



# Temple as Symbol

## A Youth Journey through Doctrine and Covenants 163:8a

### Trip Planning

Sometimes journey includes pilgrimage. Pilgrimages are travels to a sacred location, sometimes associated with a certain person. Pilgrimages may also include traveling to a certain place associated as a sacred or special place. They can also be traveling to a location associated with a specific text (i.e., the Middle East and the Bible). During this portion of our class journey or pilgrimage we will focus on the Community of Christ Temple as a symbol. While some of the class may have visited the Temple, there may be others that have only heard stories about it. The class might want to explore the possibility of making a pilgrimage to the Temple.

### Packing List

- Bible
- Pictures of temples
- Pictures of the Temple in Independence, Missouri
- Flip chart and markers
- Paper, pencils, or markers
- A definition of temple: “a building for religious practice, a place devoted to a special purpose” (*Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*).

### Navigational Aids

“The Temple is an instrument of ongoing revelation in the life of the church. Its symbolism and ministries call people to reverence in the presence of the Divine Being. Transformative encounters with the Eternal Creator and Reconciler await those who follow its spiritual pathways of healing, reconciliation, peace, strengthening of faith, and knowledge.”—Doctrine and Covenants 163:8a

“The temple shall be dedicated to the pursuit of peace. It shall be for reconciliation and for healing of the spirit. It shall also be for a strengthening of faith and preparation for witness. By its ministries an attitude of wholeness of body, mind, and spirit as a desirable end toward which to strive will be fostered.” —Doctrine and Covenants 156:5a–c

### Unpacking the Scripture

Ask the youth to read Doctrine and Covenants 156:5a–c. The scripture passage was written in 1984 and provides instruction for what the Temple’s primary roles would include. Building the Temple had been a dream of the Saints from the beginning of the Restoration movement. Completing the Temple was a culmination of that dream. The ministries that flow from the Temple are also a fulfillment of that dream. The following text explores the importance of the Temple as a symbol.

### What about Temples?

Before class, if available, post pictures of temples from around the world. (Do not post a picture of the Community of Christ Temple.) Write the word “Temple” on a flip chart. Ask the students what they think a temple is and what purposes it may provide. After defining it (see definition at the left), ask the students to use a Bible and concordance, or dictionary, to further explore the meaning and purposes of temples. These will vary; be open to the many examples the youth may provide. When they have completed this, ask them to draw a picture of the Community of Christ Temple. Afterwards compare their drawings, having each student tell about theirs.

### The Temple for Us

Ask the youth to read Doctrine and Covenants 156:5a–c. Ask them to list on the flip chart what ministries they associate with the scripture. (An example might include meditation practices as a way to address wholeness issues.) After the class has completed this exercise, continue by reading Section 163:8a. On another piece of paper, list how the ministries mentioned in this scripture may be lived out. When completed, compare and contrast the lists looking for similarities and differences. Following this section of the exercise, ask a few questions to further explore the Temple as a symbol. These responses may be forwarded to:

Community of Christ  
1001 West Walnut  
Independence, Mo 64050

Attn: Lu Mountenay

# Temple as Symbol

## A Youth Journey through Doctrine and Covenants 163:8a

The Temple may be expressed as a symbol. When you think of the Temple as a symbol, what comes to mind?

How can the ministry needs of congregations be met by the Temple as a symbol?

How can the Temple as a symbol be improved by ministries that flow from congregations?

### Repacking the Scripture

#### Sharing the Temple

Doctrine and Covenants 163:8a focuses on the importance of the Temple as a symbol through which people are further called into discipleship. It is in living out these ministries, both at the Temple and through congregational life, that disciples learn, are nurtured, and reach out to others who have not heard the gospel story. As a closing, ask the class what resources or teaching aids would help them so they could better understand the Temple as symbol.

#### The Temple for Me

The focus of this class has explored the Temple as both sacred place and symbol. While the Doctrine and Covenants has many references to building the Temple, the references found in Section 156 speak to the need to continue with planning and building the Temple. Section 163:8a provides further instruction about the ministries that flow from the Temple.

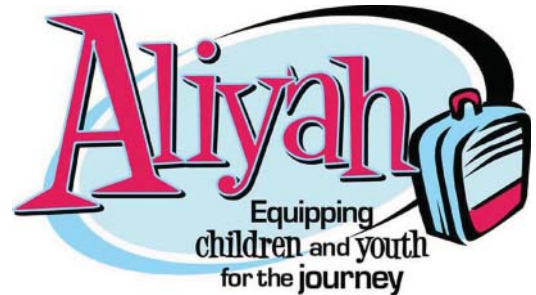
“The Temple is an instrument of ongoing revelation in the life of the church. Its symbolism and ministries call people to reverence in the presence of the Divine Being. Transformative encounters with the Eternal Creator and Reconciler await those who follow its spiritual pathways of healing, reconciliation, peace, strengthening of faith, and knowledge.”—Doctrine and Covenants 163:8a

Taken together, these scriptures provide instruction about the Temple as symbol but also ministries that, while not unique to the Temple, may flow from it.

Just as the Temple was a dream fulfilled for many, it also has sacred meaning. Ask the class what the Temple means for each one of them.

### We’re Not There Yet; The Journey Continues

Viewing the Temple as symbol assists us in knowing some methods we can use in congregational life to live out our discipleship. Read Section 163:8a again. As a final activity, have the class offer prayers over the key points they are drawn to.



#### Legend

ALIYAH Doctrine and Covenants 163:8a lesson for Youth © 2008 by Community of Christ. Permission given to reproduce any pages for Community of Christ use. Other reproductions of this resource require written permission.

Contact Poul Wilson, Community of Christ, [kpwilson@CofChrist.org](mailto:kpwilson@CofChrist.org). Unless otherwise noted, Bible scripture verses are quoted or adapted from the NRSV. “The Scripture quotations contained herein are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. and are used by permission. All rights reserved.” Other scriptures used in this resource include the following: Doctrine and Covenants (Sections 163 and 156), Community of Christ, Herald Publishing House.