

Student Teacher 2: The Relief Society is founded

Note: Before class, ask a Relief Society member (such as a family member or friend) to tell you about some ways Relief Society has given her opportunities to participate in the Lord's work and has blessed her life. Consider writing down what you learn from her.

Invite students to think of women in the scriptures they admire. Ask them to tell a partner about this woman and why they admire her. After each pair has had time to discuss, explain that the women in Nauvoo were a great strength in advancing the work of the Lord.

Explain that in 1842 some women in Nauvoo assembled to discuss ways they could assist with the construction of the Nauvoo Temple. They formed a society and wrote a constitution and bylaws to govern their work. They presented their constitution and bylaws to the Prophet Joseph Smith, who said they were "the best he had ever seen." But then he said that the Lord had "something better for them than a written constitution." He invited them to meet with him within the next week, when he would "organize the women under the priesthood after the pattern of the priesthood" (Sarah M. Kimball, "Auto-biography," *Woman's Exponent*, Sept. 1, 1883, 51; quoted in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* [2011], 12). This organization was the Relief Society.

Emma Smith was called to be the first general president of the Relief Society. Eliza R. Snow, the secretary of the Relief Society in Nauvoo and later the second general president of the Relief Society, taught: "Although the name [Relief Society] may be of modern date, the institution is of ancient origin. We were told by [the Prophet Joseph Smith] that the same organization existed in the church anciently" ("Female Relief Society," *Deseret News*, Apr. 22, 1868, 1; see also *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 7).

- What can we learn about the Relief Society from Eliza R. Snow's statement? (As students respond, write the following truth on the board: **Relief Society is an inspired part of the Restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ.**)
- Why do you think it is important for us to understand this truth?

Invite a student to read the following statement concerning the purposes of Relief Society:

"Relief Society was established to help prepare daughters of God for the blessings of eternal life. The purposes of Relief Society are to increase faith and personal righteousness, strengthen families and homes, and provide

relief by seeking out and helping those in need” (*Daughters in My Kingdom*, xi).

Tell the class about the conversation you had with a member of Relief Society, including your thoughts about what you learned. Conclude by testifying of the principle you wrote on the board.