LESSON TWO - Apartment Unity

“I say unto you, be one, and if ye are not one, ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27).

PURPOSE
To understand that relationships with roommates can be meaningful and rewarding.

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.
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 Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have others do unto you (see Matthew 7:12).
- Love thy neighbor as thyself (see Luke 10:27).
- We are responsible for one another as brothers and sisters.
- We have covenanted to bear one another’s burdens, mourn with those that mourn, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort (see Mosiah 18:8-10).

Discussion

SECTION ONE
Activity: Magic Stick
Use either the following activity or another that would take only about five minutes to accomplish.

The Magic Stick: Get a stick–maybe a broomstick without the head, or a ruler–something about three feet long. Have everyone put their two index fingers under the stick and as a team lower the stick to the ground without touching the top of the stick.

Questions for discussion:
- What was the goal? Besides completing the activity - what were you trying to achieve?
- Why do we sometimes get lost in the outcome rather than the process?
- Why is our tendency to blame someone else, give direction, or correct others?
- How does that affect unity?
- How can we relate this experience to our personal relationships?

Respect and Responsibility
“Respect is an expression of our sense of universal brotherhood or sisterhood—a testimony of our membership in the human family. It acknowledges our common humanity and shows our reverence for children of God. The gospel teaches us that we are to hold the same esteem for others that we hold for ourselves (see D&C 38:25; Matthew 7:12). Acting disrespectfully suggests that we do not esteem the other person as ourselves... true respect, then, comes as we develop our ability to love our brothers and sisters as ourselves” (Terrance D. Olson, “Cultivating Respect,” Ensign, Oct. 2001, 46).

“During a lifetime we oscillate repeatedly between being nurturing shepherds and nurtured sheep. That fact underlines our mutual interdependence—for we are all ‘the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand’ (Psalms 95:7). We are responsible for each other—not as our brother’s keeper, but as brothers and sisters freely ‘willing to bear one another’s burdens’ and ‘comfort those that stand in need of comfort’ (Mosiah 18:8-9). We cannot escape that responsibility, nor expect someone else to accept it for us” (Alexander B. Morrison, “Fire Where Once Were Ashes,” Ensign, Aug. 1990, 7).

For Facilitators: Questions
The Savior often asked questions to encourage people to ponder and apply the principles He taught. When you pose a question, wait patiently for responses. Allow people time to think. The silence gives individuals time to respond with a meaningful, thoughtful comment. Keep in mind that you don’t have to ask all the questions.
Questions for discussion:
1. How can the relationships with your roommates affect:
   • how you feel in your apartment?
   • how you perform academically?
   • how you develop spiritually and the spirit in your apartment?
   • the opportunities and quality of your social experiences?
2. How do you establish meaningful relationships with roommates:
   • With whom you feel you don’t have anything in common?
   • Who isolate themselves?
   • Who appear to have little interest in building roommate relationships?

SECTION TWO

Scenario
Matt, Abe, Ben, and Cody found themselves in the same apartment for the spring semester at BYU-Idaho. Matt and Abe had been in the same ward the semester before, but rarely interacted outside of church. Ben and Cody didn’t previously know anyone in the apartment. A typical day in the apartment for the four roommates consisted of a casual hello to one another, occasional passings while making meals, and small talk about their involvement in the ward and school functions. Matt and Abe tended to hang out at different complexes; Ben was usually found sitting in his room on the computer doing homework or gaming; and Cody spent most of his time with his girlfriend. As an apartment, the guys were coexisting just fine, but never really got to know each other, and no one felt a pressing need to change the status quo. Besides, there were no conflicts per se, and nothing negative was really occurring.

Learning from Roommates
“Internships are an opportunity for students to gain invaluable hands on experience in the field prior to entering graduate school or the job market. They add depth to the understanding and application of concepts and theories studied in the classroom and serve to polish and refine the educational experience.” (Dr. Roberta Magril, Internship Coordinator, BYU) . . . Perhaps some of you have already participated in an academic internship. What you may not recognize is that literally thousands of informal internships which are preparing you for life are already in place and BYU-Idaho. Most of you are participating in one right now. “Oh really,” you may say. “So who are the internship providers?” They are your roommates . . . .

“For this internship to provide maximum preparing for life benefits, and have the desired results, you must decide what you want to accomplish, what will be your guiding principles and then strive to apply those principles. This includes having your eyes wide open to all the opportunities for learning that are available” (Kathleen Gee, “Roommates: Preparation for Marriage and Family,” Forum Address, July 2001).

Questions for discussion:
1. Why are we sometimes tempted to just coexist or tolerate roommates? What do we miss out on when we do?
2. What things have you learned from past roommates or living situations?

“Get to know those with whom you live. Attend your meetings together, and plan activities with each other. You may room with people from many different backgrounds. Some will be easier to get to know than others; you will have more in common with some than with others. But working together and striving to create a spirit of harmony and love will bring you some of your happiest moments, and you will be able to say to your roommates...with true conviction, “Ye are they whom my Father had given me; ye are my friend” (D&C 84:63; Babzanne P. Barker, “Ye Are My Friends,” New Era, Nov. 1979, 15).

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.