

Lessons on the Family Proclamation

By Jennifer Lund

Julie Beck, Relief Society General President stated, “This generation will be called upon to defend the doctrine of the family as never before. If they don’t know the doctrine, they can’t defend it” (“Teaching the Doctrine of the Family,” March 2011 *Ensign*). Her counsel along with that of many prophets and apostles urging us to teach the Family Proclamation to our children inspired me to do just that. This is a record of what I taught my children and includes ideas for special activities to help the principles sink in for children. I give credit to the Lord for His inspiration and guidance in this endeavor. I hope your family will benefit as well!

Lesson 1: Marriage between a Man and a Woman is Ordained of God (wedding photos, finger puppets)

Lesson 2: The Family is Central to His Plan (Plan of Salvation visuals, family cheer)

Lesson 3: All Human Beings Are Created in the Image of God (silhouettes)

Lesson 4: Gender is Essential (cooperative relay)

Lesson 5: Obtaining a Body (play dough, gingerbread or cookie dough)

Lesson 6: We Have a Divine Destiny (popcorn)

Lesson 7: Families Are Eternal (memory game, family pictures)

Lesson 8: Temples Unite Families Eternally (sugar cube temples)

Lesson 9: Multiply and Replenish the Earth (paper doll chains)

Lesson 10: The Sacred Powers of Procreation (plant bean seeds)

Lesson 11: Husband & Wife Love and Care For Each Other (candy bar game, credit cards)

Lesson 12: Parents Have a Sacred Duty (mystery objects, rocking time)

Lesson 13: Children Love and Serve One Another (candles, ice cream)

Lesson 14: Teach Children to Obey the Commandments and the Law (marble, fly a kite)

Lesson 15: The Family Is Ordained of God (cookies)

Lesson 16: Marriage Is Essential To His Eternal Plan (keys parable, bride & groom wood dolls)

Lesson 17: Birth Within the Bonds of Marriage (family craft)

Lesson 18: Founded Upon the Teachings of Jesus Christ (picture of Christ on rocks)

Lesson 19: Faith and Prayer (prayer rocks, PJ’s pillow, scripture blocks)

Lesson 20: Repentance and Forgiveness (coloring page)

Lesson 21: Respect, Love and Compassion (The Good Samaritan)

Lesson 22: Work and Wholesome Recreational Activities (work project and game)

Lesson 23: Fathers Preside, Provide, and Protect (Path of Manhood)

Lesson 24: Mothers Nurture (Path of Womanhood)

Lesson 25: Equal Partners / Extended Families Can Support (family tree)

Lesson 26: We Are Accountable Before God (outlet covers)

Lesson 27: Disintegration of the Family Brings Calamities (calamity feet)

Lesson 28: Strengthen Families, Strengthen Society (building blocks)

General Preparation:

Obtain enough copies of the Proclamation on the Family for each member of your family to have and use during the lessons. Keep them in a folder for repeated, daily use. Invite children to read each day’s portion of the proclamation.

The material presented, particularly talks and quotations, are often much more lengthy than young children can digest. I have kept the material there for your benefit. You can read through the lessons in advance and pick out the most important parts and paraphrase the rest.

Alphabetical Listing of Songs Used

*If the song is found in both the Hymnal and Children's Songbook, it is only listed under Hymns.
The lessons that use each song are listed in parentheses before each song title.*

Hymns

- (9) "Dearest Children, God is Near You" Hymn 96
- (1, 2, 7, 15, 27, 28) "Families Can Be Together Forever" Hymn 300, CS, 188
- (20) "Home Can Be a Heaven on Earth" Hymn 298
- (3, 4) "I Am a Child of God" Hymn 301
- (18) "I Believe in Christ" Hymn 134
- (5) "I Know My Father Lives" Hymn 302
- (28) "Let Us All Press On" Hymn 243
- (26) "Let Us Oft Speak Kind Words" Hymn 232
- (26) "Lord, I Would Follow Thee" Hymn 220
- (11, 21) "Love at Home" Hymn 294
- (11, 13) "Love One Another" Hymn 308
- (6) "O My Father" Hymn 292
- (22) "Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel" Hymn 252
- (14) "Teach Me to Walk in the Light" Hymn 304, CS, 177

Children's Songbook

- (19) "A Child's Prayer" CS, 12
- (17) "A Happy Family" CS, 198
- (14) "Choose the Right Way" CS, 160
- (23) "Daddy's Homecoming" CS, 210
- (19) "Faith" CS, 96
- (23) "Fathers" CS, 209
- (25) "Grandmother" CS, 200
- (20) "Help Me, Dear Father" CS, 99
- (10) "Home" CS, 192
- (25) "I Have a Family Tree" CS, 199
- (3) "I Lived in Heaven" CS, 4
- (8, 16) "I Love to See the Temple" CS, 95
- (18) "I'm Trying to Be Like Jesus" CS, 78
- (14) "Keep the Commandments" CS, 146
- (13) "Kindness Begins With Me" CS, 145
- (12) "Love Is Spoken Here" CS, 190
- (24) "Mother Dear" CS, 206
- (24) "Mother, I Love You" CS, 207
- (18) "The Wise Man and the Foolish Man" CS, 281
- (25) "When Grandpa Comes" CS, 201
- (22) "When We're Helping" CS, 198
- (21) "Where Love Is" CS, 138

Extra Song

- "I Will Follow God's Plan" CS, 164

Helpful talks to read:

“For Time and All Eternity,” Elder Boyd K. Packer, *Ensign* Nov. 1993.

“The Latter-day Saint Concept of Marriage,” President Hugh B. Brown (1883-1975), First Counselor in the First Presidency, *Ensign* June 2011.

“Strengthening the Family” Series from the *Ensign* (October 2004 – December 2005).

Lesson 45: “The Family Is Ordained of God,” *Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual*, (1999)

Lesson 1: “The Family is Central to the Creator’s Plan”, “Part A: Strengthening marriages” Marriage and Family Relations Participant’s Study Guide.

“Faith and Families” Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, *Ensign* March 2007.

“Strengthening Families: Our Sacred Duty” by Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles *Ensign* May 1999.

“The Family Under Siege: The Role of Man and Woman” by Bruce K. Satterfield of BYU-Idaho June 7, 2001.

“Teaching the Doctrine of the Family” by Sister Julie B. Beck, August 4, 2009 Seminaries and Institutes of Religion Satellite Broadcast.

“The Pattern of Our Parentage” by Boyd K. Packer.

Chapter 14: Preparing for an Eternal Marriage and Family,” *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: David O. McKay*

Other Resources:

Perform “Women in the Scriptures Strengthened their Families” as an introduction or conclusion to the lessons.

http://www.sugardoodle.net/joomla/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4202&Itemid=5

For Teenagers (from Shannon Foster – SugarDoodle): Use “The Family Proclamation” fill-in-the-blanks. “I would hand this out and have the young women fill in the blanks the best they could. Then, as you discuss what words they put, and the words that are correct – the doctrine found in the YW lesson can naturally come up. I would definitely look up some of these words and be prepared with some good definitions – this kind of activity will get the girls to look more deeply into the Proclamation and they may have a few more questions.”

http://www.sugardoodle.info/joomla/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=7380&Itemid=200001

The Family Proclamation (see next page).

Source: http://lds.org/Static%20Files/PDF/Manuals/TheFamily_AProclamationToTheWorld_35538_eng.pdf

THE FAMILY

A PROCLAMATION TO THE WORLD

THE FIRST PRESIDENCY AND COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES
OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

WE, THE FIRST PRESIDENCY and the Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children.

ALL HUMAN BEINGS—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.

IN THE PREMORTAL REALM, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshipped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize their divine destiny as heirs of eternal life. The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God's commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife.

WE DECLARE the means by which mortal life is created to be divinely appointed. We affirm the sanctity of life and of its importance in God's eternal plan.

HUSBAND AND WIFE have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. "Children are an heritage of the Lord" (Psalm 127:3). Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness,

to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, and to teach them to love and serve one another, observe the commandments of God, and be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. Husbands and wives—mothers and fathers—will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations.

THE FAMILY is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity. Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities. By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation. Extended families should lend support when needed.

WE WARN that individuals who violate covenants of chastity, who abuse spouse or offspring, or who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God. Further, we warn that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.

WE CALL UPON responsible citizens and officers of government everywhere to promote those measures designed to maintain and strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society.

This proclamation was read by President Gordon B. Hinckley as part of his message at the General Relief Society Meeting held September 23, 1995, in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Lesson 1: Marriage Between a Man and a Woman is Ordained of God

"We, the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God..."

Teaching Aids: Picture of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve, copies of the family proclamation for each family member, crayons/colored pencils, family toys, pictures from your wedding, picture of Adam and Eve, scriptures for all readers

Sing: "Families Can Be Together Forever" Hymn 300 or CS, 188

Show the proclamation. A proclamation is an official, public announcement of great importance, a clear declaration of something. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" was presented by President Gordon B. Hinckley at the general Relief Society meeting in September 1995.

Show them a picture of the 1st Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve. The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles prepared this document. *Have a child point out the First Presidency. Have another child point to the Quorum of the 12.* Why do you think these prophets of the Lord felt it was important to write out a proclamation about the family to the world?

Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ tell these men what we need to know and understand in our times. The family is under attack. Prophets have warned us about the last days.

Look up Isaiah 5:20 and have someone read it: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" Isaiah 5:20.

When President Hinckley presented the proclamation, he explained, "The world we are in is a world of turmoil, of shifting values. ... With so much of deception concerning standards and values, with so much of allurements and enticement to take on the slow stain of the world, we have felt to warn and forewarn" (*Stand Strong against the Wiles of the World, Ensign* November 1995, 99-100). Many people in the world today do not believe the principles in this proclamation. Some even think these teachings are bad. But these words come from God. We are going to learn about them so we can all know the principles and recognize when the world is calling evil good and good evil, and know the truth.

Pass out a copy of the Proclamation to each family member. Have them choose a crayon or colored pencil and highlight the part taught today. Read the first part in unison:



"We, the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God..."

Ordained = ordered officially, prescribed (authorized, recommended as beneficial or stated authoritatively as a rule that an action should be carried out), determined, decreed (an official order issued by a legal authority).

This means that Heavenly Father has officially decreed that marriage is between a man and a woman and that their marriage should be carried out, and that it is beneficial for them, their children, and society. Marriage is not just a man-made institution. It is ordained of God.

In our world, there are men that want to marry other men, and women that want to marry other women. These people are called “homosexuals” or “Gays and Lesbians.” This is *not* ordained of God. The correct and true form of marriage was formed by God.

Show picture of Adam and Eve. In the Garden of Eden marriage was instituted or founded by God. Look up and read Genesis 2:18, 24: “And the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. ... Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:18, 24). Discuss what this means.

Jesus also taught about marriage. Look up Matthew 19:4–6. When Jesus departed from Galilee and came into the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan, a great multitude followed Him, and the Pharisees questioned Him regarding divorce. Have someone read Matthew 19:4–6: “And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” We must not allow the world to destroy marriage between a man and a woman.



Bring out the family toy figures. Ask children to pick out the two people that make up a marriage ordained of God. *Show your wedding picture* and say again, “Marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God.” Have the children repeat it. Explain how happy you are to be married.



Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “Two compelling doctrinal reasons help us to understand why eternal marriage is essential to the Father’s plan.

“Reason 1: The natures of male and female spirits complete and perfect each other, and therefore men and women are intended to progress together toward exaltation. ...

[Ask: are boys and girls the same? No, they are different in many ways, and this is a wonderful thing. When you grow up, the differences between men and women compliment and complete each other and when you get married, you help each other progress and become more like God.]

“Reason 2: By divine design, both a man and a woman are needed to bring children into mortality and to provide the best setting for the rearing and nurturing of children” (Elder David A. Bednar, “Marriage Is Essential to His Eternal Plan,” *Ensign*, June 2006).

[You have to have a man and a woman to make a baby. This is the way Heavenly Father designed us. Ask: “Are Dad and I the same?” No. Fathers and mothers both have characteristics that bless children in different and essential ways.]

We hope that as you children grow up that you will prepare to be married in the temple and that you will get ready to be the best husband or wife, dad or mom that you can be. The decisions that you make now will affect your decision to marry and start a family in the future.

Elder Russell M. Nelson said, “The subject of marriage is debated across the world, where various arrangements exist for conjugal living. My purpose in speaking out on this topic is to declare, as an Apostle of the Lord, that marriage between a man and a woman is sacred—it is ordained of God. I also assert the virtue of a temple marriage. It is the highest and most enduring type of marriage that our Creator can offer to His children” (Russell M. Nelson, “Celestial Marriage,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 92–95).

Bear your testimony of this principle.

Activity Ideas:

Give each child a *Kit Kat* since each candy bar has two sticks – one for a man and one for a woman.



Show the children your wedding album and/or scrapbook or pictures of your courtship and marriage. Tell them how you met, courted, and were married.



Make an “I Love to See the Temple” craft with a bride and groom finger puppets. My version is pictured on the left. I made up my own very rough pattern. It has a pocket in the back to hold the dolls. You could also make a 3D version with a house on the other side.

This idea came from *madebybedtimestales.com*. Their dolls (not finger puppets) are about 2” tall. I believe you can purchase a set or a pattern from them: www.etsy.com/listing/81751398/pattern-love-to-see-the-temple-softie.

Extras:

Print a small coloring book for young kids. Only hand out the pages for today’s discussion: http://www.sugardoodle.net/joomla/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=5175

From “Strengthening the Family: Within the Bonds of Matrimony” Ensign August 2005:
Because of pressures on government to permit marriages between two men or two women, in July 2004 the Church released a statement in support of defining marriage as the lawful union of a man and a woman. This definition is far more than a question of civil rights. Protecting marriage is a matter of deep commitment to an institution established by God our Father. This commitment shapes the moral climate in which mothers and fathers rear their children. If governments were to alter the moral climate by legitimizing same-sex marriages, gender confusion would increase, particularly among children, and this would further blur the line between good and evil (see Isa. 5:20).

Lesson 2: The Family is Central to His Plan

“...and that the family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children.”

Teaching Aids: copies of the proclamation, crayons/colored pencils, toy family figures, picture of your family, plan of salvation visuals

Opening Song “Families Can Be Together Forever” CS, 188.

Read the first paragraph of the family proclamation, emphasizing today’s portion. Have each child highlight this on their own copy of the proclamation.

Ask: What does “central” mean? Central = the center, the middle, of the greatest importance; essential.

Show a picture of your family. Heavenly Father planned for you to come to earth and belong to a family. He knew that you needed a loving family to help you grow and learn how to return to Him someday. He knows that being in a family and then creating a family of your own will help you experience joy and grow to become like Him.

From “Strengthening the Family: The Family is Central to the Creator’s Plan,” Ensign December 2004: “Birth into a family was the way God chose to send His spirit children to earth. Marriage and family relationships are the central means He has prepared to achieve His purposes. We learn the lessons of life, not in an Edenic garden, but in a context where we face challenge, opposition, hardship, and temptation (see 2 Ne. 2:11).” Thus, we should not fear the troubles of our day but should view them as an environment in which faith can be strengthened and obedience refined. As Elder Joe J. Christensen, former member of the Presidency of the Seventy, observed, “How many truly great individuals do you know who never had to struggle?” The family is the primary support structure in God’s plan to help us resist evil, overcome weakness, and work out our salvation. For this reason we should do all we can to strengthen the family in these days of confusion and opposition.”

Using toy figures, ask the children to make a family similar to yours. Express your love for your family.



Use visual aids to teach the plan of salvation. (www.theredheadedhostess.com has some phenomenal free printables.) Point out how family is central to Heavenly Father’s plan: As we welcomed each baby into our home, you each gained a body, which you needed to become like Heavenly Father and progress. Living in a family on earth with brothers and sisters, a father and mother helps us learn and grow. We learn how to share, love, forgive, etc. As parents, we teach you the gospel of Jesus Christ. Each of you can gain your own testimonies. When you are 8 you can choose to be baptized. When you grow up, you can choose to be married in the temple and create families of your own. When you are a parent, you will learn even more how to be more like Jesus. Raising your own children helps you learn how to be more like your Heavenly Parents. In temples, families are sealed together forever and we are linked to the great big family of Heavenly Father. Being in a family and having families of our own is central to Heavenly Father’s plan.



Sing “Home” CS, 192. *Explain:* This song teaches important truths about a home.
Abound = great in quantity/number; to be filled with

Home is where the heart is (touch your heart)

And warmth and love abound.

Home is where warm, circling arms

Go all the way around. (hold your arms out in front of you, then bring them close and hug yourself)

*Home is where there’s father,
With strength and wisdom true.*

*Home is where there’s mother
And all the children too.*

*Home is where our Father,
Who dwells in heav’n above,
Guides us in the way we live
And lets us feel his love.*

Bear testimony of the blessings of a home.

Activity Ideas:

1. Make up a fun family cheer – even just a way to yell your name. Practice it a few times and make it part of your family’s routine.

2. Play “Plan of Salvation Croquet” (Idea from Becky Dastrup – Sugardoodle.net). Label the wire hoops with: Pre-earth life, Birth, Earth Life, Death, Spirit World, Resurrection, Final Judgment, Telesstial, Terrestrial, and Celestial Kingdoms. Before the game review each part of the plan. http://www.sugardoodle.net/joomla/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2371&Itemid=5

3. Have each child make their own ceiling Plan of Salvation mobile. Idea from jerrysgirls.typepad.com. See this link:
http://jerrysgirls.typepad.com/the_hatchling_place/2008/11/ceiling-plan-of-salvation-part-2.html

4. Make Plan of Salvation Cookies. Make sugar cookies in various shapes and frosting of several colors. Let the children decorate each part. Idea from Wendy Keeler on Sugardoodle.net. See this link: http://www.sugardoodle.net/joomla/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3058&Itemid=5

5. Paint your family out of pegs along with a paper mâché house.

Supplies:

paper mâché house

enough pegs for each person in your family

Acrylic paint

Paintbrushes

Cups of water

Napkins or paper towels

Newspaper

Mod Podge (optional)

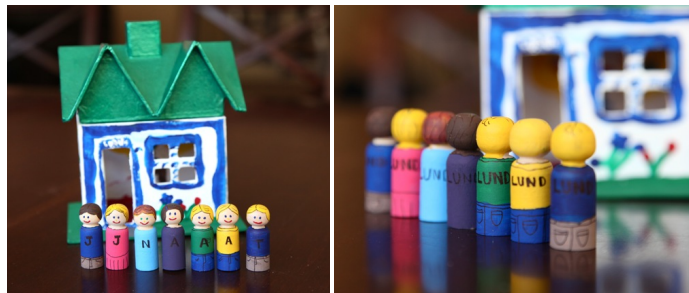
Cover-ups or old clothes for the kids



Lay out newspaper to protect your working surface. Let each child paint their own doll. Help youngsters if needed. Mod Podge over them to seal, if desired.



You can also paint your own if you want a really “pretty” set. Add features with a fine tip permanent marker.



Lesson 3: All Human Beings Are Created in the Image of God

“All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny.”

Teaching Aids: Picture of The First Vision showing Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ

Opening Song: “I Lived in Heaven” CS, 4

Read today’s part from the proclamation, explaining words and meanings as you go. Then have everyone repeat it and highlight their copy.

Image = the representation of the external form of a person/thing; a visible impression; likeness; a person or thing that closely resembles another

Beloved = dearly loved

Divine = godly; like God or of God

Nature = the basic or inherent features of something; the innate or essential qualities or character of a person; inborn or hereditary characteristics as an influence on or determinant of personality

Destiny = the events that will necessarily happen to a particular person in the future

From “Strengthening the Family: Created in the Image of God, Male and Female” *Ensign* January 2005:
Before we came to earth did we have a body? What were we then? (Spirits) “Little has been revealed about the process by which we became spirit children of God, but we understand that heavenly parents organized spirit bodies for us and that these spirit bodies housed intelligence, or light and truth, with the ability to act for ourselves (D&C 93:30). Agency, the ability and liberty of intelligent beings to choose between one course and another—and to be accountable for those decisions and actions—is an eternal principle.”

Some people on earth believe that God is only a spirit. Through modern day prophets, we know that Heavenly Father is a personage with flesh and bones. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret. If the veil were rent today, and the great God who holds this world in its orbit... was to make himself visible, ...you would see him like a man in form—like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man; for Adam was created in the very fashion, image and likeness of God, and received instruction from, and walked, talked and conversed with Him, as one man talks and communes with another.”

“No greater ideal has been revealed,” taught President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “than the supernal truth that we are the children of God, and we differ, by virtue of our creation, from all other living things. (See Moses 6:8–10, 22, 59.) No idea has been more *destructive* of happiness, no philosophy has produced more sorrow, more heartbreak and mischief; no idea has done more to destroy the family than the idea that we are not the offspring of God, only advanced animals, compelled to yield to every carnal urge” (“Strengthening the Family: Created in the Image of God, Male and Female” *Ensign* January 2005).

We are children of God. How much do you think Dad and Mom love you? Then how much do you think your Heavenly Father loves you? Testify that you know that Heavenly Father loves your children. We are His sons and daughters, created in the image of our heavenly parents.

Knowing that our bodies are created like God's body helps us to understand how wonderful, beautiful and special our bodies are. We need to care for our bodies both the outside of our bodies and what we put on the insides of our bodies.

Bear your testimony of our relationship with God as our Father and that we are created in His image.

Closing Song: "I Am a Child of God" Hymn 301

Activity Ideas:

Make silhouettes of each member of the family. As the children look at their silhouettes they can be reminded that they are created in the image of God.



The easiest way is to photograph each subject, print the image, cut it out, then trace it onto black paper, cut again and glue onto white cardstock.

For the frames pictured above, I cut 4 strips of black vinyl: two 11x1.25" and two 10.75x1.25". Square the corners and tape together. A little glue on the open edge (on the front side) helps appearance. Repeat with all four corners. Center the silhouette and tape on the back. Measure 28" of ribbon, tie a bow, and hang 4.5" from the frame. Tape edges of ribbon down. Hang.



For fun, you can put some butcher paper on the wall and have the children take turns tracing each other the old-fashioned way with a lamp as the light source in a darkened room.

Lesson 4: Gender is Essential

“Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.”

Sing: “I Am a Child of God” Hymn 301

Read today’s line from The Family Proclamation. Gender means you are a boy or a girl.

From “Strengthening the Family: Created in the Image of God, Male and Female” Ensign January 2005: Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught that our creation as male and female children of God “was done spiritually in your premortal existence when you lived in the presence of your Father in Heaven. Your gender existed before you came to earth.”

When you were born, you were the same gender as your spirit was before, and you will always be that gender (even after you die) because gender is eternal.

Gender is part of our eternal identity and is necessary for our eternal progression. President Packer explained: “The plan of happiness requires the righteous union of male and female, man and woman, husband and wife. ...A body patterned after the image of God was created for Adam, and he was introduced into the Garden. At first, Adam was alone. ...But alone, he could not fulfill the purposes of his creation. No other man would do. Neither alone nor with other men could Adam progress. Nor could Eve with another woman. It was so then. It is so today. Eve, an help meet, was created. Marriage was instituted.”

Talk about the awesomeness of boys and girls. Make sure to emphasize that neither gender is *better* than the other, but that they compliment each other. What is different or special about each gender and how does that contribute to a happy family unit?

Boys:

Big muscles – they use these to work to provide for their families and to protect them.

Priesthood – they use this to bless their families and serve others.

Logical – they have a way to understand issues clearly and less emotionally so make great guides and advisors (in their role to preside over family).

Girls:

Have babies – girls have the special privilege of carrying babies inside them to bring children into families

Emotional and loving – moms are good at nurturing or taking care of us, soothing our owies, being happy for our achievements and being interested in all we do.

Creative/Homemaking talents like cooking, organizing, sewing, etc. make home a comfortable, happy, healthy enjoyable place to be. A woman’s talents can be used and developed to the fullest in her home with her children – the best career.

Activity Ideas:

Celebrate the differences between boys and girls that lend to creating a happy home (marriage & family).

1. Have a cooperative relay with boys in one line and girls in another. Put a pile of clothes at one end of the room. On the girls' side put a big dress (easy to pull on), necklace, high heels, and a purse. On the boys' side put a suit jacket, tie, church shoes, and a laptop bag, briefcase or toolbox. Put a picture of a temple there as well as a baby and a blanket.



Have each team run toward the clothes, jumping through or climbing over obstacles to represent baptism, education, and mission. When they reach the temple have them don the clothes, (which represents becoming a man or woman). If one partner beats the other, they wait for the other (they can help the other get dressed, too).



Next, the boy and girl work together to wrap the baby in the blanket. (Take a picture), then put the items all back where they were. Run back to start and tag the next two people.



2. Choose an activity that is especially fun for boys and one that's more specific to girls.
3. Video your children singing "I am a Child of God" and let them watch it.

Lesson 5: Obtaining a Body

"In the premortal realm, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshiped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body..."

Teaching Aids: picture of pre-mortal Council in Heaven, plan of salvation cutouts from lesson 2

Sing: "I Know My Father Lives" Hymn 302 (both verses)

Read today's part from the Family Proclamation and have children highlight their copy.

Have a child pick out the first picture from the plan of salvation cutouts. Review: "What did Heavenly Father have that we did *not* have before we came to earth?" (a body) We really wanted to have a body, so Heavenly Father provided a way for us to get bodies. He created Adam and Eve – a man and a woman – who got married. Together, they brought children into the world.

Each of us used to be only a spirit without a body. When did we get our bodies? (Birth.)

From "Strengthening the Family: Our Progress toward Perfection," Ensign February 2005:

In our pre-mortal life we rejoiced at the opportunity to come to earth, obtain a physical body, and gain mortal experience. We knew this was the only way we could become like our perfect Father in Heaven and eventually enjoy the kind of life He lives—eternal life.

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) explained: "Nothing should be held in greater sacredness and honor than the covenant by which the spirits of men, the offspring of God in the spirit, are privileged to come into this world in mortal tabernacles. ... The greatest punishment ever given was proclaimed against Lucifer and his angels. To be denied the privilege of mortal bodies forever is the greatest curse of all. These spirits have no progression, no hope of resurrection and eternal life! ... Spirits cannot be made perfect without a body of flesh and bones. This body and its spirit are brought to immortality and blessings of salvation through the resurrection. ... In no other way, other than through birth into this life and the resurrection, can spirits become like our Eternal Father."

We are so lucky to have bodies!

Activity Ideas:

1. Make bodies out of play dough.
2. Have the children make bodies out of sugar cookie dough. Decorate them with M&Ms.
3. Make and eat gingerbread men. Have the children add raisin eyes and noses.
4. Trace the kids' bodies on butcher paper. Have the kids color in their features with crayons.



Lesson 6: We Have a Divine Destiny

“...and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize their divine destiny as heirs of eternal life.”

Teaching Aids: air popcorn popper, popcorn kernels, (butter and salt), a hand-held mirror

Sing: “O My Father” Hymn 292

Have a child read today’s proclamation portion.

Hold a popcorn kernel and ask: What is this? What will it turn into if you heat it up? Isn’t it crazy that something so small and hard can turn into something so big and fluffy?

Heavenly Father is already perfect – like white, fluffy popcorn. He wants you to become just like Him. But we can’t do that without work. If the kernels just sat here, would they ever change into popcorn? What do they need? (heat) Just like heat for the corn, Heavenly Father gives us experiences in life to help us become like Him.

What is an heir? Heir = a person legally entitled to the property or rank of another person; a person inheriting and continuing the legacy of a predecessor

What does Heavenly Father have that we want? (Immortality, perfection, knowledge, etc.) As His children, He wants us to have all that He has. He wants us to have eternal life.

Can you imagine what you’ll look like when you grow up? *Have the kids look in a mirror.* Do you see any similarities between yourself and Mom and Dad? *Mention some characteristics the kids got from you and your spouse.* Just as we are like our earthly parents, and can grow up to be like them, we are also like our *heavenly* parents. Heavenly Father sent you here to earth so you can become like Him and develop His spiritual characteristics and attributes. *Express your love for your children and your confidence that each of them can become like God.*

Popcorn lesson idea from:

http://www.sugardoodle.net/joomla/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3926&Itemid=429

Activity Idea:

Pop popcorn in an air popper so the kids can watch the kernels turn into popcorn. Enjoy together and remind the children of their great potential – their divine destiny – to become like Heavenly Father and inherit eternal life.



The above SugarDoodle link also contains a cute printable for brown paper bags. This is totally unnecessary, but cute.



Extra:

From: “Strengthening the Family: Our Progress toward Perfection,” *Ensign* February 2005. Although some of God’s children need only to obtain a physical body and are then called back to His presence, the rest of us come to earth for additional reasons: to learn faith, to develop Christ-like qualities in the face of opposition, and to be tried and tested. President Marion G. Romney (1897–1988), First Counselor in the First Presidency, taught: “In our upward climb, this mortal experience through which we are now passing is a necessary step. To obtain perfection, we had to leave our pre-earth home and come to earth. During the transfer, a veil was drawn over our spiritual eyes, and the memory of our premortal experiences was suspended. In the Garden of Eden, God endowed us with moral agency and, as it were, left us here on our own between the forces of good and evil to be proved—to see if, walking by faith, we would rise to our high potentiality by doing ‘all things whatsoever the Lord [our] God shall command [us]’ “ (Abr. 3:25).

When we speak of reaching our eternal potential, the ideal we have in mind is our Eternal Father. Those who inherit eternal life enter that high and holy station as married couples sealed by the power of the priesthood and enjoy relationships that endure beyond the grave. “That same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us there,” taught the Prophet Joseph Smith, “only it will be coupled with eternal glory, which glory we do not now enjoy” (D&C 130:2). Although we will certainly rejoice in the eternal fellowship of close friends, the associations that will mean most to us are family relationships that have been sealed eternally in the house of the Lord through priesthood ordinances.

This sealing does not happen automatically. We have the responsibility to search out our ancestors and employ the sealing power vicariously for them in the house of the Lord. President Brigham Young (1801–77) said: “We are called ... to redeem the nations of the earth. The fathers cannot be made perfect without us; we cannot be made perfect without the fathers. There must be this chain in the holy Priesthood; it must be welded together from the latest generation that lives on the earth back to Father Adam, to bring back all that can be saved and placed where they can receive salvation and a glory in some kingdom.” (“Strengthening the Family: Our Progress toward Perfection,” *Ensign* February 2005.)

Lesson 7: Families Are Eternal

"The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave."

Teaching Aids: Pictures of loved ones who have passed on or extended family photos

Sing: "Families Can Be Together Forever" Hymn 300 or CS, 188

Read today's Proclamation sentence. What does "beyond the grave" mean? This means that our family relationships will last after death! If anyone in our family dies, we will still be a family, and we will be together after we die.

Show the kids pictures of their grandparents and great-grandparents. (Pull them one-by-one out of a box.) For fun, use pictures of these relatives from when they were younger. (The kids may be surprised at how these relatives looked!) After the kids identify each person and to whom they belong (whose mother or father they are, etc.) ask if this person is alive or has passed away. Put all those who have passed away on your left and all those still living on your right. Express your love for all of your family members, and how your love continues for each person even after they die, and their love for us continues as well. Bear testimony that you know you can all be together again some day.



Activity Ideas:

1. Make (ahead of time) a memory game using photos of various family members. Include those that have passed on. Instead of playing Memory, have the kids match up family groups or couples. Using these cards can help remind the children of their family members and can help to keep their memory alive.



To create this game, print photos and make them into cards (all the same size). Cut each picture and glue the same color or patterned paper on the back of each picture and laminate them.

2. Tell stories about some of your closer relatives who have passed away so the kids can get to know them better.

3. Print a current family picture. Cut it into a puzzle. As the children put the puzzle together, discuss how our family will always be together even if we become separated temporarily by death.

Lesson 8: Temples Unite Families Eternally

“Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally.”

Teaching Aids: picture of the temple, *“Sealed Together Forever”* lesson from familiesin Zion.com with family clipart, envelope, picture of your family, picture of your temple wedding day

Sing: “I Love to See the Temple” CS, 95

Read today’s sentence from the proclamation and have the children highlight it.

Use the lesson “Sealed Together Forever” from familiesin Zion.com, points 1-5 (on FHE Lessons page).



6. “Can just anyone go into the temple to be sealed?” Anyone can enter the temple *who is a baptized member* of our church and who *is keeping the commandments*. Before you can go to the temple, the bishop and someone from the stake presidency interviews you to make sure you are worthy to enter the temple or the “House of the Lord.”

Discuss as a family some of the things all family members must do to allow them to be sealed in the temple and to continue to qualify for those blessings: pray, attend church, live the Word of Wisdom, pay a full tithing, follow the prophet, be morally clean....

Show a picture of your family. Share your testimony of how your family will be together forever because you were married in the temple. *Show your temple wedding day photo.* Testify how important it is for all family members to keep the commandments so that all may be able to be together as a family in the celestial kingdom.

Activity Idea: (from the November 2004 *Friend Magazine*)

Build model temples using sugar cubes.

Supplies needed:

Sugar cubes (check the baking aisle of grocery stores)

1 box of 126 cubes is adequate for a small-medium sized temple.

We gave one box to each child, and shared the extras. I used 2 boxes for my large temple.

Hot glue gun with glue (or icing if you want it edible)

Elmer’s glue for kids to build their temples independently

Graph paper (if you want to make a serious plan)

Cardboard cut to the size of your project

Aluminum foil

White paper (for a roof - optional)

Picture of the temple you will build (optional)

Marshmallows (optional) – these are handy for inserting a brad-Moroni and for eating instead of the sugar cubes

Decorations: greenery, clear blue rocks (water), brads (Moroni), Christmas lights, etc.



Lights (optional) – Christmas lights are not very bright (so use stronger lights for a hollow building), but they make a pretty surrounding to the temple.



For children working independently, give them an aluminum-covered cardboard, a box of sugar cubes and glue. Once you

show them the basics, let them build their own creation. Encourage them if they get frustrated. Young children will enjoy gluing cubes haphazardly. Enjoyment is the goal. My four-year old explained that his temple (with random blocks everywhere) was “under construction.”



Lds.about.com has helpful instructions: If you are making a complicated design, use graph paper to design your temple. Each square in the graph paper equals one sugar cube. Heat the glue gun. Cover your cardboard with foil. Begin building your temple with the base. *If you



are worried about keeping your project even on the cardboard, draw lines for a guide and/or put the project together without gluing it to the cardboard until you are finished. Otherwise, put a drop of glue onto your first sugar cube and stick it to the piece of cardboard. Avoid leaving globs of hot glue on the cubes since they will harden and create an uneven surface for the next cube. Next, put glue onto *two* sides of your second sugar cube. Stick one side to the first cube and the other to the cardboard. Continue until your project is finished.

If you are adding lights to your project you will need to add them before you close off the areas you want to light up. Make sure you leave a small opening for the cord, which you will have to put through the opening *before* you surround it with sugar cubes. You can also cut a hole into the bottom of a box for the lights and build your temple around it.

Extras:

From: Russell M. Nelson, “Celestial Marriage,” Ensign, Nov. 2008, 92–95.

How can we strengthen our commitment to keep our temple covenants?

In what ways can parents help children prepare to enter the temple?

How should the promise that we can live eternally with our families affect the way we treat family members now?

“While salvation is an individual matter, exaltation is a family matter. Only those who are married in the temple and whose marriage is sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise will continue as spouses after death and receive the highest degree of celestial glory, or exaltation. A temple marriage is also called a celestial marriage. Within the celestial glory are three levels. To obtain the highest, a husband and wife must be sealed for time and all eternity and keep their covenants made in a holy temple. ... The noblest yearning of the human heart is for a marriage that can endure beyond death. Fidelity to a temple marriage does that. It allows families to be together forever.”

From “Strengthening the Family: The Family is Central to the Creator’s Plan,” Ensign December 2004: Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “From the moment of birth into mortality to the time we are married in the temple, everything we have in the whole gospel system is to prepare and qualify us to enter that holy order of matrimony which makes us husband and wife in this life and in the world to come. ... There is nothing in this world as important as the creation and perfection of family units.”

Lesson 9: Multiply and Replenish the Earth

"The first commandment that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God's commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force."

Teaching Aids: photos of each child as a baby, picture of Adam and Eve, scriptures

Opening Song: "Dearest Children, God is Near You" Hymn 96

Read today's proclamation paragraph and have the children highlight it on their copies. Show children their baby pictures and express your joy in each child coming into your home.

Show a picture of Adam and Eve. Look up and read Moses 2:27-28 "And I, God, created man in mine own image, in the image of mine Only Begotten created I him; male and female created I them. And I, God, blessed them, and said unto them: Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

What was the first commandment God gave to Adam and Eve? (To have children.) What would have happened if Adam and Eve chose not to have children? (None of us would be here. Heavenly Father's Plan of Happiness would not have worked.)

Adam and Eve were blessed for following the Lord's counsel to have children. Look up and read Moses 5:10-12: "And in that day Adam blessed God and was filled, and began to prophesy concerning all the families of the earth, saying: Blessed be the name of God, for because of my transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God. And Eve, his wife, heard all these things and was glad, saying: Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient. And Adam and Eve blessed the name of God, and they made all things known unto their sons and their daughters" (Moses 5:10-12).

When we choose to have children, we become parents, which is part of becoming like Heavenly Father. *From "Strengthening the Family: Multiply and Replenish the Earth" Ensign April 2005: "Bringing children into the world is certainly not convenient. Most often it involves physical pain followed by great sacrifice and selflessness. But the blessings of keeping God's command to rear children are some of the sweetest blessings He offers. Indeed, in many ways parenthood gives us a foretaste of godhood. If we want to become like our Father in Heaven, then creating our own families furthers us along in that process."*

*From "Strengthening the Family: Multiply and Replenish the Earth" Ensign April 2005: After the Lord commanded Adam and Eve to "be fruitful, and multiply," He commanded them to "replenish the earth, and subdue it" (Gen. 1:28). The Hebrew word translated as *replenish* means "to fill." For many years we have heard warnings about overpopulation and the devastating effects it can cause. While some areas of the world are experiencing a negative impact from extreme population density, the world as a whole is actually moving in the opposite direction. Indeed, research indicates that by the year 2040 world population will peak and begin to decline.*

Probably a more relevant issue than population density is how we use the resources God has given us to support the population now and in the future. “For the earth is full,” He said, “and there is enough and to spare. . . . If any man shall take of the abundance which I have made, and impart not his portion, according to the law of my gospel, unto the poor and the needy, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment” (D&C 104:17–18).

“The enemy of human happiness as well as the cause of poverty and starvation is not the birth of children,” said Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “It is the failure of people to do with the earth what God could teach them to do if only they would ask and then obey.”

President David O. McKay taught: “It is said that the best and noblest lives are those which are set toward high ideals. Truly no higher ideal regarding marriage can be cherished by young people than to look upon it as a divine institution. In the minds of the young, such a standard is a protection to them in courtship, an ever-present influence inducing them to refrain from doing anything that may prevent their going to the temple to have their love made perfect in an enduring and eternal union. It will lead them to seek divine guidance in the selection of their companions, upon the wise choice of whom their life’s happiness here and hereafter is largely dependent. It makes their hearts pure and good; it lifts them up to their Father in heaven. Such joys are within the reach of most men and women if high ideals of marriage and home [are] properly fostered and cherished” (Chapter 14: Preparing for an Eternal Marriage and Family,” *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: David O. McKay*).

Bear your testimony of your love for parenthood and the blessings that come from choosing to have children.

Activity Idea:

Make paper doll chains and tell them what it means to multiply (make more).

Supplies: Colored paper and scissors



Cut a strip of paper about 4 inches high. The longer the strip, the more dolls you will make. Fold the strip of paper accordion style, making each panel about 2½” wide. Draw a figure on the top making sure that parts of the body (hands/feet) touch the sides of the panel. Cut around the figure, but don’t cut along the folds where the parts of the body touch. Unfold the chain of dolls.



Check these links for printable patterns:

kiddley.com/2006/06/09/making-paper-doll-chains/
origami-resource-center.com/paper-dolls.html

Extras:

From "For Time and All Eternity," Elder Boyd K. Packer, Ensign Nov. 1993:

During World War II, men were called away to fight. In the emergency, wives and mothers worldwide were drawn into the workforce as never before. The most devastating effect of the war was on the family. It lingers to this generation. In the October 1942 general conference, the First Presidency delivered a message to "the Saints in every land and clime," in which they said, "By virtue of the authority in us vested as the First Presidency of the Church, we warn our people."

And they said: "Amongst His earliest commands to Adam and Eve, the Lord said: 'Multiply and replenish the earth.' He has repeated that command in our day. He has again revealed in this, the last dispensation, the principle of the eternity of the marriage covenant. ...

"The Lord has told us that it is the duty of every husband and wife to obey the command given to Adam to multiply and replenish the earth, so that the legions of choice spirits waiting for their tabernacles of flesh may come here and move forward under God's great design to become perfect souls, for without these fleshly tabernacles they cannot progress to their God-planned destiny. Thus, every husband and wife should become a father and mother in Israel to children born under the holy, eternal covenant.

"By bringing these choice spirits to earth, each father and each mother assume towards the tabernacled spirit and towards the Lord Himself by having taken advantage of the opportunity He offered, an obligation of the most sacred kind, because the fate of that spirit in the eternities to come, the blessings or punishments which shall await it in the hereafter, depend, in great part, upon the care, the teachings, the training which the parents shall give to that spirit.

"No parent can escape that obligation and that responsibility, and for the proper meeting thereof, the Lord will hold us to a strict accountability. No loftier duty than this can be assumed by mortals."

From "Strengthening the Family: Multiply and Replenish the Earth" Ensign April 2005:

Children Are Becoming Less Valued

President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, addressed a "shift in attitude about the purpose of marriage. More and more young people view marriage 'as a couples relationship, designed to fulfill the emotional needs of adults, rather than an institution for bringing up children.' ...

"Another disturbing challenge to the family," observed President Faust, "is that children are becoming less valued. In many parts of the world, people are having fewer children. Abortion is probably the clearest sign that couples do not want children. An estimated one-quarter of all pregnancies worldwide end by induced abortion."

"The Latter-day Saint Concept of Marriage," *Ensign* June 2011, President Hugh B. Brown 1st Counselor in the 1st Presidency:

But perhaps the greatest value of marriage is not that which accrues to the individual man and woman. The purpose of their union in the beginning is indicated by the Lord's commandment: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28). In proper marriage, there is opportunity for man to realize his natural urge to be creative and productive. This can be completely fulfilled and properly enjoyed only in the marriage relationship, in child bearing and child rearing. Parents should remember that the children born to them—their children—are also the children of God. He is the Father of their spirit bodies, and during the pre-earth existence He wisely made provision for eternal element and eternal spirit to be inseparably connected and receive a fulness of joy. Latter-day Saints therefore believe that God is actually the third partner in this relationship and that bringing children into the world within the divinely sanctioned institution of marriage is part of His plan to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.

Lds.org, Gospel Study, Birth Control: Children are one of the greatest blessings in life, and their birth into loving and nurturing families is central to God's purposes for humanity. When husband and wife are physically able, they have the privilege and responsibility to bring children into the world and to nurture them. The decision of how many children to have and when to have them is a private matter for the husband and wife. God has a plan for the happiness of all who live on the earth, and the birth of children in loving families is central to His plan. The first commandment He gave to Adam and Eve was to "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Genesis 1:28). The scriptures declare, "Children are a heritage of the Lord" (Psalm 127:3). Those who are physically able have the blessing, joy, and obligation to bear children and to raise a family. This blessing should not be postponed for selfish reasons.

Lesson 10: The Sacred Powers of Procreation

"We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife. We declare the means by which mortal life is created to be divinely appointed. We affirm the sanctity of life and of its importance in God's eternal plan."

Teaching Aids: scriptures, apple, apricot (optional), knife, GAK 100 – Creation, Picture of Adam and Eve with children

Opening Song: "Home" CS, 192

When God created the earth and created the plants on the earth, He gave them seeds inside themselves to create more plants of their same kind. Read Moses 2:11-12. "And I, God, said: Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, the fruit tree yielding fruit, after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed should be in itself upon the earth, and it was so even as I spake. And the earth brought forth grass, every herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed should be in itself, after his kind; and I, God, saw that all things which I made were good;"

Cut an apple around the middle, in half to show the star pattern of seeds. Ask the children what is inside the apple? Pass it around so they can see the seeds. When God planted apple trees on the earth, they brought forth apples. Inside those apples, were more seeds to create more apple trees. The apple trees have the power inside them to create more apple trees. Repeat with an apricot (or another fruit with large seeds). The children may enjoy passing around the big seed.



Show GAK 100 of the Creation of Living Creatures. When God created the animals, he also put the power inside them to create more animals after their kind. Read Moses 2:21-22: "And I, God, created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind; and I, God, saw that all things which I had created were good. And I, God, blessed them, saying: Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the sea; and let fowl multiply in the earth;"

Show picture of Adam and Eve with a child. When God placed Adam and Eve on the earth, He gave them the same command that He gave to the other living things. Read Moses 2:28: "And I, God, blessed them, and said unto them: Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." God gave Adam and Eve the power in themselves to multiply and bring forth children "after their own kind." Show the apple again. We each have "seeds" inside us which give us the power to create life. Creating life is a sacred power called "procreation." In creating life, we are being like God who created the earth and every living thing on it.

Read today's part of the proclamation. Have the children highlight their copy.

The ability to have children (create life) is so special that Heavenly Father wants us to only have babies when we are married. Some people use their ability to make babies before they are married, but Heavenly Father has taught us that this is wrong. (If young children ask questions beyond their maturity level, remind them that when they turn eight you will explain all about the details.) It is an awesome blessing and privilege to create life! Someday, after you go on missions and find someone special to marry, you will get to create children of your own just like we have and just like Heavenly Father!

From "Strengthening the Family: The Sacred Powers of Procreation" Ensign June 2005: President Boyd K. Packer said, "Under the accepted plan, ...there was provided in our bodies—and this is sacred—a power of creation, a light, so to speak, that has the power to kindle other lights. This gift was to be used only within the sacred bonds of marriage. Through the exercise of this power of creation, a mortal body may be conceived, a spirit enter into it, and a new soul [be] born into this life. This power is good. It can create and sustain family life, and it is in family life that we find the fountains of happiness. It is given to virtually every individual who is born into mortality. It is a sacred and significant power. ...The power of creation—or may we say procreation—is not just an incidental part of the plan: it is essential to it. Without it the plan could not proceed. The misuse of it may disrupt the plan."

Bear your testimony about the special privilege and power of bringing children into the world and how you have been blessed by waiting to use this power until you were married.

Activity Ideas:

Plant beans. Pinto beans were the most successful beans for us.

Instructions from ehow.com: Soak a few bean seeds in water for a few hours (2-3 seeds per child). Wash glass jars. For each jar, fold 5-7 sheets of paper towels in half. Lay the sheets on top of each other and curl into a circle. Squeeze the paper towels into the jar and adjust so the outer layer lies smoothly against the inside of the jar. Peel back a portion of the towels and place a bean seed between paper a little more than halfway down the jar. Repeat with the other beans. Fill the jar with water and then pour out the excess. Place the jar in a warm, bright place like a windowsill. Add water often to keep the paper towels wet. Rotate the jar every day so that the beans take turns facing the window.



As you plant them, talk about the power to create life is special. Just like these seeds will grow life, each of you (when you grow up) will have the power to create life. We need to take care of that power just like we take care of these plants.

Watch the beans grow. They will begin to swell, then split. Then a small root will grow out of the bottom of the bean, reaching for the bottom of the jar. Soon, a small shoot will grow out of the top of the bean, reaching towards the top of the jar. When the temperature outside is warm enough, you may transfer plants to your outside garden.

If children desire, they can keep charts or color pictures of the plants' growth.

Extras:

From Lesson 45: “The Family Is Ordained of God,” *Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual*, (1999)

What has God commanded regarding the use of the power to create mortal life? Why is obedience to this commandment important? Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve taught: “Children are the inheritance of the Lord to us in this life and also in eternity. Eternal life is not only to have forever our descendants from this life. It is also to have eternal increase. . . . “We can understand why our Heavenly Father commands us to reverence life and to cherish the powers that produce it as sacred. If we do not have those reverential feelings in this life, how could our Father give them to us in the eternities?” (“The Family,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1998, 15). Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve taught: “*The body is an essential part of the soul*. . . . We declare that one who uses the God-given body of another without divine sanction abuses the very soul of that individual, abuses the central purpose and processes of life. . . . In sexual transgression the soul is at stake—the body and the spirit” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 99–100; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 76).

From “Strengthening the Family: The Sacred Powers of Procreation” *Ensign* June 2005.

Moral Agency and Chastity

Disrupting the plan is, of course, the focus of Satan’s attention, and encouraging the misuse of the power of procreation is one of his most pervasive and successful tactics. “Human sexuality,” wrote Terrance D. Olson, “is presented in our culture as if it were the driving force—if not the ultimate need—behind all human endeavor. If the popular culture is right, sex is so compelling that societies must figure out ways to allow the regular, frequent expression of sex. . . . Indeed, . . . the popular culture sees humans as victims of sexual needs and feelings.”³

The scriptures teach us otherwise. “The children of men,” Lehi taught his son Jacob, “have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon, save it be by the punishment of the law at the great and last day. . . . Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself” (2 Ne. 2:26–27).

In this matter of chastity, we are not at the mercy of our physical bodies. We are moral agents, and these purported “needs” are no different than any other choices we face in mortality. We can choose obedience and spiritual life, or we can choose captivity, misery, and spiritual death.

Three Reasons to Obey As president of Brigham Young University, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles offered three reasons for choosing chastity. First, according to scripture, the soul consists of both body and spirit (see D&C 88:15). “In trivializing the soul of another (please include the word *body* there), we trivialize the Atonement. . . . We *cannot* then say in ignorance or defiance, ‘Well, it’s *my* life,’ or worse yet, ‘It’s *my* body.’ It is *not*. ‘Ye are not your own,’ Paul said. ‘Ye are bought with a price’ [1 Cor. 6:19–20].”

“Second, may I suggest that human intimacy . . . between a man and a woman is . . . a symbol of total union: union of their hearts, their hopes, their lives, their love, their family, their future, their everything. . . . But such a total . . . union . . . can only come with the proximity and permanence afforded in a marriage covenant, with the union of *all* that they possess—their very hearts and minds, all their days and all their dreams. . . . Can you see then the moral [fracturing] that comes from pretending we are one, sharing the *physical* symbols and *physical* intimacy of our union, but then fleeing . . . all such other aspects . . . of what was meant to be a total obligation?”

Third, “sexual intimacy is not only a symbolic union between a man and a woman—the uniting of their very souls—but it is also symbolic of a union between mortals and deity, . . . uniting for a rare and special moment with God himself and all the powers by which he gives life in this wide universe of ours. . . . Surely God’s trust in us to respect this future-forming gift is awesomely staggering. . . . We carry this procreative power that makes us very much like God in at least one grand and majestic way.”⁶

With good reason the inspired prophets of the Lord’s Church have declared “the means by which mortal life is created to be divinely appointed.”⁷

What can parents do to help children understand the importance of moral cleanliness? (You may want to suggest that parents review with their children the teachings on sexual purity found in *For the Strength of Youth* [36550] or *A Parent’s Guide* [31125].)

Lesson 11: Husband & Wife Love and Care For Each Other

"Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other...."

Teaching Aids: Print quotes (next page) and paste onto colored heart shapes, favorite candy bars/treats for each child, scriptures, print and laminate "love reminder cards"

Opening Song: "Love One Another" Hymn 308

Read today's part of the proclamation and highlight it. Discuss the importance of a loving relationship between spouses. *Ask:* How can you children prepare to become loving spouses someday? (Practice now to treat your siblings with love and to care for them.) *Turn the hearts face down and have family members take turns picking a heart and reading it (quotes on following page).*



Discuss each after they are read aloud, how you can all practice these attributes and actions *now*. List the main points: Be loyal to each other (never speak unkindly to or about each other), think of what would make another person happy and do that, learn to be unselfish, etc.

What are some ways that you as children can contribute to your parents' loving relationship?

- Pay attention to when parents are talking with each other. Try not to interrupt them.
- Understand that parents will go on dates with each other and leave you at home. Be extra good for them.

Activity Ideas:

Game: Place a treat the kids like (candy bars) at each side of the room (one for each child). Have the kids link arms with a partner, back to back. Tell them they have 10 seconds to get their respective candy bar – and they have to keep their arms linked. *When you say go they will probably try to pull each other in opposite directions. One will either get their candy bar or neither will.* The point is that had they worked together and cooperated to go to one candy bar at a time, taking turns (been unified) they both could have gotten their reward. Discuss what happened with the children.



Explain: To prepare to be a good husband or wife, you can learn to be unselfish now. *Read* Matthew 7:12 "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them...". Have the children try the game again, this time working together. Explain that it makes us feel happy inside when we try to make others happy first. Then we both get the reward.

Love Reminder Cards: Make credit card-sized cards for the parents: "How can I show love to my husband/wife today." Parents can keep it in a wallet next to credit cards (or in a prominent place) for a frequent reminder to think of their spouse. For the children, print cards that say "How can I show love to my family today?" and have them put the card somewhere that they will see it often as a reminder to show love and care for each other.



Closing Song: "Love at Home" Hymn 294

Gordon B. Hinckley: “When you are married, be fiercely loyal one to another. Selfishness is the great destroyer of happy family life. If you will make your first concern the comfort, the well-being, and the happiness of your companion, sublimating any personal concern to that loftier goal, you will be happy, and your marriage will go on throughout eternity” (*Ensign*, Dec. 1995, 67).

Sublimate = modify an impulse into a culturally higher or socially more acceptable activity

Unity in marriage does not come automatically or without effort. Romantic love must mature into a commitment to seek and sustain spiritual harmony in marriage.

“Achieving marital unity takes tremendous patience and persistence and a clear vision of what our priorities are in this life,” explains marriage counselor Victor B. Cline. “Spousal love is a wonderful gift, but we have to learn to give it fully in order to receive it in full measure.”

Gordon B. Hinckley: “I have long felt that happiness in marriage is not so much a matter of romance as it is an anxious concern for the comfort and well-being of one’s companion. That involves a willingness to overlook weaknesses and mistakes” (*Ensign* July 2005).

Ezra Taft Benson: “The secret of a happy marriage is to serve God and each other. The goal of marriage is unity and oneness, as well as self-development. Paradoxically, the more we serve one another, the greater is our spiritual and emotional growth.”

Elder Russell M. Nelson counseled couples to:

1. Appreciate each other. “Look for the good in each other and sincerely pay compliments to one another.”
2. Communicate. “Couples need private time to observe, to talk, and really listen to each other.”
3. Contemplate. “Frequent participation in temple service and regular family scripture study nourish a marriage and strengthen faith within a family” (“Nurturing Marriage,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2006, 37–38).

How can I
show love to
my wife today?

How can I show
love to my
husband today?

How can I show
love to my
family today?

How can I show
love to my
family today?

How can I show
love to my
family today?

How can I show
love to my
family today?

How can I show
love to my
family today?

How can I show
love to my
family today?

2. Schedule special dates with mom and/or dad. Put forth efforts to make this a regular occurrence by scheduling them regularly.

Extras:

From “Strengthening the Family: Within the Bonds of Matrimony” Ensign August 2005: Marriage is indeed essential to God’s plan, but marriage alone is not the solution to all the problems families might encounter. Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “Deliberate decisions must be made in order to achieve that desirable condition, ‘love at home,’ such as budgeting enough time at home to, among other things, express love to children by adding to their storehouse of happy memories. Singing that song is not enough; it must be matched by wise scheduling to benefit the family, which is often victimized by our busyness.” Other deliberate decisions husbands and wives can make include being faithful; overcoming personal weakness, including the tendency to criticize; and serving each other so that love deepens over time—ensuring that “love at home” is not just a trite phrase but a reality that each family can achieve.

Lesson 13: Children Love and Serve One Another

“...and to teach them to love and serve one another, ...”

Opening Song: “Kindness Begins With Me” CS, 145

Teaching Aids: 2 candles, matches/lighter, ice cream and two scoopers of different sizes

Read today’s proclamation focus. Have children highlight it on their copy.

Look up and read Mosiah 4:14-15: “And ye will not suffer your children that they go hungry, or naked; neither will ye suffer that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel one with another, and serve the devil, who is the master of sin, or who is the evil spirit which hath been spoken of by our fathers, he being an enemy to all righteousness. But ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another.” *Discuss what it means to serve one another. Ask for ideas of how we can serve each other at home.*

From <http://www.mormonshare.com/lds-object-lesson/a-candle-loses-nothing-lighting-another>:

Sometimes we are reluctant to serve each other. Sometimes we are afraid that we will lose something by giving to others. *Light a candle.* Ask what the kids think will happen to this flame if you light another candle (they might guess that the flame will get smaller). Then light another candle from that flame. Ask: “Did the candle lose any of its light from sharing its flame?” (No, in fact, it shines brighter.) A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle. When we serve others we don’t actually take away anything from ourselves, but by sharing our flame, we burn brighter and feel happier inside. And sharing our light with others is always a good thing!



President Ezra Taft Benson said, “Your most important friendships should be with your own brothers and sisters and with your father and mother” (“To the Young Women of the Church,” *Ensign*, November 1986, 81).

“You might find this hard to believe, but ...as time goes on, the friendships that will matter the most to you are the ones you have with your parents and siblings. Thirty years from now they will be the people you most likely talk to on a consistent basis, not your junior high and high school friends. Family relationships are the ones that have been (or can be) bound together in the temple for eternity” (“Why? Powerful Answers and Practical Reasons for Living LDS Standards” p. 164).

Discuss the importance of your family relationships and how learning to get along with and serve our siblings and parents will help us to become better people and better future spouses, fathers and mothers. Encourage the children to find ways to serve each other each day and to not hesitate to give to others.

Closing Song: “Love One Another” Hymn 308

Activity Idea:

Eat ice cream. Encourage younger children to pass out spoons, napkins, etc. – to make sure that others have what they need before eating their own ice cream.

From <http://www.mormonshare.com/lds-object-lesson/serve-the-biggest-scoop>: Show the children two sizes of ice cream scoops and ask, “If I were serving you some ice cream, which scoop would you want me to use?” (Of course, everyone wants the big scoop.) “When we serve others we are really serving Christ and demonstrating our love and commitment to Him. So if you were serving Christ, would you serve a little or a *lot*?” If the children are old enough have them serve the ice cream to each other.



Lesson 14: Teach Children to Obey the Commandments and the Law

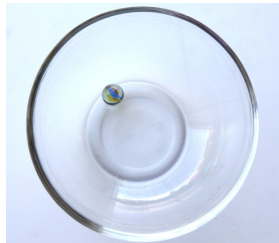
“...observe the commandments of God, and be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. Husbands and wives—mothers and fathers—will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations.”

Teaching Aids: marble, plate, large bowl, scriptures

Opening Song: “Teach Me to Walk in the Light” Hymn 304

Read today’s portion from the proclamation. Have children highlight it on their copy.

From Sugardoodle: Place a marble on a plate and rotate the plate in a circular motion. Slowly increase speed and try to keep the marble on the plate. The marble will eventually fly off the plate. Ask the children why this happened. (There was nothing to keep the marble in place.) Next, place the marble in the bowl and rotate the bowl in a circular motion. Slowly increase the rotation speed while keeping



the marble in the bowl. The sides of the bowl permit you to increase the speed of the marble without losing control. The plate had no boundaries. Like the marble, we can spin out of control without



commandments/rules. God’s commandments are like the sides of the bowl. At first, they might appear to be barriers, but they act as guides that keep us safe and permit us to move more freely through our lives.

(Source: http://www.sugardoodle.net/joomla/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6135:obedience-family-home-evening-lesson&catid=2328)

From the very beginning, Heavenly Father instructed Adam and Eve to teach their children the gospel and to help them live it. Heavenly Father has blessed you to be born into a family with parents to watch over you. We want you to know the gospel (teachings of Christ) and to *live* the gospel, too because keeping the commandments will keep you safe, healthy and happy. We do our best to teach you what the commandments are and how to keep them. It is up to *you* to choose the right!

Discuss obedience and what consequences of obedience vs. disobedience are. Explain that we are free to choose to disobey, but consequences are always connected with choices.

Learning to obey your parents helps you learn how to obey Heavenly Father. *Look up and read:*

- Colossians 3:20 “Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.”

- Ephesians 6:1 “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.”

If you will learn how to obey us, your earthly parents, you will know how to obey the Lord.

Bear your testimony of the blessing of keeping the commandments and obeying the Lord.

Closing Song: “Keep the Commandments” CS, 146 or “Choose the Right Way” CS, 160

Activity Ideas:

1. Fly a kite. Ask: Does the kite string on a kite hold it down or keep it up so it can fly? How is this similar to the commandments? What happens to a kite when someone cuts the string? What happens when someone breaks the commandments? (*From: "Why: Powerful Answers and Practical Reasons for Living LDS Standards" by John Hilton III and Anthony Sweat*)
2. Make O-bey Donuts. Use refrigerated biscuits (or homemade dough). Flatten out and have children cut circles with a cup. Use a bottle top to cut out the middle. Fry in hot oil until golden brown. Drain on paper towel. Sprinkle with powdered sugar. *Tell the children that we must obey God's commandments and rules. The donut represents the letter "O" in obey. Every time you eat a donut, remember to obey!*
(Source: http://www.dltk-bible.com/recipes/obey_donuts.htm)
3. Play one of these games: Red Light/Green Light, Mother May I? or Simon Says. Talk about following the rules of the game and how it relates to following God's laws.
4. Videos: *D&C and Church History Video Presentations* "Responsibility of Parents" (7 min). *FHE Video Supplement 1* - "The Consequences of Our Choices".
5. Write each of your children a thank you note for their obedience. Express ways that you notice how they are obedient. Giving them this positive reinforcement helps them know that Mom and Dad notice when they make good choices.

Extras:

Talk about traffic laws. When everyone obeys the laws, we are safe, but what happens when people break the laws (speed, run red lights, etc.)? (We get hurt, people die, etc.) Commandments are like traffic laws.

Ask children to sing or say the chorus of “I Am a Child of God” beginning with “Teach me all that I must...” Explain that the original song said, “Teach me all that I must *know* to live with Him someday.” When President Spencer W. Kimball was the prophet, he asked that the words to the song be changed to “Teach me all that I must *do* to live with Him someday.” Why do you think he changed the words from “know” to “do”? President Kimball said that it is not enough to *know* what the commandments are – we have to *do* them or *live* them.

One important part of obeying is listening when Mom or Dad speaks and then obeying *quickly*. Sing “Quickly I’ll Obey” CS, 197.

D&C 98:40 “But I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth.”

“Strengthening Families: Our Sacred Duty” by Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles *Ensign* May 1999: In February of this year, the First Presidency issued a call to all parents “to devote their best efforts to the teaching and rearing of their children in gospel principles which will keep them close to the Church. The home is the basis of a righteous life, and no other instrumentality can take its place or fulfill its essential functions in carrying forward this God-given responsibility.”

"Lesson 16: Family Prayer, Family Scripture Study, and Family Home Evening," *Part B: Parents' Responsibilities to Strengthen Families*: You are a chosen generation—saved for this special time in the history of mankind. You have so much to give to add to the growth and development of the families to which you belong. I challenge you to step forward in your family units with that special, enthusiastic spirit of your youth to make the gospel really live in your homes. Remember the counsel of President Joseph F. Smith when he said:

“I would like my children, and all the children in Zion, to know that there is nothing in this world that is of so much value to them as the knowledge of the Gospel as it has been restored to the earth in these latter days through the Prophet Joseph Smith. There is nothing that can compensate for its loss. There is nothing on earth that can compare with the excellence of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Let, therefore, all the parents in Zion look after their children, and teach them the principles of the Gospel, and strive as far as possible to get them to do their duty—not mechanically, because they are urged to do it, but try to instill into the hearts of the children the spirit of truth and an abiding love for the Gospel, that they may not only do their duty because it is pleasing to their parents, but because it is pleasing also to themselves” (in Brian H. Stuy, comp., *Collected Discourses Delivered by President Wilford Woodruff, His Two Counselors, the Twelve Apostles, and Others*, 5 vols. [1987–92], 5:436).

In the ninety-third section of the Doctrine and Covenants, we find the Lord chastising some of the brethren for not paying attention to their family responsibilities. The scriptures read:

“But I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth. ...

“You have not taught your children light and truth, according to the commandments; and that wicked one hath power, as yet, over you, and this is the cause of your affliction.

“And now a commandment I give unto you—if you will be delivered you shall set in order your own house, for there are many things that are not right in your house” (D&C 93:40, 42–43).

From: “Strengthening the Family: Happiness in Family Life” *Ensign* September 2005.

Sometimes children need correction and discipline. Thus, parents should study carefully Doctrine and Covenants 121:41–44 [D&C 121:41–44]. President Gordon B. Hinckley has also given wise counsel: “There is need for discipline with families. But discipline with severity, discipline with cruelty, inevitably leads not to correction but rather to resentment and bitterness. It cures nothing and only aggravates the problem.”

“Children cannot be forced into obedience,” explained President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency. “Our best method for correcting children when they have done wrong is by firmness, love, patience, kindness, persuasion, and reason.”

Lesson 15: The Family Is Ordained of God

“The family is ordained of God.”

Teaching Aids: chef hats labeled with names (Krispy Kreme hats), cookie ingredients, picture of Elder Scott

Opening Song: “Families Can Be Together Forever” Hymn 300 or “The Family Is of God”

Read today’s sentence from the proclamation and highlight it. Remind children of the definition of ordained: Ordained = ordered officially, prescribed (authorized, recommended as beneficial or stated authoritatively as a rule that an action should be carried out), determined, decreed (an official order issued by a legal authority).

This means that Heavenly Father has officially decreed that families are important and beneficial for all of His children and for society. It is important that a family is made up of a father, mother, and children. There are circumstances when a parent dies or bad things happen so families are split apart. But that doesn’t mean that the definition of a family has changed. The “ideal family” established by God with Adam and Eve is *the pattern* we are to follow and strive for.

Show picture of Elder Scott: Elder Richard G. Scott said, “Through the restored gospel we learn there is an ideal family. It is a family composed of a righteous Melchizedek Priesthood bearer with a righteous wife sealed to him and children born in the covenant or sealed to them. With a mother in the home in an environment of love and service, the parents teach their children, through example and precept, the ways of the Lord and His truths. They fulfill their divinely appointed roles mentioned in the family proclamation. Their children mature by living teachings instilled from birth. They develop characteristics of obedience, integrity, love of God, and faith in His holy plan. In due course, each of those children seeks a companion with similar ideals and aspirations. They are sealed in the temple, bear children, and the eternal plan continues, with generation strengthening generation. Throughout your life on earth, seek diligently to fulfill the fundamental purposes of this life through the ideal family. While you may not have yet reached that ideal, do all you can through obedience and faith in the Lord to consistently draw as close to it as you are able” (“First Things First,” April 2001 General Conference).

Activity Idea:

Ahead of time, make chef hats (Krispy Kreme hats work well) labeled with the names: father, mother, sister, or brother. Write or print out bubble letters and have the children color them in. Paste them onto the hats. Use these in the following activity.



From Shannon Cox on SugarDoodle.net: Make “family cookies.” Measure out the ingredients beforehand into little bowls. Pass out chef hats for each person: Dad, Mom, sisters/daughters, and brothers/sons.

Explain: We will be making “family cookies” and learning about the important roles of each family member. This special recipe has to have all the right ingredients in order to work... just like a family.

Happy Family Cookies

1 Husband (one stick of butter)

1 Wife (one stick of butter)

Blend these two together (marriage)

Crack open: all the blessings of the Priesthood (one egg)

Crack open: all the things that a father does for the family:

Provides, Protects, Presides the family in love in righteousness (add another egg)

Combine: $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of Nurturing love by Mother (white sugar)

Add: $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of Gospel teaching by Mother and Father (brown sugar)

Stir in $2\frac{1}{4}$ cups of Faithful, Respectful, Obedient, Compassionate Children (flour)

Add:

1 teaspoon of repentance (salt)

1 teaspoon of prayer (soda)

1 teaspoon of forgiveness (vanilla)

Mix well, and add 2 cups of unselfish service! (chocolate chips)

Ask children to name some ideas for serving their family as they add the chocolate chips.



Combine all ingredients for the recipe of Happy Family Cookies, and drop by spoonfuls onto a cookie sheet. Bake in the sunshine (oven) at 375° for 10-11 minutes.



As you are dropping dough onto the cookie sheet (or eating the cookies), explain: This is no ordinary dough. This dough is sweet because a family is sweet. The family is ordained of God. Each family member is important. When each person in the family does what they should our family is blessed. Enjoy the cookies with each other. Express to your children how happy you are to be a family.

Source for family cookies:

http://www.sugardoodle.net/joomla/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2274&Itemid=429

Extras:

Make family magnets of your own and your extended family. The kids especially love magnets of themselves. You can add name magnets so the kids can label each person and/or each family.



Print photos on photo paper, cut them out, stick onto adhesive magnet pages and cut them out again. Inkjet magnet paper can be used, though the magnets are very thin.

These are perfect for the refrigerator or the side of a metal filing cabinet.



Lesson 16: Marriage Is Essential To His Eternal Plan

"Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan."

Teaching Aids: hat or tie, flowers, 3 keys, 2 special boxes (1 fits inside the other)

Opening Song: "I Love to See the Temple" CS, 95

Read today's proclamation sentence and highlight it.

Act out this parable by Elder Boyd K. Packer. Have children dress up – put a hat/tie on a boy to represent the man, and have the girl hold flowers. Give the boy two keys and the girl one. Find a special box to represent the safe with a smaller box inside.

Parable of the Treasure and Keys

Once a man received as his inheritance two keys. The first key, he was told, would open a vault which he must protect at all cost. The second key was to a safe within the vault which contained a priceless treasure. He was to open this safe and freely use the precious things which were stored therein. He was warned that many would seek to rob him of his inheritance. He was promised that if he used the treasure worthily, it would be replenished and never be diminished, not in all eternity. He would be tested. If he used it to benefit others, his own blessings and joy would increase.



The man went alone to the vault. His first key opened the door. He tried to unlock the treasure with the other key, but he could not, for there were two locks on the safe. His key alone would not open it. No matter how he tried, he could not open it. He was puzzled. He had been given the keys. He knew the treasure was rightfully his. He had obeyed instructions, but he could not open the safe.



In due time there came a woman into the vault. She too held a key. It was noticeably different from the key he held. Her key fit the other lock. It humbled him to learn that he could not obtain his rightful inheritance without her. They made a covenant that together they would open the treasure and, as instructed, he would watch over the vault and protect it; she would watch over the treasure. She was not concerned that, as guardian of the vault, he held two keys, for his full purpose was to see that she was safe as she watched over that which was most precious to them both. Together they opened the safe and partook of their inheritance. They rejoiced, for, as promised, it replenished itself.

With great joy they found that they could pass the treasure on to their children; each could receive a full measure, undiminished to the last generation.

Perhaps some few of their posterity would not find a companion who possessed the complementary key, or one worthy and willing to keep the covenants relating to the treasure. Nevertheless, if they kept the commandments, they would not be denied even the smallest blessing.



Because some tempted them to misuse their treasure, they were careful to teach their children about keys and covenants.

There came, in due time, among their posterity some few who were deceived or jealous or selfish because one was given two keys and another only one. “Why,” the selfish ones reasoned, “cannot the treasure be mine alone to use as I desire?”

Some tried to reshape the key they had been given to resemble the other key. Perhaps, they thought, it would then fit both locks. And so it was that the safe was closed to them. Their reshaped keys were useless, and their inheritance was lost.

Those who received the treasure with gratitude and obeyed the laws concerning it knew joy without bounds through time and all eternity.

I bear witness of our Father’s plan for happiness, and bear testimony in the name of Him who wrought the Atonement, that it might be. (Elder Boyd K. Packer, “For Time and All Eternity,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 21–24).

Ask the children if they can guess the meaning of the parable. Discuss. Bear your testimony.

Closing Song: “Families Can Be Together Forever” Hymn 300

Lesson 17: Birth Within the Bonds of Marriage

"Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity."

Opening Song: "A Happy Family" CS, 198

Read today's proclamation sentence and highlight. Discuss these definitions:

Entitled = having the right or a just claim to receive or do something

Matrimony = the state or ceremony of being married.

In other words, children have a right to be born to a father and mother who are bound together in marriage and who keep the promises they made in marriage. Many people have children without being married, and most often those children are raised without a father or a prepared mother. Without a strong family, many children suffer from neglect and are hurt in many ways. When people choose to act like they are married without being married, they are thinking only about themselves and not about the children that may be born to them without the protection of a family. Learning the truths in the Family Proclamation can help all of God's children to follow His plan.

When you become older, your body will be able to have children even before you are married, but Heavenly Father has commanded us to protect this power and wait to use it until we are married. If you do this, you will be blessed and the children that are born to you after you are married will benefit greatly from the strength of a family with a father and mother who love each other and who are bound together in marriage.

Discuss these definitions:

Honor = keep an agreement, fulfill an obligation

Vows = a solemn (serious) promise

Fidelity = faithfulness to a person demonstrated by continuing loyalty and support; sexual faithfulness to a spouse

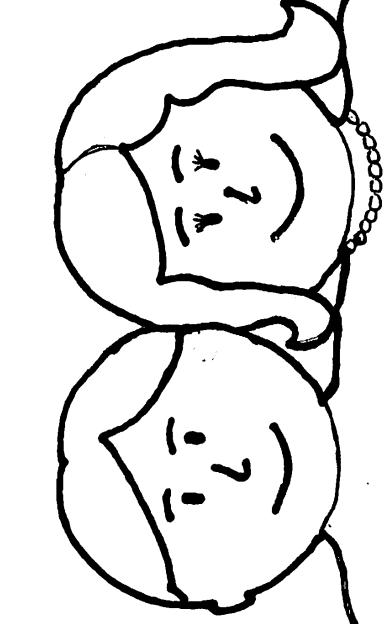
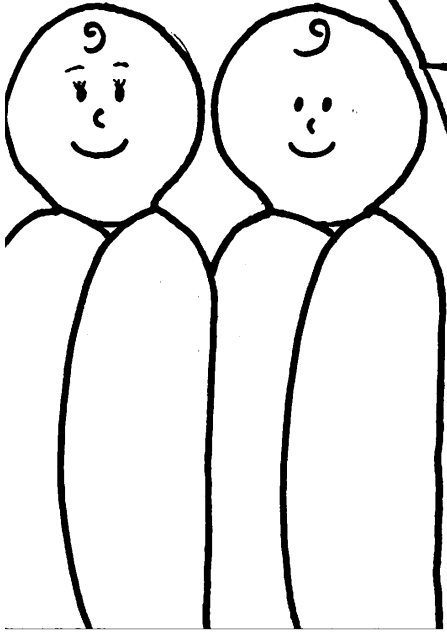
When you are married, you make "vows" or serious promises to your spouse. You promise that you will love them and no one else. *Look up and read:* D&C 42:22 "Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shall cleave unto her and none else." Cleave = stick fast to, adhere strongly to, become very strongly involved with or emotionally attached to someone. A husband and wife promise that they will cleave to each other and to no one else. It is wrong for married people to become involved with anyone other than their own spouse. When married couples break their marriage vows/promises, bad things happen and their children are especially hurt. But when a father and mother *honor* the promises they made at marriage, their family is blessed by the Lord.

Express your love for your spouse and explain how blessed your children are because you keep your marriage covenants.

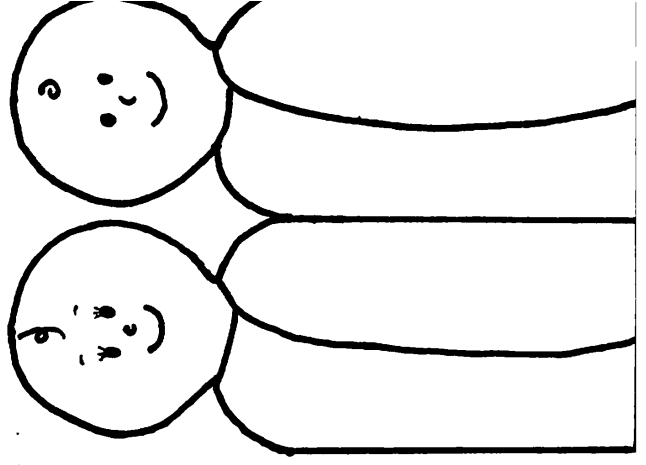
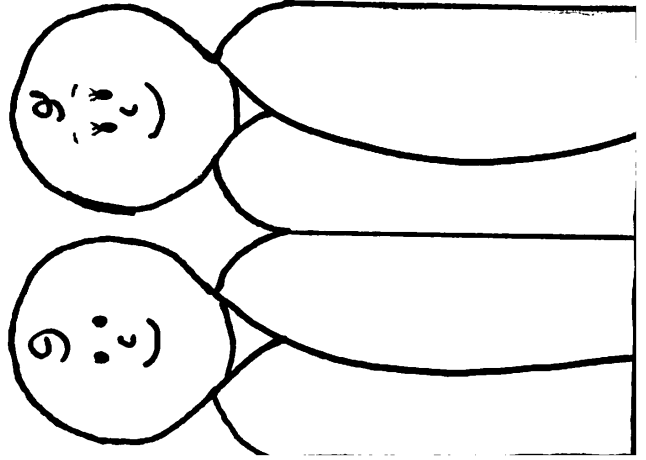
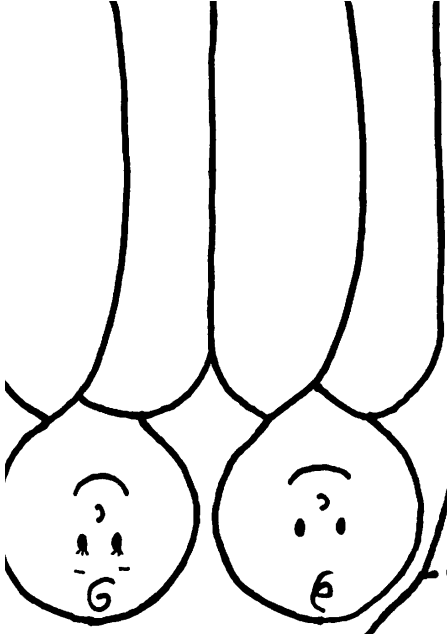
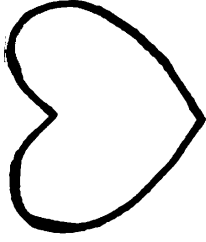
Activity Idea:

Print the following page on cardstock (one for each child). Have children color in their family and babies. Cut on the solid lines, fold on dotted lines, making a pocket with the folds on the back side. Tape down the pocket folds. Insert babies into the pocket.





Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony.



by: Jennifer Lund

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~ pocket ~

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Extras:

From “Strengthening the Family: Within the Bonds of Matrimony” Ensign August 2005:

The word *bond* has many meanings, including “a covenant,” “a uniting force,” and “an adhesive that combines, unites, and strengthens.” The bonds of matrimony are bonds of love uniting two people in a covenant relationship that strengthens them and gives them a higher purpose. In this sense, these bonds *liberate* men and women to reach their full eternal potential. Such a covenant relationship is the foundation of a home in which children are welcome and where they can learn and grow in an atmosphere of love and security, without fear of abuse or abandonment.

From “Strengthening the Family: Within the Bonds of Matrimony” Ensign August 2005:

Church leaders have consistently affirmed that children are better off when born and reared in a family with both a mother and a father. The First Presidency made the following statement: “When a man and woman conceive a child out of wedlock, every effort should be made to encourage them to marry. When the probability of a successful marriage is unlikely due to age or other circumstances, unwed parents should be counseled to place the child for adoption through LDS Family Services to ensure that the baby will be sealed to temple-worthy parents.” Where LDS Family Services is not available, priesthood leaders should encourage adoption through a legally authorized agency.

Research by family scholars supports the Church’s position. A recent publication compares children of single or cohabiting parents with children of married parents. While single parents often succeed in rearing well-adjusted, responsible children, the report concludes that, taken as a whole, children who live with married parents are less likely to divorce or become unwed parents themselves, are less likely to experience poverty, tend to have higher grades, are more likely to attend college, and experience lower rates of unemployment. On average, children of married parents also experience better physical and mental health, have lower rates of substance abuse, experience less child abuse, and are less likely to commit suicide or engage in criminal behavior. Parents can give children no greater gift than the example of a strong, loving marriage.

From “Strengthening the Family: Multiply and Replenish the Earth” Ensign April 2005:

As important as the commandment to multiply and replenish the earth is, the Lord has made clear that we must demonstrate our obedience only within the marriage relationship. There are numerous reasons for this restriction, but two of the most significant are to discourage sexual promiscuity and to provide a stable and healthy family environment for children.

In most societies, bearing children out of wedlock has traditionally been considered an embarrassment and a disgrace. But in today’s world, where good is called evil and evil good (see Isa. 5:20), the stigma of nonmarital childbearing has largely vanished. Not only is this practice a sin in the eyes of heaven, but researchers have found out-of-wedlock birth to be associated with several risks for the baby. For instance, compared with children born to married couples, children born out of wedlock are more likely to die of sudden infant death syndrome, suffer death due to injury, or eventually become juvenile offenders. Children born to unwed parents and placed for adoption fare significantly better than those who are not adopted. They experience fewer learning problems, achieve higher vocational levels, and are less likely to receive government assistance as adults. It is obvious that bringing children into the world and raising them the Lord’s way results in spiritual and temporal blessings.

Lesson 18: Founded Upon the Teachings of Jesus Christ

"Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Teaching Aids: building blocks

Opening Song: "The Wise Man and the Foolish Man" CS, 281

Read today's sentence from the proclamation. Have the children highlight their copy.



Have a child (or all of them) try to build a tower of blocks on his/her lap. Have another child build a tower on a hard surface. Discuss the difference in the strength of the towers and relate it to the song and to Christ.



Jesus told the story of a wise man who built his house upon a rock and when the storms came, his house "fell not." Luke 6:48, "He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock."

Jesus Christ is the rock upon which if we build, we cannot fail.

Look up and read Helaman 5:12, "And now, my sons, remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall."

Explain: You will have many hard times in your life. Satan will also tempt you to do wrong things. But if you have a strong testimony of Jesus and are trying to live like Him, you will stay strong and will not fall. Encourage your children to gain their own testimonies.

The proclamation says that our family will be happy when we are founded upon the teachings of Jesus Christ. On which teachings of Christ should we found our family? If we all try to be Christ-like, we will be happy and will bring the Holy Ghost into our home.

Closing Song: "I'm Trying to Be Like Jesus" CS, 78 or "I Believe in Christ" Hymn 134

Activity Idea:

Make these special rocks with pictures of Christ.

Supplies:

Smooth rocks

Small pictures of Christ pre-cut from *Ensign* magazines

Mod Podge

Foam brushes

Paint

Paint brushes

Permanent marker (optional)



Let children select a small picture of Jesus. Spread a thin layer of Mod Podge over their rock. Apply the picture, then another layer of Mod Podge on top. After it dries, children may add more paint as decoration, if desired and/or you may write "Jesus" with a permanent marker or paint. These can be used as paperweights to remind them that Jesus is the rock upon which we must build.

Lesson 19: Faith and Prayer

*"Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of **faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities.**"*

Teaching Aids: Picture of Christ, bottle of medicine, picture of Gordon B. Hinckley

Opening Song: "A Child's Prayer" CS, 12

Read today's portion from the proclamation and highlight it. Discuss in whom our faith needs to be. *Show a picture of Christ.* How does having faith in Christ help us to be a successful family? How do we demonstrate our faith?

Discuss how prayer benefits our family.

In a February 1999 letter, the First Presidency taught that by teaching and rearing children in gospel principles, parents can protect their families from corrosive elements. They counseled parents and children "to give highest priority to family prayer, family home evening, gospel study and instruction, and wholesome family activities. However worthy and appropriate other demands or activities may be, they must not be permitted to displace the divinely-appointed duties that only parents and families can adequately perform" (First Presidency letter, 11 Feb. 1999; cited in *Church News*, 27 Feb. 1999, 3).

If your family holds regular family prayer, family scripture study, and family home evening, prayerfully consider ways you might improve in one or more of these areas. If your family does not do these things, consider what you will do to help establish these activities in your home.

From "The Blessings of Family Prayer" by President Gordon B. Hinckley, Ensign, Feb. 1991:

Show a bottle of medicine. Ask the children what medicine does. Show the picture of Gordon B. Hinckley. President Gordon B. Hinckley taught, "I submit that a return to the old pattern of prayer, family prayer in the homes of the people, is one of the basic medications that would check the dread disease that is eroding the character of our society. We could not expect a miracle in a day, but in a generation we would have a miracle." [Discuss how prayer is like medicine.] "I feel satisfied that there is no adequate substitute for the morning and evening practice of kneeling together—father, mother, and children. This, more than soft carpets, more than lovely draperies, more than cleverly balanced color schemes, is the thing that will make for better and more beautiful homes."

President Hinckley taught that the act of prayer – the very posture of kneeling ...contradicts the attitudes described by Paul: "proud ... heady, high minded." There is something in the very practice of father and mother and children kneeling together that evaporates others of those qualities he described: "disobedient to parents, ... without natural affection. There is something in the act of addressing Deity that offsets a tendency toward blasphemy and toward becoming lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. The inclination to be unholy, as Paul described it, to be unthankful, is erased as together family members thank the Lord for life and peace and all they have. And as they thank the Lord for one another, there is developed within the family a new appreciation, a new respect, a new affection one for another.

In remembering together before the Lord the poor, the needy, and the oppressed, there is developed, unconsciously but realistically, a love for others above self, a respect for others, a desire to serve the needs of others. One cannot ask God to help a neighbor in distress without feeling motivated to do something oneself toward helping that neighbor. What miracles would happen in the lives of the children of the world if they would lay aside their own selfishness and lose themselves in the service of others. The seed from which this sheltering and fruitful tree may grow is best planted and nurtured in the daily supplications of the family.

I know of no better way to inculcate love for country than for parents to pray before their children for the land in which they live, invoking the blessings of the Almighty upon it that it may be preserved in liberty and in peace. I know of no better way to build within the hearts of our children a much-needed respect for authority than remembering in the daily supplications of the family the leaders of our respective countries who carry the burdens of government. I know of nothing that will so much help to ease family tensions, that in a subtle way will bring about the respect for parents which leads to obedience, that will affect the spirit of repentance which will largely erase the blight of broken homes, than will praying together, confessing weaknesses together before the Lord, and invoking the blessings of the Lord upon the home and those who dwell there.

I have long been impressed with a statement made by a man long since dead. James H. Moyle wrote to his grandchildren concerning the family prayer of his own home. He said: "We have not gone to bed before kneeling in prayer to supplicate divine guidance and approval. Differences may arise in the best governed families, but they will be dissipated by the... spirit of prayer. ...Its very psychology tends to promote the more righteous life among men. It tends to unity, love, forgiveness, to service."

The family is the basic unit of society. The praying family is the hope of a better society. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found." (Isa. 55:6.)

Can we make our homes more beautiful? Yes, through addressing ourselves as families to the Source of all true beauty. Can we strengthen society and make it a better place in which to live? Yes, by strengthening the virtue of our family life through kneeling together and supplicating the Almighty in the name of his Beloved Son.

This practice, a return to family worship, spreading across the land and over the earth, would in a generation largely lift the blight that is destroying us. It would restore integrity, mutual respect, and a spirit of thankfulness in the hearts of people.

The Master declared, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." (Matt. 7:7.)

I give you my testimony that if you sincerely apply family prayer, you will not go away unrewarded. The changes may not be readily apparent. They may be extremely subtle. But they will be real, for God "is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. 11:6.)

May we be faithful in setting an example before the world in this practice and in encouraging others to do likewise." *"The Blessings of Family Prayer" by President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, Ensign, February 1991*

Encourage your children to continue their personal prayers and scripture study and to help the family to carry on these activities as well.

Closing Song: "Faith" CS, 96

Activity Ideas:

1. Put the kids' picture-of-Christ rocks under their pillow. When they forget to pray, their head should hit the rock when they lay down to sleep. After praying, they can put the rock next to their bed. In the morning, they will either see the rock or stub their toe on it to remind them to pray.



2. Make scripture pillowcases to remind kids to read daily. Sew "PJ'S" on the front, which stands for Prayer, Journal and Scriptures. Whenever the kids don their PJ's (or before they take them off), they will be reminded to check if they have "done their PJ's." To determine what size pocket to make, decide what you want to hold: Children's Book of Mormon Stories, *The Friend*, journal, scriptures, etc.



Front: 15x15" fabric
Pocket: 15x9-10" fabric
15x9-10" fusible interfacing
Back: 15x20" fabric
30" edge binding to match
Letters: white felt ~2.25" h
Matching thread
14" pillow form

Cut fabric pieces. Iron interfacing to back side of pocket. Sew two edge binding pieces to each other over the top edge of the pocket. Cut out felt letters (find a font you like and copy it). Pin letters onto fabric. Baste letters on by hand, then use a machine to complete. Trim threads. Pin pocket to the front 15x15" piece. Baste in place. Cut the back 15x20" piece in half to make two 15x10" pieces. Hem the inside edges (fold over once, baste, fold again and sew... these will make a pocket on the back side for inserting your pillow form). Placing right sides against each other, pin one 15x10" piece onto front of pillow with hemmed edge in the middle. Sew. Pin and sew the other 15x10" piece onto the front of pillow and sew. These will overlap. Turn right side out. Insert pillow form into the back pocket opening. Check for fit. If necessary, turn inside out and sew closer to the middle for a tighter fit.



Tuck a note into the pocket for your child, encouraging them to read their scriptures each day along with your testimony of scripture reading.

3. From Whitney Heap (pictures used by permission): Make scripture count-up blocks to keep track of consecutive days for personal scripture reading and/or family scripture reading. Setting personal and family goals can help with success. When you reach 100, treat the family to ice cream or go on a special outing. Make smaller rewards as well.



Cut 4x4x8 wood into blocks. Sand and paint 5 blocks per person (or one set for the family). Stencil numbers onto blocks. Sand again if you like the distressed look. Spray varnish.



4. Sew a fun scripture bag.

<http://www.sewastraightline.com/2011/01/monster-bag.html>

<http://somethingaboutkatie.blogspot.com/2011/05/sewing-fun.html>

Tutorial: <http://somethingaboutkatie.blogspot.com/2010/07/scripturebible-case-tutorial.html>

Lesson 20: Repentance and Forgiveness

"Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities."

Opening Song: "Home Can Be a Heaven on Earth" Hymn 298

Teaching Aids: large bag and some heavy rocks

Read today's part of the proclamation. Have the children color these words on their copy.

When someone does something mean to you, how does it make you feel? (sad/mad) What if you keep feeling sad/mad all day? Can you feel happy at the same time? That is one reason that we need to *forgive* others. If we "hold a grudge" against someone (meaning we don't forget about what they did), it is like we are frowning and we are not happy inside. We need to let go of those upset feelings so we can feel happy inside.

From Primary 2-CTR A: Bring a large bag and some rocks. Discuss with the children how we often become angry or seek revenge when people have been unkind to us. During this discussion, put the rocks in the bag one by one. When the bag has a number of rocks in it, let the children take turns carrying it around. Ask them to try to clap their hands or give someone a hug while carrying the bag. Explain that being angry at others for the unkind things that they have done is like carrying a bag of rocks. It is a heavy burden for us.



Have the children say, "I will forgive" a few times as you take the rocks out of the bag. Then have the children carry the bag again. Explain that when we forgive others, we no longer have to carry a heavy burden. We feel much happier when we forgive. *Discuss how forgiving each other in our family helps us to be happier and stronger as a family.*

We need to forgive others and to repent when we make mistakes. Raise your hand if you are perfect. Do we all make mistakes? Are we "clean" inside when we make mistakes? No, but Heavenly Father provided a way for us to get rid of our "stains" or mistakes. How do we change from making a mistake to being clean and new again? (Repentance.)

Discuss the steps of repentance.

The five R's of repentance are: (1) recognition, (2) remorse, (3) resolution, (4) restitution, (5) reformation

- 1- Recognition = Know you did it
- 2- Remorse = Feel sorry
- 3- Resolution = Confess/Ask forgiveness
- 4- Restitution = Make wrong right
- 5- Reformation = Never do it again

Encourage your children (and the grown-ups, too) to repent and forgive. Testify that this will help us to be a successful family.

Closing Song: “Help Me, Dear Father” CS, 99

Activity Idea:

Color the following page from lds.org. Have the children draw happy faces on the children in the picture. Have the kids put their picture where it will remind them to forgive others.

Link on this page:

http://lds.org/ldsorg/v/index.jsp?hideNav=1&locale=0&sourceId=d2e2767978c20110VgnVCM100000176f620a___&vgnextoid=637e1b08f338c010VgnVCM1000004d82620aRCRD



Lesson 21: Respect, Love and Compassion

*"Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, **respect, love, compassion**, work, and wholesome recreational activities."*

Opening Song: "Where Love Is" CS, 138

Teaching Aids: New Testament, props for acting out the Good Samaritan or flannel board story or movie

Read today's portion of the family proclamation. Have the children color these words on their copy. Ask for the definitions of the words respect, love and compassion.

Respect = admire someone deeply, esteem, have due regard for the feelings, wishes, rights, or traditions of another; avoid harming

Compassion = knowing that someone needs help and wanting to help them in any way you can. Being compassionate means that we care about the problems of another and want to help. We can always find some way to be more compassionate to members of our family.



Activity: Act out the parable of the Good Samaritan while reading Luke 10:29-37 (or use flannel boards). You could also watch the film "The Good Samaritan" in the LDS Media Library.

How did the Good Samaritan show compassion?



Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve: "The plan of the Father is that family love and companionship will continue into the eternities. Being ... in a family carries a great responsibility of caring, loving, lifting, and strengthening each member of the family so that all can righteously endure to the end in mortality and dwell together throughout eternity. It is not enough just to save ourselves. It is equally important that parents, brothers, and sisters are saved in our families. If we return home alone to our Heavenly Father, we will be asked, 'Where is the rest of the family?'" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 88; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 65).

From "Love at Home," Friend, June 1996, 44: "Can you guess the answer to this riddle? What is as invisible as the wind and as warm as the sun, can be given away without losing any, grows when it is shared, comes from your heart, and shows on your face? The answer to the riddle is love. Love is a powerful feeling of affection, concern, and tenderness for another.

"Your home in heaven was filled with love. Your Heavenly Father prepared a plan of happiness for you because He loves you. That plan makes it possible for you to become like Him and return to live with Him forever. Your Savior and Elder Brother, Jesus Christ, suffered and gave His life to free you from sin and death. Heavenly Father and Jesus love you. Jesus gave us a commandment to love one another as He loves us. When you love others and show that love by

your actions, you are following Him. When you love others, you show that you are a child of Heavenly Father and a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ (see **John 13:34–35**). You become more like Them.

“Your home here on earth is the first and most important place to show love. You can do it in very simple but powerful ways—a smile, a thank you, a hug, a kind word or deed. You can say, “I love you.” Everyone enjoys hearing those words again and again. As you show love for your family, that love will grow, and you will help to make your home a heavenly place. A home filled with love is a heavenly place. A person filled with love is following Jesus.

“Jesus Christ is our ultimate example of love and kindness. He commanded us to “love one another” (**John 13:34**). *Let the children suggest ways that they can show love for the members of our family.*” (From “Love at Home,” *Friend*, June 1996, 44).

Closing Song: “Love at Home” Hymn 294

Extras:

1. *From lds.org*: Explain that just saying you love someone is not always enough. You must show him that you love him through your actions. Tell the children that there are many opportunities to serve family members every day. Have the children play Family Service Charades. In one bowl, have slips of paper with ideas for service. Have the child whose name you draw from the first bowl pull a slip from the second bowl and act out the service for the other children to guess. Possible service ideas: washing dishes, giving a hug, writing a letter, making a bed, playing a game with a younger child, making cookies, saying a prayer for someone, drawing a picture, smiling, picking up toys, getting the mail, setting the table, reading to a younger child, and washing the car. (Source: <http://lds.org/library/display/0,4945,2045-1-2563-1,00.html>)

2. Watch FHE video “Serving Others with Love” 6:55 min (church – 1987) clip #11

3. From “The Spoken Word” address on February 15, 2005: Noted psychiatrist and writer M. Scott Peck has said, “Of all the misconceptions about love the most powerful and pervasive is the belief that ‘falling in love’ is love.”¹ In reality, falling in love requires minimal effort, little willpower, whereas being in love involves much work and a steadfast commitment to the comfort and well-being of one’s companion. Dr. Peck says that ‘love is an act of will’ namely, both an intention and an action. Will also implies choice. We do not have to love. We choose to love.”

“Real love enlarges the soul. It helps us to bite our tongue when it would be easy to say hurtful words. It gives us an understanding heart that is filled with compassion for another. It enables us to be more patient with others’ imperfections and acknowledge our own. And it means that we stay loyal and true when it would be easy or enticing to find someone else to love. The miracle of real love is that those who choose to love blossom under the sunshine of trust and appreciation, they even become more lovable. Whenever we make a choice for lasting love, we grow. Our hearts expand in kindness; our minds are more open to another’s point of view. Our vision of the future is more hopeful as we continue to nurture our relationship over the long haul, through the ups and downs of life. Yes, honeymoons come to an end, but the life and love of a relationship can continue to grow, even flourish, like a red, red rose that’s newly sprung in June when we love and choose to stay in love.”

Lesson 22: Work and Wholesome Recreational Activities

*"Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, **work, and wholesome recreational activities.**"*

Opening Song: "When We're Helping" CS, 198

Read today's proclamation portion and have the children highlight their copies.

"Strengthening the Family: Happiness in Family Life" Ensign September 2005:

Families grow stronger as they spend time together. Elder Oaks explained: "Families should pray together, kneeling night and morning to offer thanks for blessings and prayers for common concerns. Families should worship together, participating in church services and family devotionals. Families should study and learn. ... Families should work together. ... Families should also play together, so that happy recreational experiences are associated with the activities of the family. Families should counsel together, treating all matters of concern to the family and its members. Families should eat together. Mealtime is a natural time for the family to assemble and communicate. It is a shame for such an opportunity to be lost in family bickering or to be fragmented by family members seizing food and scattering to the four corners as if the family kitchen were a fast food outlet."

"Let us realize that the privilege to work is a gift, that power to work is a blessing, and that love of work is success" (David O. McKay, *Pathways to Happiness* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1957], p. 381)

From Family Home Evening Resource Book, Lesson Ideas, Work, 231: Ask family members to tell some of the jobs they enjoy most, some they enjoy least, and why. Discuss ways tasks can be done easier, faster, and more enjoyably. Discuss specific ways family members can help and encourage each other in the tasks they have to do. To start them thinking, tell about Margaret, who learned the multiplication tables while doing the dishes, practiced adding prices and counting change when she was sent to the store, and added and subtracted stairs while sweeping (see *Walk in His Ways: Basic Manual for Children, Part B*, p. 11). Tell them also of President Spencer W. Kimball, who sang, counted, and memorized the Articles of Faith while milking cows (see Edward L. Kimball and Andrew E. Kimball, Jr., *Spencer W. Kimball* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1977], p. 36). Why does our joy in work depend on how well we do our job?

Discuss the following quotation: "When man is industrious and righteous, then is he happy" (Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 9:244).

Discuss the motto: Work hard, play hard.

Closing Song: "Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel" Hymn 252

Activity Idea:

Organize a family work project. Play a fun game after the work project.



Lesson 23: Fathers Preside, Provide, and Protect

"By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families."

Teaching Aids: A crown, items to represent things that fathers do: money (provide for the family), scriptures (leads the family in the gospel), consecrated oil (holds the priesthood and gives blessings), a weight (represents strength to protect the family), a belt (to represent discipline... not that we *use* one), a compass (guides the family), a sports ball (dads are coordinated and athletic), a game/toy (dads are fun), etc. 12 rocks with labels (see activity)

Opening Song: "Daddy's Homecoming" CS, 210

Put a crown on Dad. Having a father is a blessing from our Heavenly Father. His role is given by God. Read today's proclamation sentence and highlight it. Talk to the boys about how exciting it is that they will be able to be fathers someday. Talk to the girls about choosing a boy to marry someday who wants to be a good father; who recognizes his divinely appointed role as a father.

Let the children take turns choosing an item from the bag. Ask, "What does a ___ have to do with being a father?"



Preside = to be in the position of authority or to be in charge.

From "Strengthening the Family: As Equal Partners" Ensign October 2005: "What does it mean to "preside ...in love and righteousness"? (See D&C 121:41–46.) Presiding does not mean a man is to rule or exercise unrighteous dominion over his wife or children. The Savior taught His Apostles that the rulers among the Gentiles exercised authority over their subjects. "But it shall not be so among you," He cautioned, "but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (see Matt. 20:25–27). Presiding, then, is to love and serve and sacrifice. The Apostle Paul taught, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25). President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) stated: "Brethren, I say to you with all soberness, [Jesus Christ] is the model we must follow as we take the spiritual lead in our families. Particularly is this true in your relationship with your wife."

The Lord said "that every man who is obliged to provide for his own family, let him provide, and he shall in nowise lose his crown" (D&C 75:28). In today's world being able to provide for a family often depends on a father's willingness and opportunity to obtain sufficient education. But acquiring an education and suitable employment and providing the necessities of life does not mean spending an inordinate amount of time working to create a high standard of living. President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) warned that some fathers spend so much time providing for things far beyond the necessities of life that physical possessions become their false gods and they have little time to preside in their families in love and righteousness.

The responsibility to protect a family stretches far beyond the obvious physical shelter and security a father should provide. President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) taught: "A righteous father protects his children with his time and presence in their social, educational, and spiritual activities and responsibilities." Fathers can protect their children by teaching them to make wise

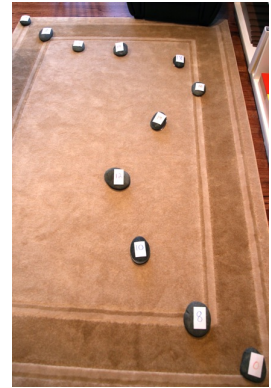
choices regarding the media they choose and the friends they spend time with. (“Strengthening the Family: As Equal Partners” *Ensign* October 2005.)

Activity: Walk the “Path of Manhood.” Label 12 rocks with age numbers or pictures on one side and the landmarks on the other side: (0) birth, name & blessing, (3) Primary, (8) baptism & cub scouts, Faith in God, sacrament, (>10) boy scouts, (12) Aaronic Priesthood - deacon, (14) teacher, seminary, (16) priest, Duty to God, drive & date, (<18) eagle scout (get 21 merit badges + service project), (19) Melchizedek Priesthood – elder, temple endowment & mission, (graduation cap) education, (wedding rings) marriage – temple sealing, (baby) father.

Have your crowned father sit at the top of the path. Let the kids turn over each rock and discuss the exciting things the boys get to look forward to with each age. Dad can share fun memories from each landmark. After discussing them all, the boys may want to attempt to walk on the rock path toward Dad. (It’s a fun challenge.)

Have everyone give Dad a hug.

Closing Song: “Fathers” CS, 209



Extras:

Lds.org *Unto All the World*, October 28, 2010, Elder Perry on the Priesthood, Part 3: The Priesthood Strengthens the Family: “Women share in all the blessings of the priesthood, Elder Perry said. “The Lord gave them the greatest assignment on earth. He entrusted unto women the opportunity of bringing forth His children to the earth.” Speaking of mothers and fathers, he said, “The Lord distinguished between the two so that the two would work in concert one with another, so the blessings of the priesthood, in oneness, in unity, and harmony apply to both. A woman who has a loyal priesthood bearer as the head of the family, he said, “should have the comforting assurance that he will take care of her first above anything else in his duty and responsibility,” noting that the father is to be the provider and protector, taking care of the family unit. He counseled priesthood bearers to be mindful of widows and single sisters, and to be supportive of those who are raising children.”

Lesson 24: Mothers Nurture

"Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children."

Teaching Aids: Crown, items to represent things that mothers do: a baby doll (bear and take care of children), pot (feed the family), kitchen glove (keep the home clean), clothing (clean clothes), scriptures (teach the gospel), heart (love), car keys (drives kids places), a camera (documents the family's doings), book (educates children); 11 boxes with labels (see activity)

Opening Song: "Mother, I Love You" CS, 207

Put a crown on the mother of the family. Talk about how her role as mother is given by God. *Read the first sentence from today's paragraph from the family proclamation and color it.*

Having a mother is a blessing from our Heavenly Father.

Let the children choose an object from the bag. Talk about how it relates to nurturing.



From "For Time and All Eternity," Elder Boyd K. Packer, Ensign Nov. 1993: The First Presidency said: "Motherhood ...[is] a holy calling, a sacred dedication for carrying out the Lord's plans, a consecration of devotion to the uprearing and fostering, the nurturing in body, mind, and spirit, of those who kept their first estate and who come to this earth for their second estate 'to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them.' (Abr. 3:25) To lead them to keep their second estate is the work of motherhood, and 'they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever.' [Abr. 3:26]"

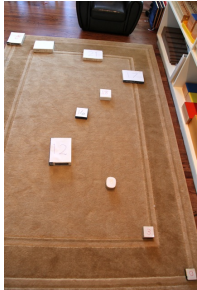
"This divine service of motherhood can be rendered only by mothers. It may not be passed to others. Nurses cannot do it; public nurseries cannot do it; hired help cannot do it—only mother, aided as much as may be by the loving hands of father, brothers, and sisters, can give the full needed measure of watchful care. The First Presidency counseled that "the mother who entrusts her child to the care of others, that she may do non-motherly work, whether for gold, for fame, or for civic service, should remember that 'a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.' (Prov. 29:15) In our day the Lord has said that unless parents teach their children the doctrines of the Church 'the sin be upon the heads of the parents.' (D&C 68:25)"

"Motherhood is near to divinity. It is the highest, holiest service to be assumed by mankind. It places her who honors its holy calling and service next to the angels."

Talk to the girls in the family about how exciting it is that they will be able to be mothers someday. Talk to the boys about choosing a girl to marry someday who wants to be a mother and who recognizes her divinely appointed role as a mother.

Activity:

Have the girls walk the “Path of Womanhood.” Label 11 boxes with these numbers/pictures. Put a slip of paper, pictures and/or objects inside to describe these landmarks: (0) birth, name & blessing (3) Primary-CTR ring, (8) baptism & Gift of the Holy Ghost, Activity Days, Faith in God,



sacrament, (12) Young Women-Beehive, baptisms for the dead, (14) Mia Maid, seminary, (16) Laurel, drive & date, (17) Young Womanhood Medallion, Personal Progress, (18) college education, (21) mission, (marriage-wedding rings) endowment, temple sealing, (baby) mother. Have the girls walk along the path and open each box as they come to it. Discuss the exciting things the girls get to look forward to with each age. Have your crowned mother sit at the top of the path. Mom can share fun memories from each landmark. Have everyone give Mom a hug at the end.



Closing Song: “Mother Dear” CS, 206

Extras:

“*Strengthening the Family: As Equal Partners*” *Ensign* October 2005: In 1942 the First Presidency stated: “Motherhood ... becomes a holy calling, a sacred dedication for carrying out the Lord’s plans, a consecration of devotion to the uprearing and fostering, the nurturing in body, mind, and spirit, of those who kept their first estate. ... To lead them to keep their second estate is the work of motherhood. ... Motherhood is near to divinity. It is the highest, holiest service to be assumed by mankind. It places her who honors its holy calling and service next to the angels.” One of Satan’s most effective deceptions is to demean the work of wife and mother in the home. Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles cautioned that “this is an attack at the very heart of God’s plan. ... Don’t be lured away from the plan of our God to the ways of the world, where motherhood is belittled, femininity is decried, and the divinely established role of wife and mother is mocked.” Prophets have emphasized the importance of mothers devoting their full-time efforts to nurturing their children. But to those who have to work to provide for the needs of their families, President Gordon B. Hinckley has said: “Do the very best you can. I hope that if you are employed full-time you are doing it to ensure that basic needs are met and not simply to indulge a taste for an elaborate home, fancy cars, and other luxuries.”

"Lesson 45: “The Family Is Ordained of God”,” *Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual*, (1999): What primary responsibility does the proclamation describe for mothers? How can young women prepare themselves now to fulfill this responsibility? President Gordon B. Hinckley taught: “If there is to be a return to old and sacred values, it must begin in the home. It is here that truth is learned, that integrity is cultivated, that self-discipline is instilled, and that love is nurtured. ... “Sisters, guard your children. ... Nothing is more precious to you as mothers, absolutely nothing. Your children are the most valuable thing you will have in time or all eternity. You will be fortunate indeed if, as you grow old and look at those you brought into the world, you find in them uprightness of life, virtue in living, and integrity in their behavior” (“Walking in the Light of the Lord,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 99).

Sing: “A Happy Family” p. 198

Lesson 25: Extended Families Can Support

“In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation. Extended families should lend support when needed.”

Teaching Aids: a clothespin for each child

Opening Song: “I Have a Family Tree” CS, 199

Read today’s proclamation paragraph and color it. Mothers have the primary responsibility to nurture children, and fathers are to preside, provide, and protect. But the proclamation also states that husbands and wives are to help each other as equal partners in the responsibilities of parenthood.

From mormonshare.com: Hand out a clothespin to each child. Ask them how many parts it is made of. Can it do its job with just one side? (No. If you only have one side of the clothespin it does not perform its full function.) However, with the two sides of the clothespin being bonded together (by the Lord) the clothespin can perform its full function. By working together and relying on the Lord, it is amazing what a husband and wife can accomplish! (mormonshare.com/lds-object-lesson/it-takes-two)



From “Strengthening the Family: As Equal Partners” *Ensign* October 2005: “The divine design to give mothers and fathers different primary responsibilities in the family reflects certain eternal differences between men and women. ... These innate differences and unique responsibilities enable a couple to come together in unity, to complement each other’s strengths and gifts, and to forge the relationship that makes an eternal family possible.”

“Strengthening the Family: Adapting to Circumstances” Ensign December 2005:

“In an ideal world all adults would be happily married, all marriages would be blessed with children, and all family members would be healthy, obedient, and supportive of each other. But life is rarely ideal. Each individual experiences adversity, and no family’s mortal sojourn is consistently trouble free. Without trial, weakness, illness, and death, we would not learn the lessons we came here to learn. President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) explained: “If we look at mortality as a complete existence, then pain, sorrow, failure, and short life could be a calamity. But if we look upon life as an eternal thing stretching far into the pre-earth past and on into the eternal post-death future, then all happenings may be put in proper perspective.”

“Disease, disability, death, divorce, and other disruptive factors can create challenges. In such situations, “individual adaptation” of roles may be necessary. A father may need to take on additional household and nurturing responsibilities, or a mother who has been a full-time homemaker may need to enter the workforce. Even children may need to accept new responsibilities.”

“How can extended family help when events occur – like death, loss of jobs, disability or divorce? Support may range from providing financial assistance to donating time to tend children, help with chores, or care for an ill or disabled family member. The degree of extended-

family involvement depends on the situation and the family's needs.”

“Even without the effects of serious adversity, the extended family can be an important support system. Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught: “To build a foundation strong enough to support a family in our troubled world today requires the best effort of each of us—father, mother, brother, sister, grandmother, grandfather, aunts, uncles, cousins, and so on. Each must contribute energy and effort in driving piles right down to the bedrock of the gospel until the foundation is strong enough to endure through the eternities” (“*Strengthening the Family: Adapting to Circumstances*” *Ensign* December 2005).

Share experiences from your own life of when extended family has helped you (at the birth of a child, in college, etc.) Show pictures if you have them. You can also show pictures of your parents and grandparents and tell about each one. Extended family members can be great examples to us and a great support to us in doing what is right. Families can be happy when everyone supports and loves each other.

Activity Idea:

To help the children understand *who* their extended family is, make a family tree diagram showing grandparents, uncles & aunts, and cousins.



Supplies needed:

Charts for each side of the family
(computer/draw)

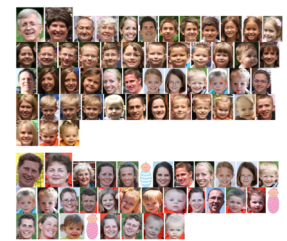
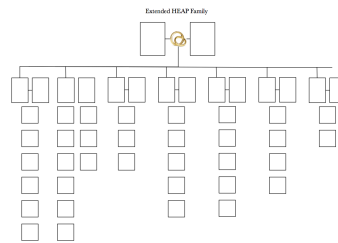
Small pictures of your extended family
(Cartoon) pictures of expected babies

Scissors

Glue sticks

Pens/pencils

An envelope for each child's pictures



Print or copy your diagrams. Print extended family pictures. Cut the pictures into strips for each child and place in their envelopes. Have the children finish cutting each picture and paste it in the appropriate place. Write their names or paste their printed names underneath the pictures.

After the project is complete, have the children point to all of their uncles, aunts, grandpas, grandmas, and cousins. Talk about how you can help and support *them*. Encourage the children to serve, love, and give support to *all* family members.

Extras:

1. Print a colored family tree from Mormonchic.com: <http://www.mormonchic.com/crafty/filefolders.asp>
Either use the accompanying generic pictures or your own. As you cut and paste, discuss ways you can help your extended family.

2. *Play/Sing*: “I Have a Family Tree” (CS 199), “Grandmother” 200, “When Grandpa Comes” 201. Listen for names of *extended* family and discuss what they do.

3. Make a “Guess Who?” game with your own family pictures.

“Strengthening the Family: Adapting to Circumstances” Ensign December 2005:

You may wonder why your family has to endure adversity and the disruption it brings. The answer, and the comfort, can be found in the gospel’s eternal perspective. The Apostle Paul taught that our “affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4:17). How is this possible?

Elder Merrill J. Bateman of the Presidency of the Seventy reminds us: “Trials and tribulations take many forms: the death of a loved one, a marriage that is different than expected, no marriage, a divorce, a child born with a disability, no children, losing a job, parents who make mistakes, a wayward son or daughter, ill health. The list is endless. Why did God make allowances in His plan for disappointment, pain, suffering, and death? Is adversity necessary for one to build a Christ-centered life, to receive the image of God in his or her countenance? “An understanding of the plan of salvation, of premortality, earth life, and life after death provides perspective. . . . Opposition, disappointments, pain, suffering, and death are necessary to protect agency and provide for spiritual development (see 2 Ne. 11). On the other hand, if life were limited to our mortal experience, adversity could not be understood. . . . Without an eternal perspective, there are no meaningful explanations for man’s inhumanity to man or for earthquakes, floods, or children with disabilities.

“We should remember that it was Satan who wanted an earth with no disappointments, no tests, no adversity, and no glory except for himself. “Recognize that some challenges in life will not be resolved here on earth. . . . He wants you to learn how to be cured when that is His will and how to obtain strength to live with your challenge when He intends it to be an instrument for growth....

“When you feel you can do no more, temporarily lay your challenges at His feet. . . . The Lord will give relief with divine power when you seek deliverance in humility and *faith in Jesus Christ*” (*“Strengthening the Family: Adapting to Circumstances” Ensign December 2005*).

Lesson 26: We Are Accountable Before God

"We warn that individuals who violate covenants of chastity, who abuse spouse or offspring, or who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God."

Opening Song: "Let Us Oft Speak Kind Words" Hymn 232

Read and highlight today's sentence from the proclamation.

We need to remember that Heavenly Father can always see us and knows what we are doing and thinking. How do you think He feels when we are mean to our families? How does He feel when we are loving toward our families? When we try hard to act like Jesus Christ would, we can know that Heavenly Father is pleased with us.

We are accountable before God for all of our actions. What does accountable mean?

Accountable = required or expected to justify actions or decisions; responsible; to blame; liable

We have learned about our family responsibilities. Let's remember to fulfill these responsibilities and to treat each other with love as the Savior would.

Closing Song: "Lord, I Would Follow Thee" Hymn 220

Activity Idea:

Make outlet-cover-messages as reminders for how we should treat each other.

Note: these make removing outlet plugs very easy.

Supplies:

Plain wood pieces (4 for \$1 at Hobby Lobby)

Outlet plugs

Colorful paper

Glue sticks

Mod Podge (optional)

Glitter Glue (or printed words)

Pencil

Scissors

Hot glue gun and glue



Trace a wood piece onto the back of your paper. Cut out the paper and glue it onto the wood. If you'd like a glossier look, cover the paper with a thin coat of Mod Podge and let it dry. Write reminder words with glitter glue on the front and allow the glitter to dry. Measure and mark where you want the plug to sit on your wood. Hot glue the outlet cover to the back of your wood piece and press down. Wait for the glue to harden.

(Source for decorated outlet covers: whimsy-girl.blogspot.com/2009/04/plug-art.html)

Lesson 27: Disintegration of the Family Brings Calamities

"Further, we warn that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets."

Opening Song: "Families Can Be Together Forever" Hymn 300, CS 188

Read today's proclamation sentence. Have the children highlight their copy. Explain its meaning.

Calamity = an event causing great and often sudden damage or distress; disaster, catastrophe, tragedy, misfortune

If society allows the family to fall apart, then the world will experience *calamities*. Discuss what kinds of calamities this might refer to. To avoid calamities, we need to follow the teachings in The Family: A Proclamation to the World.

Activity Idea: Make "calamity feet." *Make these ahead of time so you can use them at the end of the lesson. (*Idea from whimsy-girl.blogspot.com/2008/09/wacky-feet-tutorial.html*)

Supplies: Cardboard, Xact-o knife, pen, scrap fabric, hot glue gun

Directions: Draw some fun feet on a flat piece of cardboard. (Our favorites were giant feet and monster feet.) Cut out one using an Xact-o knife. Trace this foot again for a matching second foot. Paint and decorate, if desired.

Have your child stand with their feet in position on the cardboard. Mark the outsides of their feet with pen. Write their name on the inside of the marks. Cut the slits with the knife. Cut fabric straps about 2" wide and long enough to fit around your child's foot with extra underneath the foot. Push the fabric into the slots. Repeat with both sides. Try the feet on your child, adjusting the straps to fit. Carefully remove your child's feet. Hot glue the straps on the back. Trim extra fabric.



Warning: real calamities may happen if kids aren't careful – especially on slippery surfaces like hard wood. Have fun!



Lesson 28: Strengthen Families, Strengthen Society

"We call upon responsible citizens and officers of government everywhere to promote those measures designed to maintain and strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society."

Teaching Aids: Pictures of Pres. Hinckley & Pres. Kimball, a toothpick for each person, a bunch of toothpicks, 2 rubber bands, chalkboard/white board, chalk/dry erase marker, building blocks

Opening Song: "Let Us All Press On" Hymn 243

Read the last sentence from the Proclamation. Have the children highlight their copies.

Show picture of Pres. Hinckley. President Gordon B. Hinckley said, "The strength of any nation lies in the strength of its families" ("Words of the Prophet: Love at Home," *Ensign*, Oct. 1999). "In my judgment the greatest challenge facing this nation is the problem of the family, brought on by misguided parents and resulting in misguided children. The family is the primary unit of society. I believe it was designed by the Almighty. A nation will rise no higher than the strength of its families" (Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, July 2003 News of the Church).

Why must families be strong in order for nations to survive?

Give everyone a toothpick. Ask someone to break it in half. Gather all of the sticks and put a rubber band around them. Give the sticks to someone. Ask if (s)he can break them. "How are these toothpicks like our family?" (When we *stick* together we are stronger.) "What could the rubber band represent?" (Faith in God, love, temple sealing....)



President Spencer W. Kimball said, "It is against the home and family that Satan has aimed his greatest efforts to destroy" (*My Beloved Sisters*, p. 27). Ask: "Why do you think Satan is so determined to destroy families?" (If Satan can destroy families it makes it easier for him to "break" and destroy the individuals one by one.)

Discuss things families can do to strengthen themselves. Write them on a chalkboard or white board: family prayer, FHE, family scripture study, church attendance, serving one another, avoiding contention, having the Holy Ghost in our home, etc. (See "Extras" section below for ideas.)

Bear your testimony of the importance of keeping your family strong through love, kindness, and obedience and through family routines like FHE, scriptures and prayer.

Have everyone in the family get in a circle and put their hands in the middle. As you raise your hands, yell something like, "Love you!" or your family name: "Lund!" *Or:* Stand in a circle with right hands in the middle. Take hold of the wrist of the person on your left. Have that person grab hold of the wrist of the person on *their* left until everyone's hands are united. Choose one person to sit on this strong family bond and carefully lift them. Discuss.

Closing Song: "Families Can Be Together Forever" Hymn 300

Activity Idea: Build a high and/or robust tower using as many blocks as possible. Try to make it sturdy. Talk about how strong families are fundamental to building society. If the building blocks are strong and well-placed, the whole building/society will be strong. Have the children stomp on the floor around the tower to see if they can make it fall without touching it.



Extras:

President Gordon B. Hinckley: “The strength of any community lies in the strength of its families. The strength of any nation lies in the strength of its families. Strong family life comes of strong and clear religious understanding of who we are, and why we are here, and of what we may eternally become. Strong family life comes of the perception that each of us is a child of God, born with a divine birthright, and with a great and significant potential. Strong family life comes of parents who love and respect one another, and who love and respect and nurture their children in the ways of the Lord. These are undergirding principles of our teachings as a church. To the degree that we observe these teachings, we build strong families whose generations will strengthen the nation” (“Words of the Prophet: Love at Home,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1999).

“Strengthening Families: Our Sacred Duty” by Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles *Ensign* May 1999: Countless things can be done within the walls of our homes to strengthen the family. May I share a few ideas that may help identify the areas that need strengthening in our own families. I offer them in a spirit of encouragement, knowing that each family—and each family member—is unique.

- Make our homes a safe place where each family member feels love and a sense of belonging. Realize that each child has varying gifts and abilities; each is an individual requiring special love and care.
- Remember, “a soft answer turneth away wrath” (Prov. 15:1). When my sweetheart and I were sealed in the Salt Lake Temple, Elder Harold B. Lee gave us wise counsel: “When you raise your voice in anger, the Spirit departs from your home.” We must never, out of anger, lock the door of our home or our heart to our children. Like the prodigal son, our children need to know that when they come to themselves they can turn to us for love and counsel.
- Spend individual time with our children, letting them choose the activity and the subject of conversation. Block out distractions.
- Encourage our children’s private religious behavior, such as personal prayer, personal scripture study, and fasting for specific needs. Measure their spiritual growth by observing their demeanor, language, and conduct toward others.
- Pray daily with our children.
- Read the scriptures together. I remember my own mother and father reading the scriptures as we children sat on the floor and listened. Sometimes they would ask, “What does that scripture mean to you?” or “How does it make you feel?” Then they would listen to us as we responded in our own words.
- Read the words of the living prophets and other inspiring articles for children, youth, and adults in Church magazines.
- We can fill our homes with the sound of worthy music as we sing together from the hymnbook and the *Children’s Songbook*.
- Hold family home evening every week. As parents, we are sometimes too intimidated to teach or testify to our children. I have been guilty of that in my own life. Our children need to have us share spiritual feelings with them and to teach and bear testimony to them.
- Hold family councils to discuss family plans and concerns. Some of the most effective family councils are one on one with each family member. Help our children know their ideas are important. Listen to them and learn from them.
- Invite missionaries to teach less-active or nonmember friends in our homes.

- Show that we sustain and support Church leaders.
- Eat together when possible, and have meaningful mealtime discussions.
- Work together as a family, even if it may be faster and easier to do the job ourselves. Talk with our sons and daughters as we work together. I had that opportunity every Saturday with my father.
- Help our children learn how to build good friendships and make their friends feel welcome in our homes. Get to know the parents of the friends of our children.
- Teach our children by example how to budget time and resources. Help them learn self-reliance and the importance of preparing for the future.
- Teach our children the history of our ancestors and of our own family history.
- Build family traditions. Plan and carry out meaningful vacations together, considering our children's needs, talents, and abilities. Help them create happy memories, improve their talents, and build their feelings of self-worth.
- By word and example, teach moral values and a commitment to obeying the commandments.
- After my baptism and confirmation, my mother drew me aside and asked, "What do you feel?" I described as best I could the warm feeling of peace, comfort, and happiness I had. Mother explained that what I was feeling was the gift I had just received, the gift of the Holy Ghost. She told me that if I lived worthy of it, I would have that gift with me continually. That was a teaching moment that has lived with me all my life.

Teach our children the significance of baptism and confirmation, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, partaking of the sacrament, honoring the priesthood, and making and keeping temple covenants. They need to know the importance of living worthy of a temple recommend and preparing for a temple marriage.

- If you have not yet been sealed in the temple to your spouse or children, work as a family to receive temple blessings. Set temple goals as a family.
- Be worthy of the priesthood which you hold, brethren, and use it to bless the lives of your family.
- Through the power of the Melchizedek Priesthood, dedicate our homes.

Resources are available outside the home. Wise use of them will strengthen our families.

- Encourage our children to serve in the Church and community.
- Talk to our children's teachers, coaches, counselors, advisers, and Church leaders about our concerns and the needs of our children.
- Know what our children are doing in their spare time. Influence their choice of movies, television programs, and videos. If they are on the Internet, know what they are doing. Help them see the importance of wholesome entertainment.
- Encourage worthwhile school activities. Know what our children are studying. Help them with their homework. Help them realize the importance of education and of preparing for employment and self-sufficiency.
- Young women: Attend Relief Society when you reach your 18th birthday. Some of you may be reluctant to make that transition. You may fear that you won't fit in. My young sisters, this is not the case. There is much in Relief Society for you. It can be a blessing to you throughout your life.
- Young men: Honor the Aaronic Priesthood. It is the preparatory priesthood, preparing you for the Melchizedek Priesthood. Become fully active in the elders quorum when you are ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood. The brotherhood, the quorum instruction, and the opportunities to serve others will bless you and your family throughout your life.

Every family can be strengthened in one way or another if the Spirit of the Lord is brought into our homes and we teach by His example.

- Act with faith; don't react with fear. When our teenagers begin testing family values, parents need to go to the Lord for guidance on the specific needs of each family member. This is the time for added love and support and to reinforce your teachings on how to make choices. It is frightening to allow our children to learn from the mistakes they may make, but their willingness to choose the Lord's way and family values is greater when the choice comes from within than when we attempt to force those values upon them. The Lord's way of love and acceptance is better than Satan's way of force and coercion, especially in rearing teenagers.
- Remember the Prophet Joseph Smith's words: "Nothing is so much calculated to lead people to forsake sin as to take them by the hand, and watch over them with tenderness. When persons manifest the least kindness and love to me, O what power it has over my mind, while the opposite course has a tendency to harrow up all the harsh feelings and depress the human mind" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 240).
- While we may despair when, after all we can do, some of our children stray from the path of righteousness, the words of Orson F. Whitney can comfort us: "Though some of the sheep may wander, the eye of the Shepherd is upon them, and sooner or later they will feel the tentacles of Divine Providence reaching out after them and drawing them back to the fold. Either in this life or the life to come, they will return. They will have to pay their debt to justice; they will suffer for their sins; and may tread a thorny path; but if it leads them at last, like the penitent Prodigal, to a loving and forgiving [mother's and] father's heart and home, the painful experience will not have been in vain. Pray for [our] careless and disobedient children; hold on to them with [our] faith. Hope on, trust on, till you

see the salvation of God” (Orson F. Whitney, in Conference Report, Apr. 1929, 110).

- What if you are single or have not been blessed with children? Do you need to be concerned about the counsel regarding families? Yes. It is something we all need to learn in earth life. Unmarried adult members can often lend a special kind of strength to the family, becoming a tremendous source of support, acceptance, and love to their families and the families of those around them.

- Many adult members of the extended family do much parenting in their own right. Grandparents, aunts and uncles, brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews, cousins, and other family members can have great impact on the family. I want to express my appreciation for those in my own extended family who have guided me by their example and testimony. Sometimes extended family members can say things parents cannot say without starting an argument. After a long heart-to-heart discussion with her mother, one young woman said: “It would be awful to tell you and Dad I had done something wrong. But it would be worse to tell Aunt Susan. I just couldn’t let her down.” Knowing that we are in mortality to learn and to develop our faith, we should understand that there must be opposition in all things. During a family council in my own home, my wife said, “When you may think that someone has a perfect family, you just do not know them well enough.”

Brothers and sisters, as parents let us heed the admonition, even the rebuke, given by the Lord to Joseph Smith and the leaders of the Church in 1833 to “set in order [our] own house” (D&C 93:43). “I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth” (D&C 93:40). “Set in order [our] family, and see that they are more diligent and concerned at home, and pray always, or they shall be removed out of their place” (D&C 93:50).

The prophets of our day have given a similar admonition and warning to parents to set in order our families. May we be blessed with the inspiration and love to meet opposition with faith within our families. We will then know that our trials are to draw us closer to the Lord and to one another. May we listen to a prophet’s voice and set in order our own homes (see D&C 93:41–49). The family is strengthened as we draw near to the Lord, and each member of the family is strengthened as we lift and strengthen and love and care for one another. “Thee lift me and I’ll lift thee, and we’ll ascend together” (Quaker proverb).

May we be able to welcome and maintain the Spirit of the Lord in our homes to strengthen our families. That each of our family members can stay on the “strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life” (2 Ne. 31:18), I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

“Strengthening Families: Our Sacred Duty” by Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles Ensign May 1999: The key to strengthening our families is having the Spirit of the Lord come into our homes. The goal of our families is to be on the strait and narrow path. Strengthening families is our sacred duty as parents, children, extended family members, leaders, teachers, and individual members of the Church.