

LESSON 1

The Book of Mormon Is Another Testament of Jesus Christ

Introduction

Those who study the teachings and doctrine of the Book of Mormon will come to know that Jesus is the Christ. In this lesson, students will learn that the book's major authors

were eyewitnesses of the Son of God and that their words help deepen our understanding and testimony of Jesus Christ and His gospel.

Background Reading

- Gordon B. Hinckley, "A Testimony Vibrant and True," *Ensign*, Aug. 2005, 2–6.
- "The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion," chapter 9 in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* (2014), 125–35.

Suggestions for Teaching

1 Nephi 13:40; 2 Nephi 25:17–18; Alma 33:22–23

The Book of Mormon is a testament of Jesus Christ

Display the following statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44), and ask a student to read it aloud:



"I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book" (introduction to the Book of Mormon).

- Which of the Prophet's assertions about the Book of Mormon do you have a testimony of, and why?
- How does the Prophet's statement increase your motivation to study the Book of Mormon?

Invite students to highlight this statement in their own scriptures in the sixth paragraph of the introduction to the Book of Mormon, and suggest that they write next to it cross-references to 1 Nephi 13:40 and 2 Nephi 25:17–18. (*Note:* Cross-referencing is a scripture study skill that you might choose to emphasize throughout this course. As students strengthen their scripture study skills, they become more spiritually self-reliant.)

Invite a few students to take turns reading aloud from 1 Nephi 13:40 and 2 Nephi 25:17–18 while the class looks for a primary purpose of the Book of Mormon.

- According to these verses, what is one of the primary purposes of the Book of Mormon? (Students should identify the following truth: **God brought forth the Book of Mormon in the last days to convince all people that Jesus is the Christ.** [See also the title page of the Book of Mormon.]
- How does the Book of Mormon convince people that Jesus is the Christ?

Display the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994), and invite students to read it silently:



“Much of the Christian world today rejects the divinity of the Savior. They question His miraculous birth, His perfect life, and the reality of His glorious resurrection. The Book of Mormon teaches in plain and unmistakable terms about the truth of all of those. It also provides the most complete explanation of the doctrine of the Atonement. Truly, this divinely inspired book is a keystone in bearing witness to the world that Jesus is the Christ” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* [2014], 129–30).

- What are some realities of Jesus Christ’s life and ministry that are confirmed in the Book of Mormon?

Invite a student to read aloud the following statement by President Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



“I have read [the Book of Mormon] many times. I have also read much that has been written about it. Some authors have focused upon its stories, its people, or its vignettes of history. Others have been intrigued by its language structure or its records of weapons, geography, animal life, techniques of building, or systems of weights and measures.

“Interesting as these matters may be, study of the Book of Mormon is most rewarding when one focuses on its *primary* purpose—to testify of Jesus Christ. By comparison, all other issues are incidental.

“When you read the Book of Mormon, concentrate on the principal figure in the book—from its first chapter to the last—the Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God” (“A Testimony of the Book of Mormon,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 69).

- Of all the messages of the Book of Mormon, why do you think it is most important to focus on the message about Jesus Christ?

Explain to students that after the prophet Alma taught the Zoramites about the Savior’s ministry (see Alma 33:22), he invited his listeners to plant God’s word in their hearts so that it might grow. Invite students to silently read Alma 33:22–23 and identify the truths that Alma encouraged his readers to “plant” in their hearts.

- What was the message that Alma wanted his hearers to plant in their hearts?

- What results did Alma promise if they would plant and nourish these beliefs about Jesus Christ? (Their testimonies would grow “unto everlasting life”; their burdens would be light.)
- How has studying the Book of Mormon helped you receive the blessings Alma describes?

1 Nephi 6:4; 2 Nephi 11:2–3; Jacob 1:7–8; Mormon 1:15; 3:20–22; Ether 12:38–39, 41

Book of Mormon writers were eyewitnesses of Jesus Christ

Explain that the Book of Mormon was largely written by four main authors: Nephi, Jacob, Mormon, and Moroni. (Exceptions are the books of Enos, Jarom, and Omni.)

Put the following chart on the board. To help students learn about these four main writers, invite them to select and silently read one of the following passages. Ask them to look for what qualified the writer to be a powerful witness of Jesus Christ.

<i>Writer</i>	<i>Experience</i>
<i>1. Nephi</i>	<i>2 Nephi 11:2</i>
<i>2. Jacob</i>	<i>2 Nephi 11:3</i>
<i>3. Mormon</i>	<i>Mormon 1:15</i>
<i>4. Moroni</i>	<i>Ether 12:38–39</i>

Allow students to share what they learned from each of the four passages. Then ask:

- Why is it important to understand that the major writers of the Book of Mormon were eyewitnesses of Jesus Christ? (As you discuss this question, help students identify the following truth: **By studying the Book of Mormon, we learn about Jesus Christ and His mission from those who saw and knew Him.** You might point out that the translator of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith, was also an eyewitness of Jesus Christ.)

Add a third column to the chart on the board, as shown:

<i>Writer</i>	<i>Experience</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
<i>1. Nephi</i>	<i>2 Nephi 11:2</i>	<i>1 Nephi 6:4</i>

<i>Writer</i>	<i>Experience</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
2. <i>Jacob</i>	2 <i>Nephi</i> 11:3	<i>Jacob</i> 1:7–8
3. <i>Mormon</i>	<i>Mormon</i> 1:15	<i>Mormon</i> 3:20–22
4. <i>Moroni</i>	<i>Ether</i> 12:38–39	<i>Ether</i> 12:41

Ask each student to silently read one of the passages in the third column, looking for the reasons each writer recorded his message.

- Why did these Book of Mormon writers record their messages?
- Why do you think these writers were so intent on inviting others to come unto Christ?
- How do their invitations to come unto Christ apply to you personally? What thoughts and feelings do you have as you ponder these invitations?

2 Nephi 33:1–2, 4–5, 10–11

The Book of Mormon helps us to believe in Jesus Christ

Explain that while the lives of countless individuals have been changed through their testimonies of the Book of Mormon, others struggle with doubts about its truthfulness and authenticity.

- What advice would you give to help someone strengthen or gain a testimony of the Book of Mormon?

Ask a student to read 2 Nephi 33:1–2 aloud while the class identifies the power that allows the message of the Book of Mormon to enter one’s heart.

- What power did Nephi say would allow his message to enter a person’s heart? (The power of the Holy Ghost.)
- What did Nephi say would prevent some people from receiving the Holy Ghost?

Invite students to state and discuss a principle taught in these verses. (Help students identify the following principle: **The Holy Ghost can carry the message of the Book of Mormon into our hearts as long as we do not harden our hearts against the Holy Ghost.** Consider writing this principle on the board.)

Give students a moment to study 2 Nephi 33:4–5, looking for additional blessings that we can receive from studying the Book of Mormon. Ask students to share what they identified.

Display the following statement by Elder L. Whitney Clayton of the Seventy, and ask a student to read it aloud:



"[We] must choose to open our hearts to the divine reality of the Savior. ... God does not force us to believe. Instead He invites us to believe by sending living prophets and apostles to teach us, by providing scriptures, and by beckoning to us through His Spirit. ... The decision to believe is the most important choice we ever make. It shapes all our other decisions" ("Choose to Believe," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 38).

- How can accepting the invitation of the Book of Mormon writers to believe in Jesus Christ shape all our other decisions?

Continue by inviting a student to read 2 Nephi 33:10–11 aloud while the class looks for how Nephi describes the relationship between believing in his words and believing in Jesus Christ.

- According to Nephi, what is the relationship between believing in his words and believing in Jesus Christ?
- What did Nephi say would happen "at the last day" to those who reject his words?

Invite students to share their testimonies of how the Book of Mormon has helped them draw closer to Jesus Christ.

Student Readings

- 1 Nephi 6:4; 13:40; 2 Nephi 11:2–3; 25:17–18; 33:1–2, 4–5, 10–11; Jacob 1:7–8; Alma 33:22–23; Mormon 1:15; 3:20–22; Ether 12:38–39, 41.
- "The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion," chapter 9 in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* (2014), 125–35.