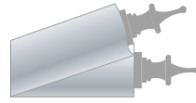




CHURCH EDUCATION

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 in Righteousness

UNIT 6 - Evidence of Authority and Establishing the Church

GRADES 10-12 and Adult

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: No records dating exactly to this period.

The Book of Mormon: 150 - 121 BC, King Benjamin was reigning in Zarahemla over the Nephites. Zeniff and other Nephites desired to re-inhabit the land of Lehi-Nephi. Alma, living in the land of Lehi-Nephi, broke away from King Noah's rule and proselytizes the true gospel of Christ.

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 participant 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 (**Extension of Topic**) (Faith and Doctrine article 17)

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 Re-establishment of the Church (King Noah/Alma) and Codes of Conduct and Worship (Alma)

Prepare to play the game, see Attachment A

MATERIALS

Holy Bible and The Book of Mormon

Task: Pages 6 & 7 printed on cardstock and pieces cut out. Tape

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.

- ✓ Time permitting, proceed to **Extension of Topic: Events Leading to the Restoration of the Church**, otherwise address this topic during the next session.

Review/Assessment (10 minutes)

Option 1:

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

Option 2:

Q. What predicament did Alma find himself in which led him to take a stand against the popular beliefs of the day?

A. Discussion

(He was convicted of his sins and realized the need for repentance and belief on Jesus Christ to obtain eternal life. He realized that the state of the Church under King Noah had become perverted or corrupted because of the unrighteousness of the priests which eventually had an evil influence on the people. He was compelled by his convictions and the Spirit to teach the ways of truth and righteousness.

Q. Why was it important to re-establish the Church to righteousness 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.)

Life Application (5 minutes)

Ask the students to relate corruption of the faith and 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?

- ✓ Song: *Saints Hymnal*, # 243, “Are You Washed in the Blood” or # 6, “Longing for the Gathering”

Scripture Texts/ References/ Memory Verses (minutes)

Holy Bible:

Isaiah chapter 66

The Book of Mormon:

Mosiah chapters 11-17(Background information on the demise of the Church under the reign of King Noah)

Mosiah chapter 18

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

A History of the Church of Jesus Christ, Volume 2, page 46

Resources:

Faith and Doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ

Minister's Manual of The Church of Jesus Christ

Faith and Doctrine Articles:

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 now 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)

- ✓ Ask the participants to research the reasons for the differences between the Church of Christ in Alma's day and The Church of Jesus Christ today, and report back.

Suggestions/Scriptures for Further Study/ Exploration/ Extension of Topic:

Teach on Early Church Restoration Events (suggested outline below)

Refer to *A History of The Church of Jesus Christ: volume 2*

Events Leading to the Restoration of the Church

- The religions of the day were teaching corrupt doctrines
- Joseph Smith, Jr. asked God which church was His
- God revealed to Joseph to join none, offered him salvation, and told him to follow His statutes and keep His commandments. (pg 25)
- Joseph began a work to restore the true doctrine
- God's priesthood authority was given to Joseph Smith, Jr., and Oliver Cowdery (pgs 26-27, The Restoration of the Priesthood)
- Joseph Smith, Jr. organized The Church of Jesus Christ, April 6, 1830
- Joseph began to err in discernment and introduced practices and doctrines into the Church that were contrary to the *Holy Bible* and *The Book of Mormon*
- Joseph was killed June 27, 1844
- William Bickerton met Sidney Rigdon in 1845 and was baptized into his organization

A History of the Church of Jesus Christ, Volume 2, pages 34-37, and 39, "The Calling of William Bickerton"

Events leading to the Re-establishment after Joseph's Death

- Rigdon began to err in leading the Church and his organization dissolved, leaving Bickerton alone.
- Late 1840s, William Bickerton received a revelation from God to preach the Gospel which responsibility he accepted
- Bickerton began preaching and baptizing but did not formally organize a church
- 1851-1852 he associated himself with the Brigham Young organization of the Church
- 1852 he disassociated himself with the Young organization, refusing the doctrine of polygamy
- Bickerton and his followers met independent of other organizations
- 1861 a revelation was given at conference in which the Lord revealed that he accepted this Church as the Church of Alma
- 1862 the decision was made to formally organize the Church as a legal entity during a July conference. The congregation met in fasting and

prayer, various manifestations of the spirit were given revealing that the Lord had accepted this group as his own- telling them to ordain apostles and committing unto them "the Keys to the Kingdom"

- The official name of the Church was chosen- "The Church of Jesus Christ"

- ✓ Have participants compare Bickerton's 1861 experience of being accepted as the Church of Alma and the restoration of the Church in Alma's time.

Q. Why was it important to restore the gospel in modern day?

Suggestions for future lessons:

- A Firm Foundation – the Building Blocks of the Church
- The Plan of Redemption
- Ordinances of God
- the Restoration of the Church

Key words: baptism, plan of redemption, Alma, Abinadi, Nephi-Lehi, restoration, King Noah, order of the church, re-establishment, corruption of doctrine, corruption of the church, William Bickerton, Joseph Smith, Jr.

God Empowers Alma to Restore the Church to Righteousness

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1. Enlarge and print the table on card stock or stiffer paper so that it can be seen from a distance and cut out the tiles.
2. Scramble the tiles and fasten them with tape on board or wall.
3. Tell participants to identify the tiles that pertain to gaining membership in the current Church of Jesus Christ, and rearrange these tiles in sequential order to the side of the remaining tiles, 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)

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

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

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