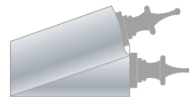




CHURCH EDUCATION

The Holy Bible  
The Book of Mormon



'...and they shall become one in thine hand.' Ezekiel 37.17

## LESSON TITLE

### God Empowers Alma to Restore the Church to Righteousness

#### UNIT 6 - Evidence of Authority and Establishing the Church

#### GRADES 7-9

#### THE HOLY BIBLE

Acts 2:46, 47 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

#### THE BOOK OF MORMON

Mosiah 18:17 And they were called the church of God, or the church of Christ, from that time forward. And it came to pass that whosoever was baptized by the power and authority of God was added to his church.

**FAITH AND DOCTRINE ARTICLES 5-**We believe The Church of Jesus Christ in this age (to be worthy of the name) must be molded substantially and minutely after the pattern left us by Christ. ... **and 17-** We believe there has been a gross and widespread apostasy among men from the true order and doctrine of the early Church as set up by the Saviour.

#### PARALLELS IN TIME

*Holy Bible:*

*The Book of Mormon:* 150-121 BC, Alma is living in the land of Lehi -Nephi; scene from the waters of Mormon

World History: Jews were an oppressed people during what is called "The Hasmonean Period." The Roman Empire is nearing its greatest extent geographically.

#### OBJECTIVES

The student will be able to:

- Retell the conversion of Alma and the formation of the Church of Christ
- Compare the Church of Christ in Alma's day to the present-day Church of Jesus Christ
- Identify types and shadows of the re-establishment of the Church in Alma's day and in William Bickerton's time

## TEACHER NOTES

45-minute lesson

To prepare for this lesson, study the scriptural references listed in **PROCEDURE.**

Q = Teacher question

A = Suggested answer

Teacher should create lists on the board or on chart paper prior to class and cover until ready to use: Events Surrounding the Demise and the Restoration of the Church (King Noah/Alma) and Procedures and Rules of the Church (Alma)

Prepare to play the game, see Attachment A

## MATERIALS

Holy Bible and The Book of Mormon

**Task:** Game pieces printed on cardstock, pages 8 & 9

Drawing board/large sheets of paper and marker

## PROCEDURE

### Motivation/Introduction (5 minutes)

- ✓ Tell students to define the word “corrupt” and compare their definition to a dictionary definition.

Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary

def. corrupt. **1 a:** to change from good to bad in morals, manners, or actions **b:** to degrade with unsound principles or moral values **4:** to alter from the original or correct form or version

- ✓ Ask the following questions and engage students in a discussion, leading to how people will corrupt God’s commandments to do whatever they want

**Q.** What happens when people decide to make up their own ideas on how to serve God?

**Q.** How do we identify God’s church vs. Man’s church?

- ✓ Read the experience of William Bickerton from *A History of The Church of Jesus Christ Volume 2*; page 46-47, pertaining to a revelation given in 1861 of God’s authority, according to William Bickerton.

*“In 1861, when the [Civil War] began, the Utah people sent missionaries out and scared a good many away to Salt Lake City. At the same time we had Conference within a half-mile of the Salt Lake people’s Conference. We had no apostles at that time, but in that Conference, the Lord revealed to us that he accepted this Church as the Church of Alma. There was thirty stood up and testified to the Revelation... [W]hile King Noah was establishing a many wife Doctrine, Alma had to flee before King Noah, and he wrote down what Abinadi had to preach, and Alma fled to a thicket of timber,... [A]bout 200 followed him. Alma asked them if they had any objection to being baptized, and they clapped their hands and said that was just what they wanted, and Alma and Helaman both went into the water and he (Alma) declared he had the Authority from God to baptize, and they both went down under the water and both were filled with the Holy Ghost and he took all and baptized them having received the Authority from God.”*

- ✓ Tell the students to remember this experience and see how it relates to the account of Abinadi and Alma.

### Lesson Development (25 minutes)

- ✓ Present information surrounding the events of the demise of the Church under King Noah and its re-establishment (refer to Mosiah chapters 11-17)

### Events Surrounding the Demise and Re-establishment of the Church (King Noah/Alma)

- King Noah and priests corrupted the doctrine of the Church which caused the people to sin
  - Abinadi came and prophesied to become righteous
  - Alma heard the words of Abinadi, believed them, repented, and was converted to Christ’s doctrine
  - Alma wrote down Abinadi’s message and began to teach and preach it
  - Alma received priesthood authority from God
  - Alma began to baptize the converts at the waters of Mormon
  - The members of the church fled into the wilderness to escape the death sentence pronounced by King Noah
  - King Noah was killed in the wilderness
  - Alma and the Church of Christ eventually returned to the land of Zarahemla where Alma was given authorized by King Mosiah to preach and establish churches in the land
- ✓ Assist the students with listing the steps to becoming a member of The Church of Jesus Christ today.
  - ✓ Tell a student to write the responses on the board in any order.  
(Reference – Faith and Doctrine- Article 9 and Ministers Manual of The Church of Jesus Christ, Section II, Baptism, pgs1-2)

### Steps to Become a Member of The Church of Jesus Christ

- Belief on Jesus’ power to save from sins
- Repent of sins and be determined to sin no more
- Promise to love and serve God to the best of your ability the remainder of your life
- Baptism by immersion in water by one with authority from God
- Bestowal of the Holy Ghost by laying on of hands

- ✓ Tell students that they are to read the scriptures that outline the steps of becoming a member of the Church of Christ in Alma's day and compare the steps to the present-day Church.
- ✓ Ask a student to read **Mosiah 18:5-7** and ask the other students to identify and check off any steps from the list above that were similar.

For example:

- Alma taught repentance, redemption, and faith on the Lord
  - People believed Alma's message
- ✓ Read **Mosiah 18:8-10** and ask the students to identify and check off any steps within the scriptures that support the list on the board.

For example:

- Alma presents the waters for baptism;
  - Asks if people are willing to keep God's commandments
    - o willing to bear one another's burdens
    - o mourn with those that mourn...
    - o willing to stand as witnesses to God unto death
  - extends the invitation to be baptized
  - enter a covenant to keep God's commandments
- ✓ Ask a student to read **Mosiah 18:12-16** to demonstrate the act of baptism that occurred and the purification from sin ("filled with the grace of God").

Note that Alma had "authority from the Almighty God" (was empowered by God) to perform the baptisms.

### **Explain:**

Because the people were willing to fulfill all the requirements to enter the kingdom of heaven, Alma felt it was necessary to organize the people as a church and establish procedures for worship to help them stay faithful to their promise.

- ✓ Ask students to guess what the church will be called. Read Mosiah 18:17. (Church of God or Church of Christ)
- ✓ Ask students to guess who will lead the people of the church.

**Read Mosiah 18:18.** (Priests)

### **Explain:**

Alma had authority from God to ordain priests. Baptizing, ordaining, and organizing a church were not something that Alma took upon himself; rather, God empowered him to act because the Holy Spirit came upon Him and gave him the power.

### **Procedures and Rules of the Church (Alma's day)**

- ✓ **Read Mosiah 18:19-29** to learn what the priests taught.

### **The Priests Taught (Alma's day)**

- How to enter the kingdom of God [18, 19]
- Repentance and faith on the Lord [20]
- Be a peacemaker (Avoid debating, arguing, or fighting) [21]
  - single in purpose (unity)
  - one faith
  - one baptism
  - love one another
- Keep the Sabbath day holy, [23]
- Give thanks every day, [23]
- Priests should be self-supporting (not be paid to preach) [24]
- Priests should grow in the Spirit of God to teach with power and authority [26]
- Set one day aside in the week to gather and learn God's word, [25]
- Meet as often as possible, [25]
- Give to the church of the things they own, [28]
- Give to those in need naturally and spiritually, [27]
- ✓ Have students contrast the roles of the priests under the church of Alma with the roles of the wicked priests under King Noah's reign.

- ✓ Have students compare the Church in Alma's day to The Church of Jesus Christ today.
  - o For instance, read each item listed above and ask whether this is practiced or taught in the Church today.
  - o Place a check mark next to each item that is currently practiced.

### **Explaining Differences**

If students identify some differences between the church in Alma's time to the present-day church, the following scriptures are provided to aid teacher with answering their questions:

**Bestowal of the Holy Ghost** by laying on of hands did not occur until after the resurrection of Christ. Prior, the people were given the Holy Ghost by Jesus Christ. (1 Nephi 10:17-19; 3 Nephi 19:13,20-22; 3 Nephi 28:18; Moroni 2:1-3; Acts 1:4-8; and Acts 2:1-4.

**The office of priest** is not an ordained office in the current church, elders fill that role today.

(If time does not permit, Authority from God can be taught as an extension of the lesson during a different session.)

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### Authority from God

**Q.** How did Alma, Joseph Smith, and William Bickerton receive the authority to preach, baptize and organize the respective churches of Christ?

**A.** Discussion

**Alma:**

Read Mosiah 18:1, 12, 13, 18 and Alma 5:3

**Joseph Smith, Jr.:**

*A History of The Church of Jesus Christ: Volume 2, pages 26-27 states:*

*“As Smith and Cowdery worked, they came to the book we now call Third Nephi, Cowdery would later reminisce:*

*After writing the account given of the Savior’s ministry to the remnant of the seed of Jacob upon this continent, it was easily to be seen, as the prophet said would be, that darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the minds of the people. On reflecting further, it was as easily to be seen that amid the great strife and noise concerning religion, none had authority from God to administer the ordinances of the Gospel. (Messenger and Advocate, October 1844, Volume I, No. I, p.15)*

*Cowdery and Smith began to pray for the restoration of this authority. On May 15, 1829, an angel visited them. The angel said: “I am thy fellow servant,” Cowdery would later recall, and “upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer this priesthood and this authority, which shall remain on the earth, that the sons of Levi may yet offer an offering unto the Lord in righteousness!”*

**William Bickerton:**

*The Restoration of The Priesthood; A History of The Church of Jesus Christ: volume 2, pages 35-36:*

*[I]n the vision, I was on the highest mountain in the earth; and [God] told me that if I did not preach the Gospel, I would fall into a dreadful chasm below, the sight thereof was*

*awful. I moved with fear, having the Holy Spirit. Here there was none to assist me and, without learning, popular opinion against me, and the Salt Lake Mormons stood in the way. I could not return back into Methodism again. No, I knew they had not the Gospel. I stood in contemplation. The chasm was before me, no other alternative but to do my duty to God and man. I went ahead preaching repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Some believed my testimony and were baptized, and we met together.... (Ensign, p.10)*

*A History of The Church of Jesus Christ, Volume 2, pages 44-47, Authority)*

*“A critical concern of the Church was the continuity of the priesthood authority that had been restored on May 15, 1829. On several occasions, God confirmed by revelation that his authority continued in Bickerton and the early apostles of the Church.*

*“Bickerton understood from his vision of the great chasm that God had commanded him to preach the Gospel. For him, the issue of his priesthood authority was simple: God had commanded him to preach the Restored Gospel, and no other option was open to him.”*

*“In October 1857, Brother William Bacon began keeping a journal of experiences in the Church. He recorded an early experience related to the “Church of Philadelphia: described in Revelation 3:7-13. He wrote that William Bickerton received the Word of the Lord as follows:*

*...I accept you this day as My Church to whom My servant John was commanded to write while in the Spirit of the Lord’s day: And to the angel of the Church of Philadelphia, write: “These things saith he that is holy, he that is True,...I know thy works: behold, I set before thee an open door and no man can shut it....” (Cadman History, pp.8, 9)”*

- ✓ Draw parallels of how the doctrine of Christ had become corrupted under King Noah, during the apostasy of the early church in Jerusalem, and during the early restoration period under Joseph Smith, Jr.

Alma, Joseph Smith, Jr., and William Bickerton were called by God to restore the doctrine in purity and truth during the various ages of time.

**Q.** “Is the Church of Christ in Alma’s day the same organization as The Church of Jesus Christ in our day?”

**A.** Read 3 Nephi 27:8 and explain that both churches were named after Christ and were built upon His Doctrine and teach the same faith: “one faith”, “single in purpose.”

**Q.** “How many faiths or religions would exist in the world today if all people were united in their belief of Christ’s doctrine and were “single in purpose?”

**A.** One faith or one religion

**Explain:**

The word of God teaches that one day there will be two churches in the world.

**Q.** “Who can guess the names of those two churches future churches?”

**A.** Read 1 Nephi 14: 7, 10 (The Church of the Lamb of God and the church of the devil.)

“God is going to do a marvelous (astonishing, miraculous, supernatural) work to convince people to believe in His Gospel as He taught it. Those who choose not to believe and will reject His Gospel be separated from His Church.”

**Review/Assessment (10 minutes)**

- ✓ See **Attachment A**. and play “**God Empowers Alma to Restore the Church to Righteousness**” game to reinforce learning the steps to enter the kingdom of heaven and become a member of The Church of Jesus Christ.

**Q.** Why was it important to restore the true gospel in Alma’s day?

**A.** Discussion

The state of the Church under King Noah was corrupted – sin was prevalent; the priests were deceptively teaching lies. The Church’s doctrine did not represent the truth of God’s word.

**Q.** Why was it important to restore the gospel in more modern times?

**A.** Discussion

**Life Application (5 minutes)**

Ask students to discuss and relate corruption of the doctrine of Christ on an individual level:

**Q.** How do we, individually, keep the doctrine pure?

**Q.** How can we live our lives to please God?

**Q.** How can we stand as a testimony of the true gospel in our world?

**Scripture Texts/ References/ Memory Verses (1 minute)**

*Holy Bible:*

Isaiah chapter 66:2

Listed within in the lesson

*The Book of Mormon:*

Mosiah chapter 18

2 Nephi 31:13-15 (belief of Nephites prior to King Noah) listed within the lesson

**Resources:**

*Faith and Doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ*

Minister’s Manual of The Church of Jesus Christ

*A History of The Church of Jesus Christ, volume 2*

*Brief Overview of History and Doctrine, The Church of Jesus Christ, Headquarters: Monongahela, Pennsylvania*

**Faith and Doctrine Article 5:**

We believe The Church of Jesus Christ in this age (to be worthy of the name) must be molded substantially and minutely after the pattern left us by Christ. The scriptures bear witness that its officers consist of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers (all inspired) for the work of the ministry, for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come into the unity of the faith, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Article 17: We believe there has been a gross and widespread apostasy among men from the true order and doctrine of the early Church as set up by the Saviour. Few scriptural subjects are treated more extensively in the Sacred Word, and to make anything like a comprehensive statement of the matter would be an extensive task. We refer the reader to several very pointed passages on the subject.

Bible: Isa.24:5-6, Acts 20:29-30, 2 Thes. 2, 1 Tim.4, 2 Tim. 3 and 4, 2 Peter 2. Book of Mormon: 4 Nephi 1:24-49

**Memory Verse:**

3 Nephi 27:8 And how be it my church save it be called in my name? For if a church be called in Moses’ name then it be Moses’ church; or if it be called in the name of a man then it be the church of a man; but if it be called in my name then it is my church, if it so be that they are built upon my gospel.

**Follow-Up/Take-Home Activities (1 minute)**

**Option 1:**

Ask the students to identify a difference between the Church of God in Alma’s day and The Church of Jesus Christ today and to research why that difference exists.

Give each student a sheet of paper to write down their topic to research. Tell them to write a brief statement, write the source for their answer and bring back to class to share.

**Option 2:**

Make a copy of **Attachment A** for each student to take home and play with their family.



## **Suggestions/Scriptures for Further Study/ Exploration/ Extension of Topic**

Future lessons:

- Plan of Redemption
- Obedience
- Baptism
- Ordinances of God
- Restoration
- Righteousness
- A Firm Foundation – The Building Blocks of The Church of Jesus Christ

Key words: baptism, plan of redemption, Alma, Abinadi, Nephi-Lehi, waters of Mormon, faith and doctrine, restoration, King Noah, William Bickerton, Joseph Smith, Jr., apostasy

## God Empowers Alma to Restore the Church to Righteousness

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1. Print the table on card stock or stiffer paper and cut out the tiles.
2. Scramble the tiles and display them face up on the table or board.
3. Tell students to identify and place to the side the tiles that pertain to gaining membership in the current Church of Jesus Christ, arranging in sequential order, starting with the first step, and ending with the last step.
4. Examine the remaining tiles and tell students to identify what they represent. (Answer can be any of the following: the procedures of the church, the rules of the church, the government of the church, and the teachings of the church)

<b>Belief on Jesus' power to save from sins</b>	<b>Repent of sins and desire to sin no more</b>	<b>Baptism by immersion in water for remission of sins</b>
<b>Bestowal of the Holy Ghost</b>	<b>Promise to love and serve God to best of your ability the remainder of your life</b>	<b>Teach things pertaining to the kingdom of God</b>
<b>Teach repentance and faith on the Lord</b>	<b>Do not fight about God's Word: single in purpose one faith one baptism love one another</b>	<b>Keep the Sabbath day holy</b>
<b>Thank God, every day</b>	<b>Priests should labor and not depend on people for support</b>	<b>Priests should grow in the spirit of God to teach with power and authority</b>



<b>Set one day aside in the week to gather and learn God's word</b>	<b>Meet as often as possible</b>	<b>Give freely to the church of your possessions</b>
<b>Give to those in need naturally and spiritually</b>		