

21. “Art Is Uplifting,” 4.
22. See also Hugh Nibley, “An Approach to the Book of Mormon,” *Collected Works of Hugh Nibley: Volume 6, The Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1988), 348–49.
23. Bruce R. McConkie, in David Croft, “Spare Time’s Rare to Apostle,” *Church News*, 24 January 1976, 4.
24. See Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 23–24.
25. M. Russell Ballard, “Filling the World with Goodness and Truth,” *Ensign*, July 1996, 14.
26. Orson F. Whitney, *Through Memory’s Halls: The Life Story of Orson F. Whitney* (Independence, Missouri: Zion’s Printing and Publishing, 1930), 151–52; cited in Jack M. Lyon, Linda Ririe Gundry, and Jay A. Parry, eds., *Best-Loved Stories of the LDS People* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 215.
27. Ballard, “Filling the World with Goodness and Truth,” 10, 13, 14.
28. Spencer W. Kimball, “The Gospel Vision of the Arts,” *Ensign*, July 1977, 3, 5.



Church Educational System teachers should heed this wise counsel:
 “Your essential and all but sole duty, is to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

Photograph of Roger Barrus by Matthew Reier, “Seminary,” © by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.
 Used by permission.

The Focus of Teaching: Principles and Doctrines

Robb Jones

Robb Jones is Church Educational System preservice trainer at BYU.

Teachers of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints naturally seek assistance in knowing not only what to teach but also how to teach it. Answers to those issues are especially relevant to teachers in the Church Educational System (CES).^{cxl1}

Stay on Safe Ground

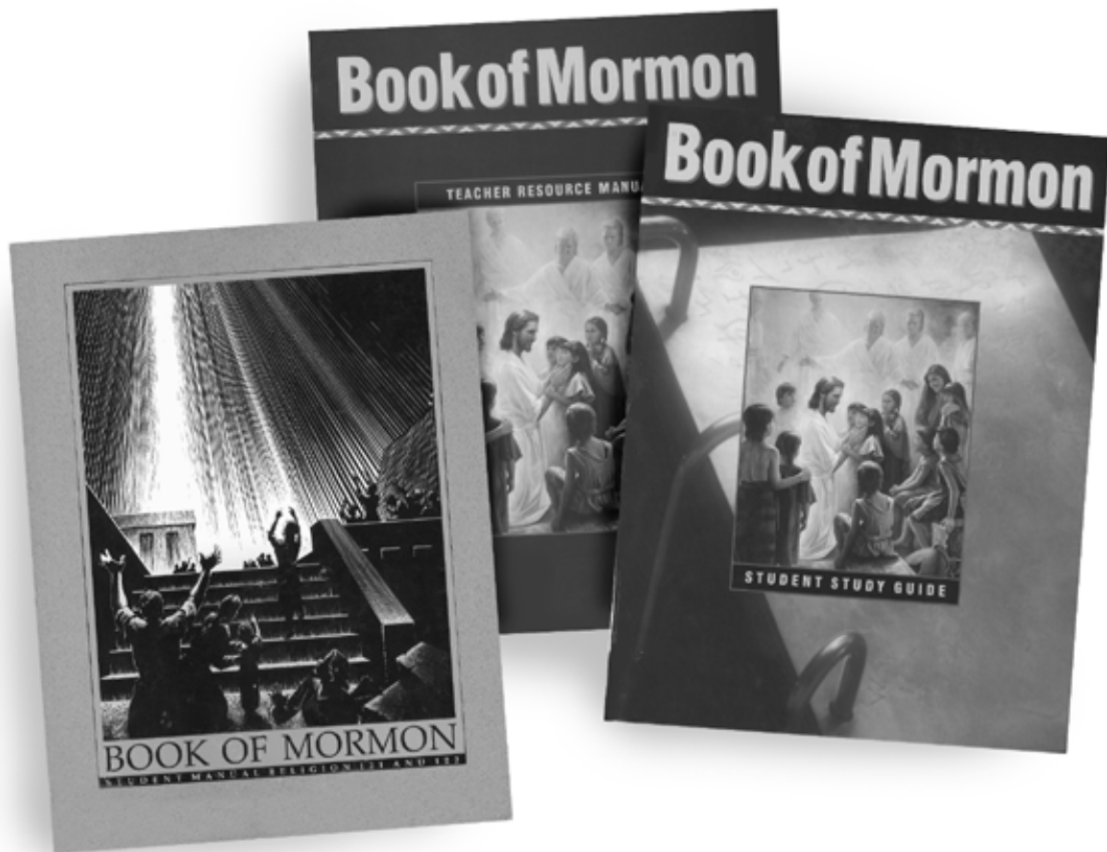
When teachers teach in any capacity in the Church, particularly in CES, they have a responsibility to avoid teaching false doctrines, the philosophies of the world, and personal opinions. In 1938, President J. Reuben Clark Jr., speaking for the First Presidency, gave this charge to teachers: “You are not . . . to intrude into your work your own peculiar philosophy, no matter what its source or how pleasing or rational it seems to you. . . . You are not . . . to change the doctrines of the Church or to modify them as they are declared by and in the standard works of the Church and by those whose authority it is to declare the mind and will of the Lord to the Church.”^{cxli2}

This counsel has not changed over the years. More recently, President Harold B. Lee stated, “You’re to teach the old doctrines, not so plainly that they can just understand, *but you must teach the doctrines of the Church so plainly that no one can misunderstand.*”^{cxlii3}

How can teachers be sure they are teaching correct principles and doctrines? President Clark answered this question when he stated: “Your essential and all but sole duty, is to teach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . You are to teach this gospel, using as your sources and authorities the standard works of the Church and the words of those whom God has called to lead His people in these last days.”^{cxliii4} Elder M. Russell Ballard counseled teachers that they “can stay on safe ground when they use the standard works, the approved manuals, and the writings of the General Authorities.”^{cxliv5}

Use the Scriptures as the Source

More recently, in the objectives of religious education in CES, teachers are told that the “source” for teaching students the gospel of Jesus Christ is “found in the standard works and the words of the prophets.”^{cxlv6} To complement the teaching of the scriptures, teachers are told to use as their “resource” the approved CES materials.^{cxlvi7} These materials include the teacher resource manual, the student study guide, and the institute student manual.



Extensive effort has gone into preparing these resources. They have been approved and correlated by CES. They will be a great benefit for both lesson preparation and lesson presentation and should be used by all CES teachers. However, teachers should be careful that the “resource” materials do not become the “source” of their teaching. Some teachers skim through the scriptures once and then spend most of their time studying the resource materials. This procedure will short-circuit the process of becoming confident and excited about the scriptures.

On page 19 of the *Teaching the Gospel handbook*, teachers are reminded of the power that comes from the word of God. “The prophet Alma said that the word has a more powerful effect upon the mind ‘than the sword, or anything else’ (Alma 31:5). The word of God ‘healeth the wounded soul’ (Jacob 2:8) and ‘will tell you all things what ye should do’ (2 Nephi 32:3). The scriptures can give the youth the power to resist the ‘fiery darts of the adversary’ (1 Nephi 15:24) and help them become ‘thoroughly furnished unto all good works’ (2 Timothy 3:17).”

Focus on Principles and Doctrines

The scriptures and the words of the prophets should be the source for teaching in the Church Educational System. But what should be the focus? “The Church has always taught the importance of education and learning in many fields, but in the Church the primary concern is to teach the saving principles of the gospel.”^{cxlvii}8 Speaking of principles, President Marion G. Romney stated that “scriptures have been written to preserve principles for our benefit.”^{cxlviii}9

Elder Bruce R. McConkie said: “Our divine commission is to teach the principles of the gospel as they are found in the standard works. . . . Our commission—and there is none greater—deals with the doctrines of the gospel.”^{cxlix}10 In a recent CES conference, Elder Henry B. Eyring exhorted teachers that “it would be better if you simply taught with unshakable faith the simple doctrine taught so well in the Book of Mormon.”^{cl}11 The scriptures and words of the prophets make it clear that the primary focus when teachers teach the scriptures should be the principles and doctrines of the gospel.

View Principles and Doctrines as Truths

Principles and doctrines are statements of truth. Some principles and doctrines suggest something teachers can do. Elder Richard G. Scott said that “principles are concentrated truth packaged for application.”^{cli}12 President Boyd K. Packer stated that a “principle is an enduring truth, a law, a rule you can adopt to guide you in making decisions.”^{clii}13 Notice how the following statements suggest an application or guide teachers in making a decision: *Follow the prophet.*

Keep the commandments.

Pay your tithing.

Stand in holy places.

Principles and doctrines may have a greater influence on students if stated with a promise or consequence. For example, teachers might say:

If we follow the prophet, we will have peace of mind.

If we pay our tithing, the Lord will open the windows of heaven.

Other principles and doctrines declare the truth about the plan of salvation:

The Father has a body of flesh and bones.

All men and women will die; all men and women will be resurrected.

The Atonement is infinite and eternal.

Identify Stated and Implied Principles and Doctrines

Some principles and doctrines are easy to identify because the scripture writer points them out with phrases such as “thus we see,” “thus,” “therefore,” “for whosoever,” and “behold”:

And thus we see that by small means the Lord can bring about great things (1 Nephi 16:29).

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it (Matthew 16:25).

Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven (D&C 58:42).

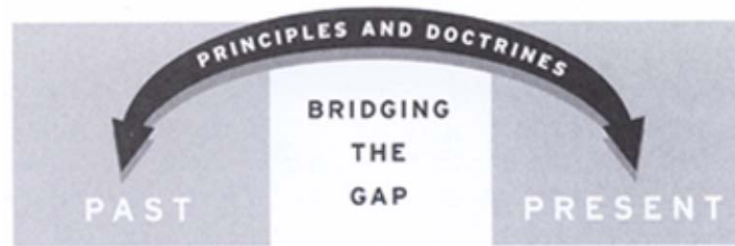
Other principles and doctrines are not stated in the verses but are implied from the content. They lie hidden within the events of the scriptures. They need to be mined like diamonds. The following principles could be inferred from the story of King David and Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11:1–4:

If we are in the wrong place, we may get in trouble.

If we see something inappropriate, we should turn away.

Use Principles and Doctrines to Bridge the Gap

The scriptures reveal a religious past that is full of customs, traditions, literary expressions, and symbols that may seem unusual and different to the reader in the present. This difference can create a gap that makes it difficult for the modern reader to relate to events in the scriptures. Principles and doctrines can play an important role in bridging the gap between what happened many years ago and what is happening today.



For example, suppose a teacher is teaching Acts 12. In this chapter, Peter is falsely accused and put in prison. The Saints pray for his release. The Lord sends an angel and miraculously releases Peter. After his release, missionary work and the growth of the Church continue.

Students usually have a difficult time relating this story to their lives. Most students have never been falsely accused, put in prison, and then released by an angel. Elder Scott suggests that we pull principles out of the details of the scriptures. He said: “As you seek spiritual knowledge, search for principles. Carefully separate them from the detail used to explain them.”^{cliii} 14 For example, teachers could help students separate the following principles and doctrines from the details in Acts 12:

The combined prayers of many righteous Saints can bring about a miracle.

Although we may go through trials and difficulties, nobody can stop God’s work.

Today’s students can relate to these principles and doctrines because they have experienced them in their lives or because they know of other Latter-day Saints who have experienced them. The power of principles and doctrines is that they can be related to a wide variety of circumstances in a wide variety of times. Although students may have difficulties relating the events in the scriptures to their lives, they can relate principles and doctrines derived from those events. Elder Scott stated, “Help your students find the diamonds of truth that sometimes must be carefully mined from the pages of scriptures.”^{cliv} 15

Understand the Power of Principles and Doctrines

Principles and doctrines can have a powerful effect on teachers’ lives and on the lives of students. President Packer said that principles help make decisions,^{clv} 16 and Elder Scott noted that principles help us make decisions during difficult times: “A true principle makes decisions clear even under the most confusing and compelling circumstances.”^{clvi} 17 Another benefit of teaching principles and doctrines is that they can lead students to obey God. President Packer refers to the effect doctrines can have in helping students be obedient. He said that true doctrines, when understood, change attitudes and behavior. “The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior. . . . That is why we stress so forcefully the study of the doctrines of the gospel.”^{clvii} 18

Principles and doctrines of the gospel can help students make correct decisions and obey God. Teachers should not only look for principles and doctrines in their scripture study and lesson preparation but also make principles and doctrines the focus of their teaching. “And again, the elders, priests and teachers of this church shall teach the principles of my gospel, which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, in the which is the fulness of the gospel” (D&C 42:12).

Notes

1. This article is the first in a series of eight that give counsel to all teachers of the restored gospel, but especially to CES teachers, about what to teach and how to teach it.
2. J. Reuben Clark Jr., “The Charted Course of the Church in Education,” in *Charge to Religious Educators*, Church Educational System (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1994), 7.

3. Harold B. Lee, "Loyalty," in *Charge to Religious Educators*, 119.
4. Clark, "Charted Course," 7.
5. M. Russell Ballard, "Teaching—No Greater Call," *Ensign*, May 1983, 86.
6. Church Educational System, *Charge to Religious Educators*, 3.
7. *Ibid.*, 21.
8. *Ibid.*, 2.
9. Marion G. Romney, "Records of Great Worth," *Ensign*, September 1980, 4.
10. Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrines of the Restoration: Sermons and Writings of Bruce R. McConkie*, ed. Mark L. McConkie (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1989), 243.
11. Henry B. Eyring, Book of Mormon CES Symposium, 14 August 2001.
12. Richard G. Scott, "Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge," *Ensign*, November 1993, 86.
13. Boyd K. Packer, "The Word of Wisdom: The Principle and the Promises," *Ensign*, May 1996, 17.
14. Scott, "Acquiring," 86.
15. Scott, Old Testament CES Symposium, 1987.
16. Packer, "Word of Wisdom," 17.
17. Scott, "Acquiring," 86.
18. Packer, "Little Children," *Ensign*, November 1986, 17.

How We Got the Book of Moses

Kent P. Jackson

Kent P. Jackson is a professor of ancient scripture at BYU.

The book of Moses is an extract from Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible. It was revealed to the Prophet in 1830 and in early 1831, not long after the organization of the Church. This article is a brief introduction to the origin of the book of Moses and the Bible translation from which it derives.^{clviii}¹

Beginning in June 1830, Joseph Smith began a careful reading of the Bible to revise and make corrections in accordance with the inspiration he would receive. The result was the revelation of many important truths and the restoration of many of the "precious things" that Nephi had foretold would be taken from the Bible (see 1 Nephi 13:23–29). In a process that took about three years, the Prophet made changes, additions, and corrections as were given him by divine inspiration while he filled his calling to provide a more correct translation for the Church.^{clix}² Collectively, these are called the "Joseph Smith Translation" (JST) or, as Joseph Smith referred to it, the "New Translation."^{clx}³ The title *Inspired Version* refers to the edited, printed edition, published in Independence, Missouri, by the Community of Christ (formerly the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints). The book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price is the very beginning of the New Translation, corresponding to Genesis 1:1–6:13 in the Bible.

The Translation

The first revelation of the JST was what we now have as Moses 1. It is the preface to the book of Genesis. It begins the earliest manuscript of the New Translation, designated Old Testament Manuscript 1 (OT1).^{clxi}⁴ Serving as scribes for what is now in the book of Moses were

Oliver Cowdery	Moses 1:1–5:43	Beginning June 1830
John Whitmer	Moses 5:43–6:18	21 October, 30 November 1830
Emma Smith	Moses 6:19–52	1 December 1830