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How We Got the Book of Mormon

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Abstract: Children's flannelboard story concerning the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and its translation by Joseph Smith.

HOW WE GOT THE BOOK OF MORMON

A Flannelboard Story by Marie F. Felt

For younger age groups, it may be well to tell this story in two parts, on successive Sundays. When this is done, Part I will end after Scene 6. Part II could include scenes from "The Courage of a Youthful Prophet" (December, 1965); "Our Books Are Sacred Records" (September, 1966), and Scenes VII and VIII from this story.

Our story begins in the beautiful city of Jerusalem. In this famous city, about 600 years before Jesus was born, lived Lehi and his family. They believed in God and were grateful for his servants the prophets, who taught them what God would like them to do. Most of the people in Jerusalem, however, would not listen when the prophets spoke. They preferred what they called a good time. Instead of worshiping God, they worshiped money, gold, precious stones, and pleasure.

One day the Lord told Lehi in a dream to leave Jerusalem. He was told to take his family and journey into the wilderness because Jerusalem would be destroyed and the wicked people punished.

Lehi did as the Lord commanded. He left behind him his lovely home, all of his gold and silver, and other precious things. All he took with him was what he and his family would need as they traveled to their new home, under God's direction.

After they were well away from the wicked city, the Lord commanded Lehi to send his sons back to Jerusalem to get from a man named Laban a metal book. In this book was engraved a record of Lehi's ancestors (those of his family who had lived long before he was born). Lehi, you see, was a descendant of Joseph who was sold into Egypt. The Lord wanted him to have this record so that his people could learn of Joseph and other good men in the history of their family. Also the book contained a history of all the Jews.

So the four sons of Lehi returned to Jerusalem. After a great struggle, but with the help of our Heavenly Father, they obtained the precious record and hurried back to their father and mother in the wilderness. Lehi and their mother Sariah were hap-

py and grateful when the boys returned, because they had worried about their safety in that wicked city. Yet they were pleased that their sons had obtained the metal book. From it they could read of God and his commandments. It would help them teach their children and grandchildren to write and speak their language correctly. And it would give these children the knowledge of who they were and of the great men in their family; where they had lived and what they had done while they were on this earth. In this book they found—besides the genealogy of Lehi's ancestors—copies of the five books of Moses, a history of the Jews to the commencement of the reign of King Zedekiah, and many prophecies of the holy prophets. [*End of Prologue.*]

From this point on, Nephi was given the responsibility of writing in the book. He was to keep a record of his people—of his father Lehi, and his father's family, and all that they and their children did in the years that followed.

After their arrival in the new country to which the Lord God had guided them, Nephi was the leader of this family for many years. When he became too old to keep the record of his people, he gave the metal book to his brother Jacob. Jacob was now the one chosen to write the history of their people in it. [*End of Scene I.*]

When Jacob grew old, he gave the sacred records into the care of his son Enos. Then, before Enos left this earth, he gave the records and other sacred things into the hands of his son Jarom. And so it went through the many, many years, with righteous men recording the events of their time, until the sacred records were passed to King Benjamin.

King Benjamin taught his sons the truths and history found in the records engraved on the plates of brass. He told them that the people would have dwindled in unbelief long ago if they had not had the records to read and to study. When King Benjamin was old, he called the people together and made his son, Mosiah, king. He gave Mosiah charge of all the affairs of the kingdom, and then he gave him charge of the records which were on the plates of brass. [*End of Scene II.*]

(Continued on following page.)

(For Course 7, lesson of July 28, "The Book of Mormon Is a Record—How We Got It"; for Course 9, lesson of May 5, "The Book of Mormon—Another Sacred Record"; for Course 15, lesson of June 30, "The Blessing of Joseph and Its Fulfillment in America"; for Course 17, lesson of August 11, "Moroni Finished His Father's Book"; for Course 19, lesson of July 21, "Latter-day Saint Contributions to Scripture"; for Course 27, lesson of May 19, "The Role of the Prophet"; for Course 29, lessons of May 5 and 19, "The Book of Mormon.")

King Mosiah's sons wanted only to be missionaries and preach the gospel and bring souls to Christ. Therefore, King Mosiah had no one to confer his kingdom upon. So he took the records on the plates of brass, and also the plates of Nephi, and the two stones fastened in the rims of a bow which had been given to his people by the Lord for the interpreting of languages. These precious stones had been handed down from generation to generation. Mosiah now conferred the care of these stones and these records upon Alma, the son of Alma. He gave him all of the records to keep and preserve and told him to also write a record of the people then living, and then to hand the records down to the next generation, just as they had been handed down from the time Lehi left Jerusalem. [*End of Scene III.*]

In the year 306 A.D., Amos, who had been keeping the records, entrusted them to his son Ammaron. However, the Nephites had become very wicked; and our Heavenly Father made it known to Ammaron that he must hide the records and other sacred things he had been given, so that they would be safe.

Ammaron hid them in the land of Antum, in a hill called Shim. Afterward, Ammaron told a young boy named Mormon about the hidden records and placed them in his charge. At that time Mormon was only about ten years old, but he was quick to observe things and he was a serious-minded child. Ammaron told Mormon that when he was about 24 years old he should go to the hill Shim, where the sacred things were hidden. He should then uncover the plates of Nephi and record on them all that had happened to his people during those years. The rest of the records and other sacred treasures he was to leave where they were. [*End of Scene IV.*]

As Mormon grew up, his people, the Nephites, had many battles with the Lamanites. Finally the Nephites were forced to flee across the land. When Mormon saw that the Lamanites were about to take over the whole land, he went to the hill Shim and took the records which Ammaron had hidden. (See Mormon 4:23.) The Nephites were so scattered and ravaged by war that Mormon wrote a letter to the Lamanite king, asking if he would allow all of the Nephites to gather into the land of Cumorah, by a hill called Cumorah, where they could all be together to fight.

The Lamanite king allowed this, and the Nephites began to pitch their tents around the hill Cumorah. It took a number of years to gather all of the Nephites. By this time Mormon was old. He knew that the record of his people must not fall into Lamanite hands and be destroyed, so he hid

all the records in the hill Cumorah, except for a few plates which he gave to his son Moroni, on which he was to keep records. (See Mormon 6:1-6.) [*End of Scene V.*]

Moroni lived long enough to write about the fierce battle, and seal up the records, and hide them in the hill Cumorah with all of the other sacred things, including the two stones set in the rims of a bow. (See Moroni 10:1, 2.) For a long, long time these records lay in a stone box in this hill. No one ever found them or disturbed them in any way until our Heavenly Father was ready for them to be found. When that time came, they were found in this way. [*End of Scene VI.*]

When the Prophet Joseph Smith was 14 years old, he prayed to our Heavenly Father to find out which church was true. Our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ appeared to him and told him that none of the churches was true, but that if he would be good and obedient, he would be allowed to help restore the true Church to this earth.

Several years passed before anything more happened. Then, one night, Joseph prayed again, and that night the Angel Moroni came to his room. He told Joseph of the sacred records and the two stones (the Urim and Thummim) set in the rims of a bow that were hidden in the Hill Cumorah. Joseph found the stone box and easily uncovered it. When he opened it, there were the sacred books of gold and other sacred treasures. But the Angel Moroni would not let him take the book. Joseph had to go to that same place each year for four years to be taught by Moroni so that he would be prepared to translate the book and do God's will.

At the end of four years Moroni gave the book to Joseph to translate. He told Joseph to guard it well so that it would not fall into wicked hands. When he had finished translating the record from Egyptian to English, he was to return it to the Angel Moroni. [*End of Scene VII.*]

Before the golden plates were returned, the Lord permitted an angel to show them to Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris. Shortly after this, eight other chosen men were allowed to see them. Later, all of these men testified that they had both seen and handled this precious record, which was a history of Father Lehi and his descendants. They were filled with a joy far greater than they had ever known. After this, the Angel Moroni came to Joseph Smith again and took back the golden plates which so many people had helped to keep safe. [*End of Scene VIII.*]

NOTE:
See "*The Book of Mormon Historians*," page 197.

How To Present the Flannelboard Story

Key to Flannelboard Figures

OT—Old Testament; BM—Book of Mormon; NT—New Testament; CH—Church History; ML—Modern Life.

Many flannelboard stories and centerspread pictures have been printed in *The Instructor* that could be used by teachers of the various age groups to enrich portions of this story. The following are listed for this purpose:

For the Prologue:

- "The Holy City," August, 1967 (centerspread)
- "Nephi Obtains the Precious Record," April, 1962 (flannelboard)
- "Prophets Give Us Messages from God," December, 1966 (flannelboard)

For Story Enrichment:

- "Lehi and His People Arrive in the Promised Land," October, 1954, centerspread (Scene I)
- "Nephi Fashions the Plates," June, 1963, centerspread (Scene I)
- "King Benjamin," April, 1967, centerspread (Scene II)
- "Mormon Bids Farewell to a Once Great Nation," January, 1962, centerspread (Scene V)
- "The Courage of a Youthful Prophet," December, 1965, flannelboard (Scene VII)
- "Joseph Receives the Plates," January, 1959, centerspread (Scene VII)
- "We Have Seen the Plates . . ." February, 1959, centerspread (Scene VIII)
- "Our Books Are Sacred Records," September, 1966, flannelboard (Scene VIII)

Characters and Props Needed for This Presentation Are:

- Nephi and Jacob (BM93). To be used in Scene I.
- King Benjamin and Mosiah (BM94). To be used in Scene II.
- King Mosiah and Alma the Younger (BM95). To be used in Scene III.
- Ammaron and 10-year-old Mormon (BM96). To be used in Scene IV.
- Mormon and Moroni (BM97). To be used in Scene V.
- Moroni (BM98). To be used in Scene VI.
- A hill (make a simple drawing and color).
- Joseph Smith (CH147). To be used in Scenes VII and VIII.
- Angel Moroni (CH148). To be used in Scenes VII and VIII.

Gold Plates (CH149). To be used in Scenes VII and VIII.

Order of Episodes:

PROLOGUE:

Scenery: Varied scenes.

Action: Lehi's family leaving Jerusalem and Lehi sending his sons back to get the records from Laban. With the help of the Lord, Nephi gets the records from Laban and the sons return to their parents in the wilderness.

SCENE I:

Scenery: An indoor scene.

Action: Nephi is seen writing the history of his people in the metal book. Jacob, his brother, stands nearby.

SCENE II:

Scenery: Outdoor scene.

Action: King Benjamin has gathered all the people to a great council. He has made his son Mosiah king, and now he gives Mosiah charge of the brass plates.

SCENE III:

Scenery: Indoor scene.

Action: King Mosiah turning over to Alma, the son of Alma, the records—the plates of Nephi and the plates of brass and the two stones fastened into the rims of a bow.

SCENE IV:

Scenery: Outdoor scene, on a mountainside.

Action: Ammaron is seen talking with 10-year-old Mormon, telling him where the sacred records are buried. He tells Mormon what to do when he is older.

SCENE V:

Scenery: Outdoor scene, in war-torn land.

Action: Mormon is seen with son Moroni, explaining to him that the sacred treasures are hidden in the Hill Cumorah and also giving Moroni a few plates to keep the record of his last days.

SCENE VI:

Scenery: The Hill Cumorah.

Action: Moroni is seen burying the golden book and other precious treasures for safekeeping.

SCENE VII:

Scenery: Outdoor scene.

Action: Joseph Smith prays and receives a vision. He talks to the Angel Moroni and is given the golden plates.

SCENE VIII:

Scenery: Outdoor scene.

Action: After Joseph Smith shows the three witnesses and eight witnesses the gold plates, he returns them to the Angel Moroni.



Answers to Your Questions

Who Comes to Stake Leadership Meeting?

Q. Are all stake board members supposed to meet with their ward counterparts each month in stake leadership meeting?

—Regional Conferences.

A. Ideally, a stake leadership meeting is performing its true function when stake board members can also meet monthly with their ward counterparts. However, ward Sunday School faculty members teaching specific classes attend leadership meeting by invitation only. The same may be true of other departments where it is felt the stake board adviser has no particular need for calling together the members of his department from the wards. Where great distances are involved, the stake

superintendent must use his best judgment in determining who will be invited to leadership meeting. As the stake president may determine the size of the board, he may also delegate to the stake superintendent the authority to decide who are to be invited to stake leadership meeting.

Stake Board Music Advisers

Q. May a stake board have more than one music adviser?

—Lorin Farr Stake.

A. Yes. The music department may be divided between a Junior Sunday School music adviser and a senior Sunday School adviser, or there may be four advisers to the stake board: a Junior Sunday School organist adviser, a Junior Sunday School chorister adviser, a

senior Sunday School organist adviser, and a senior Sunday School chorister adviser.

Minimum Number on a Stake Board

Q. What is the minimum number on a stake board?

—Regional Conferences.

A. The stake Sunday School board is composed of a minimum of seven members, used primarily in stakes where the wards are at great distances.

At the option of the stake presidency, the board may be enlarged. Most stake boards have at least nine members, as shown on page 17 of the new *Handbook*. Additional music advisers and an adviser for each course of instruction and an assistant secretary may be added.

Memorized Recitations

For July 7, 1968

The following scriptures should be memorized by students of Courses 9 and 13, respectively, during May and June, and recited in unison by the respective classes during the Sunday School worship service on July 7.

COURSE 9:

(In this scripture Jesus assures his disciples that he has chosen and ordained them to continue in his work, and that the good they

do will always remain. They are assured that God will answer their prayers.)

“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.”

—John 15:16.

COURSE 13:

(In this scripture Nephi stresses

the importance of teaching the word of Christ to both children and adults. We must learn to love and believe in Christ more deeply every day of our lives, for he has literally opened the way to our salvation.)

“For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.”

—2 Nephi 25:23.

The Book of Mormon Historians

(See “How We Got the Book of Mormon,” page 193.)

Following are the names of the Nephite historians, and the times during which each one held the sacred records.¹ Scriptural references refer to time of transmission.

NEPHI	_____ to 546 B.C.
JACOB	546 B.C. to _____ (Jacob 1:2-4)
ENOS	_____ to 422 B.C. (Jacob 7:26, 27)
JAROM	422 B.C. to 362 B.C. (Jarom 1:1)
OMNI	362 B.C. to 318 B.C. (Jarom 1:15)
AMARON	318 B.C. to 280 B.C. (Omni 3)
CHEMISH	280 B.C. to _____ (Omni 8, 9)
ABINADOM	_____ to _____ (Omni 10, 11)
AMALEKI	_____ to 200 B.C. (about) (Omni 12)
KING BENJAMIN	200 B.C. to 125 B.C. (Omni 25)

KING MOSIAH	125 B.C. to 91 B.C. (Mosiah 1:10-16)
ALMA (the younger)	91 B.C. to 73 B.C. (Mosiah 28:11-20)
HELAMAN (the elder)	73 B.C. to 57 B.C. (Alma 37:1-20)
SHIBLON	57 B.C. to 53 B.C. (Alma 63:1)
HELAMAN (the younger)	53 B.C. to 39 B.C. (Alma 63:10-13)
NEPHI (the apostle)	39 B.C. to 1 B.C. (Helaman 3:37)
NEPHI (the apostle)	1 B.C. to 34 A.D. (3 Nephi 1:2, 3)
NEPHI	34 A.D. to 110 A.D. (Heading 4 Nephi)
AMOS	110 A.D. to 194 A.D. (4 Nephi 1:19, 20)
AMOS (the younger)	194 A.D. to 306 A.D. (4 Nephi 1:21, 22)
AMMARON	306 A.D. to 320 A.D. (4 Nephi 1:47)
MORMON	320 A.D. to 385 A.D. (Mormon 1:1-4)
MORONI	385 A.D. to 421 A.D. (Mormon 6:1-6)

¹See George Reynolds, *Story of the Book of Mormon*; Deseret Book Company, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1957; pages 205, 206.

Library File Reference: BOOK OF MORMON.



MOSIAH
BM 95
ALMA

ANGEL
MORONI/
CH 149



MORONI
BURIES THE
RECORDS
BM 98



KING
BENJAMIN
— MOSIAH

BM 94



DPH

CH 148

MORMON
AND MORONI
BM 97

CH 147
AMALRONG
AND MORMON

BM 93
NEPHI
AND
JACOB

BM 96