

Engaging Mormons with the Gospel

By Beau K. Brewer

Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

Assignment One

Read the comments related to 1 John 5:13–15 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answer to the following question: How does your personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ give you confidence to share the gospel with Mormons?

Assignment Two

Read the comments related to 1 John 5:16–17 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answer to the following question: How does a regular prayer life filled with requests for sinners to repent affect your gospel encounter with a Mormon?

Assignment Three

Read the comments related to 1 John 5:18–20 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answer to the following question: What are the differences between head knowledge and heart relationship with Jesus Christ?

Scripture to Memorize

"I and the Father are one." John 10:30

Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will understand how to engage Mormons with the gospel in a loving, Christlike manner.

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It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

Mormon missionaries can be found almost everywhere, riding on their bicycles wearing black slacks, white button-up short-sleeve shirts, black necktie and an elder badge. These young men often are friendly, going door-to-door, attempting to introduce people to “Heavenly Father” and to induct them into their cult. Perhaps when you think of Mormons, polygamist communities in Utah and Arizona come to mind. In some cases, these are accurate depictions of Mormons or members of the Church of Latter-Day Saints (LDS).

How will you prepare to engage a Mormon with the real gospel of Jesus Christ?

Read 1 John 5:13–21 out loud.

Studying the Passage

The apostle John wrote this letter to believers who needed assurance of their salvation.

Verse 13. that you may know. The Greek word translated *know* is experiential in nature. The Greek term suggests moving beyond head knowledge into real and intimate knowledge of a person.

The purpose of the Bible is to reveal God’s plan of salvation so mankind can know God personally. The Bible is God’s Word. Because our God is unchangeable, His Word is constant. The apostle John wanted each believer to understand that because we *know* Jesus, who is God, we have received eternal life.

Joseph Smith Jr. (1805–1844) founded the Latter-Day Saints (LDS) Church in 1830. Mormons have several “sacred” books they consider equal to the Word of God— *The King James Bible* (with Joseph Smith’s changes), *The Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants*, and *Pearl of Great Price*. Each of these books is subject to church interpretation. These books are not God breathed as the Bible is (2 Timothy 3:16). These books offer an undependable version of truth as seen through the eyes of normal people. Joseph Smith, his successors and his followers were not writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Verses 14–15. He hears us. A new parent often develops acute hearing when a newborn baby comes into the home. A mother can hear her child’s whimper even if she is in deep sleep. At the slightest sound, she rushes to her infant to aid or nurse him.

The same is true with our Father in heaven. He hears us and answers us when we earnestly seek Him. Our God is real, Jesus is real, and the Holy Spirit is real. They alone comprise the Triune Godhead. In John’s Gospel, we see that all three persons of the Godhead have always existed and were not created from material things.

Mormonism’s god possesses the morals and ethics of man. This god’s words, faith and practices have morphed over time, while the God of the Bible is unchangeable.

Assignment One Feedback

The disciple who completed **Assignment One** during the week may now share an answer to the following question: How does your personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ give you

confidence to share the gospel with Mormons?

On Your Own

In the space below, list some things about your personal relationship with Jesus that have caused you to know and love Him more. When everyone is finished, the group can share their responses.

Studying the Passage

Verses 16–17. sin not leading to death. Sin is most easily understood as disobedience to God. The apostle John was speaking to believers about their sin. The concept here is that born-again believers who fall into sin after salvation will not die spiritually again, as the blood of God's Lamb has redeemed them for all time. At the same time, their fellowship with God may be broken until repentance. John wanted disciples to pray for the salvation of those who are lost so they might be saved before their sins lead them to their death.

Assignment Two Feedback

The disciple who completed **Assignment Two** during the week may now share an answer to the following question: How does a regular prayer life filled with requests for sinners to repent affect your gospel encounter with a Mormon?

Discussion Question

What are some practical ways you can lead a Mormon to repentance and confession in Jesus Christ?

Studying the Passage

Verse 19. the whole world lies. Disciples must remain well grounded in the Bible when sharing the gospel with a Mormon. The apostle John reminded believers that we are kept by the power of the Lord Jesus Christ and therefore are no longer subject to untruths of this world.

Verse 20. the Son of God has come. Mormons and Christians alike believe that Jesus the Son of God has come. However, Mormons believe Jesus was born of "Heavenly Father and Mother" and is the first of their billions of spirit children. According to their beliefs, Jesus is the literal son of God through Mary, and His suffering, death, burial and resurrection save some but not all.

The Bible teaches that Jesus is God's only Son, that the Son is God, and that the Son died to offer salvation to all mankind (see John 3:16).

Assignment Three Feedback

The disciple who completed **Assignment Three** during the week may now share an answer to the following question: What are the differences between head knowledge and heart relationship with Jesus Christ?

On Your Own

In the space below, list some of Scriptures that refer to the deity of Jesus Christ that you can use to share the message of Jesus Christ with Mormons. When everyone is finished, the group can share their lists.

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below, and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Give the group this update: "In our last session I made a commitment to . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . ."

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights, and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions, and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

The Christian faith was founded through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Mormon faith was founded by Joseph Smith Jr.

The truths that form the foundation of the Christian faith are drawn from the Bible, written by men under the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The truths that form the foundation of the Mormon faith are drawn from various books written by normal people based on their own thinking.

The God of the Bible is unchangeable. The god of the Mormon faith has words, faith and practices that have changed over time.

The Bible teaches that Jesus is both God and the only Son of God. The Mormon faith teaches that Jesus was born of "Heavenly Father and Mother" and is the first of their billions of spirit children.

At any given moment, disciples might find themselves in a gospel encounter with a Mormon. The tendency might be to start a harsh argument about their beliefs. In reality, just winning an argument does not win souls for the kingdom of Christ. The apostle Paul reminded disciples in Philippians 4:5, "Let your gentle spirit be known to all men." The world sees Christ best when we share the gospel in a spirit of humility, respect and sacrificial love.

Follow up Question

How is the god of Mormonism different from the God you worship?

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.