

LESSON 10

Prayer and Revelation

Introduction

Prayer is a sacred privilege and commandment that allows us to communicate with a loving Heavenly Father. He hears and answers our prayers. Those who diligently seek the Lord's

guidance can be blessed with personal revelation. This lesson highlights what we can do to prepare our hearts and our minds to receive answers to our prayers.

Background Reading

- Boyd K. Packer, "The Candle of the Lord," *Ensign*, Jan. 1983, 51–56.
- Richard G. Scott, "How to Obtain Revelation and Inspiration for Your Personal Life," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2012, 45–47.
- David A. Bednar, "The Spirit of Revelation," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 87–90.

Suggestions for Teaching

2 Nephi 32:8–9; 3 Nephi 14:7–11

God hears our prayers

Ask students to list some of the ways in which we can use technology to communicate with others. Write the students' responses on the board.

- While technology allows us to communicate with nearly anyone we choose, why do we sometimes find it difficult to communicate effectively with our Heavenly Father?

Invite a student to read 3 Nephi 14:7–11 aloud while the class looks for what the Savior taught about Heavenly Father's willingness to answer our prayers.

- What principle did the Savior teach about Heavenly Father's willingness to answer our prayers? (Student responses should include the following principle: **Heavenly Father hears and responds to us when we ask, seek, and knock.**)

To deepen students' understanding of this principle, share the following statement by President James E. Faust (1920–2007) of the First Presidency:



"No earthly authority can separate us from direct access to our Creator. There can never be a mechanical or electronic failure when we pray. There is no limit on the number of times or how long we can pray each day. There is no quota of how many needs we wish to pray for in each prayer. We do not need to go through secretaries or make an appointment to reach the throne of grace. He is reachable at any time and any place" ("The Lifeline of Prayer," *Ensign*, May 2002, 59).

- What might you say to help individuals who do not pray often because they do not believe that God hears or answers their prayers?

Invite a student to read 2 Nephi 32:8–9 aloud, and ask the class to look for what Nephi taught about prayer. You might ask questions such as the following:

- What do you think it means to “pray always”?
- What example have you seen of someone who prays always? How has this person been blessed because of this practice?
- What does it mean to you that the Lord will “consecrate” your efforts for the welfare of your soul when you pray for His help? (It may be helpful to point out that to *consecrate* something means to dedicate it for a special or sacred purpose or to make it holy.)

Encourage students to be diligent in praying always. Assure them that Heavenly Father does hear their prayers and greatly desires to bless them.

1 Nephi 10:17–19; 15:1–3, 7–11; Jacob 4:6; Alma 26:22

All followers of Jesus Christ can receive personal revelation

Ask students to list some questions or circumstances for which young adults might desire revelation from God.

Remind students of Lehi’s dream of the tree of life, and point out that after Nephi heard about this inspired dream, he desired to learn more about it. Ask several students to take turns reading 1 Nephi 10:17–19 aloud. Ask the class to look for what these verses teach about revelation, including who is entitled to revelation.

- What do these verses teach about personal revelation? (Ensure that the following doctrine is identified: **God reveals truth by the power of the Holy Ghost to all those who diligently seek to know.**)

Display the following statement by Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and ask a student to read it aloud:



“[The spirit of revelation] is not restricted to the presiding authorities of the Church; rather, it belongs to and should be operative in the life of every man, woman, and child who reaches the age of accountability and enters into sacred covenants. Sincere desire and worthiness invite the spirit of revelation into our lives” (“The Spirit of Revelation,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 87).

- Why is this insight from Elder Bednar encouraging to you?

Explain that because of Nephi’s desires, his worthiness, and his faith, he too was shown a vision of the tree of life (see 1 Nephi 11–14). Also point out that Laman and Lemuel’s response to their father’s vision was quite different from Nephi’s. Ask two students to read 1 Nephi 15:1–3, 7–9 aloud, and invite the class to follow along and consider what they learn from these verses.

- What is most important to you in these verses?

Ask another student to read 1 Nephi 15:10–11 aloud. Consider pointing out to students that verse 11 is an example of an “if-then” statement in the scriptures.

Write the following on the board and ask students how they would fill in the blanks based on what they read in verses 10–11:

If _____, then _____.

Invite students to cross-reference verse 11 with Alma 26:22, and then ask:

- How might you use what is taught in 1 Nephi 15:10–11 and Alma 26:22 to teach someone how to seek answers to his or her prayers?

Ask a student to read Jacob 4:6 aloud, and invite the class to look for what Jacob’s people did, in addition to asking in faith, to invite revelation. You may want to explain that “we search the prophets” refers to reading the words of the prophets in the scriptures.

- Why do you think that studying the words of both ancient and latter-day prophets can lead to receiving revelation from the Lord?

Display and read the following statement by Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



“When we want to speak to God, we pray. And when we want Him to speak to us, we search the scriptures; for His words are spoken through His prophets. He will then teach us as we listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

“If you have not heard His voice speaking to you lately, return with new eyes and new ears to the scriptures. They are our spiritual lifeline” (“Holy Scriptures: The Power of God unto Our Salvation,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2006, 26–27).

Invite students to think of a challenge or decision they are facing. Ask them to consider whether they have inquired of the Lord in prayer and turned to the scriptures for answers.

To help students see examples of how the Lord provides personal revelation to us, write the following scripture references on the board.

1 Nephi 4:6

1 Nephi 8:2

Jacob 7:5

Enos 1:10

Helaman 13:5

3 Nephi 11:3

Assign a few students to each of the passages. Ask them to read their assigned passages and find one way in which God gives personal revelation to His children. Invite students to share what they discovered. As you consider the needs of your students, you might share the following statements by President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015) and Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



"The Spirit does not get our attention by shouting or shaking us with a heavy hand. Rather it whispers. It caresses so gently that if we are preoccupied we may not feel it at all. . . .

"Occasionally it will press just firmly enough for us to pay heed. But most of the time, if we do not heed the gentle feeling, the Spirit will withdraw and wait until we come seeking and listening and say in our manner and expression, like Samuel of ancient times, 'Speak [Lord], for thy servant heareth.' (1 Sam. 3:10.)" ("The Candle of the Lord," *Ensign*, Jan. 1983, 53).



"His answers will seldom come while you are on your knees praying, even when you may plead for an immediate response. Rather, He will prompt you in quiet moments when the Spirit can most effectively touch your mind and heart. Hence, you should find periods of quiet time to recognize when you are being instructed and strengthened" ("Using the Supernal Gift of Prayer," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2007, 9).

Remind students that we do not choose how God will reveal truth to us, but when we act in faith, we better prepare our hearts and minds to receive revelation. Invite a few students to share how they have received personal revelation, if the experience is not too personal or sacred.

1 Nephi 18:1–3; 2 Nephi 28:30; Alma 12:9–11

Receiving and acting upon revelation

Ask students to silently compare 2 Nephi 28:30 and Alma 12:9–11 and identify principles that can help them receive increased personal revelation.

- What do these passages teach that will help us receive increased personal revelation? (Though they may use different words, students should identify the following principles: **The Lord reveals truth to us according to how diligently we give heed to His word. Revelation often comes to us line upon line.**)
- Why do you think the Lord requires us to be obedient to what He has already revealed to us before He reveals additional knowledge?
- What does it mean that revelation comes to us "line upon line"?

As time permits, you might discuss 1 Nephi 18:1–3 with the class to illustrate how Nephi received incremental revelation to learn how to build a ship.

Display and ask a student to read the following statement by Elder David A. Bednar:



"Most frequently, revelation comes in small increments over time and is granted according to our desire, worthiness, and preparation. Such communications from Heavenly Father gradually and gently 'distil upon [our souls] as the dews from heaven' (D&C 121:45). This pattern of revelation tends to be more common than rare" ("The Spirit of Revelation," 88).

- As you think back over your life, how has the Lord directed you incrementally in making a decision or seeking understanding from Him?

Conclude the lesson by displaying and asking a student to read aloud the following statement by President Thomas S. Monson:



"If any of us has been slow to hearken to the counsel to pray always, there is no finer hour to begin than now. William Cowper declared, 'Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees' ['Exhortation to Prayer,' in *Olney Hymns*]" ("A Royal Priesthood," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 61).

Ask students to think about the effort they currently give to prayer in their daily lives. Encourage them to follow the principles discussed in this lesson to invite increased personal revelation through prayer and scripture study. Invite students to share how they know Heavenly Father answers prayers. Share your testimony that our loving Heavenly Father will inspire us with understanding and direction if we prepare ourselves to receive it.

Student Readings

- 1 Nephi 10:17–19; 15:1–3, 7–11; 18:1–3; 2 Nephi 28:30; 32:8–9; Jacob 4:6; Alma 12:9–11; 26:22; 3 Nephi 14:7–11.
- David A. Bednar, "The Spirit of Revelation," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2011, 87–90.