

LESSON 1

The Purpose of Studying History

Desired Results: The child will understand that we study history to learn about Heavenly Father.

Principle: God directs both the histories of nations and the histories of our individual lives.

Materials Needed:

Scriptures
 Sheet of paper
 Why we study history wordstrips (appendix)
 A paper roll for each child.
 Roll a paper into a 1" (10 mm) tube
 and fasten with tape.



Song: "I Know that My Father Lives," *Childrens Songbook*, p.5. (music CD disc 1, song 3)

Prayer: Ask for the spirit to guide your lesson.

Memorization: Spend three to five minutes memorizing "My brothers and sisters, I beg of you to study history—the history of the world!" President Spencer W. Kimball (*Ensign*, Jan. 1975, . 3) (1 of 2 lessons).



Activity: (Have the children do this activity or the Enrichment activity.) Have the child roll a piece of paper into a tube approximately 1" or 10 mm in diameter. Tape it so it doesn't unroll. Take the children outside (or have them look through a window) and have them look through their paper rolls at one fixed point or object. Let them describe what they see. They can see only a little bit of God's world around them. Explain to the children that this experience is like looking at the world without knowing history. If the children do not learn history, they will not be able to see clearly the Lord's plan for this earth.

Have the children put the paper rolls down. Have them look at the same area and now describe all the things they can see. Explain that looking at the world without the paper roll is like knowing history. We can see and understand much more of the world around us by understanding history. History teaches us about Heavenly Father's other children rather than just knowing about ourselves.

Have the children again look through their paper rolls fixed on the previous object. As they look, have them remember all the things they can't see with the paper rolls restricting their vision.



Apply: ? If you had the choice of going through life and only looking through the paper roll or being able to see everything, which would you choose? (Everything)

? Why? (not restricted, do more, know more)

Explain: This is why we study history. It helps us see and understand more about life and its ways. This understanding helps us live our lives.



Think: **Explain** to the children that they are beginning their history study. Write “history” so they can see it. Help the children see that “history” can be broken into two words: “His story.” Rewrite “His story.”

? Who is in control of our lives’ stories? (Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.)

? Who is in control of the earth’s story? (Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.)

? Then whose story is history? (Heavenly Father’s and Jesus Christ’s.)

Explain that as we study history, we are really studying “His story,” or Heavenly Father’s and Christ’s story for us on this earth.



Study/ Think:

? What is Heavenly Father’s purpose for us and the earth? To find the answer, read together

Moses 1:39

39: *For behold, this is my work and my glory--to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.*

? What does this scripture mean? (His purpose is to help us come back and live with Him again and be like Him.)

Explain: Heavenly Father has a specific plan and purpose for the earth’s history. He appointed a special time for each person to be born.

Each person has a unique life with different learning experiences to teach them to become like their Heavenly Father.

? Do you think Heavenly Father knows and loves every one of His children? (yes)

? Do you think He wants every one of His children to return to Him? (yes)



Apply: Teach the children that because Heavenly Father loves us so dearly, He has a purpose for our lives. Teach the children that His Story is a plan and purpose for each of us. Repeat with your children five times the following sentence:

His Story is a plan and a purpose for me.

Explain: Heavenly Father has created this earth for His spirit sons and daughters to learn how to be like Him. We learn from history what other people have chosen to do. Some follow Heavenly Father and Jesus. Some do not. We can learn from them.



Apply: Tell a story from your life about when Heavenly Father guided your life. Help your children see how Heavenly Father was and is involved in your life. Teach your children that just as Heavenly Father has guided your life, He will guide their lives.



Study: Heavenly Father wants us to gain knowledge. Have the children listen for the things Heavenly Father commands us to learn about as you read the following verse. Children can put up a finger for each subject Heavenly Father wants us to learn about.

Read D&C 88: 76-78.

76: *Also, I give unto you a commandment that ye shall continue in prayer and fasting from this time forth.*

77: *And I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom.*

78: *Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand;*



Think: ? Of what does Heavenly Father want us to gain a knowledge? (history, countries, kingdoms, and laws of God and man.)

Explain: When we study history, we are studying about countries, kingdoms, and laws of God and man. All these things.

Show first word strip for “why we study history” (appendix): “Heavenly Father has commanded us to gain a knowledge of history.”

Read D&C 93:53, asking the children to listen to Heavenly Father’s reason for why we study history.

D&C 93:53

53: *And, verily I say unto you, that it is my will that you should hasten to translate my scriptures, and to obtain a knowledge of history, and of countries, and of kingdoms, of laws of God and man, and all this for the salvation of Zion. Amen.*

? Why does Heavenly Father want us to learn history? (“for the salvation of Zion.”)

? What does *Zion* mean? (D&C 97:21 *For this is zion- the pure in heart;*)

Read: D&C 93:53 and add in the words **pure in heart** where it says **zion**.

Show word strip #2: “Learning history helps the pure in heart gain salvation with God”

Explain: Zion can also be a place where the pure in heart are such as your home.



Think: As we read this next scripture, listen for three reasons why we are commanded to learn these things.

D&C 88: 80

80: *That ye may be prepared in all things when I shall send you again to magnify the calling whereunto I have called you, and the mission with which I have commissioned you.*

? Why does Heavenly Father want us to learn of these things, especially history? (So that we “may be prepared in all things” so we can “magnify the calling[s]” that Heavenly Father will give us and fulfill our missions.)

Show word strip #3: “Learning history is a commandment.

Show word strip #4: “Learning history prepares us for our lives’ purposes”.



Apply: As the lesson closes, review all the reasons that Heavenly Father wants us to study history. Important points to review are the following:

- Learning history can strengthen our faith
- History gives us examples to follow or avoid
- Learning history is a commandment from God
- Learning history prepares us for our purpose in life
- Learning history will help us establish Zion
- We must learn history with a gospel perspective
- We must apply history to our lives.

Enrichment:

If you choose to do any of these enrichment activities, tie the activities back into the ideas of the lesson.

1. Give each child a puzzle piece. Have them describe what is on their puzzle piece. Can you see the whole puzzle with just this little piece? (We see only a part of the big picture.) If possible (perhaps after the lesson), have the children put together a puzzle so they can see the big picture, or show the picture on the box so they can see that the piece is a tiny part of a whole big picture.

2. Find a painting or picture (it would be best if the children were not familiar with the picture). Have the children look at the picture through a small paper roll. Put the picture very close to the paper roll so they can see only an inch of the picture. Have them describe what they see. Then let them see the whole picture without an object obstructing their vision. Teach them that not knowing history is like looking at the world without being able to see the whole picture. Knowing history enables us to see more of the big picture of God’s plan.

3. Imagine that you and your family lived on an island out in the ocean. You didn't know how your parents had come to the island, you didn't know that there were people on the earth other than your family. You didn't have any records about your ancestors, or about the gospel, or about anything. Imagine how your life would be different. Discuss how your perspective would be different.

Things Heavenly Fathers has Commanded us to gain knowledge of:

D&C 88: 76-79

Things in Heaven and in the Earth and under the Earth

Things which have been

Things which are

Things Heavenly Fathers has Commanded us to gain knowledge of:

Things that will shortly come to pass

Things at home

Things abroad

Wars and the perplexities of the nations

Judgments on the land

Knowledge of Countries

Knowledge of Kingdoms

D&C 93:53

Knowledge of History

Knowledge of Countries

Knowledge of Kingdoms

Knowledge of the laws of God and Man

Why we study history

Heavenly Father wants us to learn His story.

Learning history helps the pure in heart gain salvation with God.

Learning history is a commandment.

Learning history prepares us for our lives purposes.

