Most members of the Church have a basic understanding of the Holy Ghost. Most have experienced its promptings and understand why the Holy Ghost is called the Comforter.

They know “the Holy Ghost . . . is a personage of Spirit” (D&C 130:22) and a member of the Godhead (see Articles of Faith 1:1).

But many do not know that there is another Spirit – “the light of Christ” (D&C 88:7) – another source of inspiration, which each of us possesses in common with all other members of the human family. If we know about the Light of Christ, we will understand that there is something inside all of us, and we can appeal to that in our desire to share truth.

The Holy Ghost and the Light of Christ are different from each other. While they are sometimes described in the scriptures with the same words, they are two different and distinct entities. It is important for you to know about both of them.

The more we know about the Light of Christ, the more we will understand about life and the more we will have a deep love for all mankind. We will be better teachers and missionaries and parents, and better men and women and children. We will have deeper regard for our brothers and sisters in the Church and for those who do not believe and have not yet had conferred upon them the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The Light of Christ is defined in the scriptures as “the Spirit [which] giveth light to every man that cometh into the world” (D&C 84:46; emphasis added); “the light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed” (D&C 88:13; see also John 1:4-9; D&C 84:45-47; 88:6; 93:9).

And the Light of Christ is also described in the scriptures as “the Spirit of Jesus Christ” (D&C 84:45), “the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18; see also Mosiah 25:24), “the Spirit of truth” (D&C 93:26), “the light of truth” (D&C 88:6), “the Spirit of God” (D&C 46:17), and “the Holy Spirit” (D&C 45:57). Some of these terms are also used to refer to the Holy Ghost.

The First Presidency has written, “There is a universally diffused essence which is the light and the life of the world, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, which proceedeth forth from the presence of God throughout the immensity of space, the light and power of which God bestows in different degrees to ‘them that ask him,’ according to their faith and obedience.”[“Receiving the Holy Ghost,” Improvement Era, Mar. 1916, 460.]

Regardless of whether this inner light, this knowledge of right and wrong, is called the Light of Christ, moral sense, or conscience, it can direct us to moderate our actions – unless, that is, we subdue it or silence it.

Every spirit child of our Heavenly Father enters into mortality to receive a physical body and to be tested.

“The Lord said . . . they are the workmanship of mine own hands, and I gave unto them their knowledge, in the day I created them; and in the Garden of Eden, gave I unto man his agency” (Moses 7:32).

“Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil” (2 Nephi 2:27).

Therefore, we know that “every man may act in doctrine and principle pertaining to futurity, according to the moral agency [the words free agency do not appear in the revelations] which I have given unto him, that every man may be accountable for his own sins in the day of judgment” (D&C 101:78; emphasis added).

We are admonished to “quench not the Spirit” (1 Thessalonians 5:19). Thus we can see that “[all] are instructed sufficiently that they know good from evil” (2 Nephi 2:5; see also 2 Nephi 2:27). They have their agency, and they are accountable.
This Spirit of Christ fosters everything that is good, every virtue (see Moroni 7:16). It stands in brilliant, indestructible opposition to anything that is coarse or ugly or profane or evil or wicked (see Moroni 7:17). Conscience affirms the reality of the Spirit of Christ in man. It affirms, as well, the reality of good and evil, of justice, mercy, honor, courage, faith, love, and virtue, as well as the necessary opposites – hatred, greed, brutality, jealousy (see 2 Nephi 2:11, 16). Such values, though physically intangible, respond to laws with cause-and-effect relationships as certain as any resulting from physical laws (see Galatians 6:7-9). The Spirit of Christ can be likened unto a “guardian angel” for every person.[See Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (1954–56), 1:54. ]

The Spirit of Christ can enlighten the inventor, the scientist, the painter, the sculptor, the composer, the performer, the architect, the author to produce great, even inspired things for the blessing and good of all mankind.

This Spirit can prompt the farmer in his field and the fisherman on his boat. It can inspire the teacher in the classroom, the missionary in presenting his discussion. It can inspire the student who listens. And of enormous importance, it can inspire husband and wife, and father and mother.

This inner Light can warn and guard and guide. But it can be repulsed by anything that is ugly or unworthy or wicked or immoral or selfish.

The Light of Christ existed in you before you were born (see D&C 93:23, 29-30), and it will be with you every moment that you live and will not perish when the mortal part of you has turned to dust. It is ever there.

Every man, woman, and child of every nation, creed, or color – everyone, no matter where they live or what they believe or what they do – has within them the imperishable Light of Christ. In this respect, all men are created equally. The Light of Christ in everyone is a testimony that God is no respecter of persons (see D&C 1:35). He treats everyone equally in that endowment with the Light of Christ.

It is important for a teacher or a missionary or a parent to know that the Holy Ghost can work through the Light of Christ. A teacher of gospel truths is not planting something foreign or even new into an adult or a child. Rather, the missionary or teacher is making contact with the Spirit of Christ already there. The gospel will have a familiar “ring” to them. Then the teaching will come “to the convincing of [those who will listen] that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations” (Book of Mormon title page).

During His mortal ministry, Jesus taught His gospel and put in place the foundation upon which His Church would be built. The foundation was built of stones of doctrine which can neither be seen with mortal eyes nor felt by touch; they are invisible and intangible. They will not weather away or crumble. They cannot be broken or dissolved or destroyed. These stones of doctrine are imperishable and indestructible.

These stones of doctrine existed “before the world was” (D&C 124:38), “from before the foundation of the world” (D&C 124:41). Christ built His Church upon them.

Jesus spoke of “the stone which the builders rejected” (Matthew 21:42). Then the shadow of apostasy settled over the earth. The line of priesthood authority was broken. But mankind was not left in total darkness or completely without revelation or inspiration. The idea that with the Crucifixion of Christ the heavens were closed and that they opened in the First Vision is not true. The Light of Christ would be everywhere present to attend the children of God; the Holy Ghost would visit seeking souls. The prayers of the righteous would not go unanswered.

The conferring of the gift of the Holy Ghost must await the restoration of the priesthood and the dispensation of the fulness of times, when all things would be revealed. Temple work — ordinance work — would then be revealed. Then those who lived during the many generations when essential ordinances were unavailable, when baptism was not available, would be redeemed. God never abandons His children. He never has abandoned this earth.

When the fulness of His gospel was restored, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was built upon the same foundation stones of doctrine.

Because we learn most everything through physical senses, teaching intangible doctrines which cannot be seen or felt becomes very difficult. Jesus, the Master Teacher, taught these doctrines, and they can be taught in the same way today. It is my purpose to show you how He, the Master Teacher, taught them.

You can come to understand spiritual truths as clearly as if these stones of doctrine were as tangible as granite or flint or marble. Marble will yield to the hands of the sculptor so that others can see what he sees hidden within the shapeless stone. In like manner, you can teach others to see — that is, to understand — these intangible, invisible stones of doctrine.

The way the Savior taught, and the way you can teach, is both simple and very profound. If you choose a tangible object as a symbol for a doctrine, you can teach just as He did. A teacher can associate the doctrine with
an object already known, which can be seen with physical eyes.

Jesus compared faith to a seed, the tiny mustard seed, which can be seen and touched. He told how if the seed is nurtured, it can grow and flourish and become a tree. (See Luke 13:19.)

He compared the kingdom of heaven to an everyday object that can be seen. “The kingdom of heaven,” He said, “is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind” (Matthew 13:47); and He said, “The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field” (Matthew 13:44).

Christ used as examples, as symbols, such ordinary things as salt (see Matthew 5:13; Mark 9:49-50; Luke 14:34) and candles (see Matthew 5:15; Mark 4:21; Luke 8:16; 11:33-36; Revelation 18:23), as rain (see Matthew 28:27) and rainbows (see Revelation 4:3; 10:1). The four Gospels are full of such examples. Likewise the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price have dozens of similar references. They are everywhere. That is what a story or a parable is—a true-to-life example used to teach a principle or a doctrine that is invisible or intangible.

One time in Matthew, one time in Luke, three times in the Book of Mormon, and three times in the Doctrine and Covenants, the Savior spoke of a hen with her chickens (see Matthew 23:37; Luke 13:34; 3 Nephi 10:4-6; D&C 10:65; 29:2; 43:24). Everyone knows about hens and chickens, even little children.

Now faith is not really exactly like a seed, nor is the kingdom of heaven exactly like a net or a treasure or heaven (see Luke 13:21) or “a merchant man, seeking goodly pears” (Matthew 13:45). But with these illustrations, Jesus was able to open the eyes of His disciples—not their natural eyes but the eyes of their understanding (see Matthew 13:15; John 12:40; Acts 28:27; Ephesians 1:18; 2 Nephi 16:10; D&C 76:12, 19; 88:11; 110:1).

With the eyes of our understanding, we see things that are spiritual. With our spirits reaching out, we can touch things that are spiritual and feel them. Then we can see and we can feel things that are invisible to the physical senses. Remember, Nephi told his rebellious brothers, who had rejected a message from an angel, “Ye were past feeling, that ye could not feel his words” (1 Nephi 17:45; emphasis added).

Paul wrote to the Corinthians that “God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. . . . “Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:10, 13-14).

In modern revelation, Christ spoke of “the light which shineth, which giveth you light [and] enlighteneth your eyes, which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings” (D&C 88:11).

I do not know how to teach about the Spirit of Christ except to follow what the Lord did when He taught invisible, intangible truths to His disciples.

To describe the Light of Christ, I will compare or liken it to the light of the sun. Sunlight is familiar to everyone; it is everywhere present and can be seen and can be felt. Life itself depends upon sunlight.

The Light of Christ is like sunlight. It, too, is everywhere present and given to everyone equally.

Just as darkness must vanish when the light of the sun appears, so is evil sent fleeing by the Light of Christ.

There is no darkness in sunlight. Darkness is subject unto it. The sun can be hidden by clouds or by the rotation of the earth, but the clouds will disappear, and the earth will complete its turning.

According to the plan, we are told that “it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things” (2 Nephi 2:11).

Mormon warned that “the devil . . . persuadeth no man to do good, no, not one; neither do his angels; neither do they who subject themselves unto him.

“[Now] seeing that ye know the light by which ye may judge, which light is the light of Christ, see that ye do not judge wrongfully” (Moroni 7:17-18).

This Light of Christ, which gives life, is within you. The evil one will attempt to obscure it. It can be so clouded with confusion so far as to convince you that it does not even exist.

Just as sunlight is a natural disinfectant, the Spirit of Christ can cleanse the spirit.

Every soul, no matter who or where or when, is a child of God. Our responsibility is to teach that “there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding” (Job 32:8).

President Joseph Fielding Smith spoke of the teachings of the Holy Ghost and of the Spirit of Christ: “Every man can receive a manifestation of the Holy Ghost, even when he is out of the Church, if he is earnestly seeking for the light and for the truth. The Holy Ghost will come and give the man the testimony he is seeking, and then withdraw; and the man does not have a claim upon another visit or constant visits and
manifestations from him. He may have the constant guidance of that other Spirit, the Spirit of Christ.”

[Doctrines of Salvation, 1:42; see also Joseph Smith, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 149.]

The Spirit of Christ is always there. It never leaves. It cannot leave.

Everyone everywhere already has the Spirit of Christ, and while the Spirit of the Holy Ghost can visit anyone, the gift of the Holy Ghost is obtained “by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel” (Articles of Faith 1:3), by submitting to “baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; [and the] laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Articles of Faith 1:4). It is not automatically present like the Spirit of Christ is present. This gift must be conferred by one holding authority (see Articles of Faith 1:5).

That is what we are commissioned to do, to foster the Light of Christ, which is within every soul we meet, and bring souls to the point where the Holy Ghost may visit them. And then, in due time, they can receive, through the ordinance, the gift of the Holy Ghost, which is conferred upon every member of the Church.

Once a person has received that gift of the Holy Ghost and can cultivate it together with the Light of Christ, which they already have, then the fulness of the gospel is open to their understanding. The Holy Ghost can even work through the Light of Christ. [See Doctrines of Salvation, 1:54.]

The Light of Christ is as universal as sunlight itself. Wherever there is human life, there is the Spirit of Christ. Every living soul is possessed of it. It is the sponsor of everything that is good. It is the inspirer of everything that will bless and benefit mankind. It nourishes goodness itself.

Mormon taught: “Search diligently in the light of Christ that ye may know good from evil; and if ye will lay hold upon every good thing, and condemn it not, ye certainly will be a child of Christ” (Moroni 7:19).

Everyone knows about sunlight. When you liken the Spirit of Christ to sunlight, ordinary examples from your own experiences may come to your mind. These examples are almost endless. These examples can be understood by little children or by adults, as the parables of Christ can be understood. It should not be difficult to teach how revelation can come through Light, even though we do not know exactly how inspiration works.

Man himself, with all his limitations, can convey messages through fiber-optic cables. A single tiny fiber of glass, smaller than a human hair, can carry 40,000 messages at the same time. These can then be decoded and turned into sight and sound and color, even motion.

Man can do that.

A laser beam, where there is no wire or fiber at all, can carry 100 billion bits of information in a second.

If man can do that, why should we marvel at the promise that the Light of Christ is in all of us and that the Holy Ghost can visit any of us?

It should not be difficult, therefore, to understand how revelation from God to His children on earth can come to all mankind through both the Spirit of Christ and the Holy Ghost.

This Light of Christ is everywhere in the scriptures. The Doctrine and Covenants is a very rich source of teaching on the Light of Christ. For example, it speaks of the light of truth; which truth shineth. This is the light of Christ. . . . He is in the sun, and the light of the sun, and the power thereof by which it was made” (D&C 88:6-7).

Ordinary teachers responsible to teach the doctrines and to testify of spiritual things have within their own personal experience everyday things which can be likened unto things which are spiritual.

Then the Light of Christ can be ignited by the Spirit of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. We are told that then the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26).

President Harold B. Lee explained: “That light never entirely goes out . . . [speaking of the Light of Christ] unless we commit the unpardonable sin. Its glow may be so dim that we can hardly perceive it, but it is there for us to fan into a flame that shall burn brighter with understanding and with knowledge. Except for that, we wouldn't be able to achieve. Our missionary work would come to naught.”[The Teachings of Harold B. Lee, ed. Clyde J. Williams (1996), 101.]

If we understand the reality of the Light of Christ in everyone we see and in every meeting we attend and within ourselves, and understand the great challenge that we have – the surroundings in which we live, the danger which sometimes besets us – we will have courage and inspiration beyond that which we have known heretofore. And it must be so! And it will be so! All of this is a dimension of gospel truth that too few understand.

May you prayerfully and diligently endeavor to comprehend the meaning of these principles, and then begin to apply them. As you do, then follows the testimony that the gospel of Jesus Christ is true, that the Restoration of the gospel is a reality, and that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is “the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth”
(D&C 1:30). Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the Only Begotten of the Father. And from Him emanates the Light of Christ to all mankind.

May you who are called as missionaries or teachers and you who are parents “feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:3). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.