

# Witnesses

## Witness #1: The words of the Lord

Joseph Smith was commanded not to show the gold plates to the world (see Doctrine and Covenants 5:3). Read Doctrine and Covenants 5:6–10, looking for what Joseph was allowed to share.

You may want to mark a phrase the Lord repeats in verses 5, 6, and 7.

- Why do you think the Lord is more concerned about us believing in and hearkening to His words in the Book of Mormon than He is about us knowing that the plates existed?

Referring to the Book of Mormon, President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) taught:



The evidence for its truth, for its validity in a world that is prone to demand evidence, lies not in archaeology or anthropology, though these may be helpful to some. It lies not in word research or historical analysis, though these may be confirmatory. . . . The test of its truth lies in reading it. It is a book of God. (Gordon B. Hinckley, "Four Cornerstones of Faith," *Ensign*, Feb. 2004, 6)

Take a few minutes to ponder your experience studying and being taught from the Book of Mormon. Think about how your study has impacted your life. You might want to record some of your thoughts in your journal.

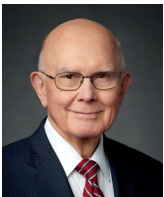
## Witness #2: The testimony of three servants

Read Doctrine and Covenants 5:11–15, looking for who the Lord would eventually allow to see the plates.

- What did you see in these verses that could make the testimonies of the Three Witnesses powerful?

Later, Martin Harris, Oliver Cowdery, and David Whitmer would see the gold plates and testify of their reality. You will learn more about this event when you study Doctrine and Covenants 17.

Referring to the Three Witnesses, President Dallin H. Oaks of the First Presidency taught:



Their testimony stands uncontradicted by any other witnesses. Reject it one may, but how does one explain three men of good character uniting and persisting in this published testimony to the end of their lives in the face of great ridicule and other personal disadvantage? Like the Book of Mormon itself, there is no better explanation than is given in the testimony itself, the solemn statement of good and honest men who told what they saw. (Dallin H. Oaks, "The Witness: Martin Harris," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 1999, 36)

Consider reading "The Testimony of Three Witnesses" at the beginning of the Book of Mormon or making a list of people who have testified to you that the Book of Mormon is true. Think of how their testimony has strengthened yours.

## Witness #3: The Holy Ghost

Read Doctrine and Covenants 5:16 and Moroni 10:4–5. Identify how God reveals the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon to His children.

- What are some ways the Spirit might testify to someone of the Book of Mormon's truthfulness?

Glenn L. Pace, who served as the Presiding Bishop, said:



There is no other way to gain a testimony but through the witness of the Holy Ghost. You can rely on nothing else. . . . We have numerous scriptural examples of how pointless a physical manifestation can be without the accompanying receipt of the witness of the Holy Ghost. Conversion comes not by physical manifestations from heaven. (Glenn L. Pace, "The Elusive Balance," *New Era*, Mar. 1989, 49)

Make a list of reasons why you think a witness from the Holy Ghost, a member of the Godhead, is more important than physical evidence that something is true. Consider including any witnesses you feel you have received through the Holy Ghost that the Book of Mormon is true.