LESSON ELEVEN - The Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood

“The rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and . . . the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness” (D&C 121:36).

PURPOSE
To increase understanding of the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood pursuant to one’s sacred responsibilities within an eternal home with spouse and children.

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 of the material provided.
3. Prayerfully study D&C 84:33-40 and Abraham 1:2, 2:9-11. Be prepared to use the following addresses:
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 at any time the spirit prompts.

Doctrine
- “[The priesthood] is . . . the power of God delegated to man by which man can act in the earth for the salvation of the human family” (Joseph F. Smith, Gospel Doctrine, 5th ed. [1939], 139).
- The divine roles of men and women are essential to fulfilling the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood.
- The priesthood is the power through which families are sealed together forever.

Discussion
SECTION ONE
Priesthood Influence on Families
Divide into gender groups and have each discuss the following quotations and questions.

“The Priesthood does not have the strength that it should have and will not have until the power of the priesthood is firmly fixed in the families as it should be . . . .

“Every law and principle and power, every belief, every ordinance and ordination, every covenant, every sermon and every sacrament, every counsel and correction, the sealings, the calls, the releases, the service—all these have as their ultimate purpose the perfection of the individual and the family . . . .” (Boyd K. Packer, “The Power of the Priesthood,” Ensign, May 2010, 6-10).

“The man holds the Priesthood, performs the priestly duties of the Church, but his wife enjoys with him every other privilege derived from the possession of the Priesthood. This is made clear, as an example, in the Temple service of the Church. The ordinances of the Temple are distinctly of Priesthood character, yet women have access to all of them, and the highest blessings of the Temple are conferred only upon a man and his wife jointly” (Lesson 13, The Latter-day Saint Woman: Basic Manual for Women, Part A, 91).

Sisters and the Priesthood
Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained the companionship role of the priesthood and women: “In the true Patriarchal Order man holds the priesthood and is the head of the household, . . . but he cannot attain a fulness of joy here or of eternal reward hereafter alone. Woman stands at his side a joint-inheritor with him in the fulness of all things. Exaltation and eternal increase is her lot as well as his (D&C 131:1-4). Godhood is not for men only; it is for men and women together” (D&C 132:19-20; Mormon Doctrine, 2nd ed. [1966], 844).

“It is crucial for everyone to understand what is expected of the brethren. Unless we enlist the attention of the mothers and daughters and sisters—who have influence on their husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers—we cannot progress. The priesthood will lose great power if the sisters are neglected. Priesthood is the authority and the power which God has granted to men on earth to act for Him. When priesthood authority is exercised properly, priesthood bearers do what He would do if He were present” (Boyd K. Packer, “The Power of the Priesthood,” Ensign, May 2010, 6-10).

For Facilitators: Think-Pair-Share
Using a question, prompt, or observation, invite students to think about the questions. Then pair up and talk about their ideas for a few minutes. Call on pairs to share their thoughts with the rest of the group.
Men: Questions for discussion:
- How can women honor the priesthood of their husbands and fathers?
- What influence does a woman (a mother, a girlfriend, a sister, an HE sister, friend) have on the development and righteous choices of a priesthood holder?
- In what ways do men and women share the responsibilities and blessings of the priesthood?

Women: Questions for discussion:
- How can men become faithful priesthood holders?
- What can you do to facilitate a young man's development into a faithful priesthood holder?
- Why is it important for you to know about the roles and administration of the priesthood?
- In what ways do you participate and receive the blessings of the priesthood?

SECTION TWO
The Oath and Covenant of The Priesthood (D&C 84:33-40)
“There is an oath and covenant of the priesthood. The covenant rests with man; the oath with God. The Melchizedek Priesthood is received by covenant. A man’s covenant with God is to:

“Be faithful and magnify his callings in the priesthood; give heed to the words of eternal life; and live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God” (see D&C 83:33, 43-44).

“God, for his part, declares with an everlasting oath that all who receive the priesthood and obey the covenants that pertain to that priesthood shall receive ‘all that [the] Father hath’ (see D&C 84:38).

“And this is according to the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood” (Boyd K. Packer, “What Every Elder Should Know—and Every Sister As Well,” Liahona, Nov. 1994, 7).

Questions for discussion:
- What is the oath and what is the covenant of the priesthood?
- What do you think it means in verse 33 when it speaks of “magnifying their calling”?
- How can one become sanctified and what does that entail?
- What blessings can both men and women gain from fulfilling the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood?

SECTION THREE
The New and Everlasting Covenant (D&C 131:2-3)
Spencer W. Kimball taught that “no one who rejects the covenant of celestial marriage can reach exaltation in the eternal kingdom of God” (Spencer W. Kimball, “The Importance of Celestial Marriage,” Ensign, Oct. 1979, 5-6).

“We believe that when a man and a woman are united as husband and wife, and they love each other, their hearts and feelings are one, that that love is as enduring as eternity itself . . . . God has restored the everlasting priesthood, by which ties can be formed, consecrated and consummated, which shall be as enduring as we ourselves are enduring . . . husbands and wives will be united together, and they and their children will dwell and associate together eternally and this . . . will constitute one of the chiefest joys of heaven” (George Q. Cannon, Journal of Discourses, 14:320-21).

Question for discussion:
- How does the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood help us fulfill the responsibilities outlined in “The Family Proclamation”?

Activity: Think-Pair-Share
Divide the class into pairs. After reviewing the previous quotes on sisters and the priesthood, invite each participant to think about the following question: “How does fulfilling priesthood responsibilities relate to the New and Everlasting Covenant and exaltation? After a minute of thought, invite them to share with their partners. Give the groups two to three minutes to write down as many ideas as they have on the prompt. Invite each pair to share their top two ideas.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
Doctrine & Covenants 132:28-33
Abraham 1:2
Bible Dictionary: Abrahamic Covenant

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.