

## LESSON 1

# Introduction to the Old Testament

### Introduction

The Old Testament contains images, symbols, and teachings about the Lord Jesus Christ and His role as the Savior of Heavenly Father's children. As students study daily from its pages, they will increase their

understanding of prophets, covenants and ordinances, the scattering and gathering of Israel, and many other doctrines and principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

### Suggestions for Teaching

#### The Old Testament testifies of Jesus Christ

The *Gospel Art Book* (item no. 06048) contains images that depict a variety of Old Testament accounts. You may want to display these images throughout the year as you teach the lessons they pertain to.

Before class, place several pictures depicting Old Testament accounts in a circular pattern on the board (see *Gospel Art Book* [2009], nos. 4–27; see also LDS.org). In the center of these pictures, place a picture of Jesus Christ and write the following statement by President Marion G. Romney of the First Presidency. (This statement is found in “The Message of the Old Testament” [Church Educational System Symposium on the Old Testament, Aug. 17, 1979], 4; si.lds.org.)

*“The message of the Old Testament is the message of Christ and his coming and his atonement”*  
(President Marion G. Romney).

Begin by asking students if they recognize any of the stories represented in the pictures on the board. Invite them to explain what they know about the stories they recognize. After a few students have commented, draw an arrow pointing from each picture toward the picture of Christ and the statement in the middle. Invite a student to read the statement aloud.

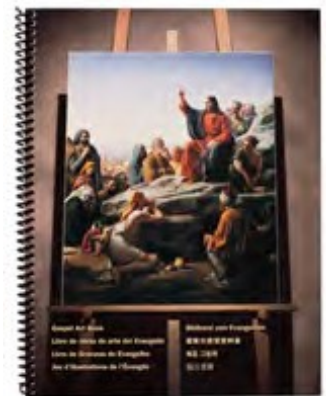
- How can the events depicted in these pictures teach of Jesus Christ, His coming, and His Atonement?
- As you begin your study of the Old Testament, why do you think it might be helpful to know that this book of scripture testifies of Jesus Christ?

Point out that although the Old Testament may seem to focus on topics such as covenants, prophets, repentance, the law of Moses, and commandments, there is one theme that weaves through them all: Jesus Christ. Write the following truth on the board: **As we learn to see how the Old Testament testifies of Jesus Christ, our faith in Jesus Christ will increase.**

Invite two students to read Mosiah 3:15 and Moses 6:63 aloud. Ask students to follow along, looking for ways the Lord tried to help His people learn of Jesus Christ during Old Testament times. After students report what they have found, explain that as they study the Old Testament this year, they will learn to see Jesus Christ in the prophecies, events, and symbols of the Old Testament.

To help students understand how the Old Testament testifies of Jesus Christ through symbols, show the class a picture of a lamb. Explain that one of the early commandments given to Adam and Eve was to sacrifice the firstborn males of their flocks of sheep as an offering to the Lord (see Exodus 12:5). They would kill the animal and then place it on an altar to be burned. Invite a student to read Moses 5:5–7 aloud.

- According to the angel, why did the Lord command Adam to offer sacrifices?



#### Invite the Spirit through effective devotionals

A brief devotional at the beginning of class can help teachers and students feel the Spirit and prepare to learn. A devotional generally includes a hymn (see D&C 25:12), a prayer, and a thought from the scriptures. Devotionals are most effective when students bear testimony and share feelings and insights they have had during their personal scripture study. Consider how you might organize devotionals so that all students have opportunities to participate throughout the year.

Explain that in the book of Leviticus we learn additional details about animal sacrifices. These details were meant to teach of Jesus Christ and His Atonement. Invite a student to read Leviticus 1:2–4 aloud. Ask the class to look for words or phrases about the animal to be sacrificed that also describe the Savior and His Atonement. Ask students to report what they find. Ask questions such as the following to help students deepen their understanding of these verses:

- What does “without blemish” mean? (Free of flaws or imperfections.) How does this symbolize Jesus Christ?

Point out that the offerings and sacrifices explained in the book of Leviticus are part of what was known as the law of Moses. Invite a student to read 2 Nephi 11:4 aloud. Ask students to look for what Nephi said was the purpose of the law of Moses.

- What does the word “typifying” mean? (To symbolize or represent.)

### Encourage daily scripture study

Encourage students to set aside time every day for personal study of the Old Testament. You can help them account for their daily study by providing an appropriate tracking system (see the reading charts in the appendix of this manual). Give students regular opportunities to share what they are learning and feeling during their personal scripture study. Take care not to embarrass or discourage students who struggle to study the scriptures on their own.

### In the Old Testament, Jesus Christ is known as Jehovah

Write the following titles on the board, and ask students if they know whom they refer to: *Anointed One, Creator, Deliverer*. If students need help answering this question, explain that these titles refer to the Savior Jesus Christ. Explain that as they study the Old Testament they will learn to recognize additional names and titles for Jesus Christ.

To help students become familiar with a few of these titles, write the following scripture references on the board: *Job 19:25, Psalm 16:10, Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 9:6, Isaiah 49:26*. Invite students to select one of the passages and read it silently, looking for a name or title used for Jesus Christ. (For additional names and titles for Jesus Christ, see Topical Guide, “Jesus Christ.”) Then ask students to report what they find. Write the names they discover on the board. (The meaning of the name “Immanuel” can be found in the Bible Dictionary.)

Ask a student to read Genesis 2:4 aloud, and invite the class to look for a title of the Savior in this verse. After students locate the title “LORD God,” explain that this title implies supreme authority and that “when the word [LORD] appears in the Old Testament, it [usually] means Jehovah” (Guide to the Scriptures, “Jehovah”; scriptures.lds.org). *Jehovah* is the name of the premortal Jesus Christ, who is the God of Israel.

This may be a good time to encourage students to study the scriptures daily and read the Old Testament this year. Teachers and students are encouraged to read and study the portions of the Old Testament that have been selected for the seminary curriculum. Instruct students to begin their study of the Old Testament by reading Moses 1, which is part of Joseph Smith’s translation of the book of Genesis (see Bible Dictionary, “Joseph Smith Translation”).

### Additional themes in the Old Testament

Write the following heading on the board: *Additional themes in the Old Testament*. Explain to the class that in addition to finding that the mission of Jesus Christ is a theme in the Old Testament, they will discover other themes as they study this book of scripture.

Assign each student a partner and invite them to share with each other about a time when they were left behind or got separated from family or friends. Ask them to explain how or why they got left behind or separated and how they felt during the separation.

Explain that ever since Adam and Eve were cast out from the Garden of Eden, Heavenly Father’s children have lived in a fallen condition and are physically and spiritually separated from God.

- How does Heavenly Father let us know that we are not forgotten?
- How does Heavenly Father help us find our way back to Him?

Display a picture of an Old Testament prophet (consider using *Building the Ark [Gospel Art Book (2009), no. 7; see also LDS.org]*). Explain that one of the ways Heavenly Father helps us return to Him is by calling prophets.

- How do prophets help us return to our Heavenly Father?

After students respond, write the following doctrine under the heading on the board:

**God calls prophets to preach the gospel and administer His covenants and ordinances.** Ask students to explain what covenants and ordinances are.

