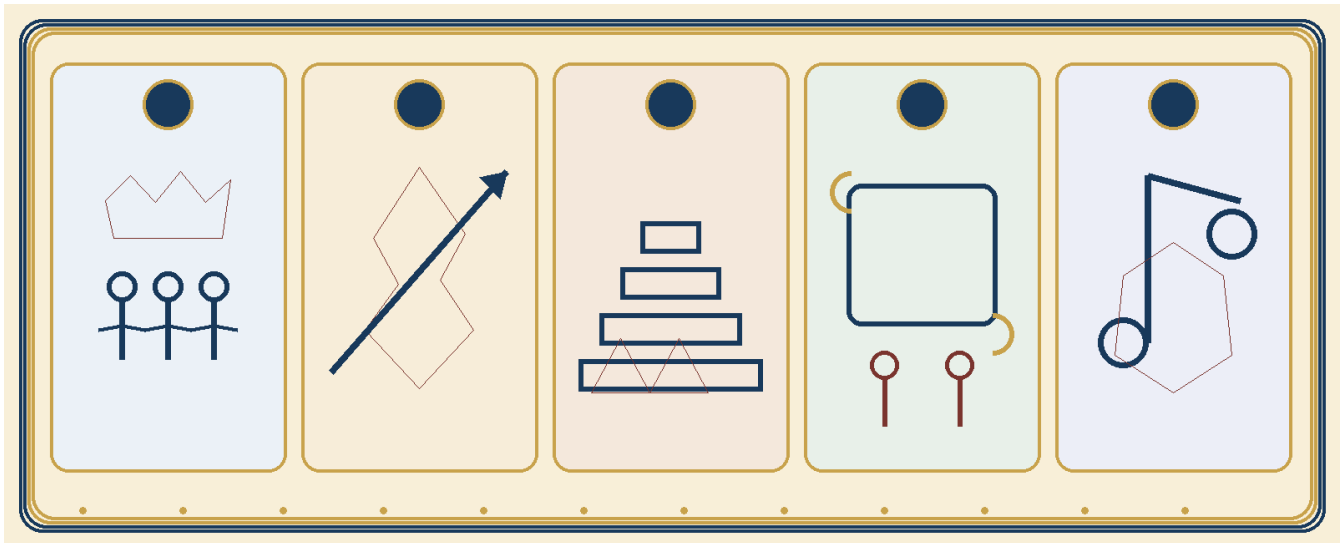


TALES OF THE PROMISED LAND

STORIES BEHIND THE STORIES

Classroom & Family Study Pack



A Five-Lesson Companion

Scripture readings • vocabulary • comprehension • fact vs. imagined detail • discussion prompts • creative writing

ESTHER'S CHOICE
THROUGH THE FIRE
THE FALL OF JACOBUGATH
THE MISSION OF ALMA AND AMULEK
WITH A NEW VOICE

Designed for family study, homeschool, classroom, book clubs, and seminary-style discussion.

Companion to Tales of the Promised Land by Michael D. Young

How to Use This Pack

Purpose

Each lesson invites readers to move back and forth between the fictional story and the Book of Mormon passage that inspired it. The goal is not to treat fictional details as scripture, but to notice what the scriptural record says, identify where the novel fills narrative gaps, and then return to the text with better questions.

Suggested 35-50 Minute Lesson Flow

- Read the assigned scripture passage before or during the lesson.
- Read or review the matching story from Tales of the Promised Land.
- Use the vocabulary list to clarify unfamiliar religious, political, or historical terms.
- Answer the comprehension questions from the novel.
- Complete “Scripture Record or Novel Expansion?” and discuss why the distinction matters.
- Choose one or two discussion prompts; end with the creative response if time allows.

SCRIPTURE RECORD

Material explicitly found in the Book of Mormon or directly summarized from it.

NOVEL EXPANSION

Characters, motives, relationships, dialogue, settings, or scene-level details created by the novel to explore the scriptural gap.

Important Note

This is an unofficial literary study companion. It is not an official publication of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Scripture references are provided so readers can examine the source text for themselves.

Five Stories, Five Scriptural Windows

# / Story	Primary Reading	Core Theme	Best For
1. Esther's Choice	Mosiah 20:1-5; 23:25-39; 24:8-25	Courage, captivity, conversion, deliverance	Compare source and imagination
2. Through the Fire	Mosiah 17:14-18; Alma 25:4-12	Prophecy, inherited consequences, identity, mercy	Compare source and imagination
3. The Fall of Jacobugath	3 Nephi 9:1-14; 11:1-17; 17:7-10	Judgment, repentance, healing, second chances	Compare source and imagination
4. The Mission of Alma and Amulek	Alma 8:14-32; 10-15	Calling, testimony, opposition, forgiveness	Compare source and imagination
5. With a New Voice	3 Nephi 3-4	Faith under pressure, gifts, loss, restoration	Compare source and imagination

The Big Question for the Whole Book

What can historical or scriptural fiction help us notice that a brief record may leave unstated - and how do we enjoy those possibilities without confusing imagination with revelation?

Recurring Skills

- Close reading: identify what the source text actually states.
- Inference: distinguish reasonable possibilities from explicit facts.
- Character analysis: ask why a fictional character makes a particular choice.
- Scripture connection: trace how a fictional plot grows from a short passage.
- Creative writing: expand a brief event while labeling invented details honestly.

LESSON 1 • Esther's Choice

MOSIAH 20, 23-24

BIG IDEA

Faith can grow in the middle of coercion, fear, and divided loyalties.

SCRIPTURE READING Mosiah 20:1-5; Mosiah 23:25-39; Mosiah 24:8-25

SETTING THE STAGE

The scriptural record briefly reports that twenty-four Lamanite daughters were taken by the priests of Noah, and later describes Amulon's power over Alma's people. The novel enters that gap through Esther, one of the abducted women, and follows her changing view of Nephites, God, and freedom.

SCRIPTURE RECORD

- Lamanite daughters gather to sing and dance; twenty-four are carried into the wilderness by the priests of Noah.
- Amulon is identified as the leader of the former priests of Noah and later gains authority over Alma's people.
- Alma's people are forbidden to pray aloud, yet the Lord strengthens them and ultimately delivers them from bondage.

NOVEL EXPANSION

- The abducted royal maiden is named Esther; Orpha is her closest friend.
- Esther secretly learns about God from Helam and gradually trusts his testimony.
- Esther confronts Amulon, is imprisoned, escapes during the divinely sent sleep, and carries Orpha away with the fleeing Nephites.
- The story ends with Esther choosing baptism.

VOCABULARY

Word / Phrase	Meaning in Context
bondage	A condition of captivity or forced service.
deliverance	Rescue from danger, oppression, or captivity.
coercion	Forcing someone to act through threats or pressure.
conversion	A deep change of belief, loyalty, and spiritual direction.
taskmaster	A person who supervises forced labor or harsh work.

Esther's Choice: Read, Compare, Discuss

COMPREHENSION - ANSWER FROM THE NOVEL

1. Why does Esther refuse Helam's first invitation to escape?
2. What experiences begin to change Esther's assumptions about Nephites?
3. Why does Esther return for Orpha when the settlement falls asleep?
4. What final choice shows that Esther's change is spiritual as well as physical?

SCRIPTURE RECORD OR NOVEL EXPANSION?

Statement	Scripture Record	Novel Expansion
Twenty-four Lamanite daughters are taken by the priests of Noah.	☐	☐
One of the women is a royal daughter named Esther.	☐	☐
Amulon later exercises authority over Alma's people.	☐	☐
Esther meets Helam in secret and carries Orpha during the escape.	☐	☐

DISCUSS

- How can fear of harming others keep a person in an unhealthy or unjust situation?
- Esther begins with inherited assumptions about Nephites. What helps her revise them?
- Why is deliverance in this story both a physical event and a change of heart?

CREATE

Write a one-page journal entry from Orpha's point of view on the morning after the escape. Include three details from the novel and clearly mark one detail you invent.

RETURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Re-read Mosiah 20:1-5; Mosiah 23:25-39; Mosiah 24:8-25. Underline one detail you noticed more clearly after reading the story. Then write one sentence beginning: "The novel made me wonder..."

LESSON 2 • Through the Fire

MOSIAH 17 • ALMA 25

BIG IDEA

A person is more than the sins, reputation, or legacy of previous generations.

SCRIPTURE READING Mosiah 17:14-18; Alma 25:4-12

SETTING THE STAGE

Abinadi prophesies that the priests who put him to death by fire will see consequences return upon their posterity. Alma later records the fulfillment of that prophecy. The novel imagines righteous descendants of those priests who must decide what inherited identity means for them.

SCRIPTURE RECORD

- Abinadi warns that what is done to him will become a type of things to come.
- Alma records that many descendants of Amulon and the other priests are slain, hunted, and scattered.
- The record explicitly connects those events to Abinadi's prophecy.

NOVEL EXPANSION

- Helorum and Zimran are descendants of the priests who reject their fathers' wicked traditions.
- Amulon manipulates Helorum by using Ephah and a sealed bundle of supposed military intelligence.
- Helorum is tricked into leading enemies to Chief Captain Levi and is later condemned to die by fire.
- Ephah and Zimran help rescue him; Helorum and Ephah eventually build a quiet life together.

VOCABULARY

Word / Phrase	Meaning in Context
posterity	Descendants or future generations.
prophecy	A divinely inspired declaration or warning about truth or future events.
legacy	Something inherited from people or events that came before.
treachery	Betrayal of trust.
vigilant	Watchful and alert to danger.

Through the Fire: Read, Compare, Discuss

COMPREHENSION - ANSWER FROM THE NOVEL

1. Why does Helorum agree to carry Amulon's sealed information?
2. How does Amulon's plan turn Helorum into an unwitting guide?
3. Why does Abinadi's prophecy trouble Helorum and Zimran?
4. Who acts to save Helorum from the threatened fire, and what does that reveal about loyalty?

SCRIPTURE RECORD OR NOVEL EXPANSION?

Statement	Scripture Record	Novel Expansion
Abinadi warns that the priests' actions will return upon their seed.	☐	☐
Helorum and Zimran are named descendants of Noah's priests.	☐	☐
Alma records the scattering and death of descendants of Amulon's group.	☐	☐
Ephah interrupts Helorum's execution and flees with him.	☐	☐

DISCUSS

- How much responsibility should people bear for the reputation of their family or community?
- What is the difference between prophecy as warning and fatalism?
- Helorum is distrusted by multiple groups. What does the story suggest about judging identity by ancestry?

CREATE

Create a "legacy map" for Helorum: three things he inherits, three things he rejects, and three things he chooses to build for the next generation.

RETURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Re-read Mosiah 17:14-18; Alma 25:4-12. Underline one detail you noticed more clearly after reading the story. Then write one sentence beginning: "The novel made me wonder..."

LESSON 3 • The Fall of Jacobugath

3 NEPHI 9, 11, 17

BIG IDEA

Judgment and mercy can sit side by side: a city falls, while individuals may still seek healing and change.

SCRIPTURE READING 3 Nephi 9:1-14; 3 Nephi 11:1-17; 3 Nephi 17:7-10

SETTING THE STAGE

The Book of Mormon gives Jacobugath only a few lines: it is the city of the people of king Jacob and is burned because of extreme wickedness and secret combinations. The novel builds an entire city, culture, family crisis, and survivor story around that brief notice.

SCRIPTURE RECORD

- Jacobugath is named as a great city inhabited by the people of king Jacob.
- The voice of Christ declares that the city was burned because of wickedness and secret combinations.
- Later, the resurrected Christ appears to the Nephites; the record also describes Him healing the sick and afflicted.

NOVEL EXPANSION

- Limhi survives the destruction of his village and enters Jacobugath to find his captured brother, Jershon.
- The city is imagined with golden walls, red-gem flame mosaics, heated pools, masks, a sun festival, and a tiered pyramid.
- Jershon has been absorbed into Jacobugath's ritual world; Milhah helps the brothers escape as the city burns.
- After the darkness, Limhi brings the injured Jershon to the Messiah, who heals him.

VOCABULARY

Word / Phrase	Meaning in Context
secret combination	A secret group bound by oaths to gain power through wrongdoing.
cataclysm	A sudden, violent, large-scale disaster.
ritual	A repeated ceremonial action with symbolic meaning.
reconstruction	An informed attempt to imagine or rebuild what is no longer visible.
repentance	Turning away from sin and toward God.

The Fall of Jacobugath: Read, Compare, Discuss

COMPREHENSION - ANSWER FROM THE NOVEL

1. Why does Limhi enter Jacobugath even though he knows it is dangerous?
2. How does he use disguise and observation to move through the city?
3. What details make Jacobugath feel powerful and corrupt at the same time?
4. How does Jershon's healing change the emotional meaning of the city's destruction?

SCRIPTURE RECORD OR NOVEL EXPANSION?

Statement	Scripture Record	Novel Expansion
Jacobugath is associated with king Jacob and secret combinations.	☐	☐
Its walls are plated with gold and decorated with red gemstone flame mosaics.	☐	☐
The city is destroyed by fire.	☐	☐
A survivor named Jershon is personally healed by the resurrected Christ.	☐	☐

DISCUSS

- Why might an author build a lavish city around a single scriptural verse?
- How does the contrast between Jacobugath's masked festival and the later gathering of believers shape the theme?
- What does Jershon's fear of approaching Christ reveal about guilt and mercy?

CREATE

Design a museum label for one imagined artifact from Jacobugath. Include what the scripture supports, what the novel supplies, and one clearly labeled inference of your own.

RETURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Re-read 3 Nephi 9:1-14; 3 Nephi 11:1-17; 3 Nephi 17:7-10. Underline one detail you noticed more clearly after reading the story. Then write one sentence beginning: "The novel made me wonder..."

LESSON 4 • The Mission of Alma and Amulek

ALMA 8-15

BIG IDEA

Discipleship can require costly choices, and repentance can turn an opponent into a brother.

SCRIPTURE READING Alma 8:14-32; Alma 10:1-12; Alma 11:21-46; Alma 14:1-29; Alma 15:1-14

SETTING THE STAGE

This story expands one of the more detailed scriptural narratives in the collection. Alma returns to hostile Ammonihah, meets Amulek, preaches, confronts Zeezrom, suffers persecution, escapes prison, and later helps Zeezrom find healing and baptism.

SCRIPTURE RECORD

- An angel commands Alma to return to Ammonihah, where Amulek receives him.
- Amulek joins Alma as a witness and teacher.
- Zeezrom offers six onties of silver in an attempt to trap Amulek.
- Believers suffer persecution; Alma and Amulek are imprisoned and miraculously delivered.
- Zeezrom is healed according to his faith and is baptized.

NOVEL EXPANSION

- The story gives Amulek a named wife, Bilhah, a son named Aaron, servants, tenants, and detailed household scenes.
- Amulek's wealth and social position are dramatized through debts, food, property, and family pressures.
- The novel places Amulek's wife and son directly among the victims of the fire, intensifying his grief.
- Amulek's emotional struggle to forgive Zeezrom is expanded into a major part of the ending.

VOCABULARY

Word / Phrase	Meaning in Context
onti	A unit of silver money named in the Book of Mormon.
testimony	A personal witness or conviction of spiritual truth.
tribulation	Severe suffering, difficulty, or distress.
deliverance	Rescue from captivity or danger.
redemption	Rescue from sin and death through Jesus Christ.

The Mission of Alma and Amulek: Read, Compare, Discuss

COMPREHENSION - ANSWER FROM THE NOVEL

1. What makes Amulek willing to welcome Alma into his home?
2. Why is Zeezrom's offer of six onties more than a simple bribe?
3. What does Amulek lose because of his decision to stand with Alma?
4. Why is forgiving Zeezrom so difficult for Amulek in the novel?

SCRIPTURE RECORD OR NOVEL EXPANSION?

Statement	Scripture Record	Novel Expansion
An angel directs Alma to return to Ammonihah.	☐	☐
Amulek's wife is named Bilhah and his son Aaron.	☐	☐
Zeezrom offers six onties to Amulek.	☐	☐
Zeezrom is healed and baptized after his change of heart.	☐	☐

DISCUSS

- Which is harder: beginning to believe, or continuing to believe when obedience becomes costly?
- Why does Zeezrom's transformation matter more because he first opposed Alma and Amulek?
- How does the novel use family details to make Amulek's scriptural sacrifices feel personal?

CREATE

Rewrite the six-onties confrontation as a short courtroom transcript. Keep the scriptural facts intact, but add stage directions that show what each man may be thinking.

RETURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Re-read Alma 8:14-32; Alma 10:1-12; Alma 11:21-46; Alma 14:1-29; Alma 15:1-14. Underline one detail you noticed more clearly after reading the story. Then write one sentence beginning: "The novel made me wonder..."

LESSON 5 • With a New Voice

3 NEPHI 3-4

BIG IDEA

A spiritual gift can survive loss, fear, and change - and may return in a form deeper than the one first imagined.

SCRIPTURE READING 3 Nephi 3:1-18; 3 Nephi 4:1-33

SETTING THE STAGE

The scripture tells of Giddianhi's threat, Lachoneus's response, the gathering and fortification of the people, Gidgiddoni's leadership, and the eventual defeat of the robbers. The novel views that national crisis through Zenephi, a musician whose identity is shattered when a battle injury takes away his voice.

SCRIPTURE RECORD

- Giddianhi demands surrender and threatens destruction.
- Lachoneus gathers the people, fortifies them, and calls them to repent and pray.
- Gidgiddoni commands the Nephite armies.
- Giddianhi is slain and the robbers are defeated; the people praise God for deliverance.

NOVEL EXPANSION

- Zenephi is a farmer, storyteller, and unusually young temple singer.
- His grandfather teaches him a sacred song and tells him that the Lord's strength can flow through music.
- Zenephi fights, is struck in the throat, loses his voice, hides in despair, and is found by Ishmael.
- At the temple after the victory, Zenephi opens his mouth in faith and his strong singing voice is restored; he reunites with Jezerel.

VOCABULARY

Word / Phrase	Meaning in Context
fortification	A defensive structure or system built to protect people or a place.
supplication	Earnest prayer or pleading.
deliverance	Rescue from an enemy or danger.
gift	An ability or capacity understood as a blessing from God.
restoration	The return of something that was lost, damaged, or diminished.

With a New Voice: Read, Compare, Discuss

COMPREHENSION - ANSWER FROM THE NOVEL

1. What does Zenephi's grandfather teach him about music and divine gifts?
2. Why is the loss of Zenephi's voice especially devastating to him?
3. What does Ishmael mean when he tells Zenephi that he is more than his voice?
4. What act of faith immediately precedes the restoration of Zenephi's singing voice?

SCRIPTURE RECORD OR NOVEL EXPANSION?

Statement	Scripture Record	Novel Expansion
Giddianhi sends a demand for Nephite surrender.	☐	☐
A temple singer named Zenephi joins the defense.	☐	☐
Gidgiddoni leads the Nephite armies and Giddianhi is slain.	☐	☐
Zenephi's damaged voice is miraculously restored while he sings at the temple.	☐	☐

DISCUSS

- What happens when a talent becomes too central to a person's identity?
- How is silent prayer used in the novel when Zenephi cannot physically sing?
- Why is the story's final "new voice" about more than vocal healing?

CREATE

Choose one talent or role that matters to you. Write eight lines about how that gift could still bless others even if circumstances changed the way you use it.

RETURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Re-read 3 Nephi 3:1-18; 3 Nephi 4:1-33. Underline one detail you noticed more clearly after reading the story. Then write one sentence beginning: "The novel made me wonder..."

Creative Writing Lab

The Challenge

Choose a short Book of Mormon event that leaves questions unanswered. Write a 500-800 word scene that stays faithful to what the scripture actually states while openly inventing plausible human detail around it.

STEP 1 - BUILD YOUR SOURCE ANCHOR

1. Write the scripture reference and summarize only what the passage explicitly states in 2-4 sentences.
2. List every named person, place, action, and outcome in the passage.
3. List three things the passage does NOT tell you: motive, dialogue, weather, relationship, sensory detail, etc.

STEP 2 - CHOOSE YOUR INVENTIONS

1. Create one point-of-view character. If the scripture does not name that person, label the character as invented.
2. Choose a concrete desire or fear that does not contradict the record.
3. Invent setting and sensory details that support the mood without presenting them as historical fact.

STEP 3 - WRITE WITH TWO RULES

1. Do not change an explicit scriptural event just to make the story more dramatic.
2. Do not present an invented spiritual message, doctrine, or revelation as though scripture records it.

SOURCE ANCHOR

What must remain true because the scripture says it?

IMAGINATIVE SPACE

What can you invent because the scripture leaves it unstated?

Optional Story Seeds

A messenger carrying a difficult command • an unnamed witness to a miracle • a family preparing to flee • a soldier before a battle • a child hearing a prophet • a traveler arriving just after a major event

Facilitator Notes & Answer Key

Prompt	Suggested Answer / Teaching Note
Esther 1	She fears that leaving will bring retaliation on the other women, especially Orpha.
Esther 2	Alma's steadiness, Helam's kindness and teaching, and Esther's direct experience with suffering Nephites challenge inherited prejudice.
Esther 3	Her loyalty to Orpha outweighs the urgency of escape; she refuses to treat freedom as purely individual.
Esther 4	She asks Helam to baptize her.
Esther fact/imagined	Scripture, Novel, Scripture, Novel.
Through Fire 1	Amulon uses Ephah as leverage and presents the errand as a seemingly limited delivery.
Through Fire 2	The sealed information leads Helorum to Levi, while Amulon's men follow and attack.
Through Fire 3	They know Abinadi's prophecy concerns the descendants of Noah's priests and fear being caught in inherited judgment.
Through Fire 4	Ephah, aided by Zimran and others, interrupts the execution and helps him escape.
Through Fire fact/imagined	Scripture, Novel, Scripture, Novel.
Jacobugath 1	He is determined to find and rescue Jershon.
Jacobugath 2	He uses stealth, a discarded mask, crowds, shadows, and careful observation.
Jacobugath 3	Luxury, gold, gardens, spectacle, masks, ritual, violence, and sacrifice coexist.
Jacobugath 4	The story moves from destruction to mercy: Jershon's personal guilt and wounds are met by healing.
Jacobugath fact/imagined	Scripture, Novel, Scripture, Novel.

Facilitator Notes & Answer Key

Prompt	Suggested Answer / Teaching Note
Alma/Amulek 1	An angelic instruction connects Alma and Amulek; Amulek receives Alma and becomes willing to listen.
Alma/Amulek 2	Zeezrom is testing whether Amulek will deny God for gain and trying to create grounds to accuse him.
Alma/Amulek 3	The novel dramatizes losses of property, status, family security, loved ones, and former relationships.
Alma/Amulek 4	Zeezrom helped set events in motion that led to persecution, so forgiveness requires Amulek to surrender deeply personal anger.
Alma/Amulek fact/imagined	Scripture, Novel, Scripture, Scripture.
New Voice 1	His grandfather teaches that music is a gift of God and that divine strength can flow through song.
New Voice 2	Singing is central to Zenephi's calling, identity, hopes, and relationship to his community.
New Voice 3	He means Zenephi's worth and relationships are not erased by the loss of a talent.
New Voice 4	Zenephi obeys the prompting to ascend, remembers the promise, opens his mouth, and attempts the song despite pain and fear.
New Voice fact/imagined	Scripture, Novel, Scripture, Novel.

SCRIPTURE SOURCE GUIDE

Esther's Choice: Mosiah 20; 23-24 • Through the Fire: Mosiah 17; Alma 25 • The Fall of Jacobugath: 3 Nephi 9; 11; 17 • The Mission of Alma and Amulek: Alma 8-15 • With a New Voice: 3 Nephi 3-4

Final Teaching Reminder

When a student spots a difference between the novel and the scripture, that is not a problem to hide - it is the core learning opportunity. Ask: "What does the source actually say? Why might the author have imagined this? What changes when we return to the scripture?"