

Missionary Teaching Notes

Soren Harward
Washington D.C. South Mission (Spanish)

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Preface

Even though the *Preach My Gospel* book has replaced the six missionary discussions—a change which is certainly for the better—the basic gospel principles that every missionary needs to teach to investigators have not changed. In fact, most of the lessons in *Preach My Gospel* are re-arrangements of principles found in those six discussions and outlined in these notes. Many of the changes I made to the discussions are similar to changes later made in *Preach My Gospel*.

These notes developed over the period from about October 2001 to February 2002, while I was serving in Arlington, Virginia; the bulk of them were written in one week during December while my companion had a really bad flu. The idea of “superdiscussions” originated with Keith Warner, who was my district leader at the time and is still a very good friend. The additional lessons were developed at various times and are not entirely mine. The “swimming behind the ark” lesson came from an idea I credit to Dustin Romney, and the excellent “parable of the sower” lesson is a blend of material from President Alvarez (Stake Mission President in MacLean at the time), Keith Warner, and myself. I am sure that these notes have ideas that I picked up from other missionaries, and I regret that I can’t also credit them by name. The minor doctrinal notes are from various times during the second year of my mission, and some probably even date from before then.

All these notes were originally handwritten in Spanish and contained only the material given in the outlines; I translated them and added the commentary while typing them up during June 2005. As a consequence, I will admit that the commentary is somewhat colored by my post-mission experiences and shifts in opinion and belief.

I have made an effort to use material from the scriptures as much as possible, and I strongly encourage that you teach frequently from the scriptures during the course of the discussion. However, reading all of the parenthetical scriptural passages during the course of the discussion is overkill, but you as the missionary should at least be familiar with them. Since I was in a Spanish-speaking mission, these notes are oriented towards the teaching of people who are already well familiar with and in agreement with the basics of Christianity. But Latter-day Saints have their own Christian vocabulary, so I have put in SMALL CAPS words that will most likely require explanation.

Overall, I have tried to follow this paraphrase of Quintilian’s maxim: “Teach the gospel not so that you can be understood, but so that you cannot be misunderstood.”

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Part I

Standard Missionary Discussions

1 The Plan of Our Heavenly Father

The investigator should understand that God teaches us about Christ through prophets, and that the *Book of Mormon* is inspired teaching from prophets. The beginning of the discussion is taught only from the Bible, weighted towards the New Testament.

1. Our Heavenly Father

- (a) God exists and we should know Him (John 17:3; Hosea 4:1–2; Deut. 4:29; 2 Chr. 15:1–4)
 - i. Why should we know God?
- (b) God is perfect (Matt. 5:48)
 - i. What do you believe God is like? What should a father here on earth be like?
- (c) We are children of God, created in His image (Gen. 1:26–27; Mal. 2:10)
 - i. What would the earth be like if everyone understood that we are all brothers and sisters?
- (d) God has a plan for us, called the “plan of SALVATION”

2. Jesus Christ

- (a) Salvation comes through Christ (1 Thess. 5:9–10)
- (b) The role of Christ in the plan of salvation (John 3:16)
 - i. What did Christ do for us?
 - ii. Lots of people have died, and some even some even died on crosses. What was the difference with Christ’s death?
- (c) Salvation comes *only* through Christ (John 14:6; John 13:15; Acts 4:12)
- (d) Even though Christ already paid the price for our sins, there are still things that we need to do to receive salvation (Acts 3:19–21)
 - i. What do we need to do to receive salvation?

3. Prophets

- (a) God sends prophets to teach us and to be witnesses¹ (Acts 10:39–43)
 - i. What does it mean to be a witness?
- (b) There will be false prophets² (Matt. 24:24; Matt. 7:15)
- (c) False prophets still use the name of God (Jer. 14:14; Jer. 23:25–32)
- (d) The Holy Ghost helps us to tell the difference between false prophets and true prophets³ (1 John 4:1)
- (e) Prophets preach and write down their messages so that we can obey them (Ex. 24:3–4; Deut. 5:27)
- (f) Even though we should obey the prophets, many people still don’t
 - i. Do people always obey the prophets? Why not? What would happen if they did?
- (g) We receive Christ when we receive His servants and messengers (John 13:20)
- (h) There is no REVELATION without prophets⁴ (Amos 3:7)
 - i. What would happen if there weren’t any prophets?
- (i) People perish without revelation (Prov. 29:18)
 - i. Why is revelation important?

¹Lay down “God”, “Us”, and “Prophets” circles with corresponding arrows.

²Lay down “Satan” and “False Prophets” circles with corresponding arrows.

³Lay down “Holy Ghost” arrow.

⁴Take away the prophet circle.

- (j) Additional notes for clarification
 - i. If the prophet's word is not fulfilled, then it is not from God (Deut. 18:18–21)
 - ii. When there is a prophet, God will appear to him in a vision (Num. 12:6–8)
 - iii. All the prophets testified until John (Matt. 11:13)
 - iv. Prophets in Acts (11:27; 13:1; 21:10–11)
 - v. Devils confess Christ (Mark 1:24, 3:11, 5:7; Matt. 8:29; Acts 19:15)
 - vi. God has spoken to us through His son (Heb. 1:1–2)
 - vii. God/the Lord appears to man (Ex. 33:11; Num. 12:8; Matt. 5:8; Amos 9:1; Gen. 32:30; Deut. 34:10; Isa. 6:1; 1 Cor. 15:8; Acts 9:5,27; Acts 7:55–56; Gen. 5:24; Ex. 24:9–11)
 - viii. God does not appear to man (Ex. 33:20; John 1:18; 1 John 4:12,20)

4. Joseph Smith

- (a) God has called a modern prophet
- (b) Joseph was confused about religion
 - i. Why do you think it was important to him to join a Church that taught the truth? What would you do if you were in his situation?
- (c) Joseph studied the Bible to find his answer. Read James 1:5.
- (d) The Holy Ghost testified this scripture was true, and Joseph followed it
- (e) Joseph prayed for wisdom. Read JSH 1:16–17 or recite the First Vision passage⁵.
- (f) Joseph was called as a prophet so that God could once again teach us
- (g) Joseph Smith is a powerful witness of Christ
- (h) The message we share is the message of the prophet Joseph Smith, who taught us about Christ
 - i. **Invitation:** participate in the 6 discussions

5. The Book of Mormon

- (a) Lehi was a prophet who left Jerusalem and came to America. He got old and died.
 - i. How would God keep teaching the people in America?
- (b) God called prophets in America. There were two lines of prophets: one in Jerusalem, and the other in America. Both taught their people about Christ.
- (c) Christ visited both groups of people, and established His church among both groups.
- (d) Both groups eventually became wicked.
- (e) The few righteous people left gathered writings of some of their prophets. In Jerusalem, they called the book “the Bible”. In America, they called the book “the Book of Mormon.” The Bible stayed with the church in Jerusalem, but the Book of Mormon was lost.
- (f) There were no more prophets in the world.
- (g) **Invitation:** read the Book of Mormon, with 3 Ne. 11 as suggested passage, though this can be adapted for investigator's interests

6. The Six Discussions

- (a) During the discussions, we will teach the revelations of the prophets. We will teach from the Bible and the Book of Mormon.
- (b) The Holy Ghost confirms the message of the prophets. Read John 14:26.
- (c) The Holy Ghost teaches us through feelings. Read Gal. 5:22–23.
 - i. Have you felt this way before? When?
 - ii. How have you felt during this discussion?
 - iii. **Invitation:** Will you accept those feelings as confirmation that these things are true?
- (d) God promises that He will always confirm the truth of the prophets' message. Read Moro. 10:3–5.
 - i. **Invitation:** pray about what we've been teaching

⁵Use the First Vision picture from the *Gospel Principles* book, which actually shows God and Jesus

- (e) Additional notes for clarification
 - i. Holy Ghost in the OT: Neh. 9:20; Eze. 36:26–27; Num. 11:24–25 xref Acts 2:2–4, 19:6; 2 Pet. 1:21
 - ii. Why we have the missionary discussions: D&C 20:68–69

2 The Gospel of Jesus Christ

The investigator should understand what the Atonement is, that it is essential for salvation, and that the first four principles and ordinances of the gospel are the way in which each person receives the blessings of the Atonement. Contrary to the previous discussion, in which the *Book of Mormon* was not used for supporting scriptures, in this discussion it is used as much as possible. Doing so is important to establish that the *Book of Mormon* testifies of Christ and His mission just like the Bible does. In brackets are verses from 3 Ne. 11 which correspond to principles in the discussion. You may wish to read the chapter along with the discussion, especially if the investigator has not read the chapter already or if his or her comprehension was poor.

1. Jesus Christ carried out the Atonement

- (a) [Read through v. 11] How did Christ glorify the Father?
- (b) Jesus glorified the Father by fulfilling His mission, which was to carry out the ATONEMENT

2. The Atonement saves us from physical and spiritual death

- (a) Death is the separation of the physical body and the spirit (ie, the soul⁶)
- (b) Everyone will die (Job 34:15), and when we die we become subject to the Devil (2 Ne. 9:8)
- (c) Jesus saved *everyone* from death; everyone will be resurrected. Read Alma 11:42–43. (1 Cor. 15:22; 2 Tim. 1:10)
- (d) However, the fact that everyone will be resurrected does not mean that everyone will live with God again, because sin also separates us from God (1 Ne. 10:6; Rom. 3:23; Matt. 10:28)
 - i. What is sin? Why does it separate us from God?
- (e) By the grace of Christ, we can be forgiven for our sins (2 Ne. 2:6–7)
- (f) If Christ had not carried out the Atonement, there would be no salvation. Read Alma 34:8–9.

3. First principle: faith

- (a) [Read through v. 15] Did the Nephites doubt that this man was Jesus Christ? How would you like to touch the marks in the hands of Christ?
- (b) To have faith is to believe and to act on that belief, even without perfect knowledge. Read Alma 32:21. (John 20:29; Heb. 11:1,6)
 - i. **Example:** you might believe that a building is well-constructed, but you put your faith in the architect and the builders when you go in it
- (c) We need to have faith in Christ (2 Ne. 25:23,26)

4. Second principle: repentance

- (a) When we exercise faith, we want to come closer to God, which is called REPENTANCE. Read Alma 34:17.
- (b) Because of the great signs and destructions around them, the Nephites had remembered that they needed to repent.
- (c) [Read through v. 17] What does “hosanna” mean? It means “save us.” The Nephites wanted forgiveness for their sins. Let’s see how Christ responded.

5. Third principle: baptism

⁶Though this is contrary to the terminology used in D&C 88:15, it’s the more commonly understood wording

- (a) [Read through v. 27] Christ taught how the Nephites could have salvation: through baptism.
 - (b) Baptism, as taught by Christ, has several important elements
 - i. Proper authority (3 Ne. 11:21–22)
 - ii. Proper manner by immersion (3 Ne. 11:23–26; Matt. 3:13–16)
 - iii. The desire to make a covenant with God. Thus, children don't need baptism (Moro. 8:10–12)
 - (c) Have you been baptized? What was your baptism like?
6. Fourth principle: gift of the Holy Ghost
- (a) [Read through v. 35] The Holy Ghost purifies like fire does
 - i. **Example:** sterilizing a needle
 - (b) The Holy Ghost amplifies our talents and our gifts from God: knowledge, patience, charity, etc.
 - (c) It is a means of communication with God, giving us inspiration, comfort, happiness, peace, etc.
 - (d) The gift of the Holy Ghost is given by the laying-on of hands
 - (e) Have you received the gift of the Holy Ghost/Did you receive the gift of the Holy Ghost after your baptism?
 - (f) [Review the elements of baptism and add the gift of the Holy Ghost]
 - (g) **Invitation:** baptism, on a specific date
7. Fifth principle: Endure to the end
- (a) [Read through v. 40] Even after we've been baptized and received the gift of the Holy Ghost, we need to stay faithful and ENDURE TO THE END
 - (b) [Read v. 41] **Invitation:** invite a friend to the next discussion

3 The Restoration

This discussion can quickly get out of hand, bogged down in a lot of historical and organizational details that aren't nearly as important as the core message of this discussion: Christ organized a church to help people achieve salvation, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is that church.

1. The original [first-century] church
 - (a) What is a church? (building, persons, **organization**)
 - (b) Why did Christ organize a church? Read Eph. 2:19–20, 4:11–12. (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:12,27)
 - i. “strangers and foreigners” are now “fellowcitizens”: unified members
 - ii. “perfecting the body of Christ”:
 - (c) Christ called “apostles, prophets, . . .” for the building of the church (1 Cor. 14:33)
 - (d) He gave to these leaders the PRIESTHOOD and REVELATION
 - i. priesthood: Matt. 16:18–19; Mark 3:14; Acts 6:5–6
 - ii. revelation: Acts 11:1–18; Gal. 1:11–12; Eph. 3:1–7; John 17:7–8; Rev. 1:1
 - (e) Jesus organized this church so that the members would be united. Read Eph. 4:13–14.
2. The apostasy
 - (a) The apostles preached and established the church
 - (b) False prophets and false doctrines opposed the apostles (1 Tim. 1:3–7; Acts 20:28–31; 2 Pet. 2:1–2; Jude 1:3–4; 2 Cor. 4:4–6; 2 Pet. 1:19–21)
 - (c) The apostles and many faithful members were eventually killed
 - (d) Without apostles and prophets, there was no more revelation or priesthood
 - (e) The church of Christ fell apart, and split into many different religions: the APOSTASY
 - (f) Paul had prophesied that the Apostasy would come. Read 2 Thess. 2:1–3. (2 Tim. 3:1–5; 2 Tim. 4:3–4)

3. The restoration of revelation

- (a) Joseph Smith had questions about the church because of the effects of the Apostasy
- (b) He prayed, and was answered that he should not join any of the churches
- (c) The Lord called him to be a prophet
- (d) As a prophet, he received revelations (*Book of Mormon, Doctrine & Covenants*)

4. The restoration of the priesthood

- (a) The priesthood was also restored to Joseph Smith
- (b) John the Baptist gave him the authority to baptize
- (c) Peter, James, and John gave him the authority to give the gift of the Holy Ghost
- (d) The Lord commanded Joseph to re-organize the church. Read D&C 115:4.
- (e) The Lord Himself testified about this church. Read D&C 1:30.
 - i. “true”: teaches correct doctrine
 - ii. “living”: has the proper authority
 - iii. “collectively, but not individually”: the church itself is perfect, but the members are not

5. The church today

- (a) Today, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is guided by Jesus Christ through His prophets and His apostles
- (b) The powers of the priesthood and revelation work under His direction
- (c) Jesus organized this church so that we could come back to Him. Read Moro. 6:2–4. (Acts 2:37–47)
- (d) By being baptized and becoming members of the church of Christ, we show Him that we accept Him and will follow Him
 - i. **Invitation:** re-confirm baptismal commitment

6. Church attendance and the sacrament

- (a) What is a church? (**building, persons**, organization)
- (b) What good is a church if we don't go? Why do we go, then?
 - i. Support from other church members
 - ii. Learn about the gospel
 - iii. Friendship
 - iv. Worship: feel the Holy Ghost, pray, fast
 - v. **Sacrament**
- (c) Why do we take the sacrament? Read Moro. 6:5–9. (John 6:51–58; 1 Cor. 11:23–26)
 - i. remember the Atonement
 - ii. renew our baptismal covenants: it's like being re-baptized every week; thus, those that haven't been baptized don't need to take the sacrament
- (d) God commanded us to keep the Sabbath day holy so we could go to church and take the sacrament
 - i. **Invitation:** Attend Sunday meetings

7. Additional clarifying notes

- (a) Apostasy: Matt. 13:24–30; Amos 8:11–12
- (b) Restoration: Is. 29:13–14; Acts 3:19–21
- (c) “Dispensation of the fulness of times”: Eph. 1:10
- (d) Ecclesiastical Structure
 - i. Prophets: Acts 13:1; Eph. 2:20; 1 Cor. 12:28
 - ii. Apostles: Eph. 2:20; Luke 6:13; 1 Cor. 12:28
 - iii. Seventy: Luke 10:1
 - iv. Elder: James 5:14–15; Acts 14:23

- v. Bishop: Philip. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1–7
- vi. Priest: 1 Tim. 4:14
- vii. Teacher: 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:19
- viii. Deacon: Philip. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8–13
- (e) Laying on of hands: Acts 13:3; 2 Tim. 1:6; Heb. 6:1–2; Alma 6:1; Moro. 2:2; Num. 27:22–23; Deut. 34:9
- (f) Two priesthoods: Heb. 7:11–17

4 Eternal Progression

I have two problems with the way this discussion is structured in the official booklets: it's too long, and the way it starts (Plan of Salvation) really doesn't lead up to the way it ends (chastity and Word of Wisdom). So I almost always split it into two parts. Outlined here are the Plan of Salvation principles; the law of chastity lesson is outlined in section 7 and the Word of Wisdom is outlined in section 8. I usually taught these latter two principles as part of the fifth discussion for reasons described there (section 5).

Just like the second discussion used the *Book of Mormon* extensively, this uses the *Doctrine and Covenants* and *Pearl of Great Price* extensively to show their value in illuminating otherwise incomplete parts of the Plan of Salvation.

1. Pre-mortal life

- (a) Read Jer. 1:5. How did God know Jeremiah?
- (b) We lived with God before we were born. Read Abr. 3:22–23.
 - i. “intelligences”: spirits
 - ii. “nobles and great ones”: prophets and apostles, like Jeremiah
- (c) Jesus created the world for us. Read Abr. 3:24–25.
 - i. “one who was like God”: Jesus Christ
 - ii. “make an Earth”: the creation
 - iii. “test them”: the purpose of this life

2. Mortal life

- (a) When we came to earth, we passed through the VEIL and received a physical body
- (b) We have the freedom to choose; the veil exists so that we can have faith (Alma 12:24; Heb. 11:13–16)

3. Post-mortal life

- (a) When we die, the body goes in the grave, and the spirit goes to the Spirit World. Read Alma 40:11–13. (Eccl. 12:7; 2 Sam. 12:22–23)
- (b) In the resurrection, the body and the spirit will be reunited. Read Alma 11:42–25. (2 Ne. 9:15; John 5:28–29; 1 Cor. 15:21–22)
- (c) We will be judged according to our works: the ordinances, and our efforts (3 Ne. 26:4–5; Rev. 20:12–23)
- (d) We will then receive one of three different glories. Read D&C 88:14–24. (1 Cor. 15:40–42; 2 Cor. 12:2–4)

4. Work for the dead

- (a) The requirements for entry to the celestial kingdom are faith, repentance, baptism, and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost. What happens to the millions of people that have died without hearing about Jesus Christ?
- (b) Jesus preached to the dead after His crucifixion. Read 1 Pet. 3:18–20, 4:6. (John 5:25,29; D&C 138:30–34)

- i. “spirits in prison”: those that died without accepting Christ
- (c) We do baptisms for the dead in temples. Read D&C 128:16–18. (1 Cor. 15:29)
- (d) Baptism “liberates” the spirits in prison.

5. Eternal families

- (a) (Refer to D&C 128:16–18) Joseph Smith, quoting Malachi, spoke of a chain of generations
- (b) Families can be welded together eternally by the sealing power of the priesthood (Matt. 16:19, 18:18)
- (c) This sealing ceremony is carried out in temples
- (d) When children are sealed to their parents, this creates a huge family in the celestial kingdom

6. Additional notes for clarifications

- (a) No reincarnation: Heb. 7:27; Alma 34:32–34; Alma 12:24; Job 10:21, 16:22
- (b) Jesus has a body: D&C 130:22; John 2:19; Luke 24:36–39; Rom. 6:9; James 2:26; Rev. 1:18; Philip. 3:20–21
- (c) Baptism for the dead is not automatic salvation: D&C 137:7–8, Alma 41:3–6, 10–13

5 Living a Christlike Life

I never liked the official format of this discussion. It is the most important discussion besides the second, but it suffers from the same disjointed “the end doesn’t follow from the beginning” problem that the fourth does, and thus the whole point gets lost. Fortunately, it isn’t nearly as long as the fourth, and the first two principles are familiar material, so it’s ideal for a catch-up discussion, especially if you omitted the law of chastity and the Word of Wisdom from the fourth discussion. So I have extensively rewritten the first two principles to lead in better to the commitments for fasting, tithing, chastity, and obeying the Word of Wisdom.

Because the beginning is familiar material (unlike the third and fourth discussions) this is an ideal place to have a real “discussion,” instead of just a scripted lesson. Give the investigator time to understand what is being taught and commit to the high expectations of being a disciple of Christ and being a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

1. Obedience

- (a) What does it mean to lead a Christ-like life?
- (b) What are the two great commandments? (Matt. 22:37–40)
- (c) **Love God.** Read John 14:15.
- (d) Review the ten commandments. Read Ex. 20:3–17. (Deut. 5:6–21; Mos. 12:34–36, 13:11–24)
 - i. No other gods: we’ll talk about sacrifice in a second
 - ii. No images: we pray only to God
 - iii. No blasphemy (James 3:6–12)
 - iv. Sabbath day: review commitment from third discussion
 - v. No adultery: another imminent topic
- (e) **Love thy neighbor.** Read Mos. 2:17.
- (f) We have the tendency to be selfish, which is a great spiritual danger (Deut. 8:11–17; Matt. 23:8–12; Hel. 13:25–28)
- (g) Selfishness makes us forget God and our fellowmen (Hel. 7:20–21; 2 Ne. 10:23–24)
- (h) God gives us commandments so that we can overcome selfishness

2. Sacrifice

- (a) Obedience requires sacrifice. Read Matt. 16:24–26.
- (b) We should put the things of God first (3 Ne. 13:31–33; D&C 98:11–15; Matt. 6:31–33)
- (c) We should be willing to sacrifice all that we have for God

- i. Remember Lot's wife: Luke 9:57–62
- ii. I do not bring peace to the Earth: Matt. 10:34–39
- iii. Rich young man: Luke 18:18–23
- iv. Broken heart and contrite spirit: Psalms 51:17; 3 Ne. 9:20; D&C 97:8
- v. He who will not renounce everything is not my disciple: Luke 14:26–33
- vi. Paul suffered for Christ: Acts 9:15–16
- vii. Sacrifice pleases God: Heb. 13:13–16
- viii. Offer your whole souls: Omni 1:26
- ix. Life is more than food: Luke 12:15–31
- x. Moses left all the riches of Egypt: Heb. 11:24–27
- xi. King Lamoni was willing to give all that he had: Alma 22:15
- xii. Parable of the marriage of the king's son: Matt. 22:1–10
- xiii. Parable of the pearl of great price: Matt. 13:44–46
- (d) God blesses us for our sacrifices
 - i. Blessings come from obedience: D&C 130:20–21
 - ii. Will receive ten times over: Matt. 19:29
 - iii. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be: Luke 12:32–34
 - iv. The Lord blessed Job: Job 42:12
 - v. You will still be unprofitable servants: Mos. 2:20–24
 - vi. A blessing and a curse: Deut. 11:26–28
- (e) We must be willing to sacrifice our time, possessions, talents, and energies

3. Fasting

- (a) Fasting, as a form of sacrifice, is a powerful way to obtain blessings
- (b) We should pray while we fast (Alma 5:54–46, 6:6, 17:3–9; Hel. 3:35; D&C 59:12–13)
- (c) We fast the first Sunday of every month
- (d) We give an offering to help the needy (Mos. 4:26, 18:27; D&C 56:16–17)

Continue on to tithing (Section 9), law of chastity (Section 7), and the Word of Wisdom (Section 8) as appropriate.

6 Membership in the Kingdom

By this point, the investigator has a firm baptismal date and feels comfortable attending and participating in church. This lesson serves to reiterate the expectations of all church members, and in turn, what each member can expect of the church. The main focus should be that the temple is the primary goal after baptism, and the first year of membership is focused on helping the new member achieve that goal. I was fortunate enough to serve in an area with a temple nearby, but lack of a temple in the area should not deter you nor the new member from working towards it.

However, in stressing that the Church has high expectations of its members, do not forget repentance. New members (and even old members) will inevitably stray from the straight and narrow path. Remind the investigators that even when they do transgress, Christ still loves them, the church still wants them, and they can repent and continue to progress.

1. Christ's roles in the Plan of Salvation

- (a) What roles does Christ play in the Plan of Salvation?
- (b) Read Mos. 3:8. **Creator** (Heb. 11:1–12; Rev. 4:11; D&C 76:22–24)
- (c) Read Mos. 3:9. **Redeemer** (Rom. 5:10; D&C 18:47; Hel. 14:15–17)

(d) Read Mos. 3:10. **Judge** (Acts 10:42; Moses 6:57; Rom. 14:10–12)

2. The work of God

(a) What is the work of God? Read Moses 1:39.

- i. “immortality”: salvation from physical death
- ii. “eternal life”: salvation from sin

(b) Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ organized the church to carry out the work of God. (Eph. 4:11–12)

(c) The mission of the church has three components: “perfect the saints”, “proclaim the Gospel”, and “redeem the dead”

(d) Every member has the duty to carry out the mission of the church

3. Perfect the saints

(a) What blessings do we receive from the church?

- i. Inspired guidance
- ii. Ordinances (baptism, sacrament, temple)
- iii. Friendship and support (home teachers, callings)
- iv. Learn more about gospel

4. Proclaim the gospel

(a) Help others know the gospel (D&C 15:1–6, 10–16; D&C 88:81)

(b) The greatest service one can render to another is to teach the gospel

(c) **Invitation:** Invite friends and family members to baptism

5. Redeem the dead

(a) Genealogical work: family history centers

(b) Temple

- i. Baptisms for the dead
- ii. Endowment, sealings (after a year)

6. Preparation to go to temple

(a) The most important goal after baptism

(b) The same preparations that get you ready for baptism will get you ready for the temple

- i. faith, sacrament, endure to the end
- ii. worthiness: repentance
- iii. church attendance, tithing, Word of Wisdom, law of chastity
- iv. daily prayer and scripture study, participation in church

Part II

Commitments

7 Law of Chastity

I often found it necessary to cover chastity far more explicitly than the standard discussions do, even with teenagers. Just because you weren't doing this stuff (or even knew about this stuff) at thirteen doesn't mean your classmates weren't (or didn't). It's a heavy topic, so should probably be treated as its own separate lesson. Note that Latter-day Saints tend to use a lot of awkward euphemisms when talking about sex. It's a lot better to use straightforward language than to hide behind terms like "procreation" and "fornication" and "self-abuse." You should have a copy of "For the Strength of Youth" to give to the investigator, even if he or she is an adult.

1. Marriage and family are ordained of God (1 Cor. 11:11–12; Gen. 2:24)
2. Our bodies have the sacred power to create children. This power is sacred because we participate in creation like God does.
3. God has given us laws to control the use of this power (Ex. 20:14)
4. God forbids all sexual relations outside marriage (Alma 39:3–5)
5. The law of CHASTITY is one of the highest laws (Matt. 5:27–28; D&C 42:22–26; D&C 63:16)
6. Other perverse behaviors are prohibited: pornography, masturbation, incest, sexual abuse, abortion, and homosexuality
 - (a) Personal purity: music, television, movies, manners of dress, action, and speech
7. By living the law of chastity, we demonstrate respect for our bodies.
8. Additional notes for clarifications
 - (a) Chastity
 - i. 1 Cor. 6:18–20: flee fornication
 - ii. Gen. 39:7–12: Joseph and Potiphar's wife
 - iii. Gal. 5:16–21: do not satisfy the desires of the flesh
 - iv. Jacob 2:27–28, 32–35: Jacob teaches about chastity
 - (b) Homosexuality
 - i. Lev. 18:22, 20:13: man should not lie with man
 - ii. Rom. 1:26–32: leaving the natural purpose of women
 - iii. Jude 1:6–7: pursuing affections against nature
 - (c) Sex is not a sin in and of itself (ie, celibacy is not a commandment)
 - i. They will be one flesh (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:4–6)
 - ii. Multiply and replenish the earth (Gen. 1:22; Gen. 9:1)
 - iii. Source of misunderstanding: It is better to marry than to burn (1 Cor. 7:1–9)
 - iv. Source of misunderstanding: The 144,000 are virgins (Rev. 14:4–5)

8 Word of Wisdom

This is a straightforward lesson, but it can quickly get sidetracked by ineffective debates about the scientific evidence for or against the Word of Wisdom, or into minutiae about what can or can't be consumed. These are not important. The link between physical and spiritual health *is* important.

1. Our bodies are a gift from God. Read 1 Cor. 6:19–20. (1 Cor. 3:16–17)
2. He expects us to take care of our bodies (D&C 89:10–17; D&C 88:124; D&C 59:18–20)
3. Spiritual and physical health are linked

4. We avoid addictive and harmful substances. Read D&C 89:5–9.
5. Taking care of our physical body brings us physical and spiritual blessings. Read D&C 89:18–21.

9 Tithing

Again, this is a straightforward lesson, but has the potential to get sidetracked. I found that people were reassured to understand that nobody within the church (like bishops) got the tithing funds for their personal use. If the investigator understands the principle that sacrifice is necessary for obedience, and obedience is necessary for blessings (the crux of the fifth discussion), then understanding the principle of tithing is a lot easier.

1. Tithes and offerings are an important part of the Church. Read Mal. 3:8–9.
2. Everything we have comes from God
3. He asks that we return 10% to Him for His work
4. This money is used for the expenditures of the Church. No person within the Church receives this money⁷ (1 Cor. 9:18; Matt. 10:8–9; 1 Pet. 5:1–3; 1 Tim. 3:2–3; Alma 1:2–6, 2:12–14)
 - (a) This thing is dedicated to Jehovah (Lev. 27:28–30)
 - (b) The Levites received from tithing, but this was because they had no other inheritance (Num. 18:24)
5. The law of tithing helps us be less selfish
 - (a) Seek first the kingdom of God: Jac. 2:18–19
 - (b) You cannot serve two masters: Matt. 6:24
 - (c) This will be the principle of tithing: D&C 119:3–4
 - (d) He who is tithed will not be burned: D&C 64:23
 - (e) Tithe the people: D&C 85:3
 - (f) Riches are the thorns that choke the seed: Matt. 8:14
 - (g) Being faithful in riches: Luke 16:11–13
 - (h) Those who care for others prosper: Alma 1:27–31
 - (i) No man should have more than another: D&C 49:20
6. God promises great blessings for paying tithing. Read Mal. 3:10–11. (Matt. 6:31–33; Alma 1:27–31)
7. Additional notes for clarifications
 - (a) Consequences of pursuing riches: Acts 5:1–11; James 5:1–6; Rev. 19:2–20; Hel. 13:21–23
 - (b) Law of consecration: Acts 2:44–45; Acts 4:32–35; 3 Ne. 26:19–20; 4 Ne. 1:3, 25; Moses 7:18
 - (c) Christ asks the best of us: Matt. 26:6–13

⁷CES salaries are paid from tithing, but they're outside the ecclesiastical structure of the Church

Part III

Other Lessons and Notes

10 Mini-lessons

Though they're not part of the standard discussions, I ended up sharing at least one of these lessons with almost every serious investigator (or investigator that I hoped would be serious) or less-active members. They're meant to be brief, incisive lessons that give the listener something to think about. The fact that all three of them come from Luke is not entirely coincidental; in all cases the wording in Luke is stronger than the wording in Matthew.

10.1 The Parable of the Sower

Read Luke 8:5–15. Explain that the missionary discussions are “the word” and that Satan will do all that he can to prevent the investigator from receiving it. Ask the investigator how Satan might try to lead them astray, and how they can be ready for those temptations. Remind them: “the temptations never look like thorns. They always look like roses.”

10.2 Swimming Behind the Ark

Read Luke 17:26–27. What were the days of Noah like? Read Moses 8:19–25. These scriptures don't say that the people rejected Noah, or even that they didn't think he was a prophet. It says that they just didn't follow his teachings. There were probably people who thought he was a prophet, but still didn't feel it was necessary to get on board the ark. Their idea of “following the prophet” was “swimming behind the ark”: agreeing with what he said, but not taking his warnings and commandments seriously enough to obey them. They perished, just like those that completely rejected his teachings.

10.3 The Seven Wicked Spirits

Read Luke 11:24–26. Whenever we kick a bad habit, we have to replace it with a good habit. Otherwise, the bad habit returns, and it comes back worse than before. What are some bad habits you have? What are some good habits that you can use to replace the bad ones? What are some specific steps you can take to achieve this goal? How can we help you?

11 Miscellaneous Doctrinal Notes

Even though I think doctrine is fundamentally irrelevant to an investigator's conversion (and a member's testimony), I recognize people still have questions, curiosities, or just get hung up on issues at times. Here are scriptures related to various points of doctrine which you probably aren't going to find in the discussions or even in *Gospel Principles*. Use this information wisely with investigators who will benefit from a scriptural clarification of a particular point of doctrine.

11.1 The trinity/Godhead

1. Sources of misunderstanding
 - (a) My Father and I are one (John 10:30)
 - (b) The Father is in Me (John 10:38)

- (c) The three are one (1 John 5:7)
- (d) We are one (3 Ne. 11:27)
- (e) Being both the Father and the Son (Mos. 15:1–4)
- (f) That are one God (Morm. 7:7)
- (g) The Lord is one (Mark 12:29)
- (h) They are one God (2 Ne. 31:21)

2. Clarifications

- (a) The disciples should be one as the Godhead is one (John 17:9–11,20–21)
- (b) The Son does nothing of Himself (John 5:19–29)
- (c) Christ does what pleases the Father (John 8:26–29)
- (d) One God, and one Lord (1 Cor. 8:4–6)
- (e) The only true God (John 17:3)
- (f) Christ on the right hand of God (Acts 7:55–56)
- (g) Christ is in the image of God (2 Cor. 4:4)
- (h) Christ's baptism (Matt. 3:16–17)
- (i) He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit (1 Cor. 6:17)
- (j) One mediator (Tim. 2:5)
- (k) So that they may be one (3 Ne. 19:23)
- (l) Father, why has thou forsaken me? (Mark 15:34)
- (m) Christ has done God's will, not His (Luke 22:42)
- (n) God raised up Christ (Acts 5:30–32)
- (o) Christ was in the form of God (Philip. 2:5–11)
- (p) Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:5–7 xref 2 Pet. 1:17)

11.2 We worship on Sunday

1. Worshipped on the seventh day under Law of Moses (Gen. 2:2–23; Ex. 20:8–11; Ex. 31:12–17)
2. Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5)
3. The Apostles worshipped on the first day
 - (a) The offerings will be gathered on the first day: 1 Cor. 16:2
 - (b) Met on the first day: John 20:1, 19, 26; Acts 20:7
 - (c) Jesus rose on the first day: Luke 24:1
 - (d) Day of Pentecost: Acts 2:1
4. Prophecies of a new day
 - (a) A new day of rest: Hosea 2:11 xref 2 Col. 2:16
 - (b) Things difficult to understand: 2 Pet. 3:16
 - (c) Keep the Day of the Lord: D&C 68:29
 - (d) Christ is creator of the first day: D&C 95:7

11.3 We worship/pray to God only

1. One mediator, Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5)
2. No man cometh unto the Father but by me (John 14:6)
3. The redemption which is in Christ Jesus (Rom. 3:23–26)
4. Jesus teaches the apostles about prayer (Luke 11:1, 10–13)
5. Pray to the Father in my name (3 Ne. 18:20–21)
6. Blessed are those who hear the word (Luke 11:27–28)
7. My Father's business (Luke 2:49)

8. He employeth no servant at the gate (2 Ne. 9:41)

11.4 There is only one Church of Christ

1. I am the way (John 14:6)
2. Can two walk together unless they agree? (Amos 3:3)
3. The way is straight and narrow (Matt. 7:13–14)
4. One Lord, one faith, one baptism (Eph. 4:5)
5. Unity of the faith (Eph. 4:13)
6. Only two churches (2 Ne. 14:10)
7. Is Christ divided? (1 Cor. 1:10–15)
8. A house divided (Matt. 12:25; Mark 3:24–25; Luke 11:17)
9. Those that cause divisions do not serve Christ (Rom. 16:17–18)

11.5 Why Nephi killed Laban

The most complete answer to this question involves an explanation of Nephi's actions in relation to Ex. 21:13 (and associated scriptures within in Mosaic law), but this is more detail than most investigators need. It is generally sufficient to show that this was not the first time God has commanded one of His servants to kill someone.

1. Cain killed his *innocent* brother, thus committing murder: Gen. 4:8–10
2. Two or three witnesses convict a man for death: Deut. 17:6–7
3. Whoever rebels against commandments will be put to death: Josh. 1:18
4. The Lord commands Saul to kill an entire people: 1 Sam. 15:3, 18, 33

11.6 Witchcraft

1. Not permit a witch to live: Ex. 22:18
2. The sorcerers of Egypt: Ex. 7:10–12, 22, 8:7
3. False prophets will do many wonders: Matt. 24:24
4. In NT times: Acts 8:9, 13:6–1, 16:16–18, 19:13–16, 19; 1 John 2:18–2, 4:1–3; 2 John 1:7

11.7 The Antichrist

1. What is an anti-Christ: 1 John 2:18–22, 4:1–3; 2 John 1:7; Alma 30:12

11.8 Christ's biological relatives

1. Misunderstood: Matt. 12:30
2. Matt. 13:55–56; Mark 3:31–35, 46–50, 6:3; Acts 1:14; Gal. 1:19

11.9 Jesus is Jehovah

1. Ex. 3:6, 14 xref John 8:58 (KJV⁸)
2. Rev. 1:8 xref Rev. 22:12, 16 (NWT⁹)
3. Isa. 43:11, 45:21 xref Acts 4:11, 12 (KJV, NWT)

⁸King James Version

⁹New World Translation

4. Isa. 40:3 xref Matt. 3:3 (KJV, NWT)
5. Isa. 53:12 xref Mark 15:28 (KJV)

11.10 The Rapture

Latter-day Saints don't talk about "the Rapture" at all, which is interesting because the *Doctrine and Covenants* makes specific reference to it. The tradition is that shortly before the Second Coming, all faithful believers in Christ will be "taken up" into heaven, which almost always implies physical, bodily removal from the earth via something like the LDS doctrine of translation (think city of Enoch). It may also involve a reunion with not just the faithful who are currently living on earth, but with all the faithful who ever have lived on earth (conflating the Rapture with the first resurrection). Belief in "the Rapture" is prominent within many Evangelical Christian groups and has been popularized by the *Left Behind* series of books.

1. One shall be taken, and the other left (Matt. 24:40–42, Luke 17:34–36, JS-M 1:44–46)
2. We shall be caught up (1 Thess. 4:17; D&C 88:96–97; D&C 101:31; D&C 109:75; Moro. 10:34)
3. The Lord will come with His saints (Jude 1:14–16)

11.11 Jesus carefully guarded some of His teachings

Some investigators may not understand why we don't openly discuss things such as the temple ceremony, or why certain topics are not covered in the discussions. These limitations on information don't come from secrecy, but from trying to teach people at a rate they can handle.

1. Why dost thou speak in parables? (Matt. 13:10–13)
2. How do you think I shall tell you of heavenly things? (John 3:9–12)
3. You can not stand the teaching (John 16:12–13)
4. Milk, not meat (Isa. 28:9–10; 1 Cor. 3:1–3)

11.12 The Urim and Thummim

1. Ex. 28:30; Lev. 8:8; Deut. 33:8; Ezra 2:63; 1 Sam. 28:6

11.13 Instances where the Bible apparently contradicts itself

1. 1 John 2:7–8, 1 Sam 15:29 xref Gen. 6:6, Ex. 32:14
2. Num. 23:19 xref 2 Chr. 18:22
3. Matt. 17:13 xref John 1:21
4. 1 Chr. 2:13–15 xref 1 Sam. 17:12–14