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## The Translation of the Book of Mormon

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**Abstract:** Provides suggestions for a lesson about the translation of the Book of Mormon. Emphasizes the role of Martin Harris.

## ASSOCIATION SUGGESTIONS.

## THE TRANSLATION OF THE BOOK OF MORMON.

IN giving this lesson to the girls, great care should be taken by the president of the association to familiarize herself with all the details of the history. Try to get some reality connected with the facts as related in Joseph's history. Ask those who can tell you something about the style of living followed by the New England farmers at that time, what sort of houses were occupied by ordinary farmers, the physical features of the land over which Joseph's feet traveled during the exciting years spent in the translation of the wonderful Book. In addition to a large map for reference, get one of the girls to prepare some paper or pasteboard, or get, if possible, a piece of tin about the size of that upon which the Book of Mormon was engraved. Get a good idea fixed in your own mind as to the shape and appearance of the Urim and Thummim, the box in which they were buried, and in fact all the details of the lesson. Then put these graphically before the girls, and make your hour as full of live, active interest as it is possible to be. Set one girl to finding out some of the passages in the Book of Mormon that relate to the ordinance of baptism; for this it was that led to the baptism of Joseph and Oliver. Then let one find the revelation in the Doctrine and Covenants which relates to the lost pages

given to Martin Harris. See that you understand what books replace that lost manuscript, and then explain the matter to them. Call their attention to the strange way in which Nephi was moved upon to prepare the two sets of plates, and as he says, the purpose of this need is hidden from himself but is clear to God. Picture to them the tall and handsome youth, for such the Prophet was, and of the innumerable trials he endured from the time of his first vision until his martyrdom. Just think yourself how the young man must have felt when he started from the sacred hill with his precious burden weighing so heavily against him. Twice in his passage through the wood he was assaulted, and twice strength was given him to conquer his assailants. Be sure and explain how God works upon natural principles, and fix upon the minds of your hearers the delusions which men allowed themselves to hold concerning the work. Now, for instance, suppose some one in your neighborhood should say they had received a vision, and that a lot of golden plates were hidden in a certain place, and at a certain time he would bring them forth from their hiding place. Don't you suppose that an immense deal of curiosity would be manifested by all the neighborhood, and that plenty of men, if refused the sight of them, would be willing to do almost anything to get a sight if not actual

possession of the treasure? You must remember that the devil takes perfectly natural modes of accomplishing his designs, and he made men believe that the lad Joseph was a visionary boy, and that if there were golden plates they were going to have a sight of them as well as the Smith family. Make this point clear, for there is no better way of proving to our young people that the Spirit of the Lord as well as the influence of the devil acts upon us in apparently natural channels. It seems to us that we just think so and so, not that we are inspired of the Lord or tempted of the devil. 'Twas so with these men in that far away time. They, no doubt, fancied that it would be a good thing to shut off the claims of this impostor by getting hold of his tricky plates, which no one could get a sight of, and destroy them, thus killing out the foolish delusion and doing a good to all mankind. Others, no doubt, were actuated by selfish and greedy motives, and when they heard so much about the wonderful golden treasures hid up by the young Smith, they determined to get hold of them by fair means or foul. All these things should be brought out in a very simple and vivid manner, and the girls will take a much greater interest and receive much more good.

There is a small but important point in connection with the manuscript lost by Martin Harris that should be laid carefully before the young girls. There is

nothing so disagreeable and so liable to lead to mischievous consequences as a persistent, vulgar curiosity upon the part of man or woman. Whether justly or not, history has recorded many more troubles brought about by the silly and determined curiosity of women than any that has been shown by men. No matter, however, as to that, teach your young charges one solemn truth: there are things which they have no right to know, unless told of them freely and voluntarily. If a young girl finds herself in possession of a morbid curiosity, let her at once take measures to curb it as she would a dangerous spiritual disease, for that is what it is. Proper and legitimate curiosity is useful, for it leads us into truth and into the bright fields of progress. But that is mainly the curiosity upon general topics, not personal curiosity. It was a woman's curiosity which led Joseph and Martin into such terrible straight; that curiosity, it must be admitted, was shared by Martin himself, but it originated with a woman. When you are married, you will discover that your husband, if in responsible positions, will hear and know of many things that he should not repeat to you. When you find this out, force yourself to believe that you do not want to know these secrets, and by and by it will actually be so with you. If your husband is in councils of the Priesthood, he will hear things that should not be told to any living soul. Yet

such things will be made known to you in the course of time if you are faithful and patient. Do you not hear things which you should keep sacred to yourself? Yes, I am sure you do. But if you are a person of inordinate curiosity, I should hesitate to tell you one of my little secrets, for I am sure you are unable to keep secrets when you are so anxious to get them. I know women who are trusted by their husbands, but they are the women who ask no questions whatever, and quietly wait to hear what is legitimate and proper for them to know. Therefore, bring this little lesson out strongly, and you will find great need for it, too, or I am not right in my estimate of our girls.

There is one point in connection with this present lesson that is most important for you to become acquainted with in your upward. It is a point that I effort to lead the girls onward and never heard touched upon until it was taught by Elder B. H. Roberts in his remarks on Founder Day at the Brigham Young Academy at Provo. It was briefly, it is an educational principle that the mind must be prepared for the seed before the seed could be profitably planted. Thus one doctrine after another, the mind of Joseph and his associates were prepared, even as a plat of ground for the seed, and then came the information, the seed. You will notice this grand truth most beautifully exemplified in the

history we are now following. You see Joseph and Oliver were reading about baptism, and forthwith they hastened to the woods to ask the Lord as to their duty in that particular. And that was all that was given them at the time. Now take this lesson home to yourselves; try and say that you will excite a lively interest, or in other words, at the conclusion of one lesson, do all you can to make the coming lesson for the following week a something to be anticipated, to seek after, and to be eagerly watched for. Thus you will prepare the ground, and your seed will not fall into stony places.

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#### GONE SHOPPING WITH MY WIFE.

THERE is at least one lawyer in Detroit who tells the truth. It is his custom to put on his office door, notices—

"Gone to lunch; be back in half an hour."

"Gone to court; back in three hours."

"Gone out to see a man; back in ten minutes."

And so on and callers are generally successful in waiting for him.

One day last week a caller found this:

"Gone shopping with my wife; will be back I don't know when."

The caller didn't wait, neither did four others who called.

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VIRTUE makes friends of all.