

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

Joseph Smith, Jr.

- Born Dec. 23, 1805 to Joseph & Emma Hale Smith in Sharon, Vermont. (Some accounts say that his mother was named Lucy Mack Smith?)
- They were a very religious family, his parents were married for 17 yrs., having 11 children (6 will die in infancy) & 2 adopted, Joseph Jr. will be the 5th child.

- His family moved from Vermont to Palmyra, NY in 1816.
- This area was called the "Burned-Over District" for all of the religious activity.
- He was exposed to all the various Protestant & Catholic beliefs of the day, and was confused over which was the "True Church".
- While reading his Bible, he read James 1:5, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask God, that giveth to all men liberally, And unbraideth not, and it shall be given him." (KJV)

- The spring of 1820, Joseph went to a secluded stand of trees & prayed.
- God appeared before Joseph & said "*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*", God told him that all the religions groups were wrong & that he was not to join any of them.
- The angel Moroni, appeared in 1823 & told him that he was selected by God to restore his church here on earth.
- Moroni was the son of Mormon, the last prophet of the Israelite people in the Americas.
- This gives a connection between the Lost Tribes of Israel & America. Why is that important????

- Lehi & his family lived in Jerusalem around 600 B.C. He was commanded by God to lead a small group of people (similar to the story of Noah) to the American continent.
- Their descendants were known as the Nephites & they became a great civilization.
- There was another group of people here called the Jaredites, who arrived in the Americas after the fall of the Tower of Babel.
- Their descendants would become the Lamanites, the ancestors of the American Indians.
- After a period of peaceful cohabitation, the Lamanites attacked & killed the Nephites.

- The Lamanites killed all the Nephites except Mormon & his son, Moroni.
- He wrote the account into what is now called the Book Of Mormon & his son finished the account & buried the "golden plates" in the hill Cumorah. (located in what is now the state of New York)
- Moroni, now an angel, comes to Joseph on Sept. 22, 1827 & tells him that he was ready to receive the truth.
- Joseph is taken to the hill where he finds the "golden plate" & also the Urim & Thummim to help him translate the "reformed Egyptian hieroglyphics".

- With the aid of a friend, Joseph would sit behind a curtain & translate, while his friend wrote down every word.
- The task was completed in 1830 & the Book of Mormon was published in Palmyra, NY.
- The "golden plates" were then taken back to the hill & Moroni returned them to heaven.
- This is why the Mormons believe that their church was founded on the word of God, not Smith's.

- The church formed in 1830, shortly after the publication of the Book of Mormon, and the congregation was made up of 5 people.
- As the church began to grow, so did the hatred & persecution from the other Christian denominations.
- This begins the Mormon trek westward for their "New Zion".
- They moved from NY., to Kirtland, Ohio, Independence, Mo., established Nauvoo, Ill., & finally ended up in Carthage, Ill.

- Every place they stopped, they became VERY prosperous!! (especially Nauvoo).
- This threatened some of the local populations, who then ran the Mormons out.
- As Joseph prepared to leave Nauvoo for Carthage, (by request of the Gov. Thomas Ford) about 20 miles away, he knew that he was seeing his family & friends for the last time.
- He prophesied, "I am going like a lamb to the slaughter, but I am calm as a summer's morning."
- While in Carthage, Joseph, Jr., Hyrum, & several others were jailed.

- June 27, 1844, shortly after 5pm, a mob of about 200 men with painted faces stormed the Carthage Jail, shot and killed Joseph and his brother Hyrum, and seriously wounded John Taylor. Only Willard Richards remained unharmed.
- According to some eye witness accounts, as the mob stormed the jail, Joseph gave the distress sign of a Master Mason (he had been a Mason for several yrs.) & all but a few of the attackers stopped. Those that were not a Mason killed Joseph & Hyrum in the name of God.
- The mob & many of the citizens of Carthage ran for the woods when someone yelled, "The Mormons are coming!!!"
- Thus creating the 1st Mormon martyr.

- The leadership of the Church then passed to Brigham Young, who was the senior Apostle of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
- This also caused a big controversy and several Mormons, including Smith's widow & young son, stayed in Illinois & created the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.
- They have since changed their name to the Community of Christ & are headquartered out of Independence, MO.

- Brigham Young received a revelation that the "New Zion" was out west.
- So he led the first group across 1,000 miles of unsettled plains, arriving in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847.
- Supervised the subsequent immigration of more than 70,000 people from the U.S. & Europe.
- Founded over 350 settlements, including communities in Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, California, Canada, and Mexico.
- Led the Church for 33 years before passing away in 1877 at age 76 in Salt Lake City.

Beliefs

- God is our Heavenly Father. He loves us and wants us to return to Him.
- Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is our Savior. He redeems us from death by providing the Resurrection. He saves us from sin as we repent.
- Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we can return to live with God if we keep His commandments.
- The Holy Ghost helps us to recognize truth.
- The first principles and ordinances of the gospel are faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism, and receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost.

- The Church of Jesus Christ has been restored to the earth.
- The priesthood authority of God exists in His Church today, just as it did in the original Church.
- The Holy Bible and the Book of Mormon are the word of God.
- God reveals His will to prophets today, just as He did anciently.
- Our life has a purpose.
- Families can live together forever.
- Through serving others, we can experience joy and draw closer to God.

Articles of the Faith

- We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.
- We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression.
- We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.

- We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are:
 - Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ
 - Repentance
 - Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins
 - Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.
- We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.
- We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth.

- We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, and so forth.
- We believe the Holy Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.
- We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

- We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes;
 - that Zion (the New Jerusalem) will be built upon this the American continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.
- We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.

- We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.
- We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—
 - We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.

