

Many Mormons retain as adults what they were taught as children. In a story book for young children the Mormon church teaches about *Doctrine and Covenants*, one of four volumes in the church's scripture canon.\*\*

Some adults passively accept Mormon doctrines because they don't know them or don't care—or consider them to be, at best, simply stories for children. Then there are ardent believers who will actively defend and promote these stories and their religion.

*Doctrine and Covenants Stories* has 64 chapters of colorful illustrations and brief text in simple, childlike language: "Some people were mean to him." "Heavenly Father...lives in a beautiful, shining place." "Vermont is in the United States of America." "A light shows us the right way to go."

**In a five-page preamble**, "Before the Doctrine and Covenants," children are treated to some basics of Mormon religion represented as true Christian faith. Three highlights:

- Jesus and Satan, God's children and our brothers, lived with us as spirits in heaven. God chose Jesus to be the savior. Satan volunteered, too, but was rejected and banished from heaven.
- God wants us to obey prophets, and Jesus established a church with prophets in America. When it failed, ordinary men started other churches. All are false; none have the true gospel or prophets.\*
- By revelation the correct church finally was restored to earth. "This [story] book tells...how the true Church of Jesus Christ was brought back to the earth."

#### **The flavor of Mormonism from a quick scan:**

Chapter 2: Fourteen-year-old Joseph Smith decided to ask God which church to join. Jesus told him in a vision in 1820 to join no church because they were all wrong.

Chapter 9: In 1830 "Jesus Christ told Joseph it was time for the true church to be on earth again. Jesus told Joseph to start the Church," which he did on April 6. "Jesus said Joseph was a prophet."

Chapter 14: "Only one man gets revelations for the Church...the President of the Church. He is the prophet of God. Members of the Church should obey the prophet."

Chapter 26, about the "three kingdoms of heaven": "The New Testament said good people go to heaven." In one kingdom, "Righteous" Mormons "become gods." In another "good people" who "did not obey all of the commandments but come to believe Mormonism after death "will see Jesus," but cannot become gods and cannot live with the Father or Son. In a third kingdom of heaven, the unrighteous who "did not believe the prophets" cannot see the Father or Son, and "they can never live with them." Finally, "very wicked people" have no heaven, but "will live with Satan forever."

Chapter 30: In a Mormon temple church members "learn things they need to know to go back to heaven. They make covenants with God. God makes covenants with them."

**The story is consistent.** Mormon children hear the elementary ideas of their religion, whether supposedly from the Bible, or from the church's other religious books. The principles are: You came to earth from heaven. You will be happy on earth and return to heaven and gain eternal life if you are good, obey the living prophet, and observe throughout life all the rites and traditions of the religion.

**What can you do about it?** How is this relevant in your relationship and conversation with adult Mormons? Some ideas: Simply ask them who their prophet is and what unique revelation they have heard from him in the past month—or year, or ten years. Ask them how they are doing personally in their pursuit of eternal life. Tell them that you follow the living prophet, Jesus Christ, and the truth revealed in the Bible.

NOTES: \*Unlike Mormon churches and officiants, false churches are represented in pictures showing crosses on steeples and inside a church, and the false leaders wearing stereotypical vestments. \*\*The Mormon canon: Bible, *Book of Mormon*, *Doctrine and Covenants*, *Pearl of Great Price*. See [P.S.#42](#) for the Mormon church's stories for children about the Bible, and [P.S.#43](#) about the *Book of Mormon*.