

PRIESTHOOD AND AUXILIARY LEADERS'

G U I D E B O O K

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Distribution

The *Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders' Guidebook* is for priesthood and auxiliary leaders who are new to the Church and have limited Church experience. It will also be useful for leaders in more established areas. It explains principles and practices to help priesthood and auxiliary leaders fulfill their callings.

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Introduction

The Church prepared this guidebook to help priesthood and auxiliary leaders learn the responsibilities of their callings and how to fulfill them. All leaders and other Church members are to help accomplish the mission of the Church, which is to invite all people to “come unto Christ, and be perfected in him” (Moroni 10:32). To accomplish this mission, leaders help members:

- Proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. Share the gospel by bearing testimony as prompted by the Spirit.
- Perfect the Saints. Help new converts progress in the Church by ensuring that they have a friend and an assignment and are nourished by the word of God. Receive the ordinances and make the covenants of the gospel, strive to keep the commandments as they have promised, serve their fellowmen, care for the poor and needy, and fellowship one another to build the community of Saints.
- Redeem the dead. Identify deceased ancestors and perform temple ordinances for them as far as reasonably possible to prepare for family exaltation.

Share the Gospel



The Lord asks Church members to share the gospel. Leaders are to do so themselves and should encourage and inspire other members to do so. Some ways to share the gospel include:

- Setting a good example of living by gospel principles.
- Telling friends and family members about the gospel and the blessings it brings into their lives.
- Assisting district or full-time missionaries.
- Planning activities and programs to introduce the gospel to others.

Another way to share the gospel is to help members prepare to serve full-time missions. Leaders can help youth prepare to serve, encourage

parents to prepare their children for missions, and encourage retired couples to serve missions. Further, they can counsel members to save money to pay for their own missions and to support missionaries financially.

Under the direction of the branch president, the branch mission leader (when called) coordinates missionary work in the branch.

Perfect the Saints

Perfecting the Saints includes encouraging and helping each member live the gospel each day to prepare for exaltation. Perfecting the Saints has both a spiritual dimension and a temporal dimension.

Spiritual Preparation



Leaders should pray continually for inspiration to know how to help members increase their spiritual strength. Leaders can help members prepare spiritually by teaching them

the gospel and urging them to live it. They should encourage members to draw close to the Lord by praying, fasting, partaking of the sacrament, and studying the scriptures and the teachings of latter-day prophets. They should provide opportunities to serve, ensure that Church meetings are spiritually edifying, and show love by ministering to members individually.

Efforts to perfect the Saints should focus on individuals and families. The Church strengthens and supports families and homes. The home is the most important place for gospel teaching and leadership. Leaders are to encourage family members to love and serve each other and are to emphasize that parents have a responsibility to teach the gospel to their children and to hold family home evenings regularly.

All members of the Church should prepare to receive the blessings of the temple. Members' responsibilities for doing this are outlined in the *Family Guidebook* (31180). Leaders can help members prepare to receive temple blessings by teaching them about the temple. Leaders are to encourage members to live worthily to obtain and always have a valid temple recommend and to receive their temple endowments and temple sealing ordinances where reasonable. A worthy person is one who has entered into covenants with the Lord, such as the

baptismal covenant, and is striving diligently to keep these covenants.

Physical and Temporal Preparation

Leaders can help members prepare to meet physical and temporal needs by teaching them to be self-reliant and to prepare for unexpected events. Leaders can teach members to live the law of tithing and the law of the fast, encourage them to live within their means, and assign home and visiting teachers to watch over and help them.

Leaders should seek out and help care for the poor and the needy in the branch and teach branch members to do likewise.

For more information about how members can meet their physical needs, see the *Family Guidebook*.

Temple Ordinances and Family History



In addition to receiving their own temple ordinances, members help redeem the dead by identifying their ancestors and performing temple ordinances for them. They should concentrate initially on the first four generations of their ancestors.

Leaders can help members by teaching them the doctrines relating to the redemption of the dead, encouraging them to submit names for temple work, and encouraging them to perform temple ordinances, where possible, for their ancestors and for others who have died.

Priesthood



The priesthood is the power and authority of God. Through it, He accomplishes His work and glory, which is “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). Jesus Christ permits worthy male members of the Church to hold His priesthood. When they are ordained to the priesthood, they can be authorized to do the Lord’s work, such as preach the gospel, perform priesthood ordinances, and minister, as called, in the kingdom of God on earth.

“There are, in the church, two priesthoods, namely, the Melchizedek and Aaronic” (D&C 107:1). Heavenly mes-

sengers restored priesthood authority to the earth through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Melchizedek Priesthood

The Melchizedek Priesthood is the greater priesthood. Its name comes from the name of a great high priest who lived during the time of Abraham (see D&C 107:2–5). Brethren who hold this priesthood have the power and authority to hold positions of leadership in the Church and to direct the preaching of the gospel. They may preside, as called, over missions, districts, branches, and quorums.

Before a man can be ordained to an office in the Melchizedek Priesthood, he must first have the Melchizedek Priesthood conferred upon him. Then he is ordained to an office in that priesthood. These offices are elder, high priest, patriarch, seventy, and apostle. Mission or district priesthood leaders organize brethren who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood into quorums of elders in the mission or district. A president presides over each elders quorum. He teaches quorum members their duties and encourages brotherhood among quorum members. All brethren in the branch who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood are members of the elders quorum.

Elder and Elders Quorum Presidency

Elders are to teach, expound, baptize, and watch over the Church. In addition to having the authority and responsibilities of Aaronic Priesthood offices, elders may bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost, administer to the sick, and perform other ordinances (see "Priesthood Ordinances and Blessings" in the *Family Guidebook*).

When authorized by their priesthood leaders, elders may preside over Church meetings when no authorized high priest is present. (See D&C 20:42–45; 107:11.)

When a branch has worthy men who bear the Melchizedek Priesthood, the

mission or district presidency, as guided by the Spirit, may organize an elders quorum in the branch, calling and setting apart a quorum president from among quorum members. As the number of elders in the branch increases, the mission presidency may call and set apart two counselors to the elders quorum president. Each elders quorum may consist of up to 96 members. The quorum provides example, help, and direction to fathers and other quorum members.

The elders quorum president serves under the direction of the district or mission president and is accountable to him. The quorum president works also under the direction of the branch president as a member of the branch priesthood executive committee and as a member of the branch council. The quorum president presides over quorum members in the branch and sets an example for them. He works with the branch president to organize and administer home teaching to ensure that the Church remains in active contact with all branch members.

The quorum president teaches quorum members the gospel and their Melchizedek Priesthood duties (see D&C 107:89). He encourages them to serve with joy and humility, especially in their responsibilities as husbands and fathers. He teaches them how to perform priesthood ordinances, and

plans service projects and activities that assist members and build quorum brotherhood. He is responsible for the spiritual and temporal well-being of quorum members.

The elders quorum president assigns home teachers who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood and adults (19 and older) who hold the Aaronic Priesthood, and with the approval of the branch president, he assigns young men as home teachers who are teachers and priests in the Aaronic Priesthood. Home teachers are assigned in companionships of two during private interviews. As approved by the branch president, the elders quorum president may assign the wife of a man who holds the Melchizedek Priesthood to accompany her husband on visits where a couple is specifically needed.

The quorum president teaches quorum members the purposes of home teaching (see pages 6–7) and inspires them to fulfill them well. A member of the quorum presidency interviews home teachers regularly to receive an accounting of their visits and to learn of members' needs.

The elders quorum president supervises home teaching and keeps the branch president informed of home teaching visits and of member needs and concerns learned through home teaching visits.

The quorum president encourages quorum members to participate in Church meetings and activities and to give service. He helps unordained men and those over 18 years of age who hold the Aaronic Priesthood prepare to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood and temple ordinances. Home teachers help with these efforts, but often the president needs to minister personally to his quorum members.

High Priest, Patriarch, Seventy, and Apostle

For information about the offices of high priest, patriarch, seventy, and apostle, see *Gospel Principles*, chapter 14.

Home Teaching



Home teachers are brethren who bear the priesthood and are called to help priesthood leaders watch over and strengthen branch members. Males who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood and Aaronic Priesthood, with the exception of deacons, may serve as home teachers.

Home teachers are to visit members regularly, showing love for them, teaching them the gospel, and inviting them to come unto Christ. Home teachers should encourage fathers to pray and take proper care of their families. Home teachers help members in times of illness, loss, loneliness, unemployment, and at times of other special needs. (See D&C 20:51, 53, 59.)

Home teachers represent the Lord, branch president, and quorum president as they visit their assigned families. They learn about the interests and needs of family members and show a genuine interest in them. Under the inspiration of the Spirit, home teachers seek to teach the gospel and to develop and strengthen the faith of the individuals and family members they visit. If possible, each home teacher should have a companion.

Home teachers:

- Stay in active contact with each assigned member.
- Recognize the father as the head of the family (or the mother or single member where no father is in the home) and help him lead his family members on their journey toward immortality and eternal life.

- Help members to have faith in Jesus Christ by sharing a message from the scriptures or from the living prophets as contained in the *First Presidency Message, Liahona, or Ensign*.
- Pray with and bless those they visit.
- Inform the family of meetings, quorum and branch activities, and special projects, and help them participate.
- Report to the elders quorum president (or to the branch president if the branch does not have an elders quorum) on the progress of members.
- Encourage and help family members receive all essential gospel ordinances and keep the associated covenants.
- Encourage members to do missionary work and family history and temple work.

Ordinances and Blessings

Priesthood ordinances are sacred acts revealed by the Lord and performed by the authority of the priesthood. Priesthood blessings are given for healing, comfort, and encouragement. Baptizing and blessing and passing the sacrament are examples of priesthood ordinances. Some ordinances

may be performed by brethren who hold the Aaronic Priesthood, but most ordinances are performed by men who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood (see “Aaronic Priesthood” in this guidebook and the *Family Guidebook*). Branch presidents and elders quorum presidents are to teach the brethren how to perform ordinances. These leaders should help fathers prepare and be worthy to perform ordinances for family members. Brethren who perform ordinances and blessings are to prepare themselves by living according to gospel principles and striving to be guided by the Holy Spirit. They perform each ordinance and blessing in a dignified manner. Each ordinance should be performed:

1. In the name of Jesus Christ.
2. By the authority of the priesthood.
3. With any necessary procedures, such as specified words or consecrated oil.
4. With authorization of the designated priesthood leader who holds the proper keys, if necessary.

Ordinances that require priesthood leader authorization are naming and blessing children, performing baptisms and confirmations, conferring the priesthood and ordaining to a priesthood office, blessing and passing the sacrament, and dedicating graves.

See the *Family Guidebook* for instruction on specific ordinances and blessings.

Aaronic Priesthood



The Aaronic Priesthood “is an appendage to the greater, or the Melchizedek Priesthood” (D&C 107:14). It is named after Aaron, Moses’ brother, because it was conferred on him and his descendants. Brethren who hold the Aaronic Priesthood have authority to perform certain priesthood ordinances. Priests may perform baptisms, bless the sacrament, and ordain priests, teachers, and deacons. Priests and teachers may prepare the sacrament. Priests, teachers, and deacons may pass the sacrament. (See D&C 107:13–14, 20.)

When the Aaronic Priesthood is conferred on a person, he is ordained to an office in that priesthood. The offices are deacon, teacher, and priest. As guided by the Spirit and as numbers warrant, the branch president, who is president of the Aaronic

Priesthood in the branch, organizes brethren who hold the same office into quorums of deacons (ages 12–13), teachers (ages 14–15), and priests (ages 16–18).

The branch president, holding the keys of presidency of the Aaronic Priesthood, is president of the Aaronic Priesthood in the branch. He is president of the priests quorum and may call two worthy priests to serve as his assistants in the priests quorum. He may call a worthy teacher and a worthy deacon to serve as presidents of the teachers and deacons quorums, respectively. He or an assigned counselor may call two counselors to the teachers and deacons quorum presidents to complete the presidencies of these quorums. When quorums have a sufficient number of young men, a member of the branch presidency may call a young man in each quorum to serve as quorum secretary. The branch president sets apart his assistants in the priests quorum and the presidents of the teachers and deacons quorums. A member of the branch presidency sets apart counselors in quorum presidencies and secretaries.

Following the opening exercises of priesthood meeting, the Aaronic Priesthood meets, under the direction of the branch president, separately from those who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood.

When the branch president organizes Aaronic Priesthood quorums, he calls, as guided by the Spirit, and sets apart a man who holds the Melchizedek Priesthood or the office of priest in the Aaronic Priesthood to serve as Young Men president. The Young Men president works with the branch presidency and Aaronic Priesthood quorum presidencies to help each quorum member strengthen his faith in Jesus Christ and increase his understanding of and commitment to live in harmony with the principles of the restored gospel.

The purposes of the Aaronic Priesthood are to help each one ordained to that priesthood:

- Become converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ and live by its teachings.
- Serve faithfully in priesthood callings and fulfill the responsibilities of each priesthood office.
- Give meaningful service.
- Prepare and live worthily to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood and temple ordinances.
- Prepare to serve an honorable full-time mission.
- Obtain as much education as possible and prepare to become a worthy husband and father.
- Give proper respect to women, girls, and children.

The branch president works with Aaronic Priesthood quorum presidencies to plan quorum meetings, service projects, and activities to help accomplish these purposes. Activities are to provide a wholesome environment in which young men can make friends, provide service, and develop skills with others who share similar beliefs and standards.

Aaronic Priesthood quorum presidencies and Young Women class presidencies, in cooperation with Aaronic Priesthood and Young Women adult leaders, may plan combined Aaronic Priesthood and Young Women activities under the supervision of the branch president. The combined activities are called Mutual.

Deacon

A worthy young man who has been baptized and confirmed may be ordained a deacon when he is at least 12 years old. Deacons usually are assigned to pass the sacrament, care for Church buildings and grounds, help care for the needy, and complete special assignments, such as gathering fast offerings.

A deacons quorum may consist of up to 12 deacons (see D&C 107:85).

Teacher

A worthy young man may be ordained a teacher when he is at least 14 years old. In addition to all of the authority and responsibilities of deacons, teachers prepare the sacrament and serve as home teachers.

A teachers quorum may consist of up to 24 teachers (see D&C 107:86).

Priest

Worthy brethren may be ordained priests when they are at least 16 years old. Normally, adult male converts are ordained priests until they have had sufficient experience to be ordained elders.

In addition to all of the authority and responsibilities of deacons and teachers, priests may baptize and administer the sacrament and may conduct meetings when no one who holds the Melchizedek Priesthood is present (see D&C 20:46–51).

A priests quorum may consist of up to 48 priests (see D&C 107:87–88).

Auxiliaries



In a branch, the priesthood organization is established first. As the number of members increases and as leaders and meeting places become available, the branch president may organize auxiliaries to the priesthood as he determines they are needed. The auxiliaries are Relief Society, Young Men, Young Women, Primary, and Sunday School.

Until the branch has sufficient women, young women, and children to divide into separate auxiliary groups, they meet together for instruction under the direction of the Relief Society president.

Relief Society

The Relief Society assists priesthood leaders by encouraging adult sisters (18 and older) to build faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Relief Society helps women and their families come unto Christ and live worthily to receive the guidance of the Holy Ghost. Relief Society sisters teach and learn the doctrines of the gospel, provide charitable service, develop home-making skills, strengthen family relationships, and serve and support each sister.

When a branch has at least two women members, the branch president may organize a Relief

Society. Under the direction of the branch president, the Relief Society president:

- Directs or conducts a class for adult women (18 and older) on Sundays while the men and young men are in priesthood meeting.
- Works with the branch president to advise him of the needs and activities of women, young women, and children.
- Helps the branch president identify and care for those in need.

Young Men

See “Aaronic Priesthood” on pages 8–10 of this guidebook.

Young Women



The branch presidency has essentially the same responsibility for young women 12 through 18 years of age as for young men of that age.

The Young Women organization helps girls (12 through 17) become converted

to the gospel of Jesus Christ, honor their parents, prepare to make and keep sacred temple covenants, become worthy wives and mothers, and give service. Young women receive gospel instruction in Sunday meetings and in weekday activities.

Young women 12 through 17 may meet separately from the Relief Society when the branch president determines that enough young women live in the branch. He may organize them into Beehive (ages 12–13), Mia Maid (ages 14–15) and Laurel (ages 16–17) classes. He may call and set apart a worthy young woman in each class as class president. A member of the branch presidency may call and set apart two additional young women as counselors to each president and a class secretary when enough young women are in the class.

Under the direction of the branch president, the Young Women presidency (adults) works with the branch presidency and with the Young Women class presidencies (girls) to strengthen each young woman’s faith in Jesus Christ and to increase her understanding of and commitment to live in harmony with the principles of the restored gospel. Sunday gospel instruction and wholesome weekday activities may help to achieve these goals.

Young Women class presidencies and Aaronic Priesthood quorum presidencies, in cooperation with the Young Women and Aaronic Priesthood adult leaders and under the supervision of the branch president, may plan combined Young Women and Aaronic Priesthood activities. The combined activities are called Mutual.

Primary



The Primary teaches children (ages 3 through 11) the gospel of Jesus Christ and helps them learn to live it. In Primary, children feel welcome, feel the Savior's love, and feel the joy the gospel brings.

The Primary theme is "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children" (3 Nephi 22:13). The Primary assists priesthood leaders in accomplishing the mission of the Church by encouraging children to study the scriptures, pray, and follow the example of the Savior. The objectives of Primary are to:

- Teach children that they are children of God and that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ love them.
- Help children learn to love Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.
- Help children prepare to be baptized, receive the Holy Ghost, and keep their baptismal covenants and promises.
- Help children grow in their understanding of the gospel plan and provide opportunities for them to live gospel principles.
- Help boys prepare to receive the priesthood and be worthy to use the priesthood to bless and serve others.
- Help girls prepare to be righteous young women, understand the blessings of the priesthood and the temple, and serve others.

Priesthood and Primary leaders and teachers help parents teach their children the gospel of Jesus Christ as they seek and are guided by the Spirit. Each child in Primary needs to be loved by caring teachers and leaders, especially children who come from homes that lack strong support for gospel living.

When the number of children is sufficient, they meet separately from women and young women for class instruction and sharing time during the Sunday School and the Relief

Society and Young Women time periods. Branches may organize occasional activities for Primary-age children on a day other than Sunday. More instruction regarding sharing time and weekday activities is available through priesthood leaders.

Sunday School

The Sunday School helps members and investigators 12 and older learn the gospel of Jesus Christ and live according to gospel principles by providing edification and instruction in Sunday meetings. Sunday School teachers encourage members to:

- Study the scriptures.
- Obey the commandments.
- Receive the essential ordinances and keep the associated covenants of the gospel.

The Sunday School presidency oversees the Sunday School. The president recommends potential teachers to the branch president. The branch presidency calls and sets the teachers apart to teach Sunday School classes. Youth and adults meet together where they are few in number, but when numbers justify doing so, they may meet separately for class instruction.



Curriculum and Teacher Improvement



Curriculum

The Church provides priesthood quorum and auxiliary curriculum materials. The Area Presidency provides instructions regarding the materials to be used each year. The instructions are provided with the annual shipment of materials from the Church distribution or service center. The publication *Information for Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders on Curriculum* (36363), which is available through priesthood leaders, contains an overview of Church curriculum. Leaders and teachers are encouraged to use only approved Church instructional materials and to avoid using commercial products.

The *First Presidency Messages*, *Visiting Teaching Messages*, and resources in the *Liahona* provide material to refresh and enrich lessons in curriculum manuals. These materials are available in print and in electronic form on the Church's official Internet site, www.lds.org. Where the *Liahona* is available, each family in the branch should subscribe.

Teacher Improvement

Parents, leaders, and teachers have a sacred responsibility to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Through their efforts, others can learn how to apply gospel truths in everyday living. The Lord said: "I give unto you a

commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom. Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you" (D&C 88:77–78).

The branch presidency is responsible for the quality of teaching in the

branch. When the branch has sufficient strength, the presidency calls a brother or sister to serve as the branch teacher improvement coordinator.

For more information on teaching and teacher improvement, see the *Teaching Guidebook*.



Leadership



The Savior's Example

Our Savior, Jesus Christ, has set the perfect example for members to follow as leaders in their families and in the Church. He loved His Father and loved the people He served. He lived to serve others, lifting the downtrodden and giving hope to the discouraged.

Jesus understood His calling and was prayerful and diligent in fulfilling it. He always did His Father's will and gave Him the glory, seeking none for Himself. He sacrificed everything for mankind, giving His life on the cross and atoning for the sins of all people.

As leaders follow the Savior's example, He will increase their ability to do His work. He will inspire them to know what they should say and do (see D&C 100:6). Leaders will truly become His fellow servants in building the kingdom of God. They will become students of the scriptures, learn the doctrines and principles of the gospel, and strive to teach them to those they serve.

Character Traits of Leaders

Faith

During His mortal ministry, the Savior admonished His disciples to exercise faith (see Matthew 17:14–21;

Luke 8:22–25). Leaders in the Church must have faith that Jesus Christ is our Savior and Redeemer. They develop this faith through prayer, scripture study, obedience, and repentance. As we nourish the seed of faith, it will grow within us and bear fruit that is most precious and sweet (see Alma 32:42).

Love

The Savior said: “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34–35). Leaders should love the people for whom the Lord has given them responsibility. As leaders love the people, they will want to serve them, teach them, and help them work for their salvation.

In the world, people seldom think of leaders as servants. But the Savior taught by His words and example that leaders should serve the people they lead. He told the Twelve, “Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant” (Matthew 20:27). When we serve others, we are serving the Lord (see Matthew 25:31–40; Mosiah 2:17).

Obedience

Jesus Christ set the perfect example of obedience and submission to

Heavenly Father’s will (see Matthew 26:39; John 5:30). Leaders need to obey the Lord’s commandments so they can set an example for others and be worthy to receive guidance from the Holy Ghost. Obedience shows love for the Lord (see John 14:15).

The Lord’s commandments are revealed in the scriptures, through Church leaders, and through the promptings of the Holy Spirit. As leaders obey these commandments, the Lord will help them fulfill their callings.

Unity

In His great intercessory prayer, the Savior prayed that those who believe in Him might be one, even as He and His Father are one (see John 17:20–23). Unity is essential for success in every organization of the Church. Priesthood and auxiliary presidents should not work independently of their counselors. Presidencies can accomplish much more when they are unified and counsel together.

Sacrifice

A rich young man asked the Savior what he must do to inherit eternal life. “Keep the commandments,” the Lord told him. The young man said he had kept the commandments from his youth, then asked, “What lack I yet?” Jesus, knowing what was in his heart,

told him to sell his possessions, give to the poor, and come follow Him. But the young man “went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.” (See Matthew 19:16–22.)

In this incident, the Lord teaches that leaders must be willing to sacrifice all things in following Him. Like the rich young man, leaders may be called on to sacrifice their possessions, or they may be asked to sacrifice their time, talents, and personal pursuits to further the Lord’s work. As leaders sacrifice for the Lord and His kingdom, He promises to bless them in all things (see Matthew 19:29; D&C 97:8–9).

Leadership Tasks

Setting Goals

Leaders learn that seeking direction from the Lord prayerfully about what He wants them to do is essential in their callings. Setting goals, with the guidance of the Spirit, will help them do the work the Lord has given them.

When setting a goal, a leader needs to plan how to reach it. For example, a district president may set a goal to increase attendance at sacrament meetings in the district. His plan might include asking the branch presidents to invite all branch members to commit themselves to attend sacrament meetings.

Leaders can encourage members to set and reach personal goals. Leaders may suggest goals for individuals, but they should set their own goals and make plans to reach them.

Planning and Delegating

The following steps will help both priesthood and auxiliary leaders plan meetings, activities, service projects, and goals for doing the Lord’s work and can be useful in fellowshiping members and friendshipping non-members. These steps will help leaders organize home teaching and Relief Society visiting teaching, and will help priesthood leaders in calling members to serve in branch positions.

1. Plan and organize. Leaders plan all meetings, activities, and goals to have a gospel purpose. In making these plans, leaders ask others, such as their counselors, to share ideas and help with organization.
2. Pray. Leaders pray for guidance through the promptings of the Spirit as they make and implement plans. They also pray for guidance to know whom they should call to help with the work.
3. Delegate. A good leader invites others to help because he knows he cannot and should not do everything himself. He delegates to help others enlarge their abilities by

giving them experience. He explains the plan to them. He then delegates (assigns) specific tasks to each person, explaining the duties and blessings of accomplishing the task.

4. Help and support. After a leader plans, prays, and delegates, he supports those to whom he has delegated responsibility. He teaches them what they need to know and offers to help but does not do the tasks he has asked them to do. He expresses his love and confidence and encourages them to use their own ideas and inspiration rather than insisting that things always be done his way. He redirects them or has them change what they are doing only when necessary.
5. Follow through. After giving an assignment, a leader periodically asks for a progress report. He may do so in a casual conversation, during a meeting, or in a private interview. During the report, the leader thanks the person and gives sincere praise and encouragement. He also may discuss how the assigned work could be done better.
6. Evaluate. When the assigned work is finished, the leader evaluates it with each assigned person. He expresses thanks, discusses the

value of what has been done, and may give the person another assignment.

Preparing an Agenda

An agenda is a plan for a meeting. It may include prayers, hymns, talks, announcements, business, reports on assignments, new assignments, and other significant items. A written agenda helps a leader make sure the most important matters are considered and helps ensure that the meeting time is used wisely. It also helps him direct the meeting in an orderly manner.

The person who presides or is in charge usually prepares the agenda. He or she ensures that it includes everything necessary to accomplish the purposes of the meeting. The one who prepares the agenda determines how much time each agenda item should take. If too little time is available to discuss all of the items, he or she puts some of them on the agenda for the next meeting.

Conducting Meetings

The person who conducts a meeting acts as the leader of that meeting. He or she announces the names of those who will pray, speak, lead the music, and do other things in the meeting. The one conducting the meeting

should be reverent and should conduct the meeting as guided by the Spirit of the Lord.

The person who presides at the meeting may conduct it or may ask someone else to conduct it under his or her direction. For example, a branch president may ask one of his counselors to conduct a sacrament meeting, or a quorum president may ask one of his counselors to conduct a quorum meeting. The same principle holds true for auxiliaries.

Councils



The Lord governs His kingdom by the principle of councils. Those conducting council meetings, such as branch council meeting, priesthood executive committee meeting, and priesthood and auxiliary presidency meetings (see the *Branch Guidebook*), should apply the following important principles:

- Focus on gospel doctrines and principles, not speculative matters.

- Focus on individuals and how to strengthen them in the gospel, remembering to always keep confidential information safely guarded.
- Promote free and open expression, giving all a chance to be heard. Leaders must listen as well as speak.
- Sustain and help carry out the decisions of presiding leaders.
- Lead with love and a caring concern for the needs and well-being of all.

Keeping Confidences

Leaders must not reveal confidential information to anyone, whether it comes up in formal interviews or informal conversation. Information resulting from interviews and confessions and such information as the amount of tithing and donations a person pays must be kept completely confidential. A leader must not discuss private matters about a person with others, including counselors and spouse, unless the person gives permission. A leader who is careless about keeping confidential matters strictly confidential can weaken the testimonies and faith of those he or she serves and diminish their trust and confidence in him or her.

Obtaining Church Materials and Locating Information on Family History

Local leaders and other members may obtain Church materials, including scriptures, courses of study, Church magazines, garments, and temple clothing, from their Church distribution center or service center, from the Salt Lake Distribution Center, or through the Church's official Internet site, which is located at www.lds.org.

Information on family history work is available on the Church's family history Internet site, which is located at www.familysearch.org.

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

