

LESSON 24

All Are Alike unto God

Introduction

To protect themselves after the death of Lehi, Nephi and other righteous members of Lehi's family were directed by the Lord to separate from Laman and Lemuel and their followers. Thereafter, contentions and wars often defined the

relationship between the Nephites and Lamanites. This lesson discusses how the gospel of Jesus Christ transcends religious, ethnic, cultural, and other differences to unite God's children.

Background Reading

- Dallin H. Oaks, "All Men Everywhere," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2006, 77–80.
- Howard W. Hunter, "The Gospel—A Global Faith," *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 18–19.

Suggestions for Teaching

2 Nephi 26:23–28, 33; Jacob 7:24; Enos 1:11, 20

All of God's children are invited to come unto Him

Ask students to consider some of the religious, ethnic, or cultural groups in the world and think about the attitudes that some people in such groups have toward members of other groups.

Remind students that following Lehi's death, his posterity separated into two groups: Nephites and Lamanites (see 2 Nephi 5:1–7). Soon after this separation, the two groups began contending and warring with each other (see 2 Nephi 5:34). The experiences of these two groups illustrate that when people do not know and follow God's commandments, they often emphasize the differences between themselves and others, leading to separation from others and feelings of hatred toward them. Point out that in contrast, Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ want all people to feel love for one another and be unified.

Invite several students to take turns reading 2 Nephi 26:23–28, 33 aloud. Ask the class to watch for how Nephi used the words *none*, *any*, and *all*. Consider encouraging students to mark these words in their scriptures.

- What key doctrine do we learn from these verses? (Though they may use different words, students should identify the following doctrine: **Jesus Christ loves all people and invites all to come unto Him and partake of His salvation.** You may wish to write this doctrine on the board. You might also encourage students to cross-reference 2 Nephi 26:33 with Alma 5:33–34 and Alma 19:36.)

Give students a few minutes to silently read Jacob 7:24 and Enos 1:11, 20, looking for the Nephites' desires for the Lamanites during the time of the prophets Jacob and Enos.

- What false traditions prevented the Lamanites from accepting the invitation to come unto Jesus Christ?

- Knowing that the Lamanites often felt hatred toward the Nephites, what attitudes or false traditions would many Nephites likely need to overcome in order to share the gospel with them?

Invite a student to read the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



“The Book of Mormon promises that all who receive and act upon the Lord’s invitation to ‘repent and believe in his Son’ become ‘the covenant people of the Lord’ (2 Nephi 30:2). This is a potent reminder that neither riches nor lineage nor any other privileges of birth should cause us to believe that we are ‘better one than another’ (Alma 5:54; see also Jacob 3:9). Indeed, the Book of Mormon commands, ‘Ye shall not esteem one flesh above another, or one man shall not think himself above another’ (Mosiah 23:7)” (“All Men Everywhere,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2006, 79).

Invite students to take a moment and ponder their attitude toward individuals who come from a different background than they do. Encourage them to follow the example of the Savior by striving to love all of God’s children, including those whose ethnicity, culture, or religion is different from theirs.

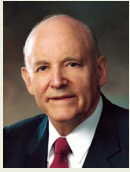
Mosiah 28:1–3; Helaman 6:1–8

Gaining a desire to share the gospel with all of God’s children

Remind students that the Book of Mormon records notable experiences that the Nephites had while preaching the gospel to the Lamanites. Remind students of the remarkable conversion of the sons of Mosiah (see Mosiah 27), and then ask a student to read Mosiah 28:1–3 aloud. Ask the class to look for reasons why the sons of Mosiah desired to preach the gospel to the Lamanites.

- Of the reasons you discovered, which ones are particularly meaningful to you as you think about sharing the gospel with others?
- Which word in verse 1 expresses how the sons of Mosiah viewed the Lamanites?
- How is our desire to share the gospel affected when we view those of other religions, races, or ethnic groups as our brothers and sisters? (As students respond, help them identify the following principle: **When we see others as our brothers and sisters, our desire to share the gospel with them increases.**)

Invite a student to read the following statement by President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) aloud:



"All men and women have not only a physical lineage leading back to Adam and Eve, their first earthly parents, but also a spiritual heritage leading back to God the Eternal Father. Thus, all persons on earth are literally brothers and sisters in the family of God.

"It is in understanding and accepting this universal fatherhood of God that all human beings can best appreciate God's concern for them and their relationship to each other. This is a message of life and love that strikes squarely against all stifling traditions based on race, language, economic or political standing, educational rank, or cultural background, for we are all of the same spiritual descent" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Howard W. Hunter* [2015], 123–24).

- What thoughts do you have when you hear these words from President Hunter?

Give students a few minutes to read Helaman 6:1–8. Point out that the circumstances described in these verses occurred about 50 years after the sons of Mosiah served their missions to the Lamanites. Ask students to think about what the relationship between the Nephites and Lamanites was at the time of those missions and look for how the relationship had changed in 50 years.

- What had changed in the relationship between the Nephites and Lamanites? Why had the relationship changed?
- What can we learn about sharing the gospel from the attitude of the sons of Mosiah and from the results of their missions?

Alma 27:1–2, 20–24; 53:10–11, 13–17; 4 Nephi 1:1–3, 11–13, 15–18

The gospel of Jesus Christ transcends the differences between people

Invite students to ponder the following question and then share their thoughts:

- Why do you think that individuals from so many varied backgrounds can meet together in a spirit of peace and love in the Church? What is it that unites Church members?

Divide the class in half. Invite one half to study Alma 27:1–2, 20–24 and look for what the Nephites did to help the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi. Invite the other half to study Alma 53:10–11, 13–17 and look for what the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi (the people of Ammon) did for the Nephites. After sufficient time, ask students to share what they found.

- What do you think caused these two groups to feel such love and concern for one another? (As part of this discussion, help students identify the following principle: **As people embrace the teachings of Jesus Christ, they become unified with one another.**)

Explain that a wonderful illustration of this principle is recorded in 4 Nephi. Ask a student to read 4 Nephi 1:1–2 aloud. Emphasize that after the Savior's visit to the Americas, all the Nephites and Lamanites repented, were baptized, received the Holy Ghost, and were converted unto the Lord. Assign students to search 4 Nephi 1:3, 11–13, 15–18, looking for the blessings the people experienced when everyone was converted to the gospel.

- What words or phrases describe the people at that time?
- Why does living the gospel of Jesus Christ result in these blessings?

Invite a student to read 4 Nephi 1:17 aloud.

- What do you think it means to have no “manner of -ites”? (The people no longer distinguished themselves from each other with titles such as Nephites or Lamanites. They overcame any differences that existed between them and lived in unity and peace.)
- How have you seen the gospel diminish differences between people of different backgrounds?

To deepen students’ understanding of how living the gospel unites people of different backgrounds, share the following statement by Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



“Your Heavenly Father assigned you to be born into a specific lineage from which you received your inheritance of race, culture, and traditions. That lineage can provide a rich heritage and great reasons to rejoice. Yet you have the responsibility to determine if there is any part of that heritage that must be discarded because it works against the Lord’s plan of happiness. . . .

“I testify that you will remove barriers to happiness and find greater peace as you make your first allegiance your membership in the Church of Jesus Christ, and His teachings the foundation of your life. Where family or national traditions or customs conflict with the teachings of God, set them aside. Where traditions and customs are in harmony with His teachings, they should be cherished and followed to preserve your culture and heritage” (“Removing Barriers to Happiness,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 86–87).

- Why do you think that differences between people of different backgrounds diminish when these people make the gospel of Jesus Christ their first allegiance?
- How has being a member of the Church helped you feel unified with Church members who have backgrounds different from yours?

Conclude by testifying that the Book of Mormon contains real examples of how people from different backgrounds lived the gospel of Jesus Christ and overcame their differences. The Atonement and the gospel of Jesus Christ transcend differences in race, ethnicity, culture, age, and gender to unite God’s children.

Encourage students to consider how the gospel of Jesus Christ can help them overcome any false traditions or ideas learned from family members or friends, or resolve any differences they might have with someone they know. Encourage them to seek ways to become more united with members of their local congregation.

Student Readings

- 2 Nephi 26:23–28, 33; Jacob 7:24; Enos 1:11, 20; Mosiah 28:1–3; Alma 27:1–2, 20–24; 53:10–11, 13–17; Helaman 6:1–8; 4 Nephi 1:1–3, 11–13, 15–18.
- Dallin H. Oaks, “All Men Everywhere,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2006, 77–80.