

## Comparisons and Object Lessons

### From Teaching, No Greater Call

It is often difficult to teach the intangible aspects of the gospel—principles such as faith, repentance, love, the Atonement of Jesus Christ, remission of sins, and redemption. Elder Boyd K. Packer said:

“In teaching the gospel, we do not re-create the material world around us; we deal with the intangible world within us, and there is a big difference. None of the ordinary tools are available to us. To convey to a youngster the idea of a cat is much simpler than to convey the idea of faith; faith is very difficult to describe.

“For instance, how big is faith? We soon learn that size is not helpful. Only vaguely can we talk to a youngster who knows nothing about faith by talking about an amount, such as much faith, or little faith. We can’t tell him what color it is. We can’t tell him what shape it is. We can’t tell him what texture it is.”

Then Elder Packer shared a teaching tool that we can use to teach about intangible principles: “Tie the invisible idea ... to some tangible object the student already knows about and then build from that knowledge” (Teach Ye Diligently, rev. ed. [1991], 31–32).

You can use comparisons and object lessons to help learners understand intangible principles. Together with the use of stories and personal testimony, these methods give you an excellent set of tools for teaching the eternal realities that we cannot perceive with our senses.

As you use comparisons and object lessons, remember that they should always reinforce the lesson purpose and that they should not detract from the gospel principles you are teaching.

### Comparisons

The Savior often referred to familiar earthly objects or experiences to help His listeners understand spiritual principles. He spoke of Himself as “the bread of life” (John 6:35) and “the good shepherd” (John 10:11, 14). He taught His followers to seek out the lost sheep (see Matthew 10:5–8) and to feed His lambs (see John 21:15–17). The Lord compared the kingdom of heaven to a treasure, a pearl, and a fishing net (see Matthew 13:44–48). He likened faith to a mustard seed (see Matthew 17:20). He said that people are known by their fruits (see Matthew 7:15–20). In His lessons, a narrow gate became the way of eternal life (see Matthew 7:13–14) and His disciples became fishers of men (see Matthew 4:18–19). He spoke of gathering His people as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings (see Matthew 23:37).

With practice and imagination, you can find gospel applications in familiar objects.

Explain to the rest of the class why the following comparison might help someone understand the gospel topic:

**Repentance**

**is like**

**soap**

Explain to the rest of the class why the following comparison might help someone understand the gospel topic:

**Scripture Study**

**is like**

**a feast**

Explain to the rest of the class why the following comparison might help someone understand the gospel topic:

**Children**

**are like**

**treasures**

Explain to the rest of the class why the following comparison might help someone understand the gospel topic:

**Faith**

**is like**

**a shield**

Explain to the rest of the class why the following comparison might help someone understand the gospel topic:

**The scriptures  
are like a life raft  
in troubled  
waters**

Explain to the rest of the class why the following comparison might help someone understand the gospel topic:

**Sin  
is like  
quick sand**

Explain to the rest of the class why the following comparison might help someone understand the gospel topic:

**Anger  
is like  
a hot coal**

Explain to the rest of the class why the following comparison might help someone understand the gospel topic:

**The church  
is like a stone  
rolling across the  
whole earth**

Explain to the rest of the class why the following comparison might help someone understand the gospel topic:

**Prayer  
is like  
a radio**

Explain to the rest of the class why the following comparison might help someone understand the gospel topic:

**The church  
is like a stone  
rolling across the  
whole earth**

Explain to the rest of the class why the following comparison might help someone understand the gospel topic:

**The Liahona  
was like  
a compass/radio**

Explain to the rest of the class why the following comparison might help someone understand the gospel topic:

**A patriarchal  
blessing  
is like a Liahona**