

Trek Lesson #1

The theme of trek is Remember The Journey. This lesson will focus on the importance of learning and remembering our family histories and to encourage the youth to begin learning more about a relative who had an important journey. (perhaps working with the church pamphlet “My Family”)

Show the youth the Trek logo and ask them what they think the First Trek Symbol- represents. Possible answers: scriptures, journal, book, record, journey (river book mark).

Next have the kids take the yes or no “Do You Know” Quiz. Ideally pass it out or just read aloud. No one has to show their answers.

I. The connection between knowledge of family and kids’ health and happiness:

Recently a study was done that tried to discover what could strengthen families and help kids be more resilient. Their conclusion: *“The single most important thing you can do for your family may be the simplest of all: develop a strong family narrative.”* They created a questionnaire that tested kids on their knowledge of their families, which you just took.

They also gave their subjects extensive psychological tests to gauge their emotional stability and resilience. What they found was that *The more children knew about their family’s history, the stronger their sense of control over their lives, the higher their self-esteem and the more successfully they believed their families functioned. The “Do You Know?” scale turned out to be the best single predictor of children’s emotional health and happiness. [Feiler]*

Why do you think this is? See if the kids can make connections between knowing about where they came from and how that affects where they are going.

II. Lehi and his family:

When Lehi and his family fled Jerusalem, why did Lehi send his sons back? (to get the Brass Plates) What was in the plates? (their history and geneology)
Read 1 Nephi 3:2-4

Why would he risk their lives for the Brass Plates? Why would the stories of their history and the record their ancestors be so important?

In Nephi Chapter 5:14-15 Nephi explains the importance of these plates as not only a record of their past, but a guide to their future: (have someone read the verses) *And it came to pass that my father, Lehi, also found upon the plates of brass a genealogy of his fathers; wherefore he knew that he was a descendant of Joseph; yea, even that Joseph who was the son of Jacob, who was sold into Egypt, and who was preserved by the hand of the Lord, that he might preserve his father, Jacob, and all his household from perishing with famine. And they were also led out of captivity and out of the land of Egypt, by that same God who had preserved them.*

What connections can you make between these two families?

(Fleeing a land, father and son working together to preserve a faith and a people, relying on the hand of the Lord for protection? Lehi must have taken great comfort in his Joseph's successful physical and spiritual journey. In short, just as the Liahona was a physical compass, the Brass Plates were a spiritual compass, telling Lehi where he came from, who he was, and that the Lord would get him where he needed to go.)

III. Who in your family has made a journey?

Think of your family. Brainstorm what a significant journey might look like. (ideas: come from another country, joined the Church, crossed the plains, got an education, learned an important skill, overcame an obstacle ie gender, race, illness, etc)

Who in your family has made an important journey? How has their journey affected who you are?

Example story: feel free to use one of your own to show how knowing about the trials and successes of our families can help us to grown and have faith.

My grandmother Lettie was born in a small town in Northern Utah in 1885. She married her childhood sweetheart, Alf, and they had a sweet baby girl. When Alf was working in Idaho he got cholera and died. My grandma was a widow at 24 with a 3 year old daughter. She always wanted to get a good education and to be able to support her family. She prayed about what path to take and felt impressed to get a teaching degree. She applied to and was accepted into the University of

California at Berkeley 800 miles away. It was not easy to manage classes and a child, but she did it. She came home and taught school. Later she married my grandpa, a widower with 8 children and had 4 more, totaling 13. They lived on a farm. Despite the many hard times and lean years, Grandma always taught school and helped provide for the family. And she made sure that all the kids had opportunities to go to college. She made sure all the girls went because she knew from experience how much her education had blessed her life. From the time I was born Grandma sent me \$5 every birthday for my college fund. I used to think it was a little silly. \$5 seemed so little, how could it get me to college? But those yearly checks reminded me to have education as a goal and told me that someone believed in me and was rooting for me. I did go to college and used the money to help pay for my tuition one year. I am so grateful that I had an example of someone who set goals and worked towards them even when everything seemed to be too hard.

Ask the kids why would it be important to see ourselves as part of something bigger? How does that help us?

We all need to be part of larger stories where we see that trials and problems are part of life but ultimately we will endure and triumph. One researcher concluded that happy families were not the ones who had the least troubles, but ones that talk about their challenges and found “positive stories” to tell. He writes: *“When faced with a challenge, happy families, like happy people, just add a new chapter to their life story that shows them overcoming the hardship.... The bottom line: if you want a happier family, create, refine and retell the story of your family’s positive moments and your ability to bounce back from the difficult ones. That act alone may increase the odds that your family will thrive for many generations to come.” [feiler]*

IV. Our Pioneer Ancestors

Between 1847 and 1868, Mormon emigrants traveling in more than 300 companies departed from various places and headed for the Salt Lake Valley. More than 60,000 LDS Church members traveled in these companies -- some traveling by foot, some in wagons, and some pulling handcarts. The journey and faith of those pioneers helped to shape and grow the Church. Every member of the LDS faith, even brand-new converts, can claim that Pioneer heritage. As President Hinckley stated, “Whether you are among the posterity of the pioneers or whether you were baptized only yesterday, each is the beneficiary of their great undertaking.” If you belong to the Church, then the Pioneers belong to you.

In 1846 the Saints were living in Nauvoo, which they had bought and turned into a thriving city. They thought this was Zion and they would stay there. But after the Prophet's martyrdom, they knew they would have to leave. In 1847 the first groups of wagon trains headed west. Brigham entered the valley on July 24 and said, "This is the right place." Most companies traveled from April to September in companies using covered wagons pulled by oxen. By 1856 there were so many immigrants coming from other countries that the church could no longer afford to move the companies via wagon so they decided to try using handcarts instead. There were 10 handcart companies. They had to leave most possessions behind as the cart carried their belongings and provisions for the journey. Each company still had one oxen pulled wagon per 20 handcarts to carry the food and other necessities. This venture lasted 5 years and brought 3000 saints. This is the experience we will sample.

What pioneer stories do you know? What did they leave behind? What was life like for them? (most of us know how hard it could be to travel across the plains. Lots of sickness, discomfort, hard work, even death)

Why would they be willing to risk so much to go West? What had they been promised? (D&C 136: 10-11) 10 Let every man use all his influence and property to remove this people to the place where the Lord shall locate a stake of Zion.

11 And if ye do this with a pure heart, in all faithfulness, ye shall be blessed; ye shall be blessed in your flocks, and in your herds, and in your fields, and in your houses, and in your families.

What blessings did they get in their new home? (freedom of religion, a temple, didn't have to move from town to town)

How are our modern lives as Latter day saints like pioneers? What are we asked to sacrifice?

What blessings are we promised?

How can knowing about the pioneers help us on our journey?

Conclusion:

As we learn more about our family history, we can see we are part of something bigger than ourselves. Our parents and grandparents made journeys, faced hardships, and have a legacy of faith to share with us. And as a member of the Church, our pioneer ancestors also provide a pattern for our lives. All of us on are a

journey that calls for sacrifice, hard work, and faith. As we look back on the gifts we have been given, we can move forward confident that our lives, while not always easy, will always be blessed.

Assignment: Choose a family member who made an important journey (as discussed above). Start to find out more about that person and what they went through, their sacrifices, setbacks, and successes. At some point you will turn this into an essay or talk to be shared with others.

Bear testimony that as we seek to know where we come from the Lord will help us know who we are.

The Do You Know Scale

Please answer the following questions by circling "Y" for "yes" or "N" for "no." Even if you know the information we are asking about, you don't need to write it down. We just wish to know if you know the information.

1. Do you know how your parents met? Y N
2. Do you know where your mother grew up? Y N
3. Do you know where your father grew up? Y N
4. Do you know where some of your grandparents grew up? Y N
5. Do you know where some of your grandparents met? Y N
6. Do you know where your parents were married? Y N
7. Do you know what went on when you were being born? Y N
8. Do you know the source of your name? Y N
9. Do you know some things about what happened when your brothers or sisters were being born? Y N
10. Do you know which person in your family you look most like? Y N
11. Do you know which person in the family you act most like? Y N
12. Do you know some of the illnesses and injuries that your parents experienced when they were younger? Y N
13. Do you know some of the lessons that your parents learned from good or bad experiences?
Y N
14. Do you know some things that happened to your mom or dad when they were in school? Y
N
15. Do you know the national background of your family (such as English, German, Russian, etc)? Y N

Remember ^{the} Journey

