

33

Celestial Marriage— A Preparation for Eternity

OBJECTIVE

Each young man will better understand the eternal significance of being married to a worthy woman in the temple and then fulfilling the covenants they make together.

PREPARATION

1. Prayerfully study Doctrine and Covenants 132:15–20.
 2. Materials needed:
 - a. Copies of the scriptures (each young man should bring his own).
 - b. Picture 10, Manila Philippines Temple (62591); picture 12, A Temple Celestial Room; picture 13, A Temple Endowment Room.
 - c. Pencils for marking scriptures.
 3. If it is available in your area, you might want to show *Together Forever* (53411).
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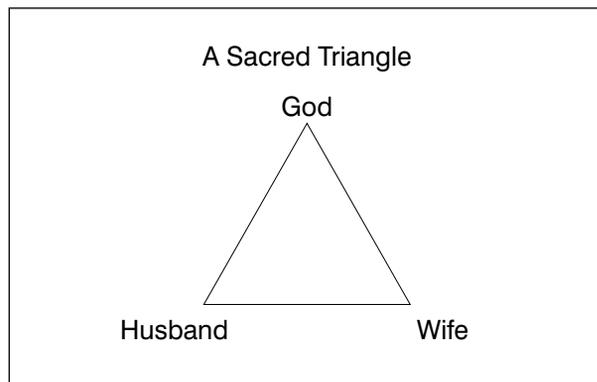
SUGGESTED LESSON DEVELOPMENT

Chalkboard
discussion

Introduction

Write the phrase *A Sacred Triangle* on the chalkboard. Draw a triangle beneath it.

Tell the quorum that they may ask ten questions to discover what the triangle represents. You must be able to answer each question with a yes or no. If after the first five questions they have not guessed that the triangle has something to do with marriage, give them a hint or two. Help them discover that the triangle represents the relationship between a husband, wife, and God. Write these words on the triangle in the proper place:



- How can God become a partner to a marriage?
- Why do you think Heavenly Father wants each of us to marry in the temple?

Explain that this lesson will help answer this question.

A Proper Marriage Is Necessary for Complete Happiness

Point out that most people spend over two-thirds of their mortal life in marriage. The quality of this time here and in eternity depends to a great extent on how and whom we marry.

- What kind of future family and home life do you want?
- What types of marriage ceremonies are available to Church members?

Adviser presentation and chalkboard discussion

When the young men mention civil marriage, write on one side of the chalkboard, *Civil Marriage: Contract for Time*. When they mention marriage in the temple, write on the other side of the chalkboard, *Celestial Marriage: Covenant for Eternity*.

As you discuss the following questions, write the responses under the proper heading. At the conclusion of the discussion, the chalkboard should look similar to the following:

Civil Marriage: Contract for Time	Celestial Marriage: Covenant for Eternity
1. Home, church, office, almost anywhere	1. Sacred sealing room in the temple
2. Justice of the peace, minister, judge, bishop	2. One having sealing power from the prophet of the Lord
3. Until death	3. For time and eternity
4. Single, servant to others	4. Gods and goddesses
5. No claim on our family	5. A family unit forever

Discussion

- Where do these different types of marriage take place?

Show and briefly explain pictures 10, 12, and 13.

- Who will perform the marriage?

As a young man reads the following quotation, ask the quorum to think about how important it is to be married by the proper authority:

“There is but one man living on the earth at a time who holds the keys of this binding or sealing power. No other man has the right to officiate in a marriage, or sealing ceremony, for time and all eternity, unless he has obtained the direct appointment from the one who holds the keys of this power” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954–56], 2:74).

Scripture, discussion, and quotation

- How long will each type of marriage last?

Have the young men read Doctrine and Covenants 132:15. Help them bring out that civil marriage lasts until death and temple marriage lasts for time and eternity.

Have the young men consider the joys of marriage that last forever, as a young man reads the following quotation:

“The greatest joys of true married life can be continued. The most beautiful relationships of parents and children can be made permanent. The holy association of families can be never-ending if husband and wife have been sealed in the holy bonds of eternal matrimony. Their joys and progress will never end” (Spencer W. Kimball, “So Long as You Both Shall Live,” *Improvement Era*, Dec. 1964, p. 1055).

- What will be the eternal status if the individuals keep the covenants of these types of marriages?

To find the answer for civil marriage, have the young men read Doctrine and Covenants 132:16–17. Then read the following quotation:

“The implication here is this, that they who are clean in their lives; who are virtuous; who are honorable; but who will not receive this covenant of eternal marriage in the house of God, shall come forth—and *they may even enter into the celestial kingdom*, but when they enter there they enter as servants—to wait upon those ‘who are worthy of a far more, and an exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory.’ . . .

“Who desires to enter the eternal world and be a *servant*, when the promise is held out that we may be sons and daughters of God? Yet there will be the vast majority who will enter the eternal world as *servants*, and not as *sons*, and this simply because they think more of the world and its covenants, than they do of God and his covenants. . . . Oh, what bitterness there will be in the day of judgment, when every man receives his reward according to his works!” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:62, 64–65).

To find the answer for temple marriage, have a young man read Doctrine and Covenants 132:19–20.

Discussion and quotations

- What will be the state of the family after its members have died?

To find the answer for civil marriage, have a young man read the following quotation:

“They [a husband and wife] are not bound by any law of the gospel. It has no claim upon them [the family]; when they are dead their contract, and obligations, and bonds come to an end; *they have no claim upon each other, and no claim upon their children. Their children are left without parents, only as they themselves through their own faithfulness may be adopted into some other man’s family*” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:61).

To find the answer for temple marriage, have a young man read the following quotation:

“I get a great deal of comfort out of the thought that *if I am faithful and worthy of an exaltation, my father will be my father, and I will be subject to him as his son through all eternity; that I will recognize and know my mother and she will be my mother in all eternity; and my brothers and sisters will be my brothers and sisters for all eternity; and that my children and my wives will be mine in eternity*” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:67).

Review the triangle and other information on the chalkboard, and have the young men explain which marriage has the potential to bring complete happiness and why.

Temple Marriages Can Become Celestial

Discussion and story

- Is a temple marriage always a celestial marriage?

Share the following story:

“In the middle of a bitter argument over family finances, Bill Morgan stopped in mid-sentence and stared at his wife with a strange expression. ‘It’s not enough,’ he said with surprise.

“ ‘What’s not enough?’ his wife snapped.

“ ‘Temple marriage. It’s like having a concrete canal with no water.’

“ ‘What are you talking about?’ Susan demanded, thoroughly exasperated now. ‘We were talking about money, remember?’

“ ‘It suddenly hit me. *Temple* marriage is not eternal marriage. It’s like having a perfectly constructed canal that doesn’t carry water.’

“Now Susan’s anger was fading too. ‘What do you mean?’

“ ‘Temple marriage is the channel for eternal marriage, but you can have the canal without having it filled with water. Look,’ he said earnestly, ‘suppose at this very moment the roof of our home was to cave in and kill us both.’ He smiled faintly. ‘We have a temple marriage. Do you think we would have an eternal marriage? Think about our marriage for a moment. Do you think it is a celestial marriage?’

“His wife shook her head slowly. ‘Probably not, and what an awful thought.’

“Bill nodded soberly. ‘Somehow we’ve just assumed that being married in the temple was enough. But we’ve got to work at building a celestial marriage. We have the channel. Let’s fill it with what it was intended to carry’ ” (*Achieving a Celestial Marriage* [Church Educational System student manual, 1976], p. 125).

Scripture and discussion

- How can a temple marriage become a celestial marriage?

To help answer this question, read Doctrine and Covenants 132:19 again. Read only to the first semicolon. Have the quorum listen for the function of the Holy Spirit of Promise in relation to temple marriage.

- What is the Holy Spirit of Promise? (The Holy Ghost.)
- What does it mean to have a marriage sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise?

Quotation

Allow the young men to respond. Then share the following quotation with them:

“To seal is to *ratify*, to *justify*, or to *approve*. Thus an act which is sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise is one which is ratified by the Holy Ghost; it is one which is approved by the Lord; and the person who has taken the obligation upon himself is justified by the Spirit in the thing he has done. The ratifying seal of approval is put upon an act only if those entering the contract are worthy” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966], pp. 361–62).

Adviser presentation and discussion

Explain that when a righteous and worthy man and woman take upon themselves the covenants of eternal marriage and continually remain pure, God becomes part of their marriage, and the Holy Spirit of Promise ratifies their marriage. It requires constant effort to develop a temple marriage into a celestial one.

- Why do you want a celestial marriage and not just a temple marriage?

Adviser presentation

Explain that preparation for a celestial marriage cannot be accomplished in a few hours, weeks, or even months. It takes years, and it needs to be started now. Celestial marriage requires two people who are committed to living celestial lives. Explain that filling a full-time mission is one of the best ways to prepare for a celestial marriage. Refer to the triangle on the chalkboard, and point out that all lines must be established in order to have a celestial marriage.

Conclusion

Challenge

Challenge the young men to continue to prepare to worthily participate in the sacred triangle of celestial marriage and to date only girls who would be worthy of temple blessings.