

## “To Seal the Testimony”

### Outline

- I. Framing (We talk about the martyrdom more than we understand it)
- II. Discussion of new resources
- III. Productive Sunday Schooling
  - a. How is your life different because of Joseph Smith?
  - b. What do you know about Hyrum and his contributions?
  - c. Why was Joseph killed?
  - d. Invite class to reflect on:
    - i. Their feelings about Joseph Smith (acknowledging he was human and a complex character)
    - ii. Their relationship to his legacy, specifically Mormonism
    - iii. Not for this section, but the question comes to mind, what would Joseph think of the Church today?

### Full episode overview

- The events leading up to Joseph’s death, including the role of the Laws
- The events of the martyrdom, including some you likely have never heard before!
- The connection of Joseph’s martyrdom to Masonry
- The relationship of self-defense and martyrdom
- Joseph’s stature in theology, history, and LDS culture

Manual Goal: To teach class members about the martyrdom of the Prophet [Joseph Smith](#) and to strengthen their testimonies of his calling as a prophet of God.

Engaging Gospel Doctrine Goal: To help class members appreciate the legacy of Joseph and Hyrum Smith and the events leading up to their martyrdom.

### Lesson 32: “To Seal the Testimony”

- [“Remembering the Martyrdom”](#): This article discusses the Saints’ early responses to the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum Smith.

- [“Ministry of Joseph Smith: Sealed His Testimony with His Blood”](#): This one-minute video introduces Joseph Smith’s imprisonment in Carthage Jail and his martyrdom. *Captures the courage and faith Joseph manifested while facing his death.*
- [“Who Killed Joseph Smith?”](#): This article discusses events leading up to the martyrdom. *Excellent detailed source. Highlights the role that polygamy and Joseph’s power played in the decision to assassinate him, and the context of vigilantism that fanned those flames.*
- [“Hyrum Smith: A Man of Mildness and Integrity”](#): This article discusses Hyrum Smith and includes a photo of the clothes he wore in Carthage Jail. *I appreciate how this article focuses on Hyrum’s life rather than dwelling on his death.*

Hyrum again stayed by Joseph’s side as they went to Carthage. Joseph had tried several times to keep Hyrum from danger. A week before they went to Carthage, Joseph wrote, “I advised my brother Hyrum to take his family on the next steamboat and go to Cincinnati. Hyrum replied, ‘Joseph, I can’t leave you.’”<sup>5</sup> Again, the day before his death, Joseph told those with him, “Could my brother, Hyrum but be liberated, it would not matter so much about me.”<sup>6</sup>

Hyrum, however, had made his choice. He would risk safety to stand beside his beloved brother. Joseph and Hyrum provided each other comfort during their final hours in the jail at Carthage. Hyrum read from the Book of Mormon and encouraged John Taylor to sing “A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief,” a folk song that “had lately been introduced into Nauvoo.”<sup>7</sup> Hyrum likely identified strongly with both the scripture he read and the song he requested, as they reassure the faithful of God’s love in spite of the world’s rejection.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death\\_of\\_Joseph\\_Smith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death_of_Joseph_Smith)

[http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Martyrdom\\_of\\_Joseph\\_and\\_Hyrum\\_Smith](http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Martyrdom_of_Joseph_and_Hyrum_Smith)

<https://history.lds.org/article/museum-treasures-powder-horn?lang=eng>

My friend’s comments: The Wikipedia article on Joseph Smith's death is more detailed and pretty good as well. Earlier in the article it makes it appear JS ordered the destruction of the Expositor, but it was actually the Nauvoo City Council that did, and JS signed the order as mayor. But the article does explain how much deliberation went into the decision as well as the context for the council's concerns.

The article misses the chance to bring the political context to the assassination. It's an essential aspect of what motivated the mob to action. They were almost entirely upset at the civic power JS had consolidated into himself and his presidential campaign made it appear there was no end to his ambition. Add suspicions of polygamy, and their religious suspicion of unholy delusion triggers major vigilante impulses.