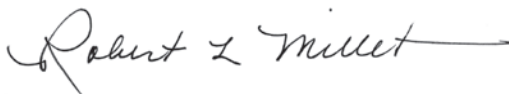


Sharpening Our Edge as Teachers

While the ability to teach the gospel is in fact a spiritual gift (see Moroni 10:9–10), an endowment of the Holy Ghost, surely each one of us can become more effective as gospel teachers. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a layman's church administered by farmers and plumbers and medical doctors, and the gospel is taught regularly by clerks and college presidents and homemakers; there is no formal training for the ministry. This, however, is no excuse for spiritual laziness or thoughtlessness in our presentations at the pulpit or in the classroom. The tenets of the restored gospel are powerful and soul-transforming, and so how we present them to others matters very much to our Lord and Savior, who is the Master Teacher. God expects his messengers to do their very best to match the Message. A profound truth can be presented poorly and have little impact on listeners. And so it is that the Church encourages its instructors to avail themselves of inservice opportunities, to visit and observe classes and ponder on what constitutes inspired and inspiring teaching.

A serious study of the scriptures, fasting, and prayer will always be prerequisites to teaching “with power and authority of God” (Alma 17:3). On the other hand, attending to methodology, to the means of delivery, is important as well. Theses and dissertations and whole books have sought to identify some of the Savior's techniques for teaching, and so wise teachers of the gospel (and that includes all of us), though focused principally on content and personal spirituality, will always devote serious reflection to how and in what manner a message is to be delivered. I testify that as we attend to both sides of this equation—both content and technique—our classrooms will become a learning environment filled with moments that matter. Truly, in such a sacred setting, “he that preacheth and he that receiveth, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together” (D&C 50:22).



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