards made a statement that helped define the nature of success which the Sunday School so earnestly sought:

I am thinking that when the time comes that we measure the success of the Sunday School by the number of missionaries it produces for the Church; by the number of men and women it teaches to pay tithing; by the number who keep their bodies, tabernacles of the holy spirit, free from contamination; by the number who are loyal to the leadership of the Church and conform to the counsel and admonition that come from that leadership, we will arrive at a far more comprehensive and accurate measurement of our success than we have heretofore had. When we come to contemplate that the prime purpose of teaching a boy in school is to make him a worthy and valuable member of the Priesthood of God and that the chief purpose in educating a girl is to make her a priestess in the temple of the home, then I think we will have enlarged our vision and come to see more perfectly what our opportunity and objectives are in this great work.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> *Instructor*, November 1935, 503.

<sup>155</sup> *Instructor*, January 1939, 10.

<sup>156</sup> *Instructor*, November 1933, 494.

<sup>157</sup> *Instructor*, January 1939, 13.

Though such intangible qualities may have been impossible to measure fully, there was no doubt that the vision of success was becoming increasingly clear in the official publications of the Sunday School during the 1930's.

### **Conclusion**

1920 through 1940 represents a period of time where the idea of effective teaching was refined within teaching aids provided for the Sunday School. An ongoing effort was made to strike the appropriate balance between the secular and the spiritual. Expert scholarship in the realm of education was sought out and made more widely available to Sunday School instructors. Current ideas concerning educational psychology were adapted to the unique nature of Latter-day Saint Sunday Schools. Teachers were trained to emulate the most current standards of public education. In contrast, curriculum itself became less secular and focused more on the scripture and the words of modern prophets. Teachers were given a renewed challenge to invite their students to take advantage of opportunities to learn through religious experience both in and out of the classroom. Living prophets continued to guide the Sunday School to reach for spiritual imperatives. Consequently, the work moved forward at an accelerated pace.

## CHAPTER FIVE: THE 1970's

### **Introduction**

The objective of this chapter is to give the reader a concept of what constituted the idea of effective teaching during the 1970's as found in the teaching aids provided for the Gospel Doctrine Class. This unique period of time was selected for a few main reasons. First, the 1970's represents an important phase of the ongoing worldwide expansion which changed the way the Church looked at teaching. Second, this period of time was marked by the implementation of the standard works themselves as the text for the Gospel Doctrine course. Finally, the teaching aids in this period reflect some of the changes that came about because of further implementation of priesthood correlation which had been initiated in the previous decade.

The chapter will first seek to provide context by looking at precedents in the 1960's. This will be followed by a brief section noting a few contemporary changes in the Church that impacted the Sunday School and the Gospel Doctrine class. The balance of the chapter will use four headings to illustrate the message of the teaching aids in the 1970's: 1) Teacher Training, 2) Learning 3) What to Teach and 4) How to Teach.

### **The Preceding Decade**

In the 1960's one can see the germination of certain trends which would later come to bloom in the 1970's. During the 1960's the call for effective teaching increased in prominence—a message that became indelible in the 1970's. The stated objective of the Sunday School in the 1960's was “to teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every member of the church.”<sup>1</sup> This statement

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<sup>1</sup> Deseret Sunday School Union, “In His Footsteps: Sunday School Conference and Departmental Meetings,” September 30-October 2, 1966, L. Tom Perry Special Collections Library, Harold B. Lee Library Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 17.

became the basis for the expanded aim of Sunday School teachers to inspire members to live the gospel and teach it to their families, which was more clearly articulated in the 1970's.

Methods in the 1960's, although still important, were seen as peripheral to delivering a powerful spiritual message.<sup>2</sup> Emphasis on spiritual impact became the crux of many teaching aids a decade later. In the 1960's teachers were, perhaps more than ever, encouraged to study the Savior as the Master Teacher.<sup>3</sup> To illustrate, teachers were reminded that the Savior taught the truth: "clearly, simply, graphically, as a friend, humbly, [and] thoughtfully"—giving light, vision and opening eyes.<sup>4</sup> This trend had reverberations which showed up in several teaching aids throughout the 1970's. References to the behavioral sciences, including developmental psychology, although waning in abundance during the 1960's, were still being integrated in teacher training materials.<sup>5</sup> These types of references were even less frequent in the 1970's.

A teacher's personal preparation was a regular item of discussion in the 1960's. For instance, during this era teachers were implored to become "converted, informed, prayerful, concerned and well trained."<sup>6</sup> In the 1970's these qualifications were not only repeated but were more clearly defined. Additionally, the teachers of the 1960's were given a heightened sense of

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<sup>2</sup> See "Teacher . . . Open My Eyes that I May See," 13.

<sup>3</sup> Lowell L. Bennion, a member of the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association (YMMIA) general board and the Church's youth correlation committee, prepared series of lessons which appeared in the *Instructor* during 1965 and 1966 which highlighted Christ as the Master Teacher. The following titles give a sample of the principles being recommended for teachers: Jesus Kindled the Imagination; Jesus Lived what He Taught; Jesus Loved People; Jesus Made Men Think; Jesus—Master Artist in Proverb and Parable; Jesus Taught for God; Jesus Taught the People; Jesus Taught Positively; Jesus Taught Principles; Jesus Taught with Singleness of Purpose; Jesus' Use of Illustrations; and Jesus' Use of Words. In addition to Bennion's work there were other materials written on the subject (see Lowell L. Bennion, *The Best of Lowell L. Bennion: Selected Writings 1928-1988*, edited by Eugene England [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1988], 19.) For example, Sterling R. Provost's article, "Learn to Be a Master Teacher," *Instructor*, June 1961, 205 or the *Guidebook for the Deseret Sunday School Union Teacher Trainers of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union, 1969) pages 1-4.

<sup>4</sup> "Teacher . . . Open My Eyes that I May See," 16-17.

<sup>5</sup> See for example, Asahel D. Woodruff, "Strands of Development" and "Relationship Between Characteristics of Age Groups and the Educational Programs of the Church," *Teaching the Gospel*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School, 1961) appendix A and B. These fold out charts were for the purpose of helping teachers identify the developmental and physiological characteristics of children, youth and adults in order to better understand the needs of those they were teaching.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 17.

responsibility of accounting for the attendance and “integration” of each member of the class, which laid the foundation for a more missionary focused program in the 1970’s.<sup>7</sup> Supervision, which took on an increasingly important role in the training process in the 1960’s, was complimented with increased involvement in training, observation, and oversight in the 1970’s. In the 1960’s Sunday School librarians took on additional functions; being responsible not only for the organizing and cataloguing of teaching aids and materials but also training teachers on how to use them. This change hinted at the beginnings of a new program in the 1970’s which made teaching aids more uniform and widely available in meetinghouse libraries worldwide.

In 1962 the teacher development program which had historically been overseen by the Deseret Sunday School Union was transitioned to the management of “priesthood leaders under Church correlation.”<sup>8</sup> This change was accompanied with refinements to the training program, including a more extensive effort to improve inservice. One manual designed for Teacher Trainers stated, “your greatest effort will be devoted to the development of Sunday School teachers after they have completed their student teaching.”<sup>9</sup> The vision was to carry out better training in a variety of settings including faculty meetings, “classroom visits, special workshops to solve specific problems, interclass observations, demonstration lessons, workshops for the production of teaching aids” and so forth.<sup>10</sup> The carryover of this sense of priority was reflected by the large amount of resources invested in the Teacher Development Program which made its advent early in the 1970’s.

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<sup>7</sup> *Sunday School Institute, 1962*, Course 28 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union, 1962), 17; see also *We’ll Keep a Welcome: Guidebook for Sunday School Stake Board Members*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union, 1964), 1. The theme for 1964-65 urged each Sunday School worker to “help converts, newly reactivated members, and newcomers to feel they are wanted and welcome in Sunday School.”

<sup>8</sup> Donald Q. Cannon, Richard O. Cowan, Arnold K. Garr, “Teacher Training,” *Encyclopedia of Latter-day Saint History*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 1228.

<sup>9</sup> *Guidebook for . . . Teacher Trainers*, 5.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

In 1960 as part of a general convention prepared for the entire Sunday School, Superintendent Lynn S. Richards presented a vision for Sunday School work in the coming decade. His overview acts as an excellent summary of the direction that the work was headed throughout the 1960's. Richards identified teaching as the vehicle by which the gospel could change the lives of individuals. He saw teaching as a potent force to lead individuals to exaltation. Richards explained that, in one very special sense, teachers "stand in the place of Jesus to show each individual . . . how to obtain eternal life."<sup>11</sup> Superintendent Richards went on to explain that "good teaching means putting each vital gospel truth into such vivid form that it becomes a compelling force, a life giving concept in the mind and soul of the student."<sup>12</sup> Part of that compelling force would come as teachers lived and taught eternal principles. For example, Richards stated, "the Spirit of the Lord comes willingly to those who live the gospel and seek that spirit through earnest prayer."<sup>13</sup> Additionally, Richards felt that some of the most inspiring and powerful concepts for students were personified in the lives of valiant men and women recorded in the scriptures. Finally, as teachers sought to avoid mechanical presentation—reading from the manual or lecturing with "lifeless" words—and lead their students to see how the truth impacts the realities of their own lives, there would be great power in making clear the path that leads to eternal life.<sup>14</sup> This theme, articulated by Richards and others, only grew in eminence as the Sunday School transitioned into the 1970's.

### **The 1970's**

For The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints the 1970's proved to be a time of significant change and continued growth. Following the trend of the previous two decades,

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<sup>11</sup> "Teacher . . . Open My Eyes that I May See": 1960 Convention, General Board Members Guide, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union, 1960), 4.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.



Church membership increased more than 50 percent during the 1970's.<sup>15</sup> In 1973 President Spencer W. Kimball began his administration which was marked by his tireless efforts, missionary zeal and the expansion of Church programs. President Kimball challenged the entire Church membership to “lengthen [their] stride” in bringing the gospel to all the world.<sup>16</sup> Several new temples were added to those already in operation. The scriptural canon was enlarged by the addition of two revelations. In 1979 the new Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Version of the Bible was published, which offered a host of new study aids.<sup>17</sup> Organizationally, the First Quorum of the Seventy was reorganized to better meet the needs of the expanding Church. Yet, perhaps the most significant change occurred in 1978 when the First Presidency announced that “a revelation had been received by President Spencer W. Kimball extending priesthood and temple blessings to all worthy male members of the Church.”<sup>18</sup>

In step with other developments in the Church, the General Authorities instigated inspired and innovative changes to the Sunday School program which impacted the Gospel Doctrine class. The teacher training program for Sunday School teachers was refined, improved and made more uniform throughout the Church. Meetinghouse libraries were better equipped and their presence made more fully ubiquitous throughout wards and branches worldwide. Teacher training material—such as *Teaching No Greater Call*—was more abundant and more widely distributed than ever before.<sup>19</sup> Both the curriculum and teaching aids provided for the Gospel

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<sup>15</sup> Richard O. Cowan, *The Church in the Twentieth Century* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985), 263.

<sup>16</sup> Regional Representative Seminar, April 4, 1974.

<sup>17</sup> *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 1-4 vols., edited by Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 111.

<sup>18</sup> The First Presidency, “Official Declaration—2,” Salt Lake City, Utah, September 30, 1978.

<sup>19</sup> *Teaching, No Greater Call* was the first volume which combined a large and comprehensive blend of both practical and spiritual teacher improvement materials in a single manual. This topical reference manual numbered almost 200 pages with each section containing a terse treatment of the subject at hand. The layout, organization, illustrations, and writing were designed to be used as a self-study tool that could be used equally well in both in the classroom and at home. Not created for the Sunday School alone, this manual was meant to be applicable for all teachers in the Church. *Teaching, No Greater Call* was a significant benchmark in teacher improvement within the Church—bringing together over a century’s worth of efforts to improve religious instruction (*Teaching, No Greater*

Doctrine course reflected a more prominent emphasis on scripture study and teaching content directly from the standard works.

Up until this period the Deseret Sunday School Union “had functioned with considerable autonomy under separate organizational leadership, sending correspondence and instructions directly to local leaders. However, in April 1971 Church leadership created an all-Church coordinating council composed of three age-group committees (child, youth, and adult) assigned to correlate the curricula within the priesthood and auxiliary organizations of the Church.”<sup>20</sup> As a result, in 1971 the *Ensign* magazine replaced the *Instructor* and “all other LDS magazines in English for adults.”<sup>21</sup> Additionally, the Priesthood took the reins of leadership for the Sunday School with correlation guiding all the materials that it produced.

The role of the Sunday School auxiliary in promoting both retention and conversion was elevated. This was to be accomplished through compelling Spirit filled teaching, proactively fellowshipping less-active members on the class role, and inviting those not yet of the faith to participate in Sunday School.<sup>22</sup> In a Sunday School conference address in 1975, President Spencer W. Kimball reiterated the power of effective teaching as a missionary tool.

Yours is the challenge to reach out to our Father’s children, to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ so effectively, and with such personal testimony, that it will truly change lives. . . . Once they are there, your sacred obligation is to feed them well. Be certain your Sunday School is a place of love, of acceptance, of brotherly fellowship, which lets no one feel unwelcome. Be certain that in every classroom is a prepared teacher with single-minded commitment to teach the gospel of Jesus

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*Call: Resource Materials for Teacher Improvement*, [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1978]).

<sup>20</sup> B. Lloyd Poelman, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 1-4 vols., ed. by Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1426.

<sup>21</sup> Richard O. Cowan, *The Church in the Twentieth Century* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985), 83.

<sup>22</sup> See *Teacher Development Bulletin*, July 1974 Vol. 2 Number 3 (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1974); see also Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Sunday School as a Missionary,” *Ensign*, August 1971, 29; “Out of the 1,900 branches in the missions of the Church,” Hinckley noted, “with possibly a few exceptions, every one began as a Sunday School;” see also *Sunday School Guidelines* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1975), 15.

Christ. Ours is a missionary Church. We must prepare missionaries. We must be missionaries. The Sunday School is a place both to prepare and to be.<sup>23</sup>

The vision of inspired leaders and the ongoing effort to develop better materials and programs reflected the value placed upon effective teaching within the Church during the 1970's.

### **Changes in Organization**

In June 1971 Russell M. Nelson, Joseph B. Wirthlin, and Richard L. Warner were called to fill the vacancies in the general superintendency of the Sunday School. Russell M. Nelson was called as general superintendant with Brothers Wirthlin and Warner as assistants. During President Nelson's service from 1971 to 1979, he and other faithful men helped to bring about innovative changes.<sup>24</sup> For example, President Nelson was instrumental in bring about changes in the nomenclature of the Deseret Sunday School Union. "Over the years, the connotation of 'union' generally became associated with labor unions, so President [Harold B.] Lee agreed with Brother Nelson that the time had come to refer to this particular Church auxiliary simply as Sunday School."<sup>25</sup> In this same vein, the title "superintendent" was changed to "president" and the title of "assistant" to "counselor" in order to accord with terms used by other auxiliaries and priesthood organizations. At the end of his term of service Russell M. Nelson was succeeded by Elder Hugh W. Pinnock of the Seventy, which was the beginning of a pattern of calling either

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<sup>23</sup> Spencer W. Kimball, "Continue in Patience Until ye are Perfected," Conference of the Sunday School (Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union, 1975) 1; In that same conference Elder Russell M. Nelson, the Sunday School General President, echoed the need to train young people to retain them and to help prepare an army of missionaries for the Lord (see page 5); Harold B. Lee, *Teacher Development Bulletin*, July 1974 Vol. 2 Number 3 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1974).

<sup>24</sup> During this time Brother Russell M. Nelson served with several different councilors. In April 1975, Joseph B. Wirthlin was called as an Assistant to the Twelve and Richard L. Warner as a regional representative. They were replaced by B. Lloyd Poelman and Joe J. Christensen respectively. Three years later Brother B. Lloyd Poelman was called to serve as mission president. Brother Joe J. Christensen replaced him as first councilor and William D. Oswald was called as second councilor. In May of 1979 Brother Christensen was released to preside as President of the Missionary Training Center. Brother Oswald became Brother Nelson's first councilor and J. Hugh Baird was called as his second councilor (see Spencer J. Condie, *Russell M. Nelson: Father, Surgeon, Apostle*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003], 424).

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 167.

members of the Seventy or Area Seventies to serve as general president of the Sunday School. These changes comported with the general move of the Sunday School to fulfill its role under the direction of the priesthood.<sup>26</sup>

### **Teacher Training**

In 1971 the First Presidency instituted the teacher development program as a successor to the teacher training program. The aim of the program was to “improve teaching wherever teaching is done [in the Church] so as to bring about worthwhile changes” in the lives of the membership.<sup>27</sup> Elder David B. Haight of the Twelve, described the program as a composite of “effective teaching techniques” and “spiritual principles.”<sup>28</sup> The teacher development program consisted of three related parts: “(1) an eleven-week basic teacher development course [provided] on a continuing basis; (2) a monthly inservice lesson for all Church teachers; and (3) a program for supervision.”<sup>29</sup> Participants who completed the program would make up corps of trained teachers from which the Bishop could draw to fill future needs.<sup>30</sup>

The basic course was designed to provide personalized instruction to a small number of trainees including young men and young women 16 years or older. This recommendation was intended to provide training for those planning for full time missionary work and enhance teaching in future Church service.<sup>31</sup> Prospective teachers were trained in the latest methods and procedures, given opportunities to observe other classes, and provided chances to practice what they had learned. These opportunities were designed to culminate in a two week teaching

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<sup>26</sup> *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 1-4 vols., edited by Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1426.

<sup>27</sup> David B. Haight, “Teach One Another,” *Ensign*, June 1971, 53.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> O. William Farley, “A Time to Teach,” *Ensign*, January 1971, 33.

<sup>30</sup> Farley, “A Time to Teach,” 33; see also *Sunday School Executive Handbook* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1975), 21.

<sup>31</sup> see *Teacher Development Bulletin*, August 1973 Vol. 1 Number 3 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints).

experience in an actual class.<sup>32</sup> Follow-up seminars were provided to help participants evaluate their teaching experiences.

The other two facets of the teacher development program were inservice and supervision. Inservice meetings for current teachers were held monthly and expanded on the fundamentals of teaching. They focused on reviewing application of previous assignments, discussing new lesson material, and examining relevant teaching principles. Lessons were deliberately geared toward “participant involvement, testimonies on good teaching, and motivation.”<sup>33</sup> To this end, trainers were invited to make time for teachers to share some of the success they had been enjoying and what they had done to achieve that success. This included having teachers informally share “personal spiritual examples of good teaching.”<sup>34</sup> In addition to enabling teachers to assist in training each other, the manual emphasized connecting the concepts of each inservice lesson in order to build a teacher’s skill and understanding into a greater whole. For example, inservice leaders were encouraged to follow up with past lessons and assignments while looking ahead and making teachers aware of material in future lessons. Inservice lessons were taught once a month and the teachers in the program were encouraged to implement the assignment throughout the month.

Instructors were advised to carefully select ten lessons which they felt best met the needs of their teachers. The following are examples of typical inservice content during this time period. “Reaching the One: Please Step Into My World” stressed the idea that when class members feel that a teacher cares about their “personal feelings, concerns, and desires” they are more likely to

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<sup>32</sup> The opportunities to practice were defined as “micro-teaching” and gave the teacher in training practice teaching a small group of 4 to 6 people for about 7-10 minutes (*Teacher Development: Administrative Manual* [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1971], 12).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 61.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*.

be receptive to being taught.<sup>35</sup> “Planning Together in the Classroom” highlighted the fact that “teachers and class members have a joint responsibility to improve their class by working together to set classroom goals and solve classroom problems.”<sup>36</sup> Meetings were supplemented by a midmonth contact by the inservice leader or ward teacher development director to remind faculty of assignments and to offer help.

The program for supervision of teaching concentrated on helping Sunday School leaders prepare themselves to assist teachers. The leader’s duty was to help the teachers understand correct principles in regard to teaching and stewardship. This included helping teachers select and be guided by their own goals. Additionally, the program of supervision provided opportunities for teachers to give a periodic account of progress toward individual goals. This enabled leaders to “follow up with personal help . . . in improving teacher effectiveness.”<sup>37</sup>

Teacher training also encompassed a teacher’s personal preparation. Teacher preparation became more finely focused on spiritual matters during the 1970’s. There was a greater move toward helping teachers initiate a creation process that enlisted the Holy Spirit as their guide. Personal worthiness became a touchstone for preparation. Spiritual planning shifted closer to the forefront of teacher readiness. The acquisition of Christlike attributes was emphasized. Each of these ideals converged on the expectation that “the teacher’s language should be truly the language of the Spirit.”<sup>38</sup>

In contrast to previous decades where recommendations for teacher’s personal preparation were somewhat general, in the 1970’s the counsel was more detailed. Teachers were

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<sup>35</sup> *Teacher Development Program: Inservice Series Five, 1974-75* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1974), 75.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 113.

<sup>37</sup> *Teacher Development Program, 1974-75*, see the notice positioned before the title page of the manual.

<sup>38</sup> Ruth H. Barrus, “A Teacher’s Gift,” *Ensign*, April 1972, 63. Ruth Barrus was a professor and head of the Department of General Education in Humanities at Ricks College, Rexburg, Idaho. At that time she was serving as organist and Relief Society cultural refinement leader in Sugar City Ward, Rexburg North Stake.

advised to strive to be aware of current issues and world events. This was calculated to increase both their personal growth and their capacity to teach the gospel. They were to be constantly looking for lessons, analogies, and illustrations from various news sources and wholesome literature. Elder Marion D. Hanks explained, “if a book is a good book, its principles will open up new vistas of life that will reinforce, reemphasize, and strengthen the fundamentals we are teaching.”<sup>39</sup>

Along similar lines, official Church publications delineated a teacher’s duties and responsibilities to be “personally prepared” to teach the gospel.<sup>40</sup> Priesthood holders were urged to faithfully attend to all priesthood duties, while female members were requested to be involved in the female Relief Society. Teachers were counseled to “pray for heavenly guidance and to receive direction from Sunday School officers.”<sup>41</sup> Further, teachers were to familiarize themselves with the lesson manuals, teacher training material, and self-training materials. Teachers were invited to complete the Teacher Development Basic Course, followed by regular attendance in the inservice meetings, and become conversant with the principles of supervision. Finally, teachers were encouraged to foster spirituality by attending all their Church meetings; including Sunday School meetings—i.e. prayer meeting, ward quarterly leadership meeting, and faculty meetings.<sup>42</sup> Such high expectations reflected the seriousness with which the Church leadership and members of the General Sunday School Presidency approached teacher improvement.

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<sup>39</sup> Marion D. Hanks, “Good Teachers Matter,” *Ensign*, July 1971, 60.

<sup>40</sup> *Orientation Study Guide: Sunday School Teacher* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1978), 2.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*; see also *Book of Mormon 1 Nephi Through Alma 39: Gospel Doctrine Teacher Supplement* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1975), 1.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*.

Additionally, the General Authorities of the Church emphasized scriptural mandates for teaching the gospel. For example, President Harold B. Lee taught that in order to be a “teacher in building the Kingdom of God”<sup>43</sup> one must be properly ordained and wholly committed to “teach the principles of the gospel” by precept and example.<sup>44</sup> Elder Hartman Rector Jr. of the First Council of the Seventy expounded on a statement in the Doctrine and Covenants, “And the Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith; and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach.”<sup>45</sup> Elder Rector explained that the difference between a prayer and “prayer of faith” is faith—not merely a belief in God, but “a strong belief plus *action*.”<sup>46</sup>

The Lord’s formula for receiving the Spirit, then, is to get on our knees and communicate with him. Tell him what we are going to do—make commitments with him—outline our program—and then get up off our knees and go and *do* precisely what we have told him we would do. In the *doing*, the Spirit comes.<sup>47</sup>

This overarching pattern was further detailed in other teaching aids.

Spiritual planning received more attention and was cited as a valuable tool for teacher preparation.<sup>48</sup> Interestingly, it was often expounded in terms of meditating upon or envisioning a final composition. For example, Sister Ruth Barrus, a professor of education, provided perspective on the process of spiritual creation in lesson planning.

Before we create physically—as on a keyboard with our hands, or on paper with a pen or pencil—we must create spiritually. How can this be done? Can we gather together in our minds all that we have been told, all that we have studied, all that we have learned through experience regarding certain principles? Can we gather all these things together and create an image (in our minds) in which we can see and hear the execution of these principles before we perform them physically? Can we relate, in our minds, these principles to that which has gone before and

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<sup>43</sup> Harold B. Lee, ““And Ye Shall Teach,”” *Ensign*, September 1971, 5; see Doctrine and Covenants 42:11-13.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Elder Hartman Rector Jr. was member of the First Council of the Seventy. (Hartman Rector Jr., “You Shall Receive the Spirit,” *Ensign*, January 1974, 106).

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>48</sup> See “Preface,” *Teaching No Greater Call*, iii.



that which is to follow? Can we see from the beginning to the end in our own minds? If we can, we are in the process of spiritual creation.<sup>49</sup>

Teachers were invited to “strive to live the gospel of Jesus Christ so that [they could] be worthy of a temple recommend, be entitled to the guidance of the Holy Ghost, and ultimately qualify for eternal life.”<sup>50</sup> Spiritual preparation was considered more important than preparation of lesson material. This was, in part, because “a high level of spirituality must be attained if you are to be the instrument through which the Spirit works.”<sup>51</sup> Speaking of the same concept, President Spencer W. Kimball stated, “It takes a clean fountain to send forth pure and clear water.”<sup>52</sup> Secondly, it was evident in the teaching aids that a teacher’s conduct both in and out of the classroom made a significant impact on how well their message was received in the hour of instruction. Once called, Elder Thomas S. Monson of the Twelve noted, “the teacher learns it is easy to be a Pharisee, difficult to be a disciple. The teacher is judged by his students—not alone by what and how he teaches, but also by how he lives.”<sup>53</sup>

In the *Teacher Development Bulletin* for October 1974, preparation was explained in terms of attributes. Teachers were urged to develop “a commitment to spiritual excellence.”<sup>54</sup> This included the recommendation to avoid seeking to teach worldly wisdom while seeking to foster the “demonstration of the Spirit and of power.”<sup>55</sup> Spiritual potency resulted from sincere fasting and prayer. “This power grows from giving service to others and, in this process of self-

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<sup>49</sup> Barrus, “A Teacher’s Gift,” 64.

<sup>50</sup> *Orientation Study Guide: Sunday School Teacher*, 2.

<sup>51</sup> “Preparing Yourself,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 1.

<sup>52</sup> Spencer W. Kimball, Quoted in Vaughn J. Featherstone, “The Impact Teacher,” *Ensign*, November 1976, 104.

<sup>53</sup> Thomas S. Monson, “Only a Teacher: A Personal Observation,” *Ensign*, May 1973, 29.

<sup>54</sup> *Teach Development Bulletin*, October 1974 Vol. 2 Number 4 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1974).

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*; 1 Corinthians 2:4.

sacrifice, freeing oneself from bondage of uncontrolled passion, obsession for material wealth, and greed for the honors of men.”<sup>56</sup>

In addition to promoting a commitment to spiritual excellence, teachers were encouraged to develop knowledge and other attributes. “A great teacher seeks personal inspiration from the Lord, but he also studies the scriptures and diligently uses the lesson material provided.”<sup>57</sup> As a compliment to gaining mastery of the subject, teachers were invited to be mindful of the need to develop true humility. A gospel teacher should be “humble . . . modest, and teachable.”<sup>58</sup> Along with humility, both enthusiasm—“devotion and zeal for the gospel and a burning desire to do things well”—and flexibility—the ability to discern and take advantage of teaching opportunities—were extolled as desirable virtues for Sunday School teachers.<sup>59</sup> Finally, the effective teacher is conversant with effective methods of teaching. They provide a “variety of learning experiences,” utilize the various teaching resources available in the meetinghouse library, and use these methods in ways that “involve the students in interesting activities which will help them to understand and live the teachings of Jesus Christ.”<sup>60</sup>

The most important attribute that a teacher must seek in preparation to teach is the pure love of Christ. “Teaching is, . . . in its deepest meaning, love.”<sup>61</sup> Love was recognized as one of the most fundamental human needs. In order for love to bless the life of a student, love must not only be felt but also shown.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, a teacher must not only care about class members but also about truth itself.<sup>63</sup> If a teacher genuinely cares about truth they will study it and “treasure” it up continually; seeking to be a pure “channel” through which divine knowledge can flow from

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> *Teacher Development: Administrative Manual*, 4.

<sup>62</sup> See Paul H. Dunn, “The Worth of Souls Is Great!,” *Ensign*, July 1973, 30.

<sup>63</sup> Barrus, “A Teacher’s Gift,” 62.

one generation to the next.<sup>64</sup> The kind of love the Lord requires is not “dependant on certain prerequisites.”<sup>65</sup> Teachers were encouraged to follow Christ’s example and pray both “with and for” those they taught.<sup>66</sup> Teachers must love those they teach “whether or not [the learner] merits or reciprocates [that] love” and this too without “thought of reward either here or in heaven.”<sup>67</sup> Love is the only appropriate way to exercise one’s “authority” as a teacher.<sup>68</sup>

In order to complete a teacher’s personal preparation *Teaching, No Greater Call* taught that a teacher must seek to live the law of consecration and stewardship. This law requires that the individual consecrate “his time, talents, ingenuity, and all the blessings he has as well as all those he will receive from the Lord for the duration of his call.”<sup>69</sup> The individual who accepts the call to teach the gospel commits himself to magnify that call with all his “heart, . . . might, mind, and strength.”<sup>70</sup> With this total sense of commitment a teacher will “magnify [their] stewardship and will succeed in [their] calling.”<sup>71</sup> As in all things, teachers were enjoined to follow Jesus Christ in their own stewardships. Christ “accepted His Father’s will and offered himself without reservation.”<sup>72</sup> The question to teachers then followed, “Have you made such a commitment?”<sup>73</sup> In this regard, the course material noted, there exists a higher expectation for excellence than in any other realm of education.<sup>74</sup>

Although compared to previous years, the training courses and materials for teachers did not change considerably. However, they did become more robust. The training program was

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> “Teach as Jesus Taught,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 14.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> “Seek the Pure Love of Christ,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 6.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>69</sup> “No Greater Call,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 3.

<sup>70</sup> Doctrine and Covenants 59:5.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> “Teach As Jesus Taught,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 14.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid; It was noted after this question that “although our calls are different from that of Jesus, we should approach them with the same commitment. We must be willing to give of ourselves for the good of others—by sacrificing our time, talents, and means” (“Teach As Jesus Taught,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 14).

<sup>74</sup> see Ibid, 233.

better organized and comprehended more members than it ever had. As result of the correlation effort, the First Presidency took a direct role in the creation of the training program.<sup>75</sup> This included a vision of preparing more members to be effective teachers, more youth to be better prepared missionaries and more current instructors to invite both members and potential students to participate in the Sunday School Program. Source material from the academic realm was limited but still extant in the teaching aids.<sup>76</sup> In comparison to earlier decades, the teaching aids were more overt in presenting principles calculated to invite and magnify the influence of the Spirit of the Lord in the educational process.

## **Learning**

Up to the 1970's most teaching aids focused on improving the teacher. There was little discussion on the role of the learner. However, during this era things began to change. First, the importance of learning on an individual basis was reiterated. There were continued reminders of the obligation to personally seek eternal truth throughout life. President Joseph Fielding Smith affirmed,

Everyone should learn something new every day. You all have inquiring minds and are seeking truth in many fields. I sincerely hope your greatest search is in the realm of spiritual things, because it is there that we are able to gain salvation and make the progress that leads to eternal life in our Father's kingdom. The most important knowledge in the world is gospel knowledge. It is a knowledge of God and his laws, of those things that men must do to work out their salvation with fear and trembling before the Lord. One of our revelations tells us that if we are to be glorified in Christ, as he is in the Father, we must understand and know both how to worship and what we worship.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> see Haight, "Teach One Another," 53.

<sup>76</sup> see *Teacher Development Program: Basic Course* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1973), 43-46, 61-63 as an example.

<sup>77</sup> Joseph Fielding Smith, "The Most Important Knowledge," *Ensign*, May 1971, 2; see also "Simplifying Lessons," *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 47; see also Boyd K. Packer, *Teach Ye Diligently* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1975), 154.

Because learning the gospel for oneself was seen as deeply important, other writers sought to address fundamental steps to learning spiritual things. Elder Marion D. Hanks, for instance, offered a pattern of effective study recommended for teachers and learners alike. He mentioned that these basic steps distilled upon him from a lifetime of being involved in the teaching and learning process.

(1) *Read*. (2) *Listen*. (3) *Mark*. (To me *mark* means also copy, clip, assemble. Do it now; tomorrow you will forget where you read it, and it will be gone. . . . The book you think you will remember to put the marker in will disappear, or you will forget it. *Mark* means get it in an accessible form while you are thinking about it, at the cost of some things that are less important.) (4) *Organize*. (Think and put things together. Get them cohesive, [and] coherent. You will change them later, but organize them now.) (5) *Digest*. (As I understand it, that means getting the strength in your bloodstream, casting out the dross, and moving with energy).<sup>78</sup>

On a similar note, Rex Skidmore, chairman of the Church's Teacher Development Committee, outlined a few fundamentals necessary for "effective and genuine learning" to take place.<sup>79</sup> First, Skidmore identified that gaining knowledge of the principles of the gospel and the history of the Church was the first step to learning spiritual truths. Second, after knowledge was increased, teachers needed to help class members change their sentiments and attitudes. This could be accomplished, Skidmore observed, by bearing personal testimony, sharing faith inspiring stories, and pointing out the positive example of others. Additionally, a student's comprehension of the doctrines and blessings connected with a given principle strongly impacted individual feelings and attitudes. As an example, Skidmore explained that as individuals "comprehend the what, the why, and the where of [a gospel principle], they are more likely to want to incorporate it into

<sup>78</sup> Hanks, "Good Teachers Matter," 63.

<sup>79</sup> Rex A. Skidmore, "Gospel Teaching That Motivates," *Ensign*, October 1971, 55.

their own lives.”<sup>80</sup> This step was complimented by an invitation to *do* something about what was learned either by assignment or by invitation.<sup>81</sup>

Next, there was material that emphasized the role of the learner. For instance, Sister Irene M. Bates in an article “How to Get the Most from Your Class,” recognized that quality instruction was a “two way street” which placed responsibility on both the teacher and the learner alike.<sup>82</sup> While she acknowledged that participation and meaningful, honest discussion are desired by most class members, in order for this ideal to be achieved in a Church staffed by lay members, learners must take greater responsibility in studying, inquiring, and participating.

Additionally, Bates made observations concerning the process of learning spiritual truths. Bates posited that spiritual truths could not fully be comprehended on an objective level. That is, when truths remain merely a collection of facts, dates, labels or answers within the realm of the intellect they lack lasting influence in an individual’s spiritual progress. The grounds for spiritual growth were prepared each time a “policy or principle or doctrine” was “confronted prayerfully” and “‘discovered’ on an individual basis, in the light of [each person’s] own special experience.”<sup>83</sup> Bates believed that by following this pattern, over time, learners would harvest the fruits of internalization and ownership.<sup>84</sup>

*Teaching, No Greater Call* also suggested that teachers had a role in preparing learners to take responsibility for their own progress. Learner readiness was compared to the importance of harvesting fruit at the right time. “How can each [student]” one article queried, “like [ripened

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> see *ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> Irene M. Bates, “How to Get the Most from Your Class,” *Ensign*, January 1978, 36. Sister Bates was serving as a Relief Society president in the Pacific Palisades Ward, Santa Monica California Stake at the time she wrote this article.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 37.

<sup>84</sup> see *Ibid.*

fruit], reach his ‘moment of fulfillment’ in receiving the Gospel light?”<sup>85</sup> *Teaching, No Greater Call* suggested that the most potent factors in promoting readiness were trying life experiences, true doctrine taught by the Spirit, and consistent love.<sup>86</sup> In order to support an individual’s drive to learn, “the teacher and fellow members must build bridges to the . . . heart as well as to his head.”<sup>87</sup> Teachers were reminded that student readiness may take time and multiple contacts—that is, time to get to know the student, time to understand his or her needs, and several efforts by the teacher to reach out to that individual. However, teachers were cautioned to “be aware of the various levels of readiness” among their class members. Forcing a class member into an activity which they are not spiritually prepared for, can elicit an array of negative emotions and be highly detrimental to learning. In light of this fact, the teacher’s best “recourse is to diversify lessons in interesting and challenging ways so that each student can find his own level of participation and involvement.”<sup>88</sup>

*Teaching, No Greater Call*, and other teaching aids acknowledged that one component of a successful experience in the Gospel Doctrine course was that members of the class come prepared, having studied the material. Furthermore, teachers were strongly encouraged to help members of their class to participate in the learning process by developing a regular pattern of study. This included reading the lesson material for each Sunday before they attended class. However, the apparent challenge was “how to stimulate a desire to study scriptures?”<sup>89</sup> Suggestions were limited but did include “having class members set specific goals and making

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<sup>85</sup> “Student Readiness,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 30.

<sup>86</sup> see *Ibid.* 31.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> “Helping Class Members Apply Lesson Principles,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 116.

assignments that require a certain amount of scripture study.”<sup>90</sup> There was also significant emphasis on bringing a personal set of the standard works to study with each week.<sup>91</sup>

During the 1970’s the role of the learner began to surface in the ocean of teacher improvement material. While the role of the learner had been addressed from time to time, up until this decade the weight of emphasis had been on the how to improve the teacher. In the 1970’s there were attempts to define effective learning. Though limited in quantity, teaching aids began to reflect the idea that in order for teaching to be effective both the teacher and the learner must take responsibility. This idea would become an important precedent to future teaching aids.

### **What to Teach**

In 1972, under the direction of the First Presidency, the Gospel Doctrine class commenced a study of the standard works over an eight year period. “The texts for the eight year series,” the Brethren announced, “will be the standard works themselves, rather than secondary manuals.”<sup>92</sup> The objective was to learn the gospel “directly from basic sources.”<sup>93</sup> The teachers supplement for 1975 encouraged instructors to teach the scriptures themselves; not merely “what others have said about the scriptures.”<sup>94</sup> President Joseph Fielding Smith reaffirmed the importance of teaching from the scriptures in his opening remarks at the April 1972 general conference. Addressing those who had been called to “positions of trust and responsibility in the

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid; see *Sunday School Guidelines* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1975), 15.

<sup>91</sup> see *Sunday School Guidelines*, 15

<sup>92</sup> “Adult Sunday School to Study Scriptures,” *Church News*, 19 August 1972, 4.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> *The Book of Mormon 1 Nephi through Alma 39*, 2; see also *The Four Gospels: Gospel Doctrine Teacher Supplement* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1974), 2.



Church,” President Smith urged teachers to “preach the gospel in plainness and simplicity as it is found in the standard works of the Church.”<sup>95</sup> President Harold B. Lee further clarified,

All that we teach in this Church ought to be couched in the scriptures. We ought to choose our texts from the scriptures. If we want to measure truth, we should measure it by the four standard works, regardless of who writes it. If it is not in the standard works, we may well assume that it is speculation, man’s own personal opinion; and if it contradicts what is in the scriptures, it is not true. This is the standard by which we measure all truth.<sup>96</sup>

Elder Joe J. Christensen, a member of the General Sunday School Presidency in 1976, reminded Sunday School workers that the major area of study for adults in the Church was the Gospel Doctrine class and its scriptural content. While supplementary courses such as Genealogy or Family Relations could fill specific training needs, Elder Christensen reaffirmed that adult members should spend the majority of their time learning directly from the scriptures in the Gospel Doctrine class.<sup>97</sup>

The teaching aids of the era reflected the direction of President Kimball and the First Presidency to emphasize the importance of personal scripture study. In a message from the First Presidency President Kimball stated,

We believe that there has been marked improvement. Many more Church members are bringing the scriptures to appropriate meetings, and they are coming prepared for learning and discussions. In accord with divine inspiration, many more parents are using the standard works to teach their children the doctrines of the Kingdom. We view these things with pleasure and satisfaction, and know that many blessings will result. Nevertheless, we are saddened to learn, as we travel about the stakes and missions of the Church, that there are still many of the Saints

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<sup>95</sup> Joseph Fielding Smith, “Counsel to the Saints and to the World,” *Ensign*, July 1972, 28; see also “Teach Only the Gospel of Jesus Christ,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 8; “The Charted Course of the Church in Education” (address delivered to Church seminary and institute leaders in summer school, Aspen Grove, Utah, 8 Aug. 1938), 10-11.

<sup>96</sup> see for example, “Making the Scriptures Live,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 85; see also Harold B. Lee, “Using the Scriptures in Our Church Assignments,” *Improvement Era*, January 1969, 13. *Teaching, No Greater Call*, cited several other scriptures in support of President Lee’s statement: Matthew 22:29; John 5:39; Acts 8:35, 17:2, 18:24, 28; 1 Nephi 19:23; Mosiah 27:34-35; Alma 13:20,17:2; 3 Nephi 23:1; Doctrine and Covenants 10:63, 11:22.

<sup>97</sup> *Remarks from Sunday School General Presidency: Sunday School Regional Meeting*, Sound Recording (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1976). Elder Christensen replaced Richard L. Warner as second councilor to Russell M. Nelson in 1975 (“Report of the 145th Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” *Ensign*, May 1975, 1).

who are not reading and pondering the scriptures regularly, and who have little knowledge of the Lord's instructions to the children of men. Many have been baptized and received a testimony, and have 'gotten into this straight and narrow path,' yet have failed to take the further required step—to 'press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end.'<sup>98</sup>

The direction given to teachers during the later half of the decade supported the First Presidency's emphasis on scripture study. For example, the introduction to *Acts Through Revelation* teacher supplement was typical of teacher preparation material during the next few years. It stated that the purpose of the course was to "assist and motivate class members to make a comprehensive study of the standard works."<sup>99</sup> This course of study was to be undertaken sequentially, discussing the messages in "terms of the day in which we live."<sup>100</sup> It further explained that "careful attention" would be focused on "key events and on the lives of the people in the scriptures. The doctrines and laws of God will be considered as they are taught and as they bear on events and peoples' lives."<sup>101</sup> Ultimately, each aspect of the course was intended to facilitate the objective of the Gospel Doctrine class, which was "to involve adult members of the Church in a program of regular personal scripture study."<sup>102</sup>

The emphasis on teaching and discussing scripture in the Gospel Doctrine class was further supported by various recommendations for teachers. The 1979 teachers supplement, for example, encouraged teachers to motivate class members to "read and ponder the material to be

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<sup>98</sup> Spencer W. Kimball, "How Rare a Possession—the Scriptures!," *Ensign*, September 1976, 2; see also 2 Nephi 31:19, 20. Each of the 1978, 1979 and 1980 introductions to the Gospel Doctrine manual included this quotation; see for example the introduction to *Old Testament, Part One: Gospel Doctrine Teacher Supplement* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1980).

<sup>99</sup> *Acts Through Revelation: Gospel Doctrine Teacher Supplement* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1975), vi.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*; Another forward added this caution: "overemphasis of a doctrinal lesson approach should not replace a study of the entire account of the scriptures." (*Book of Mormon 1 Nephi Through Alma 39*, 1).

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

studied each week and come to class prepared to share their ideas concerning it.”<sup>103</sup> This recommendation could be reinforced by “end of class assignments.”<sup>104</sup> Not only could teachers remind learners of the next reading assignment but also could provide questions and particular things to look for during their study. This was also an opportunity to make specific assignments to class members.<sup>105</sup> Though manuals during this era contained an assortment of supplementary material to enrich understanding of the scriptural text, teachers were still expected to focus discussion on the “actual content of the scriptures.”<sup>106</sup> That being said, supplements to the scriptures did have a place. Supplementary material often referred teachers not only to relevant articles but also conference editions of the *Ensign* containing charts relating a given talk to a particular lesson. This allowed teachers to easily incorporate the words and testimonies of the living prophets into their lessons.

Along with making the scriptures the curricular centerpiece of the Gospel Doctrine class, building faith through instruction was also considered a chief priority.<sup>107</sup> For example, Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone, of the First Quorum of the Seventy, emphasized the need to teach faith in the Almighty God and in His Son, the Redeemer of the world.<sup>108</sup> Elder Featherstone also discouraged teachers from providing learners intellectual proofs at the expense of helping them to develop an “inner feeling of dependence and closeness” to the Lord.<sup>109</sup> Elder Boyd K. Packer suggested that exuding faith was more important than either skill or method in teaching. He illustrated this principle by relating William E. Berrett’s description of his own ineloquent but

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<sup>103</sup> *Doctrine & Covenants and Church History: Gospel Doctrine Teacher Supplement* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979), v.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, vii.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, vi.

<sup>107</sup> See *Teacher Development Program: 1974-75*, 2.

<sup>108</sup> Featherstone, *Impact Teachers*, 104.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*; Featherstone quoted from Spencer W. Kimball, “What I Hope You Will Teach My Grandchildren and All Other Youth of Zion,” Address to CES Religious Educators, 11 July 1966, Brigham Young University.

faithful Sunday School teacher: “He was an unlettered man, deprived of a formal education, who had a hard time speaking English.” However, “what he lacked in expression he made up in spirit. We could have warmed our hands by the fire of his faith.”<sup>110</sup>

In contrast, Elder Thomas S. Monson of the Twelve issued a warning to any teacher who would intentionally destroy faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Elder Monson cautioned that the “power to lead is also the power to mislead, and the power to mislead is the power to destroy.”<sup>111</sup> This was followed by a reiteration of President J. Reuben Clark Jr.’s solemn warning: “He who wounds, maims, [or] cripples a soul who raises doubts about or destroys faith in the ultimate truths. . . . God will hold such a one strictly accountable.” President Clark added, “. . . and who can measure the depths to which one shall fall who willfully shatters in another the opportunity for celestial glory?”<sup>112</sup> Teachers were reminded that although they may not be able to control what falsehoods their students would encounter, they could prepare them against deception. Through teaching correct principles, teachers provide class members access to “a barometer to distinguish between the truths of God and the theories of men.”<sup>113</sup> Gospel Doctrine teachers were importuned to not only teach so that each individual could understand; but with such clarity and power that “no one could misunderstand.”<sup>114</sup>

Along with recommendations concerning faith, several teaching aids cautioned against diluting or departing from prescribed material. The stewardship of the Gospel Doctrine teacher was to represent the Church in the classroom. As a result, Gospel Doctrine teachers were not at liberty to “change the lesson by substituting unapproved materials, to skip a lesson arbitrarily, or

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<sup>110</sup> “Teaching with the Spirit,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 76; see also Packer, *Teach Ye Diligently*, 276.

<sup>111</sup> Monson, “Only a Teacher: A Personal Observation,” 27.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*; see also J. Reuben Clark Jr., *Immortality and Eternal Life*, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1969), 128.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> Jacob de Jager, “Let There Be No Misunderstanding,” *Ensign*, November 1978, 67.

to interrupt it in any way that will weaken or subvert its intended message.”<sup>115</sup> Additionally, teaching aids urged teachers to avoid maintaining a “special or exclusive emphasis of one principle of the gospel” or speculating “on matters about which the Lord has said very little.”<sup>116</sup> Finally, teaching aids warned against misquoting, drawing material from spurious sources, using sensational stories, or promoting ones personal opinion as if it was the official doctrine of the Church.<sup>117</sup>

In summary, the First Presidency’s decision to make the standard works the ongoing text of the Gospel Doctrine course was a benchmark in its history. To this point, there had never been such a direct approach to incorporating the scriptural text into the course. Accordingly, supplementary material was decidedly less secular. The move to the standard works as the basic text for the Gospel Doctrine class was further strengthened by teaching aids which were more particular in addressing how to effectively use the scriptures in the classroom.<sup>118</sup>

### **How to Teach**

General guidelines, aims, and methods pertaining to effective teaching were abundant within the teaching aids during the 1970’s. They ranged from the theoretical importance of gospel teaching to practical methods of religious education. They served as valuable guides for teachers—not only to shape their lifelong service in the Church but also to direct their weekly activities in the classroom. Although these guidelines were, at times, decidedly secular, more

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<sup>115</sup> “Teach Only the Gospel of Jesus Christ,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 8; see also “The Charted Course of the Church in Education” (address delivered to Church seminary and institute leaders in summer school, Aspen Grove, Utah, 8 Aug. 1938), 10-11.

<sup>116</sup> “Gospel Teaching Cautions,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 58; This article was adapted from Joseph F. McConkie, “The Disciplined Teacher,” *Instructor*, September 1969, 334-335, 341.

<sup>117</sup> see *ibid*, 58-59; see also “Teach Only the Gospel of Jesus Christ,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 8.

<sup>118</sup> see for example, “Making the Scriptures Live,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 85-86; see also Spencer W. Kimball, “Always a Convert Church: Some Lessons to Learn and Apply This Year,” *Ensign*, September 1975, 4.

frequently the teaching philosophy drew upon the scriptures and the words of modern prophets as sources of guidance.

The teachings and example of the Savior were the basis for many suggestions related to effective teaching. Teachers were encouraged to emulate His conviction, commitment, and methods.<sup>119</sup> One example came from Howard W. Driggs' observations of Jesus Christ as the Master Teacher, quoted by President Harold B. Lee:

The Master had a true love of God and God's children. He had a burning belief in his mission to serve and save mankind. He had a clear and sympathetic understanding of human beings and their vital needs. He was a constant, earnest student. He knew the "law and the prophets." He knew history and the social conditions of his time. He could discern truth and was uncompromising in upholding it. His simple language enabled him to reach and hold hearers from every class and condition. . . . He demonstrated his faith by living it constantly and courageously.<sup>120</sup>

Additionally, Elder Thomas S. Monson of the Quorum of the Twelve, extolled Jesus as the perfect example for teachers to follow:

In the home, the school, or the house of God, there is one teacher whose life overshadows all others. He taught of life and death, of duty and destiny. He lived not to be served, but to serve; not to receive, but to give; not to save his life, but to sacrifice it for others. He described a love more beautiful than lust, a poverty richer than treasure. It was said of this teacher that he taught with authority and not as do the scribes. . . . His laws were not inscribed upon stone, but upon human hearts. I speak of the master teacher, even Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Savior and Redeemer of all mankind. When dedicated teachers respond to his gentle invitation, 'Come learn of me,' they learn, but they also become partakers of his divine power.<sup>121</sup>

These examples are representative of many such statements that invited teachers to look to the Savior as not only the quintessential teacher but also the source of power and assistance behind inspired instruction.

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<sup>119</sup> see "Teach as Jesus Taught," *Teaching No Greater Call*, 14.

<sup>120</sup> Lee, "And Ye Shall Teach," 5.

<sup>121</sup> Monson, "Only a Teacher," 29.

At different times during the 1970's the Savior's life and teachings were analyzed in terms of principles of instructions. For example, Rex D. Pinegar, a member of the Sunday School Teacher Training Committee, identified several different principles of teaching based on the Master's presentation of the parable found in Luke 14:7-14.<sup>122</sup> Pinegar identified that Christ was able to meet the needs of those He taught because He utilized the principles of "preassessment."<sup>123</sup> Because the Savior was prepared in "knowledge" and in "spirit" He was able to discern the Pharisees' pride, and via the parable "taught them how to become humble."<sup>124</sup> Christ provided "objectives for behavior improvement" by helping the Pharisees recognize that choosing seats in upper rooms was a manifestation of their pride.<sup>125</sup> The Savior presented meaningful and familiar "learning activities" to help His students discover the truth being taught.<sup>126</sup> In this case "the choosing of seats" and the selection of "guests to attend a feast in their individual homes were actions with which all his students were familiar" and which presented themselves regularly in daily life.<sup>127</sup> If the Pharisees took the Savior's invitation to host the "poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind," (Luke 14:13) then they would truly begin to comprehend the lesson of the parable. Finally, the Savior supplied a general principle by which His students could evaluate their progress in relation to the fundamental truth He had taught them: "whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 14:14).<sup>128</sup>

*Direct experience.* The teacher improvement material provided for Gospel Doctrine teachers in the 1970's reinforced the concept that teachers impacted the lives of class members

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<sup>122</sup> Rex D. Pinegar, "Strategies of the Master Teacher," *Instructor*, February 1970, 43.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> Pinegar, "Strategies of the Master Teacher," 44.

both here and in the hereafter. One manual suggested that individuals who, through the instruction of a good teacher, “become imbued with eternal principles of truth, radiate an influence for good which, as their own souls, will live forever.”<sup>129</sup> In connection, teachers were reminded of the oft quoted aphorism penned by Henry Brooks Adams, “A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.”<sup>130</sup> The goal of the teacher, stated one teacher improvement lesson, is “to change behavior for good.”<sup>131</sup> The intent is to inspire the individual to “think about, feel about, and then do something about gospel truths and principles.”<sup>132</sup> Through these and other quotations, it was made clear that gospel teachers were to seek to elicit within learners lasting change.

In order to effect change, teaching aids in the 1970’s highlighted the value of personal experience and participation in learning. For instance, “direct experience” was celebrated as a highly effective avenue of learning. Direct experience was practicing or living a gospel principle. Teachers could judge the value of other experiences based on proximity to direct experience.<sup>133</sup> It was believed that when class members use more than one of their senses “learning [was] more complete.”<sup>134</sup> Based on these postulates, one teaching aid offered teachers a hierarchy of learning experiences to help guide their planning. The most effective type of classroom experiences are noted here from least effective to most effective: words (e.g. read or heard), sound only (e.g. recordings, music), sight only (e.g. still pictures, charts maps), sight plus sound (e.g. motion pictures, illustrated lectures), simulated experience (e.g. role playing, demonstrations), actual

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<sup>129</sup> David O. McKay, *True to the Faith: From the Sermons and Discourses of David O. McKay*, comp. Llewelyn R. McKay (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 248; Henry B. Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams: An Autobiography*, (Massachusetts: The Riverside Press, 1918), 300; see also *Teacher Development: Administrative Manual*, 4.

<sup>130</sup> Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, 300. See for example, *Teacher Development: Administrative Manual*, 4.

<sup>131</sup> *Teacher Development: Administrative Manual*, 4.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>133</sup> *Teacher Development Program: Basic Course*, 187.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid*; Adapted from Edward Dale, *Audio-Visual Methods in Teaching*, revised edition, (Austin, TX: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1954), 43.



experience (e.g. singing in a choir, being baptized or ordained, doing missionary work).<sup>135</sup>

Because of this type of research, visual aids became very popular during the era.

Teacher supplements and training manuals during the 1970's encouraged the use of visual aids.<sup>136</sup> In the spirit of correlation, the General Authorities of the Church implemented a program to fully equip each building with a variety of teaching aids and materials. This included providing local units with all the latest technologies such as “motion picture, slide, and overhead projectors; audio-tape and record players; a spirit duplicator; a screen; a dry-mount press; and other equipment as needed.”<sup>137</sup> The technology was to be complimented with “books, magazines, manuals, handbooks, music, printed articles, pictures, charts, maps, slides, filmstrips, overhead transparencies, [and] motion picture films.”<sup>138</sup> Elder Howard W. Hunter, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, explained, “The teaching may be excellent, but the materials from the library make it better. Abstract ideas may be difficult to understand, but when principles can be visually demonstrated to students, they comprehend more readily.”<sup>139</sup>

Participation was also seen as an important part of learning and enacting change. Teaching aids during this era not only reiterated the importance of participation but also addressed how to facilitate it. The preface to one Gospel Doctrine manual advised that, “class members . . . be involved as much as possible” using “suggested methods . . . to involve them.”<sup>140</sup> In connection, other aids intimated that when class members discover ideas for themselves and were allowed to participate they generally learned more and found class more

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> see for example *Book of Mormon 1 Nephi Through Alma 39*, 1; see also *Teacher Development Program: Basic Course*, 187.

<sup>137</sup> Howard W. Hunter, “Prepare Every Needful Thing,” *Ensign*, June 1971, 51. A spirit duplicator (also referred to as a Ditto machine or Banda machine) was a low-volume printing method used mainly by schools and churches.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> *Book of Mormon 1 Nephi Through Alma 39*, 1.

enjoyable.<sup>141</sup> Another aid observed, “if the classroom learning climate is uncritical and open, more and more class members will choose to participate.”<sup>142</sup> In regard to the quantity of verbal participation, it was recommended that class members should be doing anywhere from 40 to 60 percent of the talking during class.<sup>143</sup> Teachers were to provide activities that would allow learners to engage themselves in the process of creation coupled with time to share personal feelings about the gospel.<sup>144</sup> Finally, teachers were encouraged to involve class members in identifying and committing to live the truths being taught.<sup>145</sup>

Among the various teaching aids pertinent to participation, was a conference address given by Elder Howard W. Hunter. His message stressed the importance of teaching others where to go and what to do to gain spiritual nourishment for themselves. Using a childhood experience to illustrate, Elder Hunter told the following story:

It was on a summer day early in the morning. I was standing near the window. The curtains obstructed me from two little creatures out on the lawn. One was a large bird and the other a little bird, obviously just out of the nest. I saw the larger bird hop out on the lawn, then thump his feet and cock his head. He drew a big fat worm out of the lawn and came hopping back. The little bird opened its bill wide, but the big bird swallowed the worm. Then I saw the big bird fly up into a tree. He pecked at the bark for a little while and came back with a big bug in his mouth. The little bird opened his beak wide, but the big bird swallowed the bug. There was squawking in protest. The big bird flew away, and I didn't see it again, but I watched the little bird. After a while, the little bird hopped out on the lawn, thumped its feet, cocked its head, and pulled a big worm out of the lawn.<sup>146</sup>

While Elder Hunter directed these remarks to those who taught the children and youth of the Church, its publication in later teaching aids broadened its application to teachers of all age groups. Among other things, Elder Hunter's message affirmed the importance of spiritual self-

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<sup>141</sup> see *Ibid*; see *Teacher Development Program 1974-75*, 2.

<sup>142</sup> *Living Truths From the Book of Mormon: Teacher Supplement* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union, 1970), 2.

<sup>143</sup> “Supervision in Teaching: A Case in Point,” *Ensign*, October 1974, 30.

<sup>144</sup> Georgia D. Gant Kieft, “Modern Saints and Modern Psalms: A Teaching Experience,” *Ensign*, April 1979, 19.

<sup>145</sup> *Teacher Development Program: Basic Course*, 105.

<sup>146</sup> see Howard W. Hunter, “A Teacher,” *Ensign*, Jul 1972, 85; see also *Teaching No Greater Call*, 79.

sufficiency, the importance of a modeling in teaching, and the vital place of practice in a learner's development.

In concert, teaching aids posited that individuals learn best by practicing a principle or commandment of the gospel then evaluating their experience. In the classroom this was facilitated by having class members participate in activities such as a “walk through experience.” A walk through experience consisted of four aspects: “(1) You need to know or understand the skill or process. (2) You need to see it done. (3) You need to practice the skill or process yourself. (4) You should evaluate or review.”<sup>147</sup> Jay E. Jensen, an executive of the preservice training program for the Church Educational System, explained that the experiences produced by these four steps were important to enabling individuals to fulfill short term commitments; which in turn would empower them to reach the long term objectives of the gospel—namely, “exaltation and eternal life.”<sup>148</sup> Jensen suggested that when class members are engaged by “walk through experiences” in the classroom they will be more likely to participate in gospel fundamentals such as doing missionary work, receiving ordinances, and strengthening their families.<sup>149</sup> As one aid affirmed, providing class members repeated opportunities to practice right behavior fosters permanent change.<sup>150</sup>

*Presentation.* Teaching aids during the 1970's offered suggestions concerning how to make teacher presentation more effective. Teachers, one aid suggested, can change lives if they plan what they want their students to understand and do as the result of a lesson.<sup>151</sup> Teachers were introduced to the “three-fold nature of teaching” to help them in planning and presenting.

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<sup>147</sup> Jay E. Jensen, “Know, Show, Do, Review,” *Ensign*, May 1973, 30; see also “Know, Show, Do, Review, *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 101. The later article was adapted to be more applicable to teachers of all ages, not just children. Jay E. Jensen, an executive of the preservice training program for seminaries and institutes of religion.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> *Teacher Development Program: Basic Course*, 110.

<sup>151</sup> see *Teacher Development Program 1974-75*, 2.

The three-fold nature of teaching consisted of preassessing the understanding of class members, providing learning experiences to modify their understanding and then evaluating their comprehension.<sup>152</sup> To start a lesson, the teaching aids recommended an intriguing attention getter to instantly involve class members. “Contact must be established, interest aroused, attention secured, and class members involved if you are to really teach.”<sup>153</sup> Teacher training included how “review” and “summary” can act as bookends to an effective lesson.<sup>154</sup> Teachers were also instructed on preparing and presenting “one idea, organized and illustrated.”<sup>155</sup> “A unified lesson,” the teaching aid explained, “gives meaning to all its parts.”<sup>156</sup> While the teacher was encouraged to follow the suggested methods, they were free to adapt them as their situations warranted. However, teachers were expected to be selective with the material and choose that which would be of greatest help to their students.<sup>157</sup> Finally, it was suggested that most lessons result in better learning when there is an effective conclusion.<sup>158</sup>

Beyond the methods mentioned above, the teaching aids of the time offered a variety of additional suggestions designed to help teachers in the classroom. Using true stories or personal experiences was described as “a most effective way of teaching religious truth.”<sup>159</sup> Likewise, teaching can be enhanced by improving story telling skills.<sup>160</sup> In order to more effectively teach

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<sup>152</sup> *Teacher Development Program: Basic Course*, 43, 46, 63.

<sup>153</sup> *Teacher Development Program 1974-75*, 2. There are at least four kinds of instant involvers: 1) Stories, poems, quotations, bits of humor. 2) Instructional materials (Objects), 3) Activities, and 4) Problem situations and questions.

<sup>154</sup> *Teacher Development Program: Basic Course*, 43.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid*, 71.

<sup>156</sup> *Teacher Development Program, 1975-76*, 2-3.

<sup>157</sup> *Book of Mormon 1 Nephi Through Alma* 39, 1.

<sup>158</sup> Elements of an effective conclusion include: 1) Give a challenge for students to apply the objective of the lesson. 2) In some way relate the lesson to the lives of the students. 3) Ask a class member to summarize the ideas of the lesson (*ibid*).

<sup>159</sup> “Enriching Your Lessons with Examples,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 87.

<sup>160</sup> Some important story telling skills that teachers could rate themselves on are: 1) Present the story in your own words—don’t read or memorize it, 2) Maintain eye-to-eye contact use needed gestures. 3) Use vivid, colorful, action words. 4) Vary the pitch and tone of your voice, especially when using dialogue. 5) Practice talking as fast as you can be understood, changing pace and pausing at times to emphasize a point. (*Teacher Development Program 1974-75*, 2).

intangible concepts, *Teaching No Greater Call* advised teachers to use comparison or the principle of apperception—comparing the unknown to the known. For example, a teacher could compare the spiritual concept of repentance to the concrete example of soap.<sup>161</sup> Objects were extolled as one of the most versatile teaching tools and could be used as “attention getters,” the “framework” for the entire lesson, or a “clincher” at the end of a lesson to drive home the point.<sup>162</sup> Guidelines for using objects to teach included, choosing objects that were “simple and familiar” and letting class members use the object to discover the intended message.<sup>163</sup> It was noted that teaching with variety “may add a refreshing change” to the necessary but more mundane elements in a lesson.<sup>164</sup>

Because the lesson material during this era was carefully planned and well written, with stories, illustrations, questions, and activities, teachers could rely on the manual for a lesson with very little personal preparation on their part. This made overreliance on teaching aids during a lesson a temptation for many teachers. In response to this situation, one of the methods reemphasized during the 1970’s was what one article termed “teacher without book” instruction.<sup>165</sup> This was essentially an effort on the part of the teacher to rely on only brief notes or no notes at all, which would in turn free them to access the state of the learners, being able to look class members in the eye, sincerely listen, and adjusting lessons to class member needs.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> “Using Comparisons,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 90.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>163</sup> “Teaching Object Lessons,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 94-95.

<sup>164</sup> “Teaching with Variety,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 96; See also “Love, the Great Commandment in Teaching,” *Teacher Development Program, 1975-76* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1975), 2. This particular lesson used examples from the life of Christ to illustrate different methods that could be used: “Matthew 7:6 (used descriptive language); Matthew 13:3,44 (comparison of known objects with principle to be taught) Matthew 19:7 (use of questions); Matthew 22:15-22 (object lessons).

<sup>165</sup> Della Mae Rasmussen, “Don’t Lose the Whites of Their Eyes,” *Ensign*, March 1971, 66.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*

Although teaching without a book required a great deal more preparation it was touted as being far more effective in the classroom.<sup>167</sup>

*Discussion.* Discussion begins with a two way exchange but reaches its maximum effectiveness when there is interaction from several members of the class. For example: “the teacher questions; a student responds; a second student challenges the response; the first student defends his position; a third student asks a probing question; a fourth student suggests an alternative response; the teacher asks a fifth student if he agrees;” and so on.<sup>168</sup> Teachers should carefully select and assign readings in advance, along with thought provoking questions for students to ponder. Along with asking general questions to promote discussion, teaching aids recognized the value of a teacher not being afraid to challenge the basis of an individual’s thinking in order to stimulate cognition and deepen convictions. Notwithstanding efforts to invite deeper thought, teachers should help students know that he or she cares about what they think by responding positively to their comments.<sup>169</sup>

Teaching aids during the era offered insight on how to ask questions that elicited higher levels of thinking. For example, one article, written by Jay Monson, a professor of education at Utah State University, provided an overview of seven different types of questions and their utility.<sup>170</sup> For example, “interpretation” questions engage learners in discovering “relationships among facts and generalizations.”<sup>171</sup> These are often questions that compare or contrast information and invite learners to carefully examine detail. For instance, a teacher might request that class members compare the downfall of the Nephite civilization versus the Jaredite civilization. Synthesis questions require original, creative thinking. Students could be asked to

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<sup>167</sup> see *Ibid.*

<sup>168</sup> *Teacher Development Program: Basic Course*, 59.

<sup>169</sup> Bates, “How to Get the Most from Your Class,” 35–37.

<sup>170</sup> Jay Monson, “Questioning Questions in Gospel Teaching,” *Ensign*, April 1979, 17.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

work out an “original plan of action.”<sup>172</sup> How would you respond to being sold into slavery by family members like Jacob’s son Joseph? Evaluation questions involve more thought than the other levels of questioning. The individual must judge “whether something is good or bad, true or false, right or wrong.”<sup>173</sup> After the teacher sets up the criteria for evaluation, the learner makes his judgment “based on true gospel principles.”<sup>174</sup> A teacher, for instance, could consider asking, What are the most important reasons that a person stay morally clean? Teaching aids advocated keeping questions simple and relevant, using appropriate body language and tone of voice, and, perhaps most importantly, to employing active listening as learners respond.<sup>175</sup>

*Teaching by the spirit.* The Holy Ghost or the Spirit of the Lord is “essential in gospel teaching.”<sup>176</sup> The Spirit is vital to “receive instruction from the Lord,” “bears witness” of the truthfulness of the gospel, and “helps produce testimony.”<sup>177</sup> It does require that spiritual preparation is taken seriously and that spiritual promptings are heeded throughout the teaching process. “The things of the Spirit must be taught by the Spirit.”<sup>178</sup> Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught that teachers should “teach the principles of the gospel, out of the standard works, by the power of the Holy Ghost, always applying the teachings to [the classes] needs, and to testify that what [they] have taught is true.”<sup>179</sup>

In conjunction to teaching by the Spirit, teachers were offered detailed instruction on how to teach with testimony. Stephen R. Covey, a member of the Church’s Teacher Development

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Stanley M. Grabowski, “The Art of Questioning,” *Instructor*, January 1970, 15; “Active listening means listening to understand the words, feelings, attitudes, and motives behind the words students use to express themselves and respond to questions;” see also *Teacher Development Program 1974-75*, 2. See also “Listening,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 170.

<sup>176</sup> “Teach with the Spirit,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 13.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Bruce R. McConkie, “The Teacher’s Divine Commission,” *Ensign*, April 1979, 24.

Program Committee, explained that testimony is centered in the divine Sonship of Jesus Christ, the prophetic call of Joseph Smith and his successors, and the divinity of the restored Church. Testimony exudes conviction, “refreshes eternal memories and eternal perspective,” and “meets a hunger for something . . . unequivocal.”<sup>180</sup> Covey went on to offer suggestions regarding *how* to bear testimony “by and through the Spirit.”<sup>181</sup> Teachers were encouraged to cultivate the gift of discernment to ensure that the timing of the testimony is correct. Bearing testimony at the wrong time can be detrimental and, in some cases, damaging. This might include situations where the Spirit is absent, when teaching has been unclear, when a feeling of love is lacking, or when a teacher’s personal conduct is not in accordance with their words. Teachers were to maintain a balance between “formal versus informal testimony and feeling versus intellect.”<sup>182</sup> They were encouraged to bear testimony: when “full of love;” to identify the Spirit; in order to bless, not condemn others; to affirm the “identity and worth” of an individual and to assert their “ability, with God’s help, to accept and obey the truth given.”<sup>183</sup>

In addition to inviting the Spirit through testimony, teaching aids in the 1970’s suggested methods for facilitating divine instruction through effectively using the scriptures in class. While many of the suggestions during the era were aimed toward teaching younger children, some were clearly relevant for teaching adults. Many of these methods were geared toward helping class members become familiar with their scriptures. For example, it was suggested that teachers “encourage each class member to bring his own standard works to class” or “divide the class into groups and have them locate references by using the concordance, index, footnotes, cross

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<sup>180</sup> see Stephen R. Covey, “How to Testify,” *Ensign*, October 1977, 53.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 53-55.



references or by searching a chapter.”<sup>184</sup> Others focused on tying in visual aids such as using “pictures, charts, and the chalkboard to put life into the story” or displaying a map showing the areas you are studying.”<sup>185</sup> Finally, some methods were designed to help the members engage the scriptural text, such as “[assigning] class members in advance to look up a reference and then come to class prepared to report” or “[outlining] the lesson [with related questions] on the chalkboard; have the students provide answers from their standard works.”<sup>186</sup>

Principles and methods of teaching during this era did not differ greatly from those presented in the past. The Savior’s example and teaching were still used as a source of inspiration and methodology. Current methods in the field of education continued to be adapted to the needs of the Sunday School. Authorship of teaching aids was generally limited to members of the Church albeit some being from academic circles. Tried methods of presentation were reprinted and reaffirmed. The use of visual aids expanded with the advance of technology. Teaching by the Spirit continued to be a priority. Suggestions for use of scriptures in class harmonized with the emphasis on helping Church members study the standard works.

## **Conclusion**

The 1970’s was a decade accented with new beginnings. The Priesthood, through Church correlation, took a more direct role in guiding the Sunday School as an auxiliary. Priesthood leadership encouraged the Sunday School, its members, and its teachers to become more fully involved in the conversion and retention of Church membership. The *Ensign* magazine replaced the *Instructor* as a source for teacher improvement material. The scriptures became the primary curriculum for the Gospel Doctrine class. The teacher training program was changed to the

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<sup>184</sup> “Making the Scriptures Live,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 85-86.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

teacher development program which proved to be even more comprehensive—providing courses and materials related to virtually every major aspect of teaching. As a result of the correlation movement, teacher training materials and teaching aids in general were made more fully uniform throughout the Church. More than ever teaching aids contained counsel from modern prophets and scriptural sources while still incorporating a large number of educational principles popular at the time. Teaching aids were more abundant during this period than perhaps any other.

Statements from Church leaders couched in the teaching aids reaffirmed that effective teaching was vital to fulfilling the stated purpose of the Sunday School which was to “teach the gospel of Jesus Christ,” “build faith” and “strengthen the family.”<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>187</sup>*Improving Teaching in the Sunday School*, Film Strip. 1978; (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1978).

## CHAPTER SIX: TEACHING AIDS, 1999-2009

### Introduction

On April 1 1999, President Gordon B. Hinckley opened a time capsule prepared a hundred years earlier during the jubilee year of the Sunday School in 1899. Among its contents was a message addressed to future Sunday School leadership which included the charge to continue the great work of teaching in the Church. Before sealing a new titanium capsule to be opened in 2049, President Hinckley stated, “May the Lord continue to bless this great institution which has brought knowledge and increased faith into the hearts and lives of millions of members of this Church across the world . . . God bless the great cause of Sunday School.”<sup>1</sup> The teaching aids supplied to the Sunday School teachers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century reflect the ongoing commitment of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to infuse knowledge and increase faith in the hearts and lives of its members throughout the world.

### Importance of Teaching

Teaching aids have sought to impress upon Gospel Doctrine teachers the importance of effective teaching throughout the new millennium. The teaching aids during this decade were comprised of an anthology of powerful ideas from Church leadership both past and present. Several aids clearly underscored that the “universal assignment” to teach was crucial to the growth and progress of the Church.<sup>2</sup> The teaching aids established that “more effective” teaching

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from officers of the Sunday School, in Historical Department, Archives Division, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The time capsule box also contained visual aids for lessons, curriculum and other Sunday School materials, photographs, and publications including Church magazines and Salt Lake City newspapers; quoted in Harold G. Hillam, “Sunday School: Oil for Our Lamps,” *Ensign*, August 1999, 15.

<sup>2</sup> See Boyd K. Packer, quoted in Robert G. Jones, “Asking Questions First,” *Ensign*, January 2002, 23; see also Boyd K. Packer, *Teach Ye Diligently* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co, 1991), 3–4; L. Tom Perry, “Teach Them the Word of God with All Diligence,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 6; Thomas S. Monson, “Examples of Great Teachers,” *Ensign*, June 2007, 106, 108.

and learning was required for the Church to more fully accomplish its mission to invite all to come unto Christ.<sup>3</sup> Prophets implored local priesthood leaders to take “particular interest in improving the quality of teaching” in the Church and in the Sunday School so that members could be regularly nurtured by the Spirit to help them through times of “stress, temptation, or crisis.”<sup>4</sup>

The teaching aids not only stressed the importance of teaching to the Church as an institution but also spoke of its importance to individuals. “Eternal life,” President Gordon B. Hinckley taught, “will come only as men and women are taught with such effectiveness that they change and discipline their lives.”<sup>5</sup> The role of the Gospel Doctrine teacher is to use the power of instruction to invite individuals and families to come unto Christ by “encouraging them to study the scriptures, obey the commandments, receive the essential ordinances, and keep the associated covenants.”<sup>6</sup> To “teach, persuade, and prayerfully lead [others] to walk that path of redemption” was hailed as the one of the “most significant task[s]” in a person’s life—second only to personally coming unto Christ, keeping His commandments and following His example back to the Father.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See L. Tom Perry, “Teach Them the Word of God with All Diligence,” 6; Boyd K. Packer, *Teach Ye Diligently*, 3–4, 7; “If Gospel Knowledge Is to Be Increased, What Needs to Happen?,” The official website of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, <http://www.lds.org/pa/display/0,17884,5908-1,00.html>; see also Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Sunday School as a Missionary,” *Ensign*, August 1971, 29.

<sup>4</sup> Jeffrey R. Holland, “Teaching and Learning in the Church,” *Ensign*, June 2007, 89; Moroni 6:4; Spencer W. Kimball, “Ministering to the Needs of Members,” *Ensign*, November 1980, 46; see also Gordon B. Hinckley, in Conference Report, April 1997, 66; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 47.

<sup>5</sup> “Teacher Improvement,” Sunday School Homepage, The official website of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, <http://www.lds.org/pa/display/0,17884,4700-1,00.html>; Jeffrey R. Holland, “A Teacher Come from God,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 25; see also “How to Be a Teacher When Your Role as a Leader Requires You to Teach,” General Authority Priesthood Board Meeting, 5 Feb. 1969.

<sup>6</sup> *Church Handbook of Instructions: Book 2, Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998), 241; see also “Introduction,” *Teaching Guidebook* (The Church of Jesus of Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City 2001), 1; Harold G. Hillam, “Sunday School: Oil for Our Lamps,” 15; “Use the Scriptures, Teach with Power,” *Church News*, 21 November 1987, 4.

<sup>7</sup> “Your Call to Teach the Gospel: Principles of Gospel Teaching,” The official website of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, <http://www.lds.org/pa/display/0,17884,5441-1,00.html>; Jeffrey R. Holland, in Conference Report, April 1998, 31; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 25; See also 1 Corinthians 12:28–30.

## Changes to the Teacher Improvement Program

During this era there were several considerable changes made to the teaching improvement program of the Church. The changes were initiated during the previous decade when the “First Presidency challenged the Quorum of the Twelve to revitalize teaching in the Church. The Twelve, assisted by the Seventy, accepted that challenge.”<sup>8</sup> After “years of preparation, engaging the efforts of superb gospel teachers, scholars, writers, and others,” the First Presidency issued a letter introducing a Churchwide effort “to revitalize and improve teaching in the Church.”<sup>9</sup> The effort to rejuvenate and enhance gospel instruction in the Church was characterized by five main modifications.

First, a “refreshed and revitalized” Teaching the Gospel course was introduced as the core of the teacher improvement program.<sup>10</sup> Bishops had stewardship over the class.<sup>11</sup> “The 12-week course, was held during Sunday School and was designed for ten or less members, regardless of whether or not they currently [had] a teaching calling.”<sup>12</sup> The course was generally taught by teaching improvement coordinators who were called to assist local leadership in providing ongoing orientation, supervision and consultation for each teacher in the ward.<sup>13</sup>

Second, a newly revised edition of *Teaching, No Greater Call* was provided to “all members, leaders, and teachers as the basic resource for improving teaching in all settings of the Church.”<sup>14</sup>

Third, *Improving Gospel Teaching: A Leader’s Guide* was provided to help leaders “oversee the

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<sup>8</sup> Oaks, “Gospel Teaching,” 78.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid; see also First Presidency letter, 15 Sept. 1999.

<sup>10</sup> “Revitalizing Gospel Teaching,” *Liahona*, December 1999, 43.

<sup>11</sup> Hillam, “Sunday School: Oil for Our Lamps,” 15.

<sup>12</sup> Rebecca M. Taylor, “In the Classroom, in the Home,” *Ensign*, October 2002, 63; Hillam, “Sunday School: Oil for Our Lamps,” 15.

<sup>13</sup> See “Outline for Teaching the Gospel Course,” *Teaching Guidebook*, 21.

<sup>14</sup> “Revitalizing Gospel Teaching,” 43; *Teaching, No Greater Call: A Resource Guide for Gospel Teaching*, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999).

effort to improve gospel teaching.”<sup>15</sup> Fourth, quarterly teacher improvement meetings were instituted. These meetings were divided into three age specific sections: one for teachers instructing those 18 and older, one for teachers of youth ages 12 through 17, and one for teachers of Primary children. Finally, teacher improvement coordinators were included as “members of stake and ward councils to help priesthood and auxiliary leaders focus teacher improvement efforts where they [were] most needed.”<sup>16</sup> These changes were implemented through the larger part of the decade and many were retained as further adjustments were made.

In 2006 the First Presidency initiated an important change to the teacher improvement program, announcing the discontinuance of stake and ward teacher improvement coordinators along with quarterly teacher improvement meetings.<sup>17</sup> Priesthood and auxiliary leaders were to continue to orient “each new teacher in their organizations” and “provide ongoing instruction and support for teachers in their organizations.”<sup>18</sup> Ward Sunday School presidencies assumed responsibilities previously held by ward teacher improvement coordinators by assisting leaders in “orienting, instructing, and providing ongoing support for teachers.”<sup>19</sup> Ward councils were to regularly address “how to improve gospel teaching and learning in their wards” and receive instruction “relating to gospel teaching and learning.”<sup>20</sup> With these changes, teacher improvement was to become more fully integrated in the local leadership’s normal administrative activities. President Boyd K. Packer explained, “It should not be necessary to hold

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid; *Improving Gospel Teaching: A Leader’s Guide*, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998.)

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> First Presidency Letter, November 17, 2006: Changes to the Teacher Improvement Program.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> See Sunday School General Presidency, “Sunday School Auxiliary Training: Guiding Principles and Goals,” The official website of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, <http://www.lds.org/pa/ss/pdf/EnglishSundaySchoolAuxiliaryTraining.pdf>; see also “Making a Plan to Improve Your Teaching,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 28.

<sup>20</sup> First Presidency Letter, November 17, 2006: Changes to the Teacher Improvement Program.

special meetings for teacher improvement other than in your councils and interviews from time to time as needed.”<sup>21</sup>

### **Changes to Teaching Aids**

Since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has continued to experience steady growth and expansion throughout the world.<sup>22</sup> Along with global expansion, there has been pedagogical refinement within the teaching aids for Gospel Doctrine teachers. In this era there was an emphatic focus on teaching by the Spirit and virtually all teaching aids were geared toward that end. Teaching aids gave greater clarity to the responsibilities shared by both teachers and learners in the educational process. Teaching aids sought to establish the most fundamental principles of teaching and learning which would apply across culture, race, and time. Not only were there efforts to improve the clarity of the principles being taught but there were also strides made in identifying and focusing upon the most essential. For example, in the later part of the decade training produced by the General Sunday School Presidency focused on just three guiding principles of gospel teaching and three elements of effective instruction.<sup>23</sup>

Teaching aids during this era were consistent in four areas. First, teaching aids were presented most often in the form of principles and general guidelines which could be applied in a wide variety of circumstances. Second, principles were largely based upon and were supported

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<sup>21</sup> Boyd K. Packer and L. Tom Perry, “Principles of Teaching and Learning,” *Ensign*, June 2007, 82.

<sup>22</sup> “Statistical Report, 1998,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 22; “Statistical Report, 2008,” *Ensign*, May 2009, 30. The number of temples at the beginning of 1999 was 53; by 2009 that number had risen to 128. Total Church membership rose from 10,354,241 in 1999 to 13,508,509 by the beginning of 2009.

<sup>23</sup> The three guiding principles were: “Lay hold upon the word of God” (Helaman 3:29), “Preach my gospel by the Spirit” (D&C 50:14), and “Seek learning . . . by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118). The three elements of effective instruction were: “(1) key doctrine, (2) invitation to action, and (3) promised blessings” (Sunday School General Presidency, “Sunday School Auxiliary Training: Guiding Principles and Goals,” The official website of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, [http://www.lds.org/pa/ss/pdf/SS\\_JobChart\\_2009.pdf](http://www.lds.org/pa/ss/pdf/SS_JobChart_2009.pdf); Russell T. Osguthorpe, “Teaching Helps Save Lives,” *Ensign*, November 2009, 15.).

by scripture. Third, the principles were further clarified and expounded upon by authoritative statements from modern prophets. Finally, in many instances, they drew upon real life experiences to illustrate the principle being taught.

Many of the principles provided for Gospel Doctrine teachers during 1999 to 2009 fell under one of five basic headings. These principles are outlined both in the *Teaching Guidebook* and *Teaching, No Greater Call*. Those headings are: 1) Love Those You Teach, 2) Teach Gospel Truths, 3) Teach by the Spirit, 4) Invite Diligent Learning, and 5) Create a Learning Atmosphere.<sup>24</sup> The balance of the chapter will use this outline to illustrate some of the more salient points regarding effective teaching during this era.

### **Love Those You Teach**

One of the most common themes presented in the teaching aids during this period was the integral place of love in effective teaching. Love of God is the highest reason for service. Teachers were encouraged to accept and magnify their call out of love for their Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son.<sup>25</sup> One of the best ways teachers can magnify their call is to follow the Savior's example and fulfill God's commandment to "love one another."<sup>26</sup> This kind of love can motivate teachers to do those things which will prepare the way for the Holy Ghost to change lives.

Christ-like love affects several aspects of teaching. To be more receptive to the Spirit and better meet the needs of those taught, teachers were invited to seek for the gift of charity. As teachers pray to receive that gift "with all the energy of heart," "give service," and "look for the

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<sup>24</sup> "Teach as Jesus Taught," *Teaching Guidebook*, see the headings within this chapter.

<sup>25</sup> Dallin H. Oaks, "Gospel Teaching," *Ensign*, November 1999, 79.

<sup>26</sup> "Teaching As Jesus Taught," *Teaching Guidebook*, 4.



good in others” they can be filled with Christ’s pure love.<sup>27</sup> Being “full of love” is, according to one teaching aid, prerequisite for service in the Kingdom.<sup>28</sup> Persons who “teach out of love will be magnified as instruments in the hands of Him whom they serve.”<sup>29</sup> Exercising principles of “persuasion, long-suffering, gentleness and meekness, love unfeigned, kindness, and pure knowledge” can enlarge the capacity of both teachers and learners to share and receive gospel truths.<sup>30</sup> Significantly, love can restore an individual’s “sense of their eternal worth” and inspire within them a “greater desire for righteousness.”<sup>31</sup>

In this effort to teach “the truth in love,” teachers were urged to focus on “the progress of those [they] teach.”<sup>32</sup> Love will move teachers to understand those they teach—“to prepare and teach differently,” to “pray for each [student],” and to “know their interests, achievements . . . and concerns.”<sup>33</sup> They will be willing to tailor their teaching to meet the needs of the class members “even if this takes more time and effort.”<sup>34</sup> Love prompts care and individual attention that reaches beyond the classroom.<sup>35</sup> Love can inspire teachers to make personal sacrifices in the service of class members.<sup>36</sup> A teacher who is filled with love will seek to help whenever possible and is devoted to the “eternal welfare” of the members of his or her class.<sup>37</sup>

Many of the concepts in *Teaching No Greater Call* were illustrated with examples or stories intended to have broad application. Less time was taken talking in abstract and more time in real life experiences. For example, a particular principle, under the heading of “love those you

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<sup>27</sup> “Seeking the Gift of Charity,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 12. See also Dallin H. Oaks, in Conference Report, October 1999, 101; or *Ensign*, November 1999, 79; 1 Corinthians 13:1–13; Moroni 7:46–48.

<sup>28</sup> Love Softens Hearts,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 31; Doctrine and Covenants 12:8.

<sup>29</sup> Oaks, “Gospel Teaching,” 79.

<sup>30</sup> Love Softens Hearts,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 31; Dallas N. Archibald, in Conference Report, October 1992, 34–35; or *Ensign*, November 1992, 26; see also “Love Those You Teach,” *Teaching Guidebook*, 4.

<sup>31</sup> Love Softens Hearts,” *Teaching*, 31; Doctrine and Covenants 121:41.

<sup>32</sup> Love Softens Hearts,” *Teaching*, 31; Ephesians 4:15.

<sup>33</sup> Love Softens Hearts,” *Teaching*, 31.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> See Monson, “Examples of Great Teachers,” 109; “Reaching Out to the One,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 35.

<sup>36</sup> Monson, “Examples of Great Teachers,” 111–112.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

teach,” encouraged teachers to reach out to those they teach by providing opportunities in class for individuals to share their talent or experience. *Teaching, No Greater Call* offered this as an illustration: “One less-active brother with a good singing voice gradually returned to activity in the Church because he was occasionally invited to sing in classes and other ward functions.”<sup>38</sup> The concept of “reaching out to the one” was further solidified by citing a short anecdote which told of a Sunday School worker who successfully persuaded a young man to come back to Sunday School through taking a personal interest in him.<sup>39</sup> By using these illustrations, *Teaching, No Greater Call* and other teaching aids followed their own prescribed pattern for presenting gospel principles—i.e. to teach a gospel truth and then to “put a living seal of reality” upon it through relating personal experiences.<sup>40</sup>

### **Teach Gospel Truths**

The word of God has tremendous power to inspire faith and change lives. “The word of God is the doctrine taught by Jesus Christ and by His prophets.”<sup>41</sup> The “virtue” or “power” of the word of the Lord is centered in “the influence of the Spirit.”<sup>42</sup> It has power to bring “thousands” to redemption in Christ.<sup>43</sup> “Truth” Elder Henry B. Eyring explained, “can prepare its own way. Simply hearing the words of doctrine can plant the seed of faith in the heart. And even a tiny seed of faith in Jesus Christ invites the Spirit.”<sup>44</sup> As teachers and class members “regularly and consistently” engage in studying and teaching from the word of the Lord “other areas of activity

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<sup>38</sup> “Reaching Out to the One,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 35.

<sup>39</sup> Reaching Out to the One,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 36; see also Thomas S. Monson, “Your Jericho Road,” *Ensign*, May 1977, 72.

<sup>40</sup> Richard Nash, “Telling Personal Stories,” *Ensign*, September 2002, 50; Elder Bruce R. McConkie, “The How and Why of Faith-Promoting Stories,” *New Era*, July 1978, 5.

<sup>41</sup> Henry B. Eyring, “Teaching True Doctrine,” *Ensign*, April 2009, 5.

<sup>42</sup> Holland, “Teaching and Learning in the Church,” 94-95; Inviting the Spirit as You Teach,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 45; see also Ezra Taft Benson, “The Power of the Word,” *Ensign*, May 1986, 79.

<sup>43</sup> “The Power of the Word,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 50; Alma 26:13.

<sup>44</sup> Eyring, “Teaching True Doctrine,” 6.

will automatically come. Testimonies will increase. Commitment will be strengthened. Families will be fortified. Personal revelation will flow.”<sup>45</sup> When individuals are taught “correct principles” by the Spirit of the Lord—rather than “specific rules or applications”—they tend to “govern themselves” by those truths.<sup>46</sup>

Based on ancient and modern revelation, the teaching aids provided for Gospel Doctrine teachers in the new millennium clearly established that the prime sources of doctrine are the scriptures and the words of modern prophets. Teaching aids reaffirmed that Gospel Doctrine teachers are under divine injunction—i.e. there is “no choice . . . no alternative [course]”—to teach “‘the principles of [the] gospel’ and ‘the doctrine of the kingdom.’”<sup>47</sup> The General Sunday School Presidency provided four questions to help teachers assess whether or not something was considered official doctrine of the Church:

1. *Is the doctrine clearly expressed in the standard works of the Church?*

President Hinckley said, “[The standard works] provide the standard by which all gospel doctrine is measured.”

2. *Is the doctrine found within the official declarations, proclamations, or statements of the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles?*

President Boyd K. Packer stated: “Only [the] standard works, official statements, and other publications written under assignment from the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles are considered authorized publications by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”

3. *Is the doctrine clearly taught or discussed by current general Church leaders in general conference or other official gatherings of the Church?* President George Q. Cannon said, “We have the Bible, the Book of Mormon and the . . . Doctrine and Covenants; but all these books, without the living oracles and a constant stream of revelation from the Lord, would not lead any people into the Celestial Kingdom of God.”

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<sup>45</sup> “Your Call to Teach the Gospel: Principles of Gospel Teaching,” The official website of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, <http://www.lds.org/pa/display/0,17884,5441-1,00.html>; see also Benson, “The Power of the Word,” 81.

<sup>46</sup> “Your Call to Teach the Gospel,” Official Website; see also Joseph Smith, quoted in John Taylor, “The Organization of the Church,” *Millennial Star*, Nov. 15, 1851, 339.

<sup>47</sup> Dallin H. Oaks, “Gospel Teaching,” 79-80; “The Teacher’s Divine Commission,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 8; Doctrine & Covenants 42:12, 88:77; see also see also Bruce R. McConkie, “The Teacher’s Divine Commission,” *Ensign*, April 1979, 21.

4. *Is the doctrine found in the general handbooks or the presently approved curriculum of the Church?* Elder M. Russell Ballard said, “Teachers would be well advised to study carefully the scriptures and their manuals before reaching out for supplemental materials.”<sup>48</sup>

In summary, “gospel teaching and learning are most effective when centered on the doctrines and principles of the restored gospel as they are found in the scriptures, in the teachings of latter-day prophets, in Church publications, and through the promptings of the Holy Ghost.”<sup>49</sup>

The counsel to teach gospel truths was balanced by the reminder that “not all truths are of equal value.”<sup>50</sup> As a result, Gospel Doctrine teachers were encouraged to give particular emphasis to “the saving doctrines of the gospel” within the scriptures and words of modern prophets.<sup>51</sup> For example, the preface to *Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual*, specified: “teach the doctrines, ordinances, and covenants of the restored gospel, which are necessary for individuals and families to come unto Christ and inherit eternal life.”<sup>52</sup> This complimented the counsel for teachers to focus, as the Savior did, on the first principles and ordinances of the gospel.<sup>53</sup> Additionally, it was recommended that teachers regularly draw upon doctrine and principles as taught in the Book of Mormon. One article

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<sup>48</sup> A. Roger Merrill, “Spring 2005 President's Message,” Sunday School Open House, Spring 2005 [emphasis added]; see also Gordon B. Hinckley, regional representatives' seminar, April 5, 1991; Boyd K. Packer, *Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1991), introduction; George Q. Cannon, *Gospel Truth: Discourses and Writings of President George Q. Cannon*, selected, arranged, and edited by Jerrold L. Newquist (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1987), 1:323; M. Russell Ballard, quoted in “Helps for the Teacher,” *Book of Mormon Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual*, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999), v.

<sup>49</sup> Sunday School General Presidency, “Sunday School Auxiliary Training: Guiding Principles and Goals.”

<sup>50</sup> Daniel K. Judd, “Nourished by the Good Word of God,” *Ensign*, November 2007, 93; see also See Ezra Taft Benson, “A New Witness for Christ,” *Ensign*, November 1984, 6.

<sup>51</sup> “Helps for the Teacher,” *Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual*, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999), v.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> “Teach Gospel Truths,” *Teaching Guidebook*, 5; see also Dallin H. Oaks, “Teaching the Gospel,” 79.

reminded Gospel Doctrine teachers of President Ezra Taft Benson's vision "of classes alive, and of pulpits aflame with the spirit of Book of Mormon messages."<sup>54</sup>

In contrast, several teaching aids offered cautions in regard to teaching doctrine. For example, Elder Henry B. Eyring taught, "One of the surest ways to avoid even getting near false doctrine is to choose to be simple in our teaching."<sup>55</sup> Elder Richard G. Scott implored teachers not to abandon the actual language of the scriptures in their lessons. "There is a power that can change lives in the specific words recorded in the standard works. That power is weakened when we paraphrase or alter the actual wording."<sup>56</sup> Likewise, teachers were reminded to be accurate in all their quotations. They were cautioned to avoid: entertaining speculation, giving exclusive emphasis to one aspect of the gospel, perpetuating sensational stories, portraying Church History in a purely humanistic light, or espousing unorthodox views in the classroom.<sup>57</sup> When individuals "place confidence" in these types of "false, inaccurate teaching, it does not develop true faith."<sup>58</sup> Even more serious, warned President Gordon B. Hinckley, are "small aberrations in doctrinal teaching." If left uncorrected, "they can lead to large and evil falsehoods."<sup>59</sup>

The teaching aids asked teachers to "help class members understand and love the scriptures."<sup>60</sup> To do so teachers were invited to follow the example of the Savior who taught frequently from the scriptures. The *Teaching Guidebook* gave several suggestions on how teachers could utilize the scriptures in their teaching. For instance, teachers were to set high expectations for the use of scriptures by example, by asking questions or planning activities that

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<sup>54</sup> Quoted in Todd B. Parker and Jared T. Parker, "Power in Principles," *Ensign*, Jan 2004, 12; President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994), "Flooding the Earth with the Book of Mormon," *Ensign*, November 1988, 6.

<sup>55</sup> Eyring, "Teaching True Doctrine," 6.

<sup>56</sup> "There Is a Power in the Standard Works That Can Change Lives," The official website of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, <http://www.lds.org/pa/display/0,17884,6079-1,00.html>.

<sup>57</sup> "Keeping the Doctrine Pure," *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 52.

<sup>58</sup> Merrill, "Spring 2005 President's Message."

<sup>59</sup> "11: Keeping the Doctrine Pure," *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 52; See also Gordon B. Hinckley, *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997), 620.

<sup>60</sup> "Helps for the Teacher," *Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*, v.

stimulate class members to engage with the scriptural text, and by giving assignments that facilitate an earnest search of the word of the Lord.<sup>61</sup>

Additionally, Gospel Doctrine instructors were encouraged to teach principles and practice skills that would enable class members to teach doctrines of the gospel more effectively outside of class. The Gospel Doctrine class was to be a place where class members “learn in order to teach” and should be a “resource to them to help them teach their families.”<sup>62</sup> Teachers were asked to learn to “orient their lessons toward member preparation” including modeling effective family scripture studying, family home evening, and sharing the gospel with those not yet of the faith.<sup>63</sup> It was recommended that class members draw upon their personal experience and share ideas on how to successfully teach the gospel to their families and others.<sup>64</sup>

### **Teaching by the Spirit**

In gospel teaching, the Lord is the teacher through His Spirit. In 2009 the Sunday School General Presidency affirmed that “the most important and effective teaching, learning, and nourishing . . . is communicated . . . through the influence of the Holy Ghost.”<sup>65</sup> The Doctrine and Covenants states that members of Christ’s Church are to be “taught from on high.”<sup>66</sup> Elder Jeffery R. Holland expounded on that statement, explaining, “We’re instruments, we’re tools, and it’s our tongues and our lips, but *the teacher is on high.*”<sup>67</sup> Elder M. Russell Ballard, emphasized, that the “doctrinal power” which needs to be “both heard and felt” in all Church

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<sup>61</sup> “Teach Gospel Truths,” *Teaching Guidebook*, 5. See also “Helps for the Teacher,” *Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual*, v.

<sup>62</sup> Merrill, “Spring 2005 President’s Message.”

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Sunday School General Presidency, “Sunday School Auxiliary Training: Guiding Principles and Goals.”

<sup>66</sup> Doctrine and Covenants 43:13.

<sup>67</sup> Holland, “Teaching and Learning in the Church,” 97 [emphasis added].

meetings is generated by the Holy Ghost.<sup>68</sup> Gene R. Cook, formerly of the Seventy, taught, “*The major role of a teacher is to prepare the way so that [class members] will have a spiritual experience with the Lord.*”<sup>69</sup> Teaching by the Spirit is requisite for gospel instruction and teaching in any other way “is not of God.”<sup>70</sup>

Preparation is essential to qualifying for the presence of the Holy Ghost and teaching under its influence. As one writer put it, “good teachers . . . demonstrate that improvement in gospel teaching depends on the love and care they put into their preparation.”<sup>71</sup> A. Roger Merrill, General Sunday School President (2004-2009), made this observation about the relationship between preparation and teaching by the Spirit:

Unfortunately, in today's Church, people sometimes use the phrase ‘teaching by the Spirit’ to describe what you do when you are not prepared and you just ‘wing it.’ This is not what teaching by the Spirit means. It is true that when we are properly prepared, unanticipated teaching opportunities may arise that result in unplanned Spirit-directed experiences. It is also true that teaching by the Spirit usually does not involve a tightly scripted presentation. However, lack of preparation is not characteristic of teaching by the Spirit. In fact, to teach by the Spirit almost always requires more, not less, preparation.<sup>72</sup>

The teacher improvement material observed that preparation was not merely an event but was ultimately tied to personal conversion. To be able to teach by the convincing, converting power of the Holy Ghost, teachers must not only receive a spiritual witness of the truths they teach but be *changed* by the truths they teach.<sup>73</sup> Both requirements are contingent upon receiving the Spirit into one’s personal life.

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<sup>68</sup> M. Russell Ballard, “Pure Testimony,” *Ensign*, November 2004, 41.

<sup>69</sup> Brian Gudmundson, “Questions, the Heart of Learning and Teaching,” *Ensign*, January 2008, 28.

<sup>70</sup> Jeffrey R. Holland, “Teaching, Preaching, Healing,” *Ensign*, January 2003, 33; Doctrine & Covenants 50:20.

<sup>71</sup> Don L. Searle, “Reaching for a Higher Level,” *Ensign*, October 2002, 67.

<sup>72</sup> Merrill, “Spring 2005 President's Message;” see also “Your Call to Teach the Gospel: Principles of Gospel Teaching,” Official Website; Neal A. Maxwell, *That Ye May Believe*, (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992) 40.

<sup>73</sup> See Packer and Perry, “Principles of Teaching and Learning,” 87; “Teaching with Testimony,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 43; David O. McKay, *Gospel Ideals: Selections from the Discourses of David O. McKay* (Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1953), 190.

The teaching aids offered many suggestions to prepare a Gospel Doctrine teacher to teach by inspiration. As a first priority, the teaching aids recommended members be set apart and receive a special blessing of help from the Lord through an ordained priesthood leader. This blessing will allow the Lord to “enlarge [a teacher’s] potential to influence others for good” and receive “blessings to strengthen and direct [them].”<sup>74</sup> As they seek to magnify their calling the Lord will magnify them—often beyond their own talents and natural ability when needed.<sup>75</sup> Those who have received the call to teach can draw strength from the Lord’s promise to qualify those whom He has called.<sup>76</sup>

Teachers were invited to start their preparations early, focus on the word of the Lord and seek divine inspiration. Teachers were reminded to approach the entire preparation process “prayerfully.”<sup>77</sup> Teachers were encouraged to start studying and pondering lessons several days prior to actually teaching.<sup>78</sup> This would allow time to “think and pray about the needs of the class members,” receive and record inspiration from the Spirit, and identify impressive illustrations and applications.<sup>79</sup> To facilitate inspiration, teachers were encouraged “to arise from . . . bed early and . . . reflect in the morning when [the] mind is clear.”<sup>80</sup>

The suggested pattern for preparing lessons was to “prayerfully study the lesson and the scriptures and outline how the principles might effectively be taught.”<sup>81</sup> Following this pattern

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<sup>74</sup> “Called, Set Apart, and Magnified,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 20; see also “Prepare Yourself Spiritually,” *Teaching Guidebook* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus of Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2001), 2.

<sup>75</sup> “Prepare Yourself Spiritually,” *Teaching Guidebook*, 2.

<sup>76</sup> See Thomas S. Monson, “Tears, Trials, Trust, Testimony,” *Ensign*, September 1997, 5.

<sup>77</sup> “Prepare Yourself Spiritually,” *Teaching Guidebook*, 2; Doctrine and Covenants 42:13-14, which informs the reader that the Spirit is obtained by the “prayer of faith,” was quoted, referred to, and expounded upon multiple times in various teaching aids during this period.

<sup>78</sup> See “Helps for the Teacher,” *Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual*, v.

<sup>79</sup> “Prepare to Teach,” *Teaching Guidebook*, 14; see also “Recognizing and Following the Spirit in Your Teaching,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 47; Holland, “Teaching and Learning in the Church,” 90; Glen M. Roylance, “Teaching the Gospel with Power,” *Ensign*, September 2005, 64; “Looking for Lessons Everywhere,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 22.

<sup>80</sup> Packer and Perry, “Principles of Teaching and Learning,” 84; see Doctrine & Covenants 88:124.

<sup>81</sup> Merrill, “Spring 2005 President’s Message.”



can provide teachers the confidence and flexibility needed to “focus on the people and the Spirit” in the classroom.<sup>82</sup> Suggestions for outlining a lesson included: identifying resources, focusing on the lesson’s purpose, deciding what to teach, deciding how to teach, and planning a conclusion.<sup>83</sup> As part of deciding on lesson material, Elder M. Russell Ballard counseled teachers to go first to the scriptures, second to the prescribed manual[s], and then, if desired, to the Church magazines.<sup>84</sup> This was complimented by the recommendation to be familiar with and utilize the most recent general conference addresses. By doing so, teachers could draw upon current thought from living apostles and prophets and stay close to the present will of the Lord for the members of His Church.<sup>85</sup> Because there is usually far more to teach than time allows, teachers were encouraged to “seek the Spirit of the Lord in selecting the scripture accounts, questions, and other lesson material that will best meet the needs of class members.”<sup>86</sup>

Teaching aids during this era advocated that teachers develop a plan to “immerse” themselves in regular and meaningful study of the gospel.<sup>87</sup> This included suggestions to prayerfully use a study journal, scripture study techniques—i.e. marking, likening, “seeking answers to faithful questions,” etc.—and the study helps provided in the standard works.<sup>88</sup> Because teachers have the most control over their “own preparation,” they were advised to combine feasting on the word of God with fasting and prayer in order “to invite the Spirit for [themselves] and [those they] would teach.”<sup>89</sup> Those who follow this course were assured greater

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> See “Prepare Your Lesson,” *Teaching Guidebook*, 13-15.

<sup>84</sup> See “Teaching—No Greater Call,” *Ensign*, May 1983, 68; see also “Choosing Appropriate Methods,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 91; Don L. Searle, “Teaching with Church Magazines,” *Ensign*, Feb 2006, 56–57.

<sup>85</sup> See Roylance, “Teaching the Gospel with Power,” 64.

<sup>86</sup> “Helps for the Teacher,” *Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual*, v.

<sup>87</sup> Seeking to Obtain the Word,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 14; see also Benson, “The Power of the Word,” 82.

<sup>88</sup> See “Developing a Personal Plan to Study the Gospel,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 16; A. Roger Merrill, “To Be Edified and Rejoice Together,” *Ensign*, January 2007, 68.

<sup>89</sup> Eyring, “Teaching True Doctrine,” 6; see also “Prepare Yourself Spiritually,” *Teaching Guidebook*, 3.

capacity to persuade and invite others to come unto Christ—being filled with “the Spirit and . . . power of God unto the convincing of men.”<sup>90</sup>

Further, teachers were apprised that they must be diligent in prayer and obedience in order to have the Spirit attend their teaching.<sup>91</sup> For example, President Boyd K. Packer admonished teachers to “keep the commandments and pray constantly, unceasingly for the ability and the inspiration to know what to do and when to do it.”<sup>92</sup> As teachers continually “treasure up in [their] minds . . . the words of life” and are diligent in prayer and obedience, they ready themselves to receive the revelation and inspiration associated with their sacred call—both during preparation and in the classroom.<sup>93</sup> Teachers were invited to both importune the Lord for spiritual gifts and to earnestly seek to develop associated Christ-like attributes.<sup>94</sup> For example, instructors were invited to be repentant and humble as an important part of spiritual preparation.<sup>95</sup> “Humility,” explained one aid, “can help you avoid the temptation to seek attention for yourself or rely too much on your own knowledge or talents” and thereby inhibit “the teaching effectiveness of the Holy Ghost.”<sup>96</sup>

In light of these and the many other suggestions of how to prepare spiritually, teaching aids made it clear that one did not have to be perfect in their obedience before the Lord would bless them with His Spirit. The Lord responds to “righteous desires and faithful efforts” of those

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<sup>90</sup> “Developing a Personal Plan to Study the Gospel,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 16; see also “Prepare Yourself Spiritually,” *Teaching Guidebook*, 3; Doctrine and Covenants 11:21.

<sup>91</sup> See “Seeking to Obtain the Word,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 14.

<sup>92</sup> Packer and Perry, “Principles of Teaching and Learning,” 85-86; see also Merrill, “Spring 2005 President's Message;” Doctrine and Covenants 42:13-14.

<sup>93</sup> Richard G. Scott, Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, January 2004, 8; Merrill, “To Be Edified and Rejoice Together,” 68; see also Gordon B. Hinckley, “Missionary Service,” *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, January 11, 2003, 20; Doctrine and Covenants 84:85; Robert D. Hales, “Teaching by Faith,” *Ensign*, September 2003, 20.

<sup>94</sup> Holland, “Teaching and Learning in the Church,” 105.

<sup>95</sup> “Prepare Yourself Spiritually,” *Teaching Guidebook*, 3.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*; David A. Bednar, “Seek Learning by Faith,” *Ensign*, September 2007, 67; See also, Dallin H. Oaks, “Our Strengths Can Become Our Downfall,” *Ensign*, October 1994, 15; Matthew 23:25–28; 2 Nephi 26:29; Dallin H. Oaks, in an address given 31 March 1998, quoted in “Lesson 5: Invite Diligent Learning,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 211.

that are doing the very best they can and magnifies them through the very Spirit they seek.<sup>97</sup>

Elder Jeffery R. Holland reassured:

. . . if we ourselves are striving to know God, if we ourselves are continually seeking the light of His Only Begotten Son. Then, if our hearts are right, if we are as clean as we can be, if we have prayed and wept and prepared and worried until we don't know what more we can do, God can say to us as He did to Alma and the sons of Mosiah: "Lift up thy head and rejoice. . . I will give unto you success."<sup>98</sup>

Teaching by the Spirit is a process of receiving and responding to revelation. In representing the Lord, a teacher must seek to say what the Lord would say if he were there in person. In order to do so, he must receive revealed instruction from the Lord.<sup>99</sup> Elder Holland stressed that, "at any given moment, we are less than we are supposed to be as a teacher in the Lord's hands if we aren't willing to set aside some special thing we had prepared and respond to something the Lord prompts us to do."<sup>100</sup> To facilitate this kind of inspiration, more than one teaching aid emphasized the importance of prayer. Teachers should pray to be guided by the Spirit, to know when to share their "most sacred feelings," and for the Holy Ghost to "testify and inspire" throughout the course of the lesson.<sup>101</sup> Additionally, teachers were encouraged to pray that the Spirit might "open the hearts of the learners," and likewise invite "learners to pray in their hearts for . . . the teacher . . . themselves and others who are striving to learn."<sup>102</sup> Finally, teachers should pray that their "teaching will bring change."<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> "Seeking the Spirit," *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 13; see also Ezra Taft Benson, "Seek the Spirit of the Lord," *Ensign*, Apr. 1988, 4.

<sup>98</sup> "Helps for Teachers," The official website of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, <http://www.lds.org/pa/display/0,17884,5909-1,00.html>; Jeffrey R. Holland, "A Teacher Come from God," *Ensign*, May 1998, 25.

<sup>99</sup> See "The Teacher's Divine Commission," *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 8.

<sup>100</sup> Holland, "Teaching and Learning in the Church," 100.

<sup>101</sup> "Teaching with Testimony," *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 43; "Inviting the Spirit As You Teach," *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 45.

<sup>102</sup> "Teaching with Testimony," *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 43; "8: Inviting the Spirit As You Teach," *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 45; see also 3 Nephi 20:1.

<sup>103</sup> Holland, "Teaching, Preaching, Healing," 33.

Teaching aids addressed the need of recognizing and responding to the Spirit in inspired teaching. One indicator that a teacher is speaking by the Spirit is that they, with their students, will be edified during the lesson and learn things previously unknown.<sup>104</sup> Elder Dallin H. Oaks reminded teachers that "the Lord will speak to us through the Spirit in his own time and in his own way. . . . the Lord rarely speaks loudly. His messages almost always come in a whisper."<sup>105</sup> President Howard W. Hunter offered valuable insight into discerning the manifestations of the Spirit:

. . . sacred moments may or may not be accompanied by tears. Very often they are, but sometimes they are accompanied by total silence. Other times they are accompanied by joy. Always they are accompanied by a great manifestation of the truth, of revelation to the heart.<sup>106</sup>

The *Teaching Guidebook* suggested, that as an instructor "humbly obey[s] the whisperings of the Spirit" they will also "be able to help those [they] teach recognize the influence of the Spirit."<sup>107</sup> Teaching aids at this time supported educating members to listen with their "soul[s]."<sup>108</sup> To listen to feelings or promptings that may have little to do with what is being taught or studied. "It may be something very personal" explained Elder Holland, "it may be related to something at home, something in a marriage or with a child, but that's the Spirit, and He's the real teacher."<sup>109</sup> Conversely, the aids cautioned that teachers avoid regular discussion "of unusual spiritual experiences."<sup>110</sup> They reaffirmed that both teachers and students should be careful not be found

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<sup>104</sup> see Holland, "Teaching and Learning in the Church," 100.

<sup>105</sup> "Recognizing and Following the Spirit in Your Teaching," *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 47; Dallin H. Oaks, "Teaching and Learning by the Spirit," *Ensign*, March 1997, 10–12.

<sup>106</sup> Howard W. Hunter, quoted in "Recognizing and Following the Spirit in your Teaching," *Teaching No Greater Call*, Howard W. Hunter, "Eternal Investments" (address to religious educators, 10 Feb. 1989), 3.

<sup>107</sup> "Teach By the Spirit," *Teaching Guidebook*, 6.

<sup>108</sup> Holland, "Teaching and Learning in the Church," 97.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> LaRene Porter Gaunt, "Teaching by the Spirit," *Ensign*, March 1999, 37; see also Boyd K. Packer, "The Candle of the Lord," *Ensign*, January 1983, 53.

“listening to the wrong source or misinterpreting . . . emotional impulses as spiritual promptings.”<sup>111</sup>

There are multiple factors that contribute to the power and intensity of the Spirit in the classroom. Teaching aids during this era reaffirmed that the teachings of scriptures and the words of latter-day prophets have great power to help individuals feel the influence of the Spirit.<sup>112</sup> Germane suggestions, therefore, centered on helping lessons stay focused on scriptural and prophetic counsel. For instance, *Teaching No Greater Call*, noted, “while it is sometimes good to ask learners what they think about certain subjects, it is often a better idea to ask them what the scriptures and the latter-day prophets teach.”<sup>113</sup> Another suggestion identified that when teachers “speak out of their hearts rather than out of their books” and bear testimony of truth “with care, and by constraint of the Spirit” they invoke the witness of the Holy Ghost.<sup>114</sup> Sacred music can also be a powerful way to invite the Spirit. Elder Boyd K. Packer said that “we are able to feel and learn very quickly through music . . . some spiritual things that we would otherwise learn very slowly.”<sup>115</sup>

Personal faithfulness and the example it affords is one of the most powerful tools a teacher can wield to invite the Spirit. As teachers valiantly live the gospel they can, in turn, teach it to others by the power of the Spirit. The Spirit will not bear witness to a teacher’s words if that teacher is not living the principle being taught.<sup>116</sup> Heavenly instruction can further be fostered by

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> See “The Power of the Word,” pages 50–51; see also Doctrine and Covenants 18:34–36.

<sup>113</sup> “13: Helping Individuals Take Responsibility for Learning the Gospel,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 61.

<sup>114</sup> “Your Call to Teach the Gospel: Principles of Gospel Teaching,” The official website of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, <http://www.lds.org/pa/display/0,17884,5441-1,00.html>; Jay E. Jensen, “Bearing Testimony,” *Ensign*, October 2005, 24; Doctrine and Covenants 63:64; see also *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, 619–20.

<sup>115</sup> “Inviting the Spirit As You Teach,” 45; see also Boyd K. Packer, “The Arts and the Spirit of the Lord,” *Ensign*, August 1976, 61.

<sup>116</sup> See “Living What You Teach,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 18.

“sharing experience[s] and inviting others to do so.”<sup>117</sup> One article reaffirmed the concept by referring to Elder Bruce R. McConkie’s observation on the subject: “Perhaps the perfect pattern in presenting faith-promoting stories is to teach what is found in the scriptures and then to put a seal of living reality upon it by telling a similar and equivalent thing that has happened in our dispensation and to our people and—most ideally—to us as individuals.”<sup>118</sup> It is easier for class members to commit to live a truth when they can feel the Spirit through hearing the faith promoting experiences of others.<sup>119</sup>

In light of the significant investment teachers must make to invite the Spirit into their lessons, teaching aids reminded instructors that the workings of the Spirit cannot be forced.<sup>120</sup> “Be patient,” Elder Jeffery R. Holland counseled, “we can’t in any way be offended or get angry or disappointed” because some do not respond to what has been prepared.<sup>121</sup> Doing so may cause a forfeiture of the Spirit. Both in the pacing of a lesson and in a teacher’s expectation for the progress of his or her students an “unrushed atmosphere is absolutely essential . . . to have the Spirit of the Lord present in . . . class.”<sup>122</sup> This principle extends into a teacher’s planning and execution in the classroom. For instance, teachers were encouraged to give class members ample “time to think about and respond to their questions or invitations to participate.”<sup>123</sup> Teachers should be less concerned about covering all the material and more mindful of meeting the spiritual needs of the students.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> “Teach By the Spirit,” *Teaching Guidebook*, 6; see also *Church Handbook of Instructions*, 304.

<sup>118</sup> Nash, “Telling Personal Stories,” 50; McConkie, “The How and Why of Faith-Promoting Stories,” 5.

<sup>119</sup> See Nash, “Telling Personal Stories,” 51; see also Gene R. Cook *Teaching by the Spirit* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 64, 122–23.

<sup>120</sup> Dallin H. Oaks, “Teaching and Learning by the Spirit,” 10–12; “Recognizing and Following the Spirit in Your Teaching,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 47.

<sup>121</sup> Holland, “Teaching and Learning in the Church,” 102.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>123</sup> Jonn D. Claybaugh and Amber Barlow Dahl, “Increasing Participation in Lessons,” *Ensign*, March 2001, 35-36.

<sup>124</sup> “Ask Questions that Invite Careful Thought and Create Discussion,” *Teaching Guidebook*, 12.

### Invite Diligent Learning

Teaching by the Spirit, in its fullest sense, requires the willing preparation and participation of both teacher and learner(s). The Lord has commanded that His word only be taught and received by the aid of His Spirit.<sup>125</sup> That aid requires the penitence, meekness, and effort of all in the classroom.<sup>126</sup> Participation is vital because use of agency by both teachers and learners “authorizes the Holy Ghost to instruct.”<sup>127</sup> In light of this truth, teachers were encouraged to follow the Lord’s pattern to: “Appoint among yourselves a teacher, and let not all be spokesmen at once; but let one speak at a time and let all listen unto his sayings, that when all have spoken that all may be edified of all, and that every man may have an equal privilege” (D&C 88:122).<sup>128</sup> Elder L. Tom Perry of the Twelve, taught that this “Spirit-assisted flow of knowledge between giver and receiver is the very essence of inspired teaching.”<sup>129</sup> However, in order for this kind of exchange to be perpetuated and become most fruitful both teacher and learner must “live and act upon the doctrines and principles being taught.”<sup>130</sup>

Teachers were encouraged to invite diligent learning. Diligent learning is centered on the idea that each person must learn, receive and live the gospel for themselves in order to be saved.<sup>131</sup> It is encapsulated in the Lord’s injunction to “seek learning by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118). President Joseph F. Smith said: “When [we receive] the truth [we] will be saved by it. [We] will not be saved merely because someone taught it to [us], but because [we] received

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<sup>125</sup> See Doctrine and Covenants 50:18-22; Merrill, “Spring 2005 President's Message.”

<sup>126</sup> See Dallin H. Oaks and Kristen M. Oaks, “Learning and Latter-day Saints,” *Ensign*, April 2009, 24.

<sup>127</sup> Quoted in A. Roger Merrill, “To Be Edified and Rejoice Together,” 69; see also Richard G. Scott, “To Understand and Live Truth,” Church Educational System satellite broadcast, February 6, 2005.

<sup>128</sup> Doctrine and Covenants 88:122; see Jonn D. Claybaugh and Amber Barlow Dahl, “Increasing Participation in Lessons,” 36.

<sup>129</sup> Perry, “Teach Them the Word of God with All Diligence,” 6.

<sup>130</sup> Sunday School General Presidency, “Sunday School Auxiliary Training: Guiding Principles and Goals;” see also Dallin H. Oaks, “Gospel Teaching,” 79-80.

<sup>131</sup> “Helping Individuals Take Responsibility for Learning the Gospel,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 61; see also Bruce R. McConkie, “Finding Answers to Gospel Questions,” in *Charge to Religious Educators*, 3rd ed. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1994), 80.

and acted upon it.”<sup>132</sup> In order to bring this about, teachers were encouraged to focus on the elements of effective gospel instruction: (1) key doctrine, (2) invitation to action, and (3) promised blessings.”<sup>133</sup> Key doctrines taught by the Spirit prepare individuals to receive invitation to action. Invitations followed by the promise of divine blessings further strengthen faith and commitment to act. Faith and—by virtue of its nature—gospel learning are dead without works.<sup>134</sup>

“Successful teachers focus less on imparting what they know and focus more on helping class members gain and develop their own desires for seeking knowledge and inspiration.”<sup>135</sup> The role of a gospel teacher is to “help the learner assume responsibility for learning.”<sup>136</sup> However, because “learning has to be done by the pupil. . . . it is the pupil who has to be put into action.”<sup>137</sup> Helping class members develop the ability to “recognize and follow the promptings of the Spirit” should be a cardinal priority of a gospel teacher.<sup>138</sup> Teachers should also seek to create an atmosphere where class members feel comfortable asking questions. “The more questions we can get from the learners about something,” observed Sister Julie B. Beck, General President of the Relief Society, “the more they are engaged in the learning.”<sup>139</sup> Teachers and learners should remember that the Lord will respond with divine instruction and edification “according to the faith” of those who have come to be taught.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Osguthorpe, “Teaching Helps Save Lives,” 15; see also Joseph F. Smith, in Conference Report, April 1902, 86; “Teach the Doctrine,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 49; 1 Timothy 4:16.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid; “Sunday School Training and Orientation Handout,” The official website of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, [http://www.lds.org/pa/ss/pdf/SS\\_JobChart\\_2009.pdf](http://www.lds.org/pa/ss/pdf/SS_JobChart_2009.pdf).

<sup>134</sup> See James 2:20.

<sup>135</sup> Claybaugh and Dahl, “Increasing Participation in Lessons,” 33.

<sup>136</sup> Holland, “Teaching and Learning in the Church,” 105.

<sup>137</sup> “Helping Individuals Take Responsibility for Learning the Gospel,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 61.

<sup>138</sup> “Recognizing and Following the Spirit in Your Teaching,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 47; Richard G. Scott, “Helping Others to Be Spiritually Led,” (Address to religious educators, 11 August 1998), 3.

<sup>139</sup> Holland, “Teaching and Learning in the Church,” 101.

<sup>140</sup> See Merrill, “To Be Edified and Rejoice Together,” 66; Moroni 10:7.



During this era the teaching aids emphasized the need for the learner to take responsibility for their own learning and conversion. Receiving the Spirit's instruction during a lesson is often really "more about the people in the class than it is about the teacher."<sup>141</sup> In order to receive "the word by the Spirit of truth" (D&C 50: 21) learners must be willing to pay the "truth seeker's price."<sup>142</sup> President A. Roger Merrill reminded readers that the word "*receive* is a verb. It is a principle of action. It is a fundamental expression of faith."<sup>143</sup> Learners were encouraged to come to class having diligently followed their own pattern of gospel study—which was recognized as having inherently more value than even being taught by a gifted teacher.<sup>144</sup> Receiving the illumination of the Holy Spirit depends largely on an individual's desire to learn.<sup>145</sup> That means that whether in the study of the gospel, receiving instruction in a classroom, or in daily obedience "getting good results" flows from seeking with "real intent," "hunger[ing] and thirst[ing] after righteousness" and "searching for answers to [personal] . . . questions and concerns."<sup>146</sup> Learners were also urged to come to class with prayerful hearts, pondering "faithful questions."<sup>147</sup> Finally, a learner's efforts "must be combined with personal worthiness [in order] to receive the guidance of the Holy Ghost."<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> A. Roger Merrill, "Spring 2005 President's Message," President Merrill explained, "Nowhere is this more dramatically taught than in the mortal ministry of the Lord. In the book of Matthew, we read that when the Savior Himself "was come into his own country . . . he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief" (Matthew 13:54, 58)."

<sup>142</sup> "Helping Individuals Take Responsibility for Learning the Gospel," *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 61; see also Bruce R. McConkie, "Finding Answers to Gospel Questions," in *Charge to Religious Educators*, 3rd ed. [1994], 80.

<sup>143</sup> A. Roger Merrill, "Receiving by the Spirit," *Ensign*, November 2006, 93.

<sup>144</sup> *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service*, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004), 17.

<sup>145</sup> See Packer and Perry, "Principles of Teaching and Learning," 84.

<sup>146</sup> Class Member Home Page, "How to Study Effectively," The official website of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, <http://www.lds.org/pa/display/0,17884,8457-1,00.html>; see also *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service*, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004), 17; Moroni 10:4; Matthew 5:6.

<sup>147</sup> See Gaunt, "Teaching by the Spirit," 37; see also A. Roger Merrill, "To Be Edified and Rejoice Together," *Ensign*, January 2007, 67.

<sup>148</sup> Oaks, "Learning and Latter-day Saints," 24; Doctrine and Covenants 93:36.

Teaching aids during this period clearly communicated that the ultimate purpose of teaching by the Spirit is to bring about conversion. There is “no conversion,” stated *Teaching, No Greater Call*, “no spiritual experience, unless the Spirit of the Lord is involved.”<sup>149</sup> As another teaching aid articulated, “no mortal teacher, no matter how expert or experienced, can bring the blessings of testimony and conversion to another person. That is the office of the Holy Ghost.”<sup>150</sup>

The enduring blessings of testimony and conversion born of the Spirit are significant. Foremost, conversion is attended by spiritual healing.<sup>151</sup> Conversion to the Lord through the Spirit causes individuals “to put off the natural man, to change [their] hearts, and . . . to never fall away.”<sup>152</sup> “True doctrine” understood by the light of revelation “changes attitudes and behavior.”<sup>153</sup> Through the Holy Ghost “truth is woven into the very fiber and sinews of the body so that it cannot be forgotten.”<sup>154</sup> Its power, working in and through teachers and learners, illuminates the understanding and opens the eye of faith to “light, glory, and immortality.”<sup>155</sup> The influence of the Lord’s Spirit motivates men and women “to forsake sin . . . come unto Christ, call on His name, obey His commandments, and abide in His love.”<sup>156</sup> Those who are converted have greater ability to faithfully endure hardship. As President Gordon B. Hinckley expressed,

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<sup>149</sup> “The Teacher’s Divine Commission,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 8; see also Bruce R. McConkie, “The Teacher’s Divine Commission,” *Ensign*, Apr 1979, 21.

<sup>150</sup> “The Spirit Is the True Teacher,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 41; see Moroni 10:5; D&C 50:13–14; see also Teaching with Testimony,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 43; Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978), 516.

<sup>151</sup> See Holland, “Teaching, Preaching, Healing,” 33; see also Isaiah 6:10, Matthew 13:15, John 12:40, Acts 28:27, 3 Nephi 9:13, Doctrine and Covenants 112: 13.

<sup>152</sup> David A. Bednar, “Seek Learning by Faith,” 64; Mosiah 3:19; Mosiah 5:2; Alma 23:6.

<sup>153</sup> Quoted in “Teach the Doctrine,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 51; see also Elder Boyd K. Packer in Conference Report, October 1986, 20; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 17; see also Gaunt, “Teaching by the Spirit,” 37.

<sup>154</sup> “The Spirit Is the True Teacher,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 41; Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3 vols., edited by Bruce R. McConkie (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954-1956), 1: 47.

<sup>155</sup> Quoted in Jensen, “Bearing Testimony,” 22–25; see *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1997), 315.

<sup>156</sup> Claybaugh and Dahl, “Increasing Participation in Lessons,” 33; see also Doctrine and Covenants 93:1; John 15:10; Moroni 10:32.

“the power and deep conversion of the Spirit” confirms to the heart what an individual has already “agreed to in their [mind]” and will carry them “through every storm of adversity.”<sup>157</sup>

The materials provided to assist teachers during this era offered several insights on how to facilitate and inspire diligent learning in order to bring about spiritual conversion. The “crowning, convincing, converting power of the gospel” and “the most important thing” a teacher will share during a lesson is their personal witness that they know, through the revelations of the Holy Ghost to their soul, that what they have taught is true.<sup>158</sup> Testimony, given in the “power of the Spirit,” can inspire individuals to seek “learning by faith” and thereby “open the pathway into [their] heart.”<sup>159</sup> The most influential teachers will not provide “easy answers” but rather point the way to revelation and self discovery.<sup>160</sup> Since an instructor cannot gift their own conversion to their students, teachers were implored to teach and persuade learners to receive the sanctification and enlightenment of the Holy Ghost by their own study and the exercise of their own faith—both in and out of the classroom.<sup>161</sup> It was recommended that teachers provide ample opportunity for class members to “teach,” “edify,” and share testimony with each other.<sup>162</sup> “When moved by the Holy Ghost to impart their thoughts, students often provide a clearer way of explaining the principle under discussion.”<sup>163</sup> As class members take

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<sup>157</sup> Cited by Elder Gerald N. Lund, *BYU-Idaho Devotional*, March 25, 2003.

<sup>158</sup> Teaching with Testimony,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 43; Holland, “Teaching and Learning in the Church,” 104; see also Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978), 516.

<sup>159</sup> 2 Nephi 33:1; David A. Bednar, “Seek Learning by Faith,” 61.

<sup>160</sup> Bednar, “Seek Learning by Faith,” 67.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>162</sup> “Helps for the Teacher,” *Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual*, v; see also Junius F. Wells, “Historic Sketch of the YMMIA,” *Improvement Era*, June 1925, 715, quoted in David A. Bednar, “Seek Learning by Faith,” *Ensign*, September 2007, 67.

<sup>163</sup> Richard G. Moore, “Teaching and Being Taught,” *Ensign*, June 2007, 37.

advantage of opportunities to “verbalize” gospel truths, the Holy Ghost confirms that expression to the soul and personal testimony is strengthened.<sup>164</sup>

### **Create a Learning Atmosphere**

Creating a learning atmosphere is important to effective gospel teaching. The very crux of the concept lies in promoting a situation where the Spirit can teach, edify, and sanctify. It embraces not only environs, but also attitudes and educational methods. This section will briefly touch upon each of these three elements.

The presence of the Holy Ghost is impacted by the classroom environment. In order to create an environment where the Spirit can instruct, teachers were encouraged to be mindful of the physical makeup of the classroom. Efforts should be made to secure comfortable seating, moderate temperatures, and adequate lighting. Seating arrangements should allow the teacher to make eye contact with each individual and for each person to see “the chalkboard and other visual materials.”<sup>165</sup> Classrooms that are clean, orderly and free of unnecessary distraction can serve to invite the Spirit.<sup>166</sup>

The presence of the Holy Ghost is influenced by purpose and attitude. An important aspect of the learning environment is the purpose for which Latter-day Saints come together. Under the covenant of baptism, the class should come together as children of God committed to “look forward with one eye, having one faith and one baptism, having [their] hearts knit together in unity and in love one towards another.”<sup>167</sup> Teachers were encouraged to teach their classes about and then invite them to develop the key attitudes of a learning atmosphere: “In a learning atmosphere, [class members] (1) edify each other through . . . participation, (2) love and help

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<sup>164</sup> Quote in Holland, “Teaching and Learning in the Church,” 100; see also Richard G. Scott, “To Understand and Live Truth,” 3.

<sup>165</sup> “Preparing the Classroom,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 76.”

<sup>166</sup> See “Creating a Learning Atmosphere,” *Teaching Guidebook*, 8.

<sup>167</sup> “Teaching Others to Contribute to a Learning Atmosphere,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 77; Mosiah 18:21.

each other, and (3) desire to search for truth together.”<sup>168</sup> The impact of effective teaching in the Church “can be multiplied” as each member learns their responsibility to help create a learning atmosphere and becomes “more effective at sharing gospel truths” with each other.<sup>169</sup>

Furthermore, teachers were counseled to cultivate an attitude of reverence for the Lord and each of His children and to encourage the members of their class to do the same. *Teaching, No Greater Call* encouraged teachers to set an example of reverence through maintaining punctuality, orderliness, courtesy, deference to the names of deity and official titles in the Church and by not making a mock of others or sacred things.<sup>170</sup> Gospel Doctrine classes are generally comprised of adult class members of varied age, background, and experience. Teachers were encouraged to draw upon the diversity of talent and wisdom within the class and have class members share their strengths and experiences with one another.<sup>171</sup>

The presence of the Holy Ghost is impacted by methods. If appropriate for inspired learning, “the methods [a teacher uses] to teach gospel truths will help develop learners’ sensitivity toward sacred things.”<sup>172</sup> “A carefully selected method,” stated one aid, “can make a principle clearer, more interesting, and more memorable.”<sup>173</sup> In regard to selecting the most appropriate method, President Boyd K. Packer observed that “the best model for teaching methods . . . is the Lord and His teaching.”<sup>174</sup> By selecting the appropriate methods, class members “can be taught, and their testimonies can be conveyed from one to another.”<sup>175</sup> *Teaching, No Greater Call* and other teaching aids provided multiple suggestions regarding

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<sup>168</sup> “21: Teaching Others to Contribute to a Learning Atmosphere,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 77.

<sup>169</sup> Don L. Searle, “Reaching for a Higher Level,” *Ensign*, October 2002, 67.

<sup>170</sup> “Reverence,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 82.

<sup>171</sup> See “Understand Those You Teach,” *Teaching Guidebook*, 16.

<sup>172</sup> “Choosing Appropriate Methods,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 91.

<sup>173</sup> “Teaching with Variety,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 89.

<sup>174</sup> Packer and Perry, “Principles of Teaching and Learning,” 85.

<sup>175</sup> “Choosing Effective Methods,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 92; Packer, *Teach Ye Diligently*, 62.

methods designed to facilitate the operation of principles of learning and invite divine instruction.<sup>176</sup>

Teaching aids suggested that using a variety of learning activities could enhance the educational environment. By using a range of learning methods, “learners tend to understand gospel principles better and retain more.”<sup>177</sup> It was recommended that Gospel Doctrine teachers “consider using at least three methods in each lesson.”<sup>178</sup> Methods should be purposeful, appropriate, and when possible, actively engage learners.<sup>179</sup> A teacher must ask themselves if the method will make effective use of the time and if it will clearly convey the intended message.<sup>180</sup> For example, Elder Jeffery R. Holland’s advice on audio-visuals applies to several methods of teaching:

Audiovisual aids are just that—they are aids. They are not a substitute for the teacher, they are not a substitute for the course material, and they are not a substitute for the Spirit of the Lord. [Utilize them] the way that you would use spice in cooking—to flavor, to heighten, to accentuate, to enrich.<sup>181</sup>

Additionally teachers might ask themselves if the method will invite the Spirit, if it matches the sacredness of the principles being taught, and if it will edify class members.<sup>182</sup> Asking effective questions, utilizing group work, and employing comparisons are examples of common methods discussed in the teaching aids during 1999-2009. What follows is a sampling of what the teaching aids communicated about these methods.

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<sup>176</sup> *Teaching, No Greater Call* provided a whole section on methods that teachers could use and suggestions on how they could be used effectively. Among the different methods most relevant for the gospel doctrine class were: application techniques, attention activities, audio-visual materials, brainstorming, buzz sessions, case studies, chalkboard, comparisons, demonstrations, discussions, games, guest speakers, lectures, likening, memorization, music, object lessons, panel discussions, pictures, questions, readers theater, scripture marking and writing margin notes, reading scriptures aloud, using scripture study helps, stations, stories, white boards, and worksheets (“Methods of Teaching,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 158).

<sup>177</sup> “Teaching with Variety,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 89.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> “Choosing Effective Methods,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 92.

<sup>181</sup> Holland, “Teaching and Learning in the Church,” 102.

<sup>182</sup> “Choosing Appropriate Methods,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 91.

*Asking effective questions.* Asking questions about and discussing eternal truths can help create a learning atmosphere. During this era, emphasis was placed on asking questions that elicit deeper thinking, draw forth application, and inspire testimony in the lives of learners.<sup>183</sup> Such questions frequently “begin with the words *what, how, or why*. They cannot be answered with *yes or no*, and they usually have more than one right answer.”<sup>184</sup> For example, “Why do you think this revelation came at this time in the history of the Church?” or “What does it mean to be meek?” are questions that promote analysis.<sup>185</sup> Posing a question about a block of scripture or a quotation before reading it can help learners focus in on important concepts and acts as a catalyst for enriched discussion.<sup>186</sup> Additionally, follow-up questions or questions that “prompt silent reflection” can help class members think more deeply about a subject and can give a greater number of learners a chance to participate. Teachers were advised to avoid questions that could raise controversy or create contention.<sup>187</sup>

Asking questions that help class members understand the relationship between a doctrine and their daily choices is important to effective teaching. When application originates with learners it is usually more meaningful to them. Questions such as “When have you felt the power of this doctrine in your life?” or “How has the doctrine blessed your life or the lives of others?” can help class members apply the truths being taught. Giving time for class members to ponder before they respond to questions can facilitate the tuition of the Holy Ghost. Given this opportunity, class member’s answers are usually more meaningful.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> “Teaching with Questions,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 68.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>186</sup> Robert G. Jones, “Asking Questions First,” *Ensign*, January 2002, 23.

<sup>187</sup> See “Teaching with Questions,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 68.

<sup>188</sup> See “Invite Diligent Learning,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 67-68.

*Utilizing group work.* Group work can be an effective way to increase participation and create an environment conducive to learning. Group work “gets more people involved” and can prepare the class for more fruitful discussion.<sup>189</sup> Generally, small groups and short periods of time are most successful.<sup>190</sup> Group-work can be helpful when a teacher wants to motivate class members to talk about questions, compare ideas, share insights, or instruct one another.<sup>191</sup> When teachers take time to prepare group assignments, explain or model expectations, divide class members into groups, and then monitor those groups, group work is improved.<sup>192</sup>

*Employing comparisons.* Comparisons and object lessons can engage learners in the education process and open the way for divine teaching. The Savior used comparisons frequently. He “compared the kingdom of heaven to a treasure, a pearl, and a fishing net. . . . In His lessons, a narrow gate became the way of eternal life and His disciples became fishers of men.”<sup>193</sup> Comparisons and object lessons can effectively, “focus the attention of learners,” “introduce a subject or principle of a lesson,” “provide a framework for a lesson,” or be used “to motivate [learners] to make worthwhile changes in their lives.”<sup>194</sup> Comparisons and object lessons help illustrate abstract concepts by relating “intangible principles to familiar physical things.”<sup>195</sup> Many of the teaching aids included suggestions for comparisons or object lessons. As an example, to illustrate that ordinances and covenants are indivisible, *Teaching, No Greater Call* suggested that teachers display a coin and point out the relative importance and inseparability of its two sides. Just as a coin can be used to pay an entrance fee to an earthly

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<sup>189</sup> Russell G. Bulloch, “When Students Are the Teachers,” *Ensign*, January 2003, 18.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>191</sup> See “Buzz Sessions,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 161; *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2*, 304.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>193</sup> See “Methods of Teaching,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 164; Matthew 13:44–48, 17:20, 7:15–20, 7:13–14, 4:18–19; see also “Use Pictures and Objects,” *Teaching Guidebook*, 10.

<sup>194</sup> “Methods of Teaching,” *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 163–164.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.



event, ordinances and covenants are essential for “admission into God’s presence.”<sup>196</sup> Lessons tied to familiar objects lend themselves to comprehension and through the Spirit can have lasting influence.

## **Conclusion**

Teaching aids from 1999-2009 held up Jesus Christ as the Master Teacher.<sup>197</sup> One common purpose of the teaching aids during this decade was to enable the Lord Himself to teach His children through the instrumentality of the Holy Ghost. Teaching aids during this period were based on the principles taught and exemplified by the Savior and His prophets. One overarching message of these teaching aids was that as instructors teach with love, teach gospel truths, teach by the Spirit, invite diligent learning, and create a learning atmosphere, they teach as Christ taught. While teaching aids employed powerful educational principles also used by secular educators, the lens of learning was generally focused on helping Church members comprehend spiritual truths. Many of the teaching aids during this period were designed to involve and enable teachers and learners in the process of spiritual edification. They were geared to speak to cultures and people throughout the expanding worldwide Church. Although many of the aids built upon the work of previous decades, the teacher improvement material during this period sought to more clearly communicate how gospel teachers could contribute to the work of bringing souls to Christ.

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> See for example Monson, “Examples of Great Teachers,” 112.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: ANALYSIS AND SUMMARY

### **Introduction**

The Lord's standard is truth—"knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come" (D&C 93:24). The Lord's standard is fixed, eternal, and unchanging. While the Lord's standard does not vary, the spiritual progress and circumstances of His children do. The Lord desires to enlarge the understanding of His people so that their comprehension of His standard will grow to be ever more complete. The Lord imparts the portion of light and knowledge that "he seeth fit" (Alma 29:8) that His children should have based on their needs and "the heed and diligence which they give unto him" (Alma 12:9). Because God's children are still progressing in their understanding of His ways (see Isaiah 55:8-9), it is not yet possible for an all-inclusive statement to be made in regards to the true convention of inspired teaching. Yet, as disciples seek to bring together and implement that which the Lord has revealed thus far, through the inspiration of the Spirit, the Church will continue to take steps toward realizing the Lord's standard. The nearer gospel teachers get to the Lord's standard of teaching the more the lives of the people will be blessed—and this in proportion to the personal response of learners to the truth. This chapter will seek to provide a measure of understanding of the Lord's standard of teaching through evaluating teaching aids provided for Gospel Doctrine teachers.

First, the chapter will seek to document larger trends and themes that run in the four periods surveyed in earlier chapters. Next, this chapter will seek to look at which principles of teaching are common to each period. This will be accompanied by a comparison with suggestions on teaching found in words of the prophets from the perspective of the author. The chapter will finish with suggestions for future research.

## Themes and Observations

Has there been an unfolding of understanding concerning the idea of effective teaching and can it be observed in the teaching helps? The observations that follow may not be able to fully answer that question. However, they do give some insight in regard to the development of the idea of how to effectively aid instructors in teaching the gospel.

Although many of the guiding principles found in the teaching aids have not changed, the clarity by which they are explained has. From 1906 to 1916, for instance, teaching by the Spirit was implied but not explicitly enunciated. The theme “Efficiency—Spirituality” for a leadership meeting held in April 1915 reflected the importance of teaching by the Spirit but the actual proceedings of the meeting never directly addressed the subject.<sup>1</sup> Another aid, provided in 1916, observed that training efforts could help improve the “spiritual status” of Sunday School work; yet the training topics never overtly dealt with how to invite or teach by the Spirit.<sup>2</sup> During the 1930’s teaching by the Spirit became somewhat more pronounced. For instance, teachers were encouraged to “attain a spiritual plane” during preparation in order to more indelibly impress upon each class member an “assurance” that what they were being taught was true.<sup>3</sup> By the 1970’s a greater number of teaching aids made it easily understood that teaching by the Spirit was “essential” to gospel instruction.<sup>4</sup> During 1999-2009 the idea was stated clearly and repeatedly that the Lord is the teacher through His Spirit.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, May 1915, 293.

<sup>2</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, February, 1916, 94.

<sup>3</sup> *Instructor*, November 1935, 503.

<sup>4</sup> “Teach with the Spirit,” *Teaching No Greater Call: Resource Materials for Teacher Improvement*, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1978), 13.

<sup>5</sup> For example see Jeffrey R. Holland, “Teaching and Learning in the Church,” *Ensign*, June 2007, 97; see also Brian Gudmundson, “Questions, the Heart of Learning and Teaching,” *Ensign*, January 2008, 28; “Teacher Improvement,” Sunday School Homepage, The official website of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, <http://www.lds.org/pa/display/0,17884,4700-1,00.html>.

Another observation relates to the quantity of teaching helps. The Deseret Sunday School Union and the Sunday School auxiliary apparently produced both a greater quantity and variety of helps for teachers as the years went on, culminating in the 1970's. Among the different formats being used to provide aids for teachers in the 1970's were: *Ensign* articles, training manuals for preservice courses, training manuals for inservice courses, training manuals for supervisors and officers, periodic bulletins for teacher improvement, Sunday School conference reports, teacher resource manuals and the first edition of *Teaching No Greater Call*. Although, the most recent decade was similar to the 1970's in regard to the assortment of teaching aids, in many cases the aids have either been reduced, simplified or eliminated.<sup>6</sup>

Many communications to teachers started out specific and localized during the first several years of the Parents' Class but grew progressively general as time advanced. In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century teaching aids were often written in response to the challenges faced by individual units and communities in North America. For example, in the early aids, General Board members responded to letters from local parents' classes and made tailored recommendations to mitigate political and cultural trends in various communities where parents' classes had been established.<sup>7</sup> The aids written in the 1970's and especially in the most recent decade addressed the Church's global audience. For instance, because of its basic format and concise treatment of teaching fundamentals, *The Teaching Guidebook* (2001) has been recommended for individual use and course material for the Teaching the Gospel class for newly formed units throughout the world.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> For example, supervisory and teacher training material have been consolidated and integrated into the newest edition of *Teaching No Greater Call* (1999) and a few handbooks.

<sup>7</sup> For an example of correspondence with local units see *Juvenile Instructor*, May 1919, 254; for an example of teaching aids directed toward local cultural and political issues see *Juvenile Instructor*, February 1914, 102.

<sup>8</sup> See "Information for Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders on Curriculum: 2009 through 2012," *Information for Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders on Curriculum: 2009 through 2012*, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2008), 1-4.

Over the course of its existence, the Church's teacher training efforts for adult Sunday School instructors has shifted. The overall trend for the weight of emphasis on teaching training went from light, to heavy, to moderate. It started off with little material and no courses. It then developed into entire training programs with both courses and abundant material. Eventually it was adapted to an integrated approach designed to engage both leadership and membership with an optional course and simplified training material.

Initially, several years passed before materials and training for the Adult Sunday School were made available. During the first decade the responsibility for teacher training was placed upon the instructor and the individual class members and focused on preparing to contribute effectively during class. During the 1930's and through the 1970's there was a significant amount of time and resources invested in teacher training. During these periods local priesthood leadership and Sunday School officers took more responsibility to staff teacher training positions and fill the training courses. Multiple manuals were produced and numerous teaching aids were dedicated to addressing teacher training subjects. Since 2006 there seems to have been a hybrid of past ideas merged with a few new adjustments. Local priesthood leadership not only retained stewardship over teacher training, they themselves were to take direct responsibility to train teachers with the assistance of the Sunday School Presidency. The teacher training course became optional and teacher and student alike were expected to use available materials to prepare themselves to teach and learn by the Spirit in the classroom.

While suggestions for teachers have consistently taken advantage of the best methodology found in the educational realm, teaching aids through the years have increasingly been based on statements from scripture or modern prophets. During the first decade of adult

Sunday School suggestions for teachers were limited.<sup>9</sup> Initial teaching aids, which focused on content and purpose within the Parents' Class, were written by members of various committees housed under the Deseret Sunday School Union. By 1930 many of the aids were focused more on pedagogy and continued to be authored by members of the Deseret Sunday School Union with experience in public or higher education. Much of that academic influence could be seen in the teaching aids. Many of the recommendations regarding methodology during this period were slightly modified versions of popular practices found in the realm of secular education.<sup>10</sup> Along with the shift to the standard works as the text for the Gospel Doctrine class, teaching aids in the 1970's made greater use of the scriptures and words of modern prophets. Yet, many of the teaching aids which addressed teaching methods continued to reflect the most current thinking educationally.<sup>11</sup> In 1999-2009 the aids were largely based on principles from the scriptures and words of modern prophets. Even teaching aids that discussed methods, often were derived from sources such as the scriptures or addresses to the Church Educational System given by members of the First Presidency or Quorum of the Twelve. Without exception, each era produced at least some suggested methods which emanated from the life and teachings of the Savior.

During the first and last decades surveyed in this study there was some focus on empowering class members to teach outside of class. Within the first few years of its organization, the Parents' Department began emphasizing that class members be given not only

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<sup>9</sup> One of the reasons that a more rigid set of rules was not published was the General Board's desire not to inhibit the genius or the inspiration of the teacher (See *Juvenile Instructor*, March 1908, 118).

<sup>10</sup> As a typical example "How to Study and How to Supervise Study," *Instructor*, October 1931, 597-599, was based on F. M. McMurry, *How to Study and Teaching How to Study*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1909), Harry L. Miller, *Directing Study: Educating for Mastery by Creative Thinking*, (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1922), and John Dewey, *How We Think*, (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1910); see also *Instructor*, July 1932, 387; see also generally Patterson Du Bois, *The Point of Contact in Teaching* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1900).

<sup>11</sup> See for example Jay Monson, "Questioning Questions in Gospel Teaching," *Ensign*, April 1979, 17 or *Teacher Development Program: Basic Course* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1973), 187, adapted from Edward Dale, *Audio-Visual Methods in Teaching*, revised edition, (Austin, TX: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1954), 43.

the opportunity to teach each other in class but also training regarding how to teach more effectively in the home.<sup>12</sup> Although not repeatedly emphasized, this same idea surfaced about midway through the most recent decade. The Gospel Doctrine class was to be a place where class members “learn in order to teach” and should be a “resource to them to help them teach their families” and share the gospel with others.<sup>13</sup>

The role of the teacher and learner were subjects that the teaching aids addressed throughout each time period. There were certain expectations common to each period. These included the expectation that learners come prepared to contribute to the discussion, put in effort during class and accept assignments to prepare short presentations to share in class. However, discussion on the subject became more pronounced from 1970 to 1980 and from 1999 to 2009. The place of learning in the plan of salvation was taught more frequently. Learners were encouraged to develop habits of personal study and prayerfully read the prescribed lesson material before coming to class. They were invited to come to class earnestly seeking for answers to personal questions and concerns. During class they were asked to “pray in their hearts for . . . the teacher . . . themselves and others who are striving to learn.”<sup>14</sup> It was clearly explained that learners were expected to take responsibility for their own learning.

Although what actually happened in the classroom may have been much different, the teaching aids prepared for Gospel Doctrine teachers always held up the ideal that the teacher was to facilitate participation. Class members were to be given opportunities to present, to express gospel truths, and to answer questions. It was generally expected that the learners do nearly as much or more talking than the teacher. However, the teacher was still obligated to invite and

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<sup>12</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, March 1908, 119; *Juvenile Instructor*, February 1912, 271.

<sup>13</sup> A. Roger Merrill, “Spring 2005 President's Message,” Sunday School Open House, Spring 2005.

<sup>14</sup> “Teaching with Testimony,” *Teaching, No Greater Call: A Resource Guide for Gospel Teaching*, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999), 43; “8: Inviting the Spirit As You Teach,” *Teaching, No Greater Call* (1999), 45; see also 3 Nephi 20:1.

guide participation in its many forms. As with the role of the learner, as time progressed teachers were given more detail as to what was expected. Teachers were to “regularly and consistently” engage in studying and teaching from the word of the Lord, pray that the Spirit might “open the hearts of the learners” and put the learner “into action.”<sup>15</sup> Teachers were encouraged to persuade learners to receive the sanctification and enlightenment of the Holy Ghost by their own study and the exercise of their own faith—both in and out of the classroom.

Through the various eras examined, a common theme emerged concerning what brings about conversion. In sum, it was recognized that effectively teaching gospel truths can inspire faith that leads to righteous action and the converting influence of the Holy Ghost. However, understanding concerning the concept, as much as any other found in the teaching aids, seemed to be unfolded through time. In 1906 it was explained that “members who think and act” were changed most by the classroom experience.<sup>16</sup> In 1920 “efficient teaching” was hailed as a significant factor in establishing a “testimony in the hearts of . . . the Latter-day Saints.”<sup>17</sup> This was accompanied by the thought that the most powerful lessons are those that involve “both the intellect and the emotions” but “[appeal] primarily to the will and [call] for action.”<sup>18</sup> In the 1970’s an individual’s “actual experience” living gospel truths was seen as one of the most influential factors in bringing about a lasting change in behavior.<sup>19</sup> Much like previous ideas on the subject, teaching aids in the 1970’s affirmed that in order to bring about conversion class

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<sup>15</sup> “Teaching with Testimony,” *Teaching, No Greater Call* (1999), 43; “8: Inviting the Spirit As You Teach,” *Teaching, No Greater Call* (1999), 45; see also “Helping Individuals Take Responsibility for Learning the Gospel,” *Teaching, No Greater Call* (1999), 61.

<sup>16</sup> “Sunday School Outlines of the Parents Department,” (Deseret Sunday School Union, 1906) Americana Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections Library, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 6-7.

<sup>17</sup> “The Sunday School: Its Development and Present Day Problems,” *Juvenile Instructor*, March 1920, 112.

<sup>18</sup> “How to Make a Lesson Carry Over” *Juvenile Instructor*, October 1928, 570. This particular article quotes and was based around ideas found in George H. Betts, *How to Teach Religion*, (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1926). For example the lesson cites Betts’ query, “are the lessons we teach translated continuously into better conduct, finer acts, and stronger character, as shown in the daily run of the learner’s experience?” (see page 58).

<sup>19</sup> *Teacher Development Program: Basic Course* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1973), 187.



members must be inspired to “think about, feel about, and then do something about gospel truths and principles.”<sup>20</sup> Through 1999-2009 teaching aids continued to recognize personal faithfulness as an indispensable component of the conversion process. However, more than in previous years, the teaching aids clearly stated that the Spirit of God was the sole agent of enduring spiritual conversion. Moreover, teaching aids began to emphasize that inspired instruction comes more abundantly and with greater converting power when *both teachers and learners* expend faith filled effort in preparation, in the classroom, and by living the gospel in their daily lives.

### **Fundamentals**

This section will feature an analysis and summary of what constituted effective teaching during each era examined in earlier chapters. These findings will be compared with scriptural standards of gospel teaching in order to answer one of the research questions stated in the introductory chapter: *Which principles of teaching are fundamental to all four time periods and how do they compare with standards of teaching found in the word of the Lord?* The method of comparison is as follows. 1) A detailed outline of each era was compiled. Each outline included a comprehensive list of suggestions on subject matter, principles, and methods found within teaching aids during that time period. 2) The four outlines were compared in detail. 3) Principles common to all four time periods were noted.<sup>21</sup> 4) A statement was formulated to represent each group of common principles. 5) These principles were then compared to guidelines for gospel teaching taken primarily from a study of the four gospels, Christ’s teachings to the Nephites after His resurrection (3 Nephi chapters 11-28) and selected portions of the standard works pertinent

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>21</sup> This section will not pursue an extensive discussion of methodology because of the variety of methods which are encompassed by and logically extend from each principle.

to teaching. The first portion of this section pertains to *what to teach*. The second portion addresses *how to teach*.

### **Fundamentals: What to Teach**

The mandate to teach the principles and doctrines of the gospel in order to bring souls to Christ was fundamental to all the time periods surveyed. During 1906-1916 instructional recommendations promoted teaching not only gospel principles but also art, science, health and ethics in order to enrich homemaking, childrearing, and community-building. This suggestion was certainly in line with the scriptural enjoinder to strengthen the family and bring together all truth (see D&C 20:47; D&C 68: 25; 2 Nephi 29:14). The suggestions found in teaching aids for members of the Parents' Class to become politically and socially involved in their communities were also in line with divine teachings. The scriptures explain that the Saints are "bound to sustain and uphold" local and national government (D&C 134:5). Additionally, the Lord has said that His disciples should be "anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness" (D&C 58:27). Promoting social welfare in the community is undoubtedly encompassed in this invitation.

The era from 1920 to 1940 began with the continued focus of teaching "applied religion, child welfare, social problems, and the relation of the subjects to home life," but finished with a greater emphasis on scripture and the words of modern prophets.<sup>22</sup> Midway through that period, teaching aids suggested that scriptures be "discussed mainly from a rational and [experiential] point of view" as opposed to a "theological or authoritative" approach. This was done in order to inculcate in individuals a desire to live the gospel because "it is the most reasonable thing to do

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<sup>22</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, November 1925, 593.

and because it is justified of their own experiences.”<sup>23</sup> This approach seemed to be in harmony with the Lord’s method of using “reason” to improve understanding (Isaiah 1:18; D&C 50:11-12).<sup>24</sup> It also accorded with the Lord’s pattern of revealing truth to the “mind” (D&C 8:2; 6:15).<sup>25</sup> Finally, this approach may have highlighted the Lord’s desire that His people be “taught more perfectly, and have *experience*” in order that they may “know more perfectly concerning their duty, and the things which I require at their hands” (D&C 105:10 [emphasis added]).

During the 1970’s the standard works became the sole text for the Gospel Doctrine class. In addition, teachers could supplement lessons with talks from general conference or with articles from church magazines. Teaching aids during the era also reemphasized that teachers should provide education that built faith. This seemed to bring the curriculum into greater agreement with the Lord’s mandate that teachers in the Church preach the “the principles of [His] gospel” as found in His revealed word (D&C 42:12, 15).<sup>26</sup> By doing so, members could more fully meet the command to live by “every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”

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<sup>23</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, November 1929, 639.

<sup>24</sup> Jesus used reason to teach. Jesus used questions to help others obtain the answers to their questions. When the Pharisees questioned whether or not it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath day, Jesus asked a question to them in response. “Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?” The question invited them to think about the fundamental purpose behind the law and brought into question the detail of the rabbinic law that they hoped would provide the legal footing to condemn Him. But they held their peace” (Mark 3:4). In Matthew’s account there seems to be more detail. Jesus responded with a series of questions that set up his response. “And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days” (Matthew 12:11-12; see also Matthew 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11).

<sup>25</sup> See Boyd K. Packer, “Prayer and Promptings,” *Ensign*, November 2009, 44.

<sup>26</sup> Jesus taught doctrines and principles. Much of the power behind Christ’s teaching was inherent in the doctrines and principles He taught. His principles—based on true doctrine—were universally applicable in nature and were based on truths that could bless all mankind. Even in His more specific counsel to His apostles there were underlying truths that had larger application to the generality of mankind. They spoke of outcomes, both glorious and awful that transcended the mortal sphere. They served as illustrations of the real operation of consequences in the eternal scheme of things. Jesus’ principles define relationships; not only between actions and consequences but more importantly between man and God: “if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you” (Matthew 5:14). They can be seen throughout the Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. For example, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5). “Blessed are you, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from among them, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man’s sake . . . for, behold, your reward shall be great in heaven” (JST Luke 6:22). Connecting faithful obedience with associated eternal blessings is a powerful pattern in presenting truth.

(Matthew 4:4; see also D&C 88:43-44) and faith would more likely be strengthened by the teaching and learning process as Church members heard and read the word of God (see Romans 10:17, Helaman 15:7-8).

From 1999 through 2009 aids invited teachers to “teach the principles of [the] gospel and the doctrine of the kingdom” as found in the standard works and words of modern prophets.<sup>27</sup> Teachers were asked to give particular emphasis to “the saving doctrines of the gospel” within the scriptures and words of modern prophets; including the doctrines, ordinances, and covenants of the restored gospel, which are necessary for individuals and families to come unto Christ and inherit eternal life.”<sup>28</sup> These suggestions aligned more fully with the scriptural principle of focusing on those truths which “persuade men to come . . . unto the God of Abraham . . . and be saved” (1 Nephi 6:4; see also 2 Nephi 25:23, 26). Because men come unto Christ through their covenant relationship with Him, these later suggestions agree with one of the chief purposes of inspired material—to provide “knowledge of [the Lord’s] covenants” (Title Page of *The Book of Mormon*; 2 Nephi 3:12).

To teach “none other things than that which the prophets and apostles have written, and that which is taught . . . by the Comforter through the prayer of faith” is fundamental to gospel instruction (D&C 52:9). It is in harmony with an essential practice in the pursuit of eternal life—namely to “press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end” (2 Nephi 31:20). Those that search the scriptures and hearken to the message they contain: 1) will become “prosperous,” having “good success” (Joshua 1:8), 2) will be aware of “all things what [they] should do” (2 Nephi 32:3), 3) “shall not be deceived,” (JSM 1:37), 4) will obtain “hope”

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<sup>27</sup> Dallin H. Oaks, “Gospel Teaching,” *Ensign*, November 1999, 79-80; “The Teacher’s Divine Commission,” *Teaching, No Greater Call* (1999), 8; Doctrine & Covenants 42:12, 88:77; see also Bruce R. McConkie, “The Teacher’s Divine Commission,” *Ensign*, April 1979, 21.

<sup>28</sup> “Helps for the Teacher,” *Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual*, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999), v.

(Romans 15:5), 5) will become converted (see Psalms 19:7), 6) will receive spiritual healing (see Jacob 2:8), 7) will receive “the power of God unto the convincing of men” (D&C 11:21), 8) will be made “wise unto salvation” (2 Timothy 3:15-17), 9) will be led to the “right hand of God” (Helaman 3:29-30), and 10) will “never perish” (1 Nephi 15:24). These statements confirm the truth that the word of God—preached and received by the Spirit of God—has a more “powerful effect” upon the hearts and minds of people than “anything else” (Alma 31:5; D&C 50:17-22).

Throughout His mortal ministry Christ “preached the word” with “power” and “authority” (Mark 2:2, Luke 4:32; Matthew 7:29). When a congregation in Nazareth rejected His claim of Divine Sonship (see Luke 4:22) the Savior used scripture to help them awake to their darkened and faithless position (see Luke 4:25-27). In the wilderness Christ dispelled the cunning of the Tempter by drawing upon the words of the law (see Matthew 4:1-11). When confronted by Pharisees and Sadducees on matters of the law, the Savior confounded erroneous doctrines and false traditions by appealing to the word of the Lord (Matthew 12:3-5; 19:3-6; 22:31). To strengthen the faith and enlarge the comprehension of two disciples who were “slow . . . to believe” the witness of the prophets concerning His atonement and resurrection, the Savior “expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Luke 24:17-27). These, and many other examples, illustrate the importance the Savior placed on teaching gospel truths in the service of the Father.

In summary, one fundamental implicit in the scriptures is to teach the doctrine and principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This standard was also common to the teaching aids in each time period studied in this work. Yet, during each span of time there was varying emphasis on what to teach. This undoubtedly reflects the individual and collective efforts of leaders to gain inspiration in order to address the problems of their day. However, each era retained something

of the previous period's progress. This is apparent as the suggestions have continually advanced in emphasizing and articulating those truths which lead to salvation. The Prophet Brigham Young's description of the process of inspiration seems to capture the essence of what has happened in the teaching aids for Gospel Doctrine teachers through the course of approximately a century. "The Almighty," President Young stated, "never yet found a man in mortality that was capable, at the first intimation, at the first impulse, to receive anything in a state of entire perfection."<sup>29</sup> With this in mind, it might well be said that the initial group of leaders and workers of the adult Sunday School contributed to the foundation of understanding regarding gospel teaching and it was—in the words of President Brigham Young—"for [following] generations to rear the superstructure upon it. It is a progressive—a gradual work."<sup>30</sup>

### **Fundamentals: How to Teach**

*Expressing truth under the influence of the Holy Ghost facilitates spiritual growth.* The first principle common to each period affirmed that as teachers and learners take opportunities to express gospel truths under the influence of the Holy Ghost they grow spiritually. This includes both instructors and class members teaching, explaining, and bearing testimony of gospel truths. It could also encompass sharing faith promoting experiences. In 1917 teaching aids explained that "without expression there can be no growth, no education."<sup>31</sup> In the 1920's the process was described in terms of learners developing "through their own expression."<sup>32</sup> In 1999-2009 the teaching aids noted, as class members take advantage of opportunities to "verbalize" gospel

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<sup>29</sup> Brigham Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young*, selected and arranged by John A. Widtsoe (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954), 359.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, January 1917, 24.

<sup>32</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, November 1927, 620-627.

truths the Holy Ghost confirms that expression to the soul and personal testimony is strengthened.<sup>33</sup>

This agrees with what Jesus both illustrated and taught. For example, when He appeared to the Nephites in the Americas not only did the Savior teach the people personally—expounding “all the scriptures in one”—but also gave others, such as the Twelve, the children, and the multitude, the opportunity to teach gospel truths (see 3 Nephi 19:8; 23:14; 26:14, 16, 19). In some instances during His mortal ministry Jesus invited others to teach and testify. For example:

Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, And [they] said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them (Matthew 11:2-4).

What if, in response to the disciple’s question, Jesus had simply answered, “yes”? What opportunities for growth and conversion may have been forfeited? By giving these men this assignment, Jesus invited them to do essentially two things: 1) To hear, to see, and perhaps to remember the witness they had received. 2) They were to show John; to testify to Him of what they had witnessed. In doing this, what they had heard and seen could be confirmed in their hearts and minds as the Holy Ghost attested that what they were saying was true. In this dispensation the Lord reiterated, “I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom” and again “as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another” (D&C 88:77, 118).

As the Master teacher, Christ Himself testified both in word and by example. Although, in one sense, everything the Savior said or did bore witness to the truths of the gospel, there are occurrences throughout Jesus’ teachings where He took the opportunity to verbally testify of

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<sup>33</sup> Jeffrey R. Holland, “Teaching and Learning in the Church,” *Ensign*, June 2007, 100.

specific truths. For example, Jesus often testified of His Father, His goodness, mercy, love, justice, and of the rewards that awaited the faithful:

- “Your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).
- “Thy Father . . . seeth in secret” (Matthew 6:4).
- “Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of” (Matthew 6:8).
- “Your heavenly Father will . . . forgive you” (Matthew 6:14).
- “How much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?” (Matthew 6:11).
- “In my Father’s house are many mansions” (John 14:2).
- “My Father is greater than I” (John 14:28).
- “The Father raiseth up the dead” (John 5:21).
- “The Father hath life in himself” (John 5:26).
- “Behold the fowls of the air . . . your heavenly Father feedeth them” (Matthew 6:26).
- “The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me” (John 16:27).
- “My Father . . . is greater than all (John 10:29).
- “It is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32).

In this dispensation the Lord has repeatedly commanded members of His Church to “bear record” of gospel truths (D&C 68:6; see also D&C 71:4; 112:4; 118:4).

*Christlike love has great power to prepare individuals to receive greater truth and light.*

Another concept repeated through each time period was that love is important to gospel teaching.

This principle, taught in each era, can be captured in the statement: Christlike love has great power to prepare individuals to receive greater truth and light. As an example, initial outlines for the Parents’ class in 1906 recognized “the power of love” as a significant factor in changing behavior.<sup>34</sup> In the 1970’s teaching aids associated effective teaching with loving each class member “whether or not [that individual] merits or reciprocates [the] love.”<sup>35</sup> In 1999-2009 teaching aids observed that exercising principles of “persuasion, long-suffering, gentleness and

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<sup>34</sup> “Sunday School Outlines of the Parents’ Department,” (Deseret Sunday School Union, 1906) Americana Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections Library, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 4.

<sup>35</sup> “Seek the Pure Love of Christ,” *Teaching No Greater Call* (1978), 6.



meeekness, love unfeigned, kindness, and pure knowledge” can enlarge the capacity of both teacher and learners to share and receive gospel truths.<sup>36</sup>

The association between love and effective gospel instruction is supported by scriptural teachings. In Latter-day Saint theology “charity” is defined as the “pure love of Christ” (Moroni 7:47)—“the love that Christ has for the children of men and that the children of men should have for one another; the highest, noblest, strongest kind of love, not merely affection.”<sup>37</sup> Without charity or love, gospel teaching is of no lasting value (see 1 Corinthians 13:1-3). The Apostle Paul pointed out, that though one had the ability to prophesy, the gift of understanding, surpassing knowledge or, accordingly, the aptitude to teach with great persuasion, yet lack charity that individual would find his or her efforts—measured by divine standards—fruitless (see 1 Corinthians 13:2).

Charity is a gift from God that comes through living the principles of the gospel, fostering meekness, and persevering in earnest prayer (see Moroni 8:25-26; Moroni 7:48). Christlike love is the only source of power and authority that is both righteous and enduring (see D&C 121:41-46). Christlike love can open the hearts and minds of learners to receiving gospel truths (see Alma 20:26, 22:3). In order to “assist” in the Lord’s work, gospel teachers must earnestly seek, pray for, and strive to manifest charity in all that they do (D&C 12:8).

*Keeping gospel lessons simple engenders clear comprehension.* In addition to extolling the power of love, each era embraced the principle of keeping gospel lessons simple to engender clear comprehension. In 1907, for example, one teaching aid stated, “it always was the intention that only a single principle or truth should be discussed at each session of a Parents’ Class” in

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<sup>36</sup> Love Softens Hearts,” *Teaching, No Greater Call* (1999), 31; Dallas N. Archibald, in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 34–35; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 26; see also “Love Those You Teach,” *Teaching Guidebook* (The Church of Jesus of Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City 2001), 4.

<sup>37</sup> *Guide to the Scriptures*, “Charity,” <scriptures.lds.org>, December 7, 2008.

order to keep lessons focused and clear.<sup>38</sup> In 1934 President J. Reuben Clark pleaded, “Please, teachers, do not build [the gospel] into something which is difficult and complicated. It is simplicity itself.”<sup>39</sup> Likewise, in 2009 President Henry B. Eyring urged teachers to “avoid even getting near false doctrine” by being “simple in [their] teaching.”<sup>40</sup>

Clarity is a central characteristic of heavenly communications and a significant facet of inspired teaching. Christ Himself presents truth so that it is “plain unto the understanding of the children of men, according to the plainness which is in [Him]” (1 Nephi 13:29; see also D&C 93:31). Truth presented in “plainness” provides education by which “no man can err” (2 Nephi 25:7). President Harold B. Lee’s affirmed, “Now you as teachers are not being sent out to teach new doctrine. You’re to teach the old doctrines, not so plain that they can just understand, but you must teach the doctrines of the Church so plainly that no one can misunderstand.”<sup>41</sup>

Jesus gave lucid examples of laws, doctrines and principles He taught. These examples were specific. They were clear. They were repeated. They were relevant to the audience. Because they were based on eternal truth, their application is timeless.

As Christ explained the higher law to love one’s enemies, He gave three examples that were strong enough that it would be difficult to misinterpret what He meant (see Matthew 5:44). The statement, “Love your enemies,” is basic enough for all to understand (Matthew 5:44). However, if taken by itself, it seems there is broad potential for multiple interpretations and misinterpretations. By strengthening His statement with clear emphatic examples Jesus virtually eliminated the possibility of misunderstanding. “Bless them that curse you, do good to them that

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<sup>38</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, July 1907, 438.

<sup>39</sup> J. Reuben Clark, “The Function of the Sunday School—To Preserve and Heighten an Appreciation of the Gospel.” *Instructor*, June 1934, 246.

<sup>40</sup> Henry B. Eyring, “Teaching True Doctrine,” *Ensign*, April 2009, 6.

<sup>41</sup> Harold B. Lee, “Loyalty” (address to religious educators, 8 July 1966), 9; see also *Charge to Religious Educators*, 3rd ed. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1994), 119.

hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matthew 5:44). By following these extreme examples with the statement, “love them which love you,” allows these examples to cover a spectrum of possible experiences that one might have with others in this life (Matthew 5:46). Who are men required to love? Those who love them, their worst enemies, and—by implication—everybody else in-between. Which feelings and actions merit love in return? Cursing, hatred, spiteful abuse and persecution—and, of course, anything better. These examples clearly illustrate the type of breadth Jesus intended in the law. Men should seek to love all; no matter how others feel or act toward them. By His example, Christ showed the importance of clarity in gospel teaching.

*A learning atmosphere can enhance gospel instruction.* In addition to teaching clearly, teaching aids in each era taught the importance of creating a learning atmosphere. A learning atmosphere is influenced by several factors. For example, in 1999 a learning atmosphere was described as an environment where class members: (1) edify each other through . . . participation, (2) love and help each other, and (3) desire to search for truth together.”<sup>42</sup> This principle also implies an orderly and comfortable physical environment that allows each member to participate fully; as was emphasized in each era, starting with 1906-1916.<sup>43</sup>

The Lord’s instruction to the school of the prophets validates the importance of the proper atmosphere in facilitating effective gospel teaching and learning. “Organize yourselves” the Lord stated, “prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God” (D&C 88:119). The Lord expounded on the elements of an educational environment where gospel truths can be taught and received by the Spirit:

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<sup>42</sup> “Teaching Others to Contribute to a Learning Atmosphere,” *Teaching, No Greater Call* (1999), 77.

<sup>43</sup> “Rules for the Guidance of Members of the Weber Stake Sunday School Board and the Government of Sunday Schools Throughout the Stake,” (Deseret Sunday School Union, Salt Lake City, May 20<sup>th</sup> 1908).

Therefore, cease from all your light speeches, from all laughter, from all your lustful desires, from all your pride and light-mindedness, and from all your wicked doings. Appoint among yourselves a teacher, and let not all be spokesmen at once; but let one speak at a time and let all listen unto his sayings, that when all have spoken that all may be edified of all, and that every man may have an equal privilege. See that ye love one another; cease to be covetous; learn to impart one to another as the gospel requires. Cease to be idle; cease to be unclean; cease to find fault one with another; cease to sleep longer than is needful; retire to thy bed early, that ye may not be weary; arise early, that your bodies and your minds may be invigorated. And above all things, clothe yourselves with the bond of charity, as with a mantle, which is the bond of perfectness and peace. Pray always, that ye may not faint, until I come. (D&C 88:121-126)

These scriptures reflect many requirements for instruction and worship in the house of the Lord. The temple is the ideal environment for gospel instruction.<sup>44</sup> While teachers and learners in a Sunday School classroom will not fully enjoy the conditions and atmosphere that attends temple worship, to the degree that a similar atmosphere can be achieved inspired teaching and learning will be enhanced.

*Individuals personally receive the gospel by exercising the faith to both learn and live it.* Inviting individuals to personally receive the gospel by exercising the faith to both learn and live it was a principle taught in each era. This principle was often expressed in terms of inviting participation and helping class members apply gospel truths. For example a 1930's teaching aid explained, "Learning implies doing. Effortless learning is unknown. . . . the Lord himself can teach us only as our experience grows and we make the effort to learn."<sup>45</sup> During 1999-2009 the principle was spoken of in terms of inviting "diligent learning."<sup>46</sup>

Such a description of how to progress spiritually is in harmony with several truths taught in the scriptures. For example, the Lord commends the "truly humble" who are "seeking diligently to learn wisdom and to find truth" (D&C 97:1). This acclamation informs us that the

<sup>44</sup> See Boyd K. Packer, "The Holy Temple," *Tambuli*, June 1992, 14.

<sup>45</sup> *Instructor*, October 1932, 566.

<sup>46</sup> See *Teaching No Greater Call* (1999), 60.

Lord is pleased with those who consistently place effort into acquiring truth and light. Along the same lines, the Lord has invited the members of His Church to “seek learning even by study and also by faith” (D&C 109: 7, 14; 88:118).

In order to more fully receive the approval and assistance of the Lord, one must not only study gospel truths but demonstrate the proper application of them through obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel (see 2 Timothy 2:15; Articles of Faith 1:3). The Savior highlighted the relationship between obedience and spiritual enlightenment when He stated, “He that keepeth [the Father’s] commandments receiveth truth and light, until he is glorified in truth and knoweth all things” (D&C 93:28; see also Alma 12:9). That learners need to participate in gospel learning is evident from the Lord’s explanation of the role of the learner in section 50 of the Doctrine and Covenants. Learners must *receive* “the word by the Spirit of truth;” which implies earnest desire, exertion in the learning process and obedience to existing knowledge on their part (D&C 50:21). In the meridian of time, the Savior pointed out to the apostate Jews of His day that they had missed the mark (which was ultimately eternal life) by not finding Him in the scriptures. The scriptures, He stated in penetrating rebuke, “are they which testify of me” (John 5:39). If, in the end, study of scripture in and out of the classroom does not move one to believe in and follow the Savior, relying “wholly” (2 Nephi 19:21) upon His mercy and His grace, they will fall short of eternal life. On the other hand, if the study of the word of the God goes beyond knowing *about* Him and becomes the impetus of faithfulness and obedience, an individual will come to know the Lord and in knowing Him enjoy eternal life (see John 17:3; Mosiah 5:13).

*Effective outlines aid gospel teaching and learning.* In addition to promoting diligent learning, teaching aids in each era communicated the importance of effectively teaching from an outline. This principle implied deliberate patterned preparation and teaching in a logical

organized way with brief notes or no notes at all.<sup>47</sup> In 1908, for example, it was suggested that instructors teach from a “skeleton outline” so as not to “curtail in the least the individual resourcefulness of any teacher or member.”<sup>48</sup> In 2005 the suggested pattern for preparing lessons was to “prayerfully study the lesson and the scriptures and outline how the principles might effectively be taught.”<sup>49</sup>

The Savior used outline-like patterns in His teaching. In one of several patterns utilized in the Sermon on the Mount, Christ states the law under Moses: “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment” (Matthew 5:21).<sup>50</sup> Then He states the higher law: “But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of his judgment” (JST Matthew 5:22). He gives specific examples of how the law applies in real life: “whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council” (Matthew 5:22). Jesus then reiterates the idea in slightly different terms: “whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire” (Matthew 5:22). This makes the application clear in the mind of the student and promotes retention. Jesus goes on to give a cardinal implication and invitation to action:

Therefore, if ye shall come unto me, or shall desire to come unto me, or if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; Leave thou thy gift before the altar, and go thy way unto thy brother, and first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. (JST Matthew 5:24).

The outline, in brief: 1) state the old law, 2) state the new law, 3) give specific examples, 4) offer implications, 5) invite others to act.

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<sup>47</sup> See Della Mae Rasmussen, “Don’t Lose the Whites of Their Eyes,” *Ensign*, March 1971, 66.

<sup>48</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, July 1908, 33.

<sup>49</sup> Merrill, “Spring 2005 President’s Message.”

<sup>50</sup> Jesus’ sermon at the temple (comprising 3rd Nephi 12-15:2) shows that the order in which Jesus taught concepts in the Sermon on the Mount was not the composition of Matthew or some other author but His own.

*Spiritual truths are effectively communicated in terms of previous experience.* The principle of apperception—i.e. “the process of understanding something perceived in terms of previous experience”—is basic to each era surveyed.<sup>51</sup> Speaking of this principle, Elder Boyd K. Packer observed, “When we study how Jesus taught, we might note that He employed one principle of teaching more than any other. If we also understand this principle and employ it, it will improve us as teachers of religion perhaps more than any other thing that we could learn about His teaching techniques.”<sup>52</sup> In 1938 apperception was explained as communicating the conceptual through the medium of common experiences and taking learners from the “known to the unknown.”<sup>53</sup> A teaching aid written in the 1970’s illustrated the principle of apperception by comparing the spiritual concept of repentance to the concrete example of soap.<sup>54</sup> In 1999-2009 the term “apperception” was replaced with “comparison” and was described in one instance as relating “intangible principles to familiar physical things.”<sup>55</sup>

Jesus was able to communicate that which was intangible and unknown through likening spiritual concepts to tangible, familiar and, often times, immediate objects. Note how the Savior masterfully taught others of His coming death and resurrection—something that was beyond the realm of experience and scope of comprehension of any of His hearers. “Destroy this temple,” Jesus prophesied, “and in three days I will raise it up” (John 2:19). The temple was arguably *the* principal feature of Jerusalem and would have been recognized throughout the surrounding regions as an indelible cultural icon. Particularly, it was the spiritual center in the lives of many of the Jews. Unfortunately, some missed this simple yet powerful lesson, saying, “forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?” (John 2:20). For the

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<sup>51</sup> Boyd K. Packer, *Teach Ye Diligently* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1975), 25.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *Instructor*, October 1938, 470.

<sup>54</sup> “Using Comparisons,” *Teaching, No Greater Call* (1978), 90.

<sup>55</sup> “Methods of Teaching,” *Teaching, No Greater Call* (1999), 164.

contrite, the lesson would leave a lasting impression which remained until it could be comprehended. In retrospect his disciples would comment, “this he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they remembered the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said unto them” (JST John 2:21-22).

Jesus also used familiar things to convey multifaceted concepts. In the Sermon on the Mount Christ stated to His learners, “Ye are the salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13). Jesus’ use of this household substance would have communicated significant symbolic meaning. That included the message that the role of a disciple in regard to the inhabitants of the earth was like the function of salt in daily life. The qualities of salt facilitated its use as a preservative, flavor enhancer, healing agent, and the ritual means of making covenants (see Leviticus 2:13). Jesus used daily ordinary things in a symbolic way so that additional layers of meaning could be communicated to His disciples and even revealed to them later on as they qualified for further light and knowledge through faithfulness. That revelation would have certainly included a better understanding that through establishing the “new” covenant in the hearts of people, the faithful would be preserved, healed, and find their lives greatly improved (Matthew 26:28; D&C 101:39-40). This, in turn, would improve the lives of many others as they diligently served the Master. Jesus’ use of the term “earth” in relationship to their responsibilities was an indicator of the scope of their calling. Jesus used repetition of concepts—“ye are the salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13) and “ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14)—to help reinforce the lesson He was teaching them. Jesus followed these two analogies—rife with symbolic meaning—with a plain clarification, “Whosoever shall *do* and *teach* [these commandments] . . . shall be called great in the Kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:19 [emphasis added]).



*Effective questions improve gospel teaching.* Asking effective questions was also fundamental to each time period. Although, this principle was given more attention in teaching aids as time went on, it was extant in each era. For example, in 1906 recommendations concerning effective questioning were very general—suggesting only that questions be used with “perfect freedom.”<sup>56</sup> In later decades, such as the 1970s, entire articles were provided to help teachers use questions more efficiently.<sup>57</sup>

The Savior used questions in a variety of ways in order to teach. Jesus asked questions that invited students to evaluate. “Is not the life more than meat, and the body more than raiment?” (Matthew 6:25). Jesus asked questions that helped students reflect on the consequences of their actions. “If ye love them which love you, what reward have ye?” (Matthew 5:46). Jesus used questions that appealed to reason and personal experience in order to establish truth. For example, the following question called upon common knowledge to establish faith and trust in the Father. “Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?” (Matthew 6:26). Jesus would often ask a rhetorical question followed by a statement of truth. “Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit” (Matthew 7:16-17). Jesus asked reflective questions that prompted personal application. “Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?” (Matthew 7:3). In regard to mental effort, the Savior often invited meditation, pondering and thought of His student by asking questions such as “How think ye?” or “What think ye?” followed by a parable or the subject matter at hand (Matthew 18:12; 21: 28; 22:42). These

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<sup>56</sup> “Sunday School Outlines of the Parents’ Department,” 6-7.

<sup>57</sup> See for example Jay Monson, “Questioning Questions in Gospel Teaching,” *Ensign*, April 1979, 17.

examples from the Savior’s teaching illustrate how effective questions can enhance gospel instruction.

*Inviting the influence of the Holy Ghost is essential to teach and learn spiritual truths.*

The necessity of teaching gospel truths by the power and inspiration of the Spirit was likewise common to each of the time periods surveyed in this study. For example, in speaking of the preparation necessary to instructing by inspiration, one 1920’s teaching aid observed: “Just as it is impossible for water to make its way through a dirty, clogged pipe, so it is for the Spirit to flow through a channel of unrighteous desires.”<sup>58</sup> In the 1970’s the expectation was that “the teacher’s language should be truly the language of the Spirit.”<sup>59</sup> In 2009 the Sunday School General Presidency, affirmed that “the most important and effective teaching, learning, and nourishing . . . is communicated . . . through the influence of the Holy Ghost.”<sup>60</sup>

The scriptures also establish that teaching gospel truths by the Spirit is fundamental. The things of God are “are only to be seen and understood by the power of the Holy Spirit, which God bestows on those who love him, and purify themselves before him” (D&C 76:116). The Lord informs gospel teachers, in no uncertain terms, that “the Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith; and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach” (D&C 42:14). In religious education the Lord is *the* teacher through His Spirit. The Lord teaches in many ways, including when a person speaks “by the power of the Holy Ghost” (2 Nephi 33:1; see also D&C 68:4).

Jesus taught by the power of the Spirit. As Matthew recorded He “taught them as one having authority (Matthew 7: 29). Luke noted that Christ’s “word was with *power*” (Luke 4: 32). With the assistance of the Holy Spirit, Christ “perceived [the] thoughts” of those He taught and

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<sup>58</sup> *Juvenile Instructor*, September 1928, 499.

<sup>59</sup> Ruth H. Barrus, “A Teacher’s Gift,” *Ensign*, Apr 1972, 63.

<sup>60</sup> Sunday School General Presidency, “Sunday School Auxiliary Training: Guiding Principles and Goals,” The official website of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, <http://www.lds.org/pa/ss/pdf/EnglishSundaySchoolAuxiliaryTraining.pdf>.

was thus able to meet personal needs (Luke 5: 22). Likewise, as gospel teachers are faithful they “receive the grace of God, . . . wax strong in the Spirit” and as result “teach with power and authority from God” (Mosiah 18:26).

*Adapting gospel truths to the needs of learners aids personal growth.* The final principle common to each time period centered on adapting lessons to the needs of learners. This principle by nature encompasses other guidelines of gospel instruction such as spiritual preparation and responding to divine inspiration. In 1908 teachers applied this principle by receiving various “aims” or lesson objectives from the local ward leaders then selecting the ones that were most relevant to their class members.<sup>61</sup> In 1932 it was proposed that teachers “specialize” certain aspects of each lesson to help meet the needs of individual class members in order to bring about the conversion of individual souls.<sup>62</sup> Teaching aids in the latter two periods focused on responding to inspiration while preparing and in the classroom in order to meet the spiritual needs of the individual learner.<sup>63</sup>

The importance of adapting lessons to the needs of learners is illustrated and supported by several scriptural accounts. The Savior used visual observations and the gift of discernment to perceive the spiritual needs of those He taught. He was not there just to deliver information but to meet the spiritual needs of His students. For example, after delivering His masterful sermon at the temple, Christ

*. . . cast his eyes round about on the multitude, and said unto them: Behold, ye have heard the things which I taught before I ascended to my Father; therefore, whoso remembereth these sayings of mine and doeth them, him will I raise up at the last day. And it came to pass that when Jesus had said these words he*

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<sup>61</sup> “Rules for the Guidance of Members of the Weber Stake Sunday School Board and the Government of Sunday Schools Throughout the Stake,” (Deseret Sunday School Union, Salt Lake City, May 20<sup>th</sup> 1908).

<sup>62</sup> *Instructor*, August 1932, 447.

<sup>63</sup> See for example Rasmussen, “Don’t Lose the Whites of Their Eyes,” 66; Holland, “Teaching and Learning in the Church,” 100.

*perceived* that there were some among them who marveled, and wondered what he would concerning the law of Moses (3 Nephi 15:1-2 [emphasis added]).

As a result the Savior adapted the next portion of His teachings to specifically address that question (see 3 Nephi 15:3-10). Likewise, after announcing that He would return to the Father and show Himself “unto the lost tribes of Israel” the Savior “*cast his eyes round about again* on the multitude, and beheld they were in tears, and did look steadfastly upon him as if they would ask him to tarry a little longer with them” (3 Nephi 17:5 [emphasis added]). Consequently, Christ spent time healing the multitude, praying with and for them, administering the sacrament and then extending His sermon before departing (see 3 Nephi 17-18). This principle can also be seen operating in accounts where the Lord’s servants were teaching; as in the example of Alma adapting his attention and his message to impoverished Zoramites on the hill Onidah (see Alma 32-33). During the course of his teaching Alma took time to evaluate the comprehension and understanding of his hearers and then continued to expound and clarify accordingly (see Alma 33:1, see also chapter 33 generally).

*Summary.* In summary, there were ten principles which were fundamental to both the scriptures and to the teaching aids in each era surveyed in this study. Those principles are:

1. Expressing truth under the influence of the Holy Ghost facilitates spiritual growth.
2. Christlike love has great power to prepare individuals to receive greater truth and light.
3. Keeping gospel lessons simple engenders clear comprehension.
4. A learning atmosphere can enhance gospel instruction.
5. Individuals personally receive the gospel by exercising the faith to both learn and live it.
6. Effective outlines aid gospel teaching and learning.
7. Spiritual truths are effectively communicated in terms of previous experience.
8. Effective questions improve gospel teaching.
9. Inviting the influence of the Holy Ghost is essential to teach and learn spiritual truths.
10. Adapting gospel truths to the needs of learners aids personal growth.

It is noted that this summary does not constitute a definitive or exhaustive list of principles fundamental to gospel teaching. However, these principles do represent some of the most important ideas that have been emphasized repeatedly in both the word of the Lord and in the teaching aids provided for Gospel Doctrine teachers in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

This study has been limited to looking at teaching aids which offer merely a glimpse of the much greater work that the Lord has accomplished through the men and women who have labored in the Sunday School cause. While this study may have included some historical aspects of the Sunday School work in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, a comprehensive history of the Sunday School to the present day has yet to be completed. This thesis has attempted to examine the idea of how effective teaching has been articulated through the years. As a result of the effort, it seems apparent to the author that there is need for further study on how helpful a given teaching aid is to lay members of the Church who serve as teachers. This would include studying formats of presentation, effective length of material, how aids translate into other languages, and so forth. More specifically, similar investigation could address the question of “How effective are teaching aids in areas of the world where the Church is relatively new?” Because there are tremendous resources for teaching improvement which have been refined over the years, there is need for additional investigation on how to get these materials into a format that they will be more widely utilized by the general membership of the Church.

## Conclusion

Is there evidence of an unfolding of understanding concerning what constitutes effective gospel teaching and the teacher's divine commission? The findings of this study suggest that the answer is "yes." Elder Bruce R. McConkie made a statement in the 1970's inviting teachers "to teach the principles of the gospel, out of the standard works, by the power of the Holy Ghost, always applying the teachings to [the learner's] needs, and to testify that what [they] have taught is true."<sup>64</sup> If that statement represents a teacher's divine commission, then it is reasonable to assume that the understanding of that commission has been expanded in years that followed. Other servants of the Lord have emphasized additional principles of teaching such as to "seek learning by faith," "love those you teach," and "to bear witness of . . . promised blessings" after an invitation is given.<sup>65</sup> These principles may share an equally important place in the teacher's divine commission. It is the belief of the Latter-day Saints that the Lord Himself will establish His truth and His standards through His servants. As time has progressed, it seems clear, that the Lord has clarified, and will continue to reveal His standard for gospel teaching. It seems apparent that the Lord has followed and will continue to pursue the pattern described by the Prophet Brigham Young:

The laws that the Lord has given are not fully perfect, because the people could not receive them in their perfect fulness; but they can receive a little here and a little there, a little today and a little tomorrow, a little more next week, and a little more in advance of that next year, if they make a wise improvement upon every little they receive; if they do not, they are left in the shade, and the light which the Lord reveals will appear darkness to them, and the kingdom of heaven will travel on and leave them groping. Hence, if we wish to act upon the fulness of the knowledge that the Lord designs to reveal, little by little, to the inhabitants of the earth, we must improve upon every little as it is revealed.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Bruce R. McConkie, "The Teacher's Divine Commission," *Ensign*, April 1979, 24.

<sup>65</sup> David A. Bednar, "Seek Learning By Faith," *Ensign*, September 2007, 60; "Teach As Jesus Taught," *Teaching Guidebook*, 4. Russell T. Osguthorpe, "Teaching Helps Save Lives," *Ensign*, November 2009, 15.

<sup>66</sup> Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young*, 4.

Therefore, as the Lord continues to unfold His divine standard for gospel teachers it is imperative that members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints seek to “improve upon” each principle of inspired teaching “as it is revealed.”<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

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