LESSON SEVEN - Our Divine Heritage

“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” ("The Family: A Proclamation to the World").

PURPOSE
To help participants recognize their divine heritage and understand how their relationship with our Father in Heaven affects the choices they make, the lives they lead, and who they will become.

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
- All human beings are created in the image of God.
- We are beloved spirit sons and daughters of heavenly parents.
- We are all heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ (See Romans 8:16-17).

Discussion

SECTION ONE
Meant to be a King

“Many years ago I heard the story of the son of King Louis XVI of France. King Louis had been taken from his throne and imprisoned. His young son, the prince, was taken by those who dethroned the king. They thought that inasmuch as the king’s son was heir to the throne, if they could destroy him morally, he would never realize the great and grand destiny that life had bestowed upon him.

“They took him to a community far away, and there they exposed the lad to every filthy and vile thing that life could offer. They exposed him to foods the richness of which would quickly make him a slave to appetite. They used vile language around him constantly. They exposed him to lewd and lusting women. They exposed him to dishonor and distrust. He was surrounded 24 hours a day by everything that could drag the soul of a man as low as one could slip. For over six months he had this treatment—but not once did the young lad buckle under pressure. Finally, after intensive temptation, they questioned him. Why had he not submitted himself to these things—why had he not partaken? These things would provide pleasure, satisfy his lusts, and were desirable; they were all his. The boy said, ‘I cannot do what you ask for I was born to be a king’” (Vaughn J. Featherstone, “The King’s Son,” New Era, Nov 1975, 35).

Questions for discussion:
- What was it about this particular prince that gave him the strength to not give in to temptation?
- In what ways are we like the prince?
- How does this story relate to us as sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father?

SECTION TWO
Scripture Study: Children of God
Romans 8:16-17 “Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ”

Question for discussion:
- Why is it important for us to recognize and acknowledge our divine heritage as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ?

Moses 1:4-21 “Thou art my son”
Consider the parallels between Moses having a spiritual experience, then being tempted by Satan, and afterward being filled with the Holy Ghost and receiving even greater knowledge (verses 24-27).

- What is significant in the exchange between Moses and God and then between Moses and Satan, referring to Moses knowing who he is, as a son of God?
- Why did Moses fear in verse 20?
- Why was this sequence important in the education and conversion of Moses?
- How can we relate this to our own experiences?

For Facilitators: Follow-up Questions

While some follow-up questions may be pre-determined, it is important to stay flexible when facilitating a discussion to allow for new discoveries, insights, and inspiration as those participating listen to the Holy Ghost. Keep a balance between following the lesson plan and deviating from that plan when the spirit prompts you.

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You have a Divine Heritage

“He who is our Eternal Father has blessed you with miraculous powers of mind and body... What marvelous potential lies within you” (Gordon B. Hinckley, “Stand Strong Against the Wiles of the World,” Ensign, Nov. 1995, 98).

His Work and His Glory

“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 his or her divine destiny as an heir of eternal life” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World”).

SECTION THREE

“Remember, the worth of souls is great in the sight of God,” (D&C 18:10).

Scenario

Chelsea is a second semester freshman at BYU-Idaho. She has always been a “good” girl. She tries to be obedient because she knows she should be and she has a fairly strong testimony of the gospel. In Relief Society one Sunday a comment was made about how our Heavenly Father loves us all and how we are all special in His eyes. Chelsea has heard statements like this her whole life, especially in Young Women’s. As she heard it this time she thought to herself “I don’t really think I’m of great worth. I’m just a plain old girl, nothing spectacular. I have never truly felt the love of my Heavenly Father.” These thoughts keep coming to her as she goes throughout the rest of the day. They grow into feelings of inadequacy and she begins to doubt herself. Soon, she starts to think “why bother?” She cannot see her purpose and where she fits into this world.

Questions for discussion:

- Have you, or anyone you know ever felt this way?
- Why do you think Chelsea feels this way? What is at the root of the problem?
- How do our feelings about ourselves determine what we do and who we become?
- What can Chelsea’s loved ones do to help her?

No Ordinary People

“It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree, helping person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilization—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendours,” (C.S. Lewis “The Weight of Glory” 1942, Saint Mary’s Church).

Activity: Scripture Study

Divide the participants into two or three groups. Assign each of the groups a passage below to read and discuss. (If you have only two groups, choose two of the passages to assign.)

- Passage One: 2 Nephi 4:17-35
- Passage Two: Joseph Smith History 1:15-20
- Passage Three: Ether 3:1-13

Have each group be prepared to share the context of the passage, the insecurities and obstacles each had to face, and how they were able to overcome them. After each group has shared, consider using the questions below or some of your own.

Questions for discussion:

- In each case, how has their relationship with the Lord affected their beliefs and behaviors?
- In what ways can we relate these experience to our own?
- How can you increase your reliance and trust in the Lord in overcoming your trials?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

D&C 18:10 “Worth of Souls”
Abraham 3:22-23 “Noble and Great Ones”
Jeremiah 1:5-10 “Before I formed Thee, I knew thee”

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.