LESSON TEN - Becoming Fathers and Mothers

“Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World”).

PURPOSE
To understand the sacred roles of fathers and mothers and be committed to honoring and sustaining one another in fulfilling those roles.

Preparation
1. This lesson is designed to be approximately 20 minutes unless more time is available.
2. Seek the spirit in deciding which sections to emphasize. It is not critical that you cover all the material provided.
3. Prayerfully study the following articles in preparation for the lesson:
   • “To the Mothers in Zion,” Ezra Taft Benson, Marriage and Family Relations Participant Study Guide, p. 45.
4. Consider the needs of the participants and prepare additional questions that promote discussion and connect the principles to apartment and family life.
5. Be prepared to bear your testimony throughout the lesson as the spirit prompts.

Doctrine
• God’s commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force today.
• Fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families.
• Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children.

Discussion
SECTION ONE
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. 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” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World”).

“Do not curtail the number of your children for personal or selfish reasons. Material possessions, social convenience, and so-called professional advantages are nothing compared to a righteous posterity. In the eternal perspective, children — not possessions, not position, not prestige — are our greatest jewels” (Ezra Taft Benson, “To the Mothers in Zion,” Marriage and Family Relations Participant Study Guide, 45).

Questions for discussion:
• What is it that is so important about parenthood that God would make it the first commandment given to Adam and Eve?
• What does the world believe in regards to having and raising children?
• What are the temptations for Latter-day Saints to subscribe to world views and how do we guard against it when planning our own families?

SECTION TWO
Fathers are to Preside, Provide, & Protect
Preside
“As a patriarch in your home, you have a serious responsibility to assume leadership in working with your children. You must help create a home where the Spirit of the Lord can abide. Your place is to give direction to all family life. You should take an active part in establishing family rules and discipline” (Ezra Taft Benson, “To the Fathers in Israel,” Marriage and Family Relations Participant Study Guide, 39).

For Facilitators: Know Your Audience
Always keep in mind those you are teaching when preparing your lesson. Consider their lives, the decisions they face, and the directions they are going. As you do, you will be more prepared to make the lesson meaningful and relevant to the participants.
“Presiding in righteousness necessitates a shared responsibility between husband and wife; together you act with knowledge and participation in all family matters.” (Howard W. Hunter, “Being a Righteous Husband and Father,” Ensign, Nov 1994, 49-51).

**Provide**

“We urge the husband to do all in his power to allow his wife to remain in the home caring for the children while he continues to provide for his family the best he can, even though the job he is able to secure may not be ideal and family budgeting may have to be tighter” (Ezra Taft Benson, “To the Fathers in Israel,” Marriage and Family Relations Participant Study Guide, 39).

**Protect**

President Hunter said, “A righteous father protects his children with his time and presence in their social, educational, and spiritual activities and responsibilities”… Effective family leadership, brethren, requires both quantity and quality time. Next to your salvation, there is nothing so important to you as the salvation of your wife and children” (Howard W. Hunter, “Being a Righteous Husband and Father,” Ensign, Nov 1994, 49-51).

Questions for discussion:

- In what ways can a father take an active role in the leadership of his family pertaining to spiritual matters?
- Under what circumstances might it be appropriate for a mother to provide financial stability for her family?
- What do we think of when we hear the words preside, provide, and protect? What do they really mean?

**SECTION THREE**

**Mothers and the Nurturing of Children**

“Catch the teaching moments. This can be done anytime during the day . . . Mothers, you are your children’s best teacher. Don’t shift this precious responsibility to day-care centers or babysitters. A mother’s love and prayerful concern for her children are her most important ingredients in teaching her own.”

“I was recently at a park where I met a group of women with mother hearts. They were young, covenant-keeping women. They were bright and had obtained advanced degrees from respected universities. Now they were devoting their considerable gifts to planning dinner that evening and sharing housekeeping ideas. They were teaching two-year-olds to be kind to one another. They were soothing babies, kissing bruised knees, and wiping tears. I asked one of those mothers how it came about that she could transfer her talents so cheerfully into the role of motherhood. She replied, “I know who I am, and I know what I am supposed to do. The rest just follows” (Julie B. Beck, “A ‘Mother Heart’” Ensign, May 2004, 75).

Questions for discussion:

- In what ways does a mother nurture her children?
- How can a woman find fulfillment in her nurturing role?

**SECTION FOUR**

**Scenario**

As sacrament meeting begins, Robert and his expecting wife, Amber, took a look around the chapel: a few benches ahead a mother flicked her teenager in the ear to get her to put away her cell phone. A young family to the left was doing all they could to keep their three-year-old from making a scene. Bishop Carter stood to start the meeting. “We have an unfortunate announcement. Many of you may know the Smith family. Sister Smith went into labor a couple of nights ago and after some complications, they lost their baby.” On that somber note the meeting began.

Later, on their way home, Amber turned to Robert on the brink of tears. “Robert, are we even ready to be parents? How in the world are we supposed to do this? How are we supposed to give our kids a fighting chance in such a crazy world?”

Questions for discussion:

- How can a couple show faith and confidence in having and raising children?
- What can you do now to begin to prepare to be parents?

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**


**Application**

A lesson is not complete until a challenge or invitation is extended which inspires and motivates participants to apply what they have learned. “It’s in the doing, not just the thinking, that we accomplish our goals” (Thomas S. Monson, “A Royal Priesthood,” Ensign, Nov. 2007, 59-61).

As a result of the lesson, each participant should feel an increased desire to change an attitude or behavior and become a stronger disciple of Jesus Christ. Include the following steps as part of the application process:

1. Summarize what has been learned or ask a member of the group to do so.
2. Invite participants to write goals specific to what they have felt and learned. How will they apply the principles to their personal lives and apartment life (including roommate relationships)? How will they act on what they have learned as a means of preparation for marriage and family life? In short, what will they do about what they have learned?
3. Follow-up with participants on goals they have set. Regular and consistent follow-up will increase the likelihood that participants actually execute their plan of action.

Additional teaching resources are available in the “Stake & Ward Leaders” tab at www.byui.edu/studentliving.