

Encouragement is the Warmth That Lifts our Hearts

Teach by the spirit, love those you teach, study and nourish the soul so you can uplift others, help class members increase their faith and give them confidence to meet life's challenges.

One of the things we, as women in the church, face is a self-inflicted pressure to be perfect. We are conscious of the imperfections in our lives. As teachers and leaders it is easy to wonder and doubt how the Lord will accomplish his purpose through an incomplete vessel such as "I". When we seek to receive revelation before we teach we will receive "His guidance in choosing ways to touch those you teach so they may understand and be enlightened"(D&C 50: 21-25).

The Savior taught, "Love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12). Class members are more receptive to the gospel when they know you sincerely love them. Expressions of love will help class members feel the influence of the Spirit. One cannot truly feel love for others until one can feel love for one's self and God's acceptance for your personal efforts.

It is important to recognize the Spirit. Through the spirit you feel happy, calm, and have a clear mind. You will feel a burning love for the Lord and for others. Through the spirit you will have the confidence to share gospel principles. The Spirit's effect on you will allow others to feel generous, forgiving and kind. Feelings of happiness and peace come over you when the Spirit is present. Prayerfully seek the Lord's guidance when preparing each lesson, The Lord said, "The Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith: and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach" (D&C42: 14). Explain to class members the role of the Spirit in gospel learning and how to recognize the presence of the Spirit.

There may be some class members who are intimidated and feel uneasy participating in class. When you are humble, the Spirit will guide you in recognizing their needs and they will feel genuine love and friendship in the gospel. Through the Spirit you will be able to discern the needs of those you teach and prepare lessons that meet those needs.

Write key questions on the board and share with the class the message they will find when reading a scripture or quote. When turning to scriptures, be sensitive to those who are not familiar with the location of the scripture. State the name of the book and the page number. Allow ample time for all to find the passage. You will find that those who normally would not have the confidence to respond in class will now fully understand the question and will have confidence in sharing their thoughts and feelings.

Do not judge others. We are all imperfect and struggling toward some degree of perfection. All of God's mortal children, except our elder brother, Jesus Christ are imperfect. There are "ups and downs" in a constant progression as we desire to progress in an upward curve during the course of life. Sometimes we slip, especially when we try to measure our own weaknesses against the strengths of others. There is no value or benefit in being critical and judgmental of failings we observe in someone else's life." If we as teachers can encourage and love others unconditionally, we will be able to teach and encourage without pressure.

Offer those you teach love, compassion, support and your faith. We all need to rise above the limitations of human weakness and imperfection. Use personal experiences, metaphors and stories. President Packer says, "Ordinary teachers responsible to teach the doctrines and to testify of spiritual things have within their own personal experience everyday things which can be likened unto things which are spiritual." When we continually seek inspiration each day and study the lesson topic well in advance, we will be enlightened and have the ability to recall even simple everyday experiences in our lives that we can share with those we teach.

Have fun in your calling. It is an honor to be given stewardship to guide, teach, encourage and inspire those who seek eternal truths. Additionally, your personal gospel knowledge, and ability to receive promptings from the Holy Ghost will assist you in feeling love for others beyond your comprehension.