

MEMBER'S GUIDE

to Temple and Family History Work



MEMBER'S GUIDE TO TEMPLE AND FAMILY HISTORY WORK

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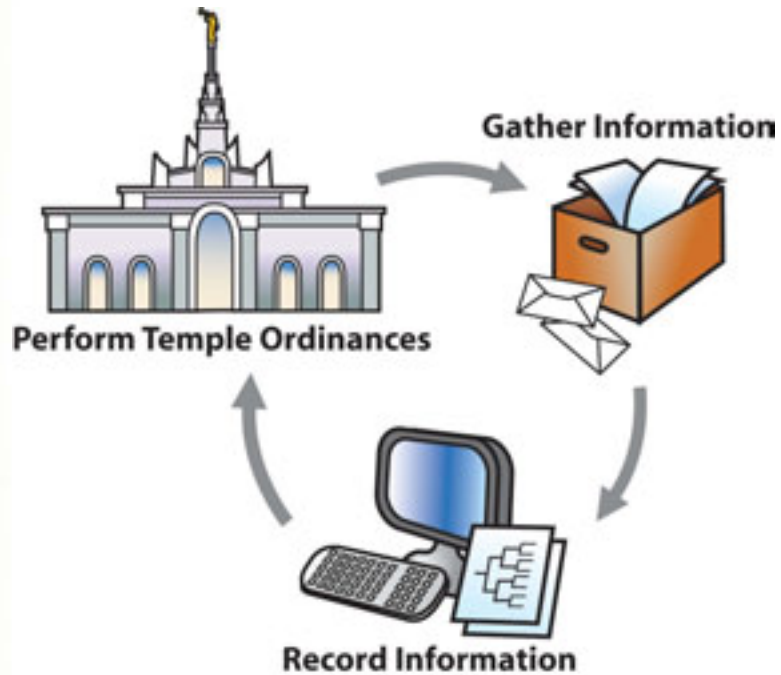
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This guide will help you use the process to identify your ancestors and bless them through temple ordinances. You will also learn about resources that can help you in this process, including the FamilySearch Internet site, which is found at new.familysearch.org.

If you already have experience in doing temple and family history work, you can adapt your use of this guide to your experience. Activities to enrich your experience and additional resources to study are suggested at the end of each chapter. You can also visit the Help Center at new.familysearch.org to find more resources to help you continue learning.

You may find that this guide is all you need to get started, or you may want the additional help of a family history consultant. Family history consultants can use this guide to help individuals and families in their homes. This guide is also the basis for a Temple and Family History course that can be taught during Sunday School, as determined by local priesthood leaders.

As you participate in temple and family history work, you will be blessed with a stronger testimony of its importance, a greater appreciation of the Lord's love for His children, and a motivating desire to do temple work for your ancestors. You will have a better understanding of your family origins and an increased love for your ancestors.

CHAPTER 1

THE PURPOSE OF TEMPLE AND FAMILY HISTORY WORK



The Great Plan of Happiness

Before you were born, you lived with Heavenly Father. He wanted you to be happy and to become like Him. He presented a plan for you and for all His children to come to earth and then return to His presence. Your life is intended to be a homeward journey to the presence of God in His celestial kingdom.

This journey would be impossible without the Atonement of our Savior Jesus Christ. The Savior's Atonement enables us all to repent and be forgiven of our sins and to be resurrected. We obtain the full blessings of the Atonement by receiving gospel ordinances and making and keeping sacred covenants with God.

An ordinance is a sacred act or ceremony performed by authority of the priesthood. Some ordinances are essential for exaltation. These include baptism, confirmation, Melchizedek Priesthood ordination for men, and temple ordinances. Receiving these ordinances should be the goal of every Latter-day Saint. Each of these essential ordinances includes covenants or promises made with God.

President Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained the role of ordinances and covenants:



"Ordinances and covenants become our credentials for admission into [God's] presence. To worthily receive them is the quest of a lifetime; to keep them thereafter is the challenge of mortality. Once we have received them for ourselves and for our families, we are obli-

gated to provide these ordinances vicariously for our kindred dead, indeed for the whole human family" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 27; or *Ensign*, May 1987, 24).



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Eternal Families Are Part of the Plan

Families are essential in Heavenly Father's plan of happiness. You are part of a heavenly family and an earthly one. President Gordon B. Hinckley taught:



“God is the designer of the family. He intended that the greatest of happiness, the most satisfying aspects of life, the deepest joys should come in our associations together and our concerns one for another as fathers and mothers and children” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1991, 98; or *Ensign*, May 1991, 74).

You have a knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ and have received at least some of the ordinances of the gospel. Not everyone in your family has had the same privilege. Many of your ancestors—and perhaps even some of your immediate family members—have died without hearing the gospel or receiving saving ordinances. Heavenly Father is just and merciful, and He has provided a way for them to have these blessings.

Your deceased ancestors live in a place called the spirit world. There they have the opportunity to hear and accept the gospel of Jesus Christ. However, they cannot receive the ordinances of the gospel for themselves, and they cannot progress until others provide these ordinances for them.

Your privilege and responsibility is to give your ancestors this gift by identifying them and ensuring that ordinances are performed in their behalf in the temple. They may then choose whether to accept the work that has been done.

Your effort in behalf of your ancestors is patterned after the work of the Savior, although on a much smaller scale. The Savior enables all of us to return to Heavenly Father's presence through the Atonement, and you help your ancestors receive the blessings of the Atonement by making ordinances available to them. You do a saving work for them that they cannot do for themselves.

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When Elijah appeared to the Prophet Joseph, he said, “Behold, the time has fully come . . . to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers. . . . Therefore, the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands” (D&C 110:14–16).

Since that time, the sealing power has been conferred on men as authorized by the President of the Church. These priesthood holders use the sealing power to perform ordinances in the temple for the living and the dead. Elijah’s return marked the beginning of a worldwide interest in genealogical research that continues to grow.

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that an outpouring of the Holy Ghost accompanied Elijah’s return:



“Elijah came to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the children to the fathers. With that, natural affection between generations began to be enriched. This restoration was accompanied by what is sometimes called the Spirit of Elijah—a manifestation of the Holy Ghost bearing witness of the divine nature of the family. Hence, people throughout the world, regardless of religious affiliation, are gathering records of deceased relatives at an ever-increasing rate.

“Elijah came not only to stimulate research for ancestors. He also enabled families to be eternally linked beyond the bounds of mortality. Indeed, the opportunity for families to be sealed forever is the real reason for our research” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 43; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 34).

The Blessings of This Work

President Thomas S. Monson emphasized that great blessings come to those who participate in temple work:



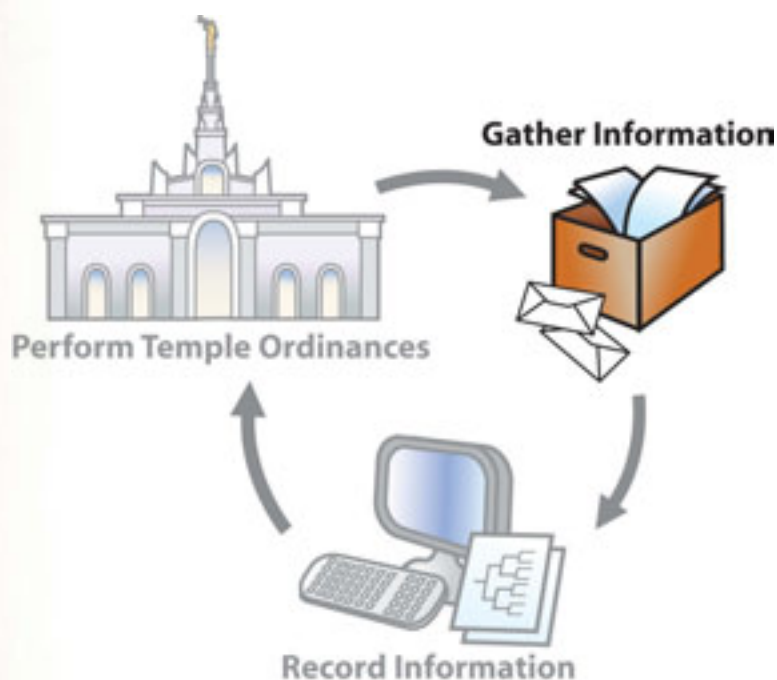
“Today is a day of temple building. Never before have so many temples been erected and dedicated. . . . Temples will bless all who attend them and who sacrifice for their completion. The light of Christ will shine on all—even those who have gone beyond” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1999, 76; or *Ensign*, May 1999, 56).

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CHAPTER 2 GETTING STARTED

Where to Get Help

There are many ways you can get help as you gather family history information. In this section you will learn to use the resources that are available to you.



The most important thing you can do is to seek and follow the guidance of the Holy Ghost. You can also seek help from family history consultants and family history centers. The FamilySearch Internet site is a powerful resource that can be a great help to you as you gather and record information and prepare names for temple ordinances.

Follow the Guidance of the Holy Ghost

In your temple and family history work, you will be most effective when you seek and follow the guidance of the Holy Ghost.

Your efforts to gather family information can be compared to the efforts of Nephi to obtain the brass plates, which contained information about his genealogy. Like Nephi, you have the responsibility to obtain information

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about your family. Like Nephi, you may need to press forward, “not knowing beforehand the things which [you] should do” (1 Nephi 4:6). If you humbly rely upon the Lord to prepare a way for you to gather records, He will bless you with the increased guidance of the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost may inspire you to know how best to begin family history work, what ancestor or family lines to focus on, where to find useful records, or which family members to contact for family information.

The Holy Ghost may communicate to you by:

- Speaking to your mind and heart and giving you impressions or ideas (see D&C 8:1–2).
- Directing others to give you inspired counsel (see Exodus 18:13–24).
- Helping you feel peace (see D&C 6:23).
- Bringing something to your remembrance (see John 14:26).

Remember to rely on the promise of the Lord: “Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you” (3 Nephi 18:20).

Family History Consultants

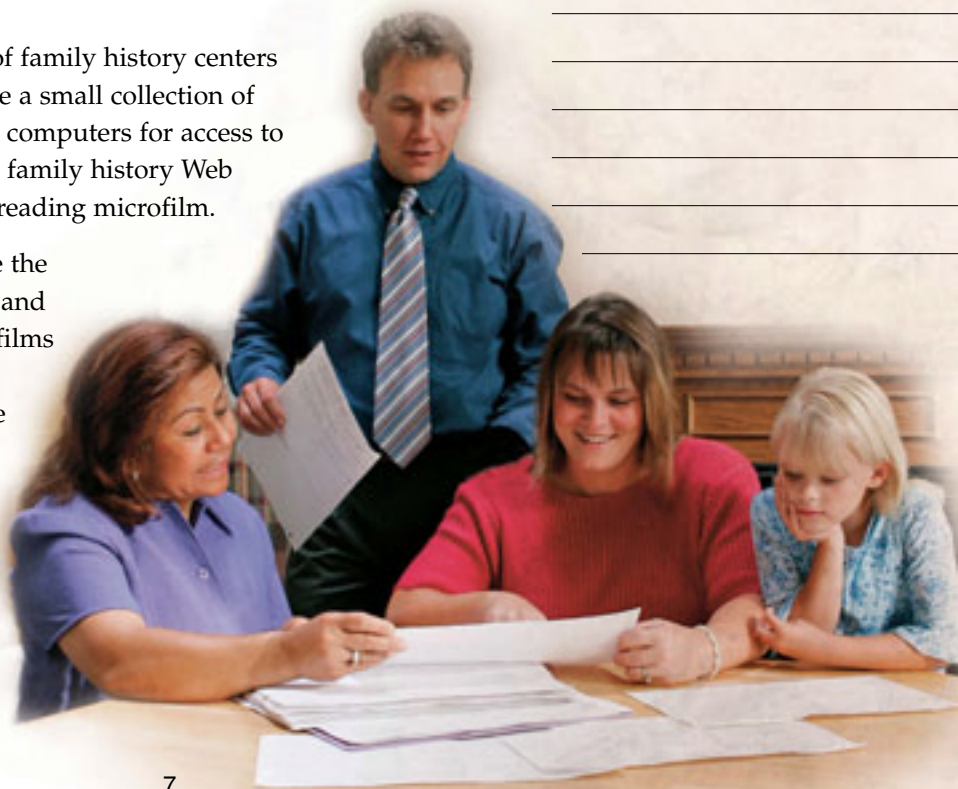
Family history consultants are called and set apart by the bishop or branch president to assist with temple and family history work. Consultants may teach family history classes and provide one-on-one help. They can help you get started, answer your questions along the way, and help you use the FamilySearch Internet site and other resources.

Family History Centers

The Church has established thousands of family history centers throughout the world. Most centers have a small collection of published resources. Many centers have computers for access to the FamilySearch Internet site and other family history Web sites. They may also have machines for reading microfilm.

Staff members can teach you how to use the center. They can answer your questions and help you use resources and order microfilms from the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah. If microfilms need to be ordered, the films will usually take a few weeks to arrive.

To find a family history center, you can talk to a family history consultant.



Notes

Begin with the FamilySearch Internet Site

To simplify your temple and family history work, the Church has developed an Internet site, found at new.familysearch.org. You can gather family information there, record ancestors' names and other information, and prepare names for temple work. As you begin your temple and family history work, the first thing you should do is register on the site and find what information is available about you and your family.



To register, you will need your Church membership record number and the date you were confirmed a member of the Church. Your ward or branch clerk can retrieve this information for you from your membership record or your Individual Ordinance Summary.

To use the FamilySearch Internet site, follow these steps:

1. **If you have Internet access**, go to new.familysearch.org and register as a new user by entering your membership record number and confirmation date to identify yourself. Once you have completed the registration process, you can begin using the site.
2. **If you do not have Internet access**, you can go to a family history center, where access is likely available. Or you can speak to a family history consultant, who may be able to print for you any information the FamilySearch Internet site has about you and your family. If your family history consultant is unable to print the information for you, you can record information on family group records and pedigree charts. Samples of these forms are available in appendix A.
3. **Add information or change incorrect information** in the site. If you do not have Internet access, you can make additions and corrections on a copy of the information printed from the site or on a family group record and pedigree chart. Then you can give the changes to a family history consultant, who can type them into the site. (See chapter 4 of this guide for more details about recording family history information.)
4. **Prepare ancestors' names for temple work** if you have sufficient information about them to perform temple ordinances. (See chapter 7 of this guide for details about preparing names for temple work.)

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CHAPTER 3 GATHERING INFORMATION FROM HOME

You can gather family history information from many sources. Some are easier to access than others. You may make more effective use of your time by gathering information from sources that are close at hand before you go to sources that are less accessible. For example, your own memory is an excellent source of family history information. Also, you may find important family information in records that exist around your home. Follow the promptings of the Holy Ghost as you decide where to begin gathering information.



Use the FamilySearch Internet Site

The FamilySearch Internet site, found at new.familysearch.org, may already contain some information about your ancestors. Review this information at the beginning of your search to avoid duplicating work that may already have been done.

Record Information from Your Memory

Your memory is the most readily available source of information about your family. Record the names you can remember and the dates and locations of births, marriages, deaths, and other important events in the lives of your ancestors. You can write this information on family group records and pedigree charts or in a research notebook, or you can record it in the FamilySearch Internet site (see chapter 4 of this guide). Be sure to verify your information by comparing it with information you find in other sources. Memories fade and are not always accurate.

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Gather Information from Home Sources

Your home is an important source of family history information. Spend some time looking for records that exist in your home. You may find:

- Family group records, pedigree charts, books of remembrance, or ancestral tablets.
- Family Bibles.
- Journals, diaries, and letters.
- Personal histories and life sketches.
- Family histories.
- Old photographs.
- Obituaries and newspaper clippings.
- Birth, marriage, and death certificates.
- Household registers and tribal registration papers.

President Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles suggested one simple way to gather such items:



“Get a cardboard box. Any kind of a box will do. Put it someplace where it is in the way, . . . anywhere where it cannot go unnoticed. Then, over a period of a few weeks, collect and put into the box every record of your life, such as your birth certificate, your certificate of blessing, your certificate of baptism, your certificate of ordination, and your certificate of graduation. Collect diplomas, all of the photographs, honors, or awards, a diary if you have kept one, everything that you can find pertaining to *your* life; anything that is written, or registered, or recorded that testifies that you are alive and what you have done” (“Your Family History: Getting Started,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2003, 15).

The same process can be followed for gathering information about your ancestors. As you locate records that might contain family information, put everything you can find about yourself into one box, pile, or folder. Put everything about the families of your parents or grandparents into separate boxes, piles, or folders.

Within family groups, you can organize the information according to each individual in the family group. For each individual, you can organize information chronologically, putting information into three categories—childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. The family history consultant in your ward or branch may have additional ideas about how to organize your family history information.



Notes

As you gather information from the records you find in your home, record it in the FamilySearch Internet site or on the appropriate paper forms (see chapter 4 of this guide).



ASSIGNMENTS

- **Prayerfully choose a family or an individual ancestor** to learn more about. Give special attention to individuals who need to have temple ordinances performed for them.
- **Begin gathering information** you have at home about that family or individual.
- **If you are taking the Temple and Family History course**, prepare for the next class by reading chapter 4. Bring to class some of the information you have gathered.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Boyd K. Packer, "Your Family History: Getting Started," *Ensign*, Aug. 2003, 12–17.
- Dennis B. Neuenschwander, "Bridges and Eternal Keepsakes," *Ensign*, May 1999, 83–85.
- Constance Palmer Lewis, "Starting from Scratch," *Ensign*, Feb. 2008, 42–45.
- *How Do I Start My Family History?* (32916; one-page guide).

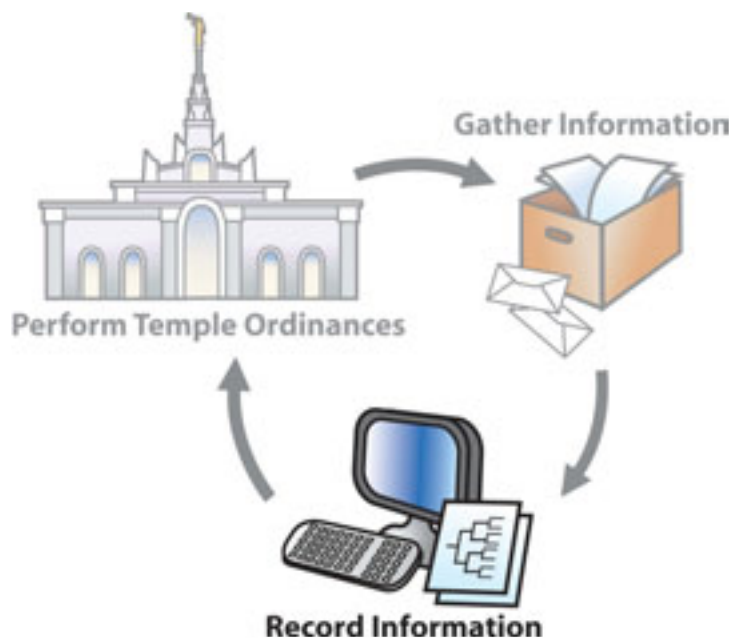
CHAPTER 4

RECORDING FAMILY HISTORY INFORMATION

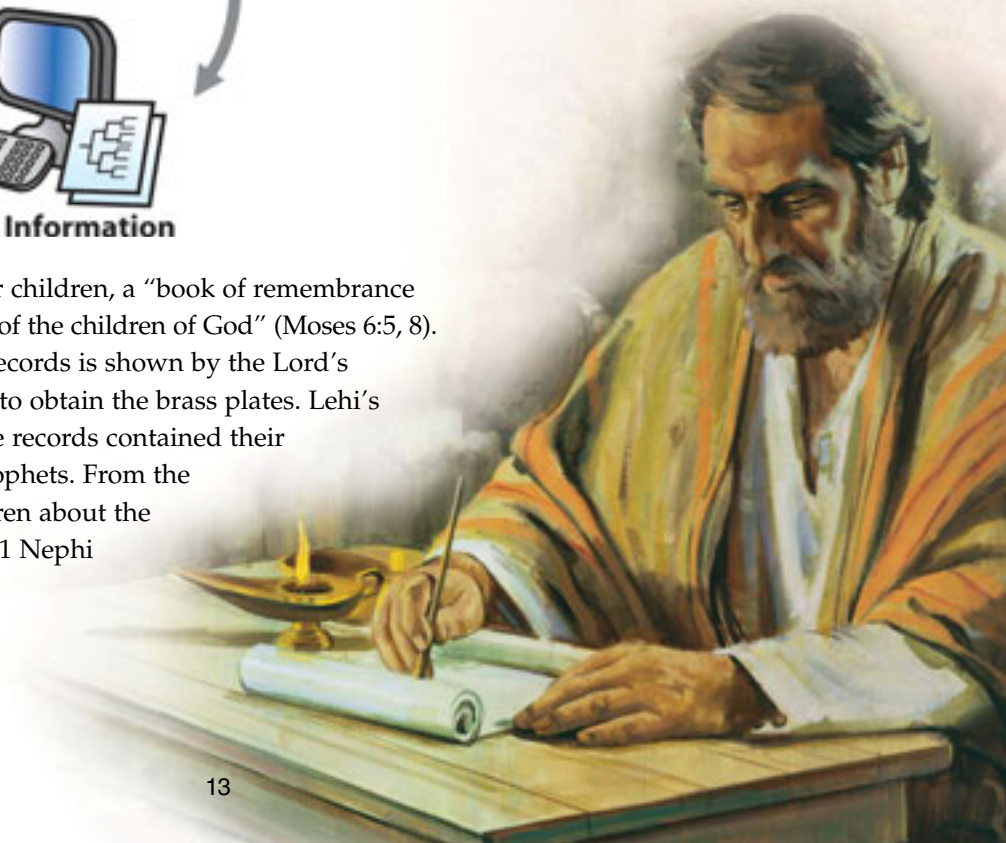
Notes

The Importance of Keeping Records

In this chapter you will learn how to record the family information you have gathered. You will find it most helpful to record information as you gather it. The process of gathering information from a variety of sources and then recording it will be repeated many times as you strive to learn about your ancestors.



In the time of Adam and Eve and their children, a “book of remembrance was kept,” and a “genealogy was kept of the children of God” (Moses 6:5, 8). The value of these records and other records is shown by the Lord’s commandment to Lehi and his family to obtain the brass plates. Lehi’s family needed the plates because these records contained their genealogy and the teachings of the prophets. From the plates, the Nephites taught their children about the gospel and about their ancestors. (See 1 Nephi 3:3–4; 5:14–16.)



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The Prophet Joseph Smith taught the importance of record keeping. He declared: "Let us present in his holy temple . . . a book containing the records of our dead, which shall be worthy of all acceptance" (D&C 128:24).

The records you preserve of your ancestors' lives and of your own life—including journals, personal histories, and other family history records—can bless your ancestors, descendants, extended family members, and others.

Using the FamilySearch Internet Site

Family history information may be handwritten or recorded by computer, but before temple ordinances can be done for your ancestors, their information must be entered into the FamilySearch Internet site at new.familysearch.org. When your family history information is entered into this site, the system will:

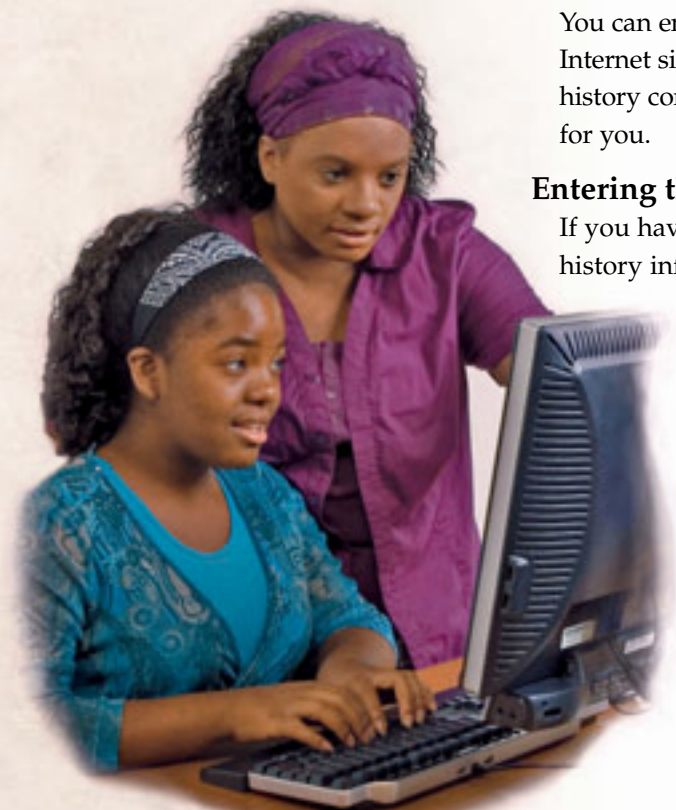
- Show what information has already been gathered about your family.
- Show which temple ordinances have been completed and which ordinances need to be done.
- Provide a way for you to print Family Ordinance Request forms that can be taken to the temple.
- Allow other researchers to use your family history information to help them in their research.
- Help you find and communicate with extended family members who are also searching for your ancestors.

You can enter your family history information directly into the FamilySearch Internet site, or you can give your handwritten information to a family history consultant, who can help you enter the information or do it for you.

Entering the Information Yourself

If you have access to the Internet, follow these steps to enter your family history information directly into the FamilySearch Internet site:

1. **Register or log on to new.familysearch.org.** If you are using the system for the first time, you will need your Church membership record number and your confirmation date to identify yourself.
2. **Enter the family history information** you have gathered, including details about how and where you obtained the information. Correct any incorrect information that your research may have discovered. The system will prompt you about what to enter and let you know if more information is required before you can perform temple ordinances for your ancestors.



Notes

Working with a Family History Consultant

If you do not have access to the Internet or do not know how to use a computer, you can record your family history information on forms. Then you can work with your family history consultant to get the information entered into the FamilySearch Internet site.

The FamilySearch Internet site allows you to print pedigree and family group information for the family you are researching. Your family history consultant or the staff at a family history center can help you print your family information from the site. As you gather additional family history information, you can record it on these printouts. If you are unable to obtain printouts, you can use blank pedigree charts and family group records (see appendix A for copies of these forms).

After you have written your family history information on printouts from the Internet site or on pedigree charts and family group records, take the forms to your family history consultant, who can help you enter the information into a computer. If Internet access is not available in your area, the family history consultant can help you send copies of your forms to a family history center or some other location where the information can be entered into the FamilySearch Internet site.

How to Record Information on Forms

Pedigree charts show extended family relationships across generations. The pedigree chart shows the direct ancestors of a single person, whose name is recorded on the left side of the chart. Use completed family group records and other information you have gathered to fill out a pedigree chart.

Pedigree Chart See the instructions on page 2.

This is pedigree chart no. 2

Name no. 1 on this chart is the same as name no. 4 on chart no. 1

<p>John Paul Smith</p> <p>Father of no. 1</p> <p>Birth date: <u>26 Jan 1826</u></p> <p>Birthplace: <u>Topsheld, Massachusetts</u></p> <p>Marriage date: <u>6 June 1844</u></p> <p>Marriage place: <u>Topsheld, Massachusetts</u></p> <p>Death date: <u>18 November 1877</u></p> <p>Death place: <u>Lowell, Massachusetts</u></p>	<p>William Grant Smith</p> <p>Father of no. 2</p> <p>Birth date: <u>12 August 1779</u></p> <p>Birthplace: _____</p> <p>Marriage date: _____</p> <p>Marriage place: _____</p> <p>Death date: _____</p> <p>Death place: _____</p>	<p>William R. Smith</p> <p>Father of no. 4</p> <p>Birth date: <u>28 May 1757</u></p> <p>Birthplace: _____</p> <p>Marriage date: _____</p> <p>Marriage place: _____</p> <p>Death date: _____</p> <p>Death place: _____</p>
<p>David Jacob Smith</p> <p>Father of no. 3</p> <p>Birth date: <u>22 June 1854</u></p> <p>Birthplace: <u>Topsheld, Massachusetts</u></p> <p>Marriage date: _____</p> <p>Marriage place: _____</p>	<p>Sarah Strong</p> <p>Mother of no. 1</p> <p>Birth date: <u>21 March 1784</u></p> <p>Birthplace: _____</p> <p>Marriage date: _____</p> <p>Marriage place: _____</p> <p>Death date: _____</p> <p>Death place: _____</p>	<p>Eliza Tolosen</p> <p>Mother of no. 4</p> <p>Birth date: <u>12 April 1752</u></p> <p>Birthplace: _____</p> <p>Marriage date: _____</p> <p>Marriage place: _____</p> <p>Death date: _____</p> <p>Death place: _____</p>
		<p>George Strong</p> <p>Father of no. 5</p> <p>Birth date: <u>15 February 1736</u></p> <p>Birthplace: _____</p> <p>Marriage date: _____</p> <p>Marriage place: _____</p> <p>Death date: _____</p> <p>Death place: _____</p>
		<p>Ann (A) Ben</p> <p>Mother of no. 5</p> <p>Birth date: <u>21 July 1757</u></p> <p>Birthplace: _____</p> <p>Marriage date: _____</p> <p>Marriage place: _____</p> <p>Death date: _____</p> <p>Death place: _____</p>

Notes

Follow these steps:

1. **Write the name of the first individual** on line 1 of the pedigree chart. Fill in the details about the individual. If the individual was married, fill in the details about the spouse. Mark the boxes for ordinances the individuals have received. If you are filling out your first pedigree chart, you will probably start with your own name in line 1.
2. **Write the names of ancestors**, starting with the father and mother on lines 2 and 3 of the pedigree chart. Fill in the event details, and mark the boxes for any ordinances. Continue this process for as many ancestors as you can. Make sure you have a family group record for each couple shown on the pedigree chart.
3. **Provide your contact information** on the back of the form. This will allow you to share your family history information with other researchers.

Family group records show detailed information about a single family unit. Use a family group record to organize key information about each family group for which you have information.

Family Group Record		Family group record number <u>6</u> Page <u>1</u> of <u>2</u>															
<small>Instructions:</small>																	
<small>• Write all names as full, legal names in the order they are spoken. Write a woman's maiden name (birth name), not her married name.</small>																	
<small>• Write all dates as day, month, and year, such as 4 Oct 1986.</small>																	
<small>• Write all places in order of smallest to largest political jurisdiction, separated by commas, such as Tyon Park, North Carolina, USA, or Wymondham, Norfolk, England.</small>																	
Husband Name <u>John Paul Smith</u> Birth date, day, month, year <u>26 Jan 1826</u> Birth place <u>Topsfield, Essex, Massachusetts</u> Death date <u>17 Mar 1826</u> Death place <u>Topsfield, Essex, Massachusetts</u> Marriage date <u>6 Jun 1844</u> Marriage place <u>Topsfield, Essex, Massachusetts</u> Civil union date <u>18 Nov 1877</u> Civil union place <u>Lowell, Middlesex, Massachusetts</u> Divorce date <u>20 Nov 1877</u> Divorce place <u>Lowell, Middlesex, Massachusetts</u> Husband's father Husband's mother		USA Ordinances <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date</th> <th>Temple or place</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Baptism</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Confirmation</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Marriage</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Endowment</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sealing to parents</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sealing to spouse</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Date	Temple or place	Baptism		Confirmation		Marriage		Endowment		Sealing to parents		Sealing to spouse	
Date	Temple or place																
Baptism																	
Confirmation																	
Marriage																	
Endowment																	
Sealing to parents																	
Sealing to spouse																	

Follow these steps:

1. **Record information about the husband and wife**, including their names and as many dates and places as you can for the events listed.
2. **Record information about each child**, including name, gender, and event information.
3. **List the sources of the information.** Sources may include personal knowledge, family possessions, public records, information from Internet sites, and published information.
4. **Provide your contact information** on the back of the form. This will allow you to share your family history information with other researchers.

Notes

as city, county, region, district, prefecture, province, state, and so on.

For example:

- Chicago, Cook, Illinois, United States
- Ixhuacán de los Reyes, Veracruz, México
- Maugerud, Flesberg, Buskerud, Norway

If you do not know all the levels of a name, the FamilySearch Internet site will likely give you a list of complete place-names you can choose from.

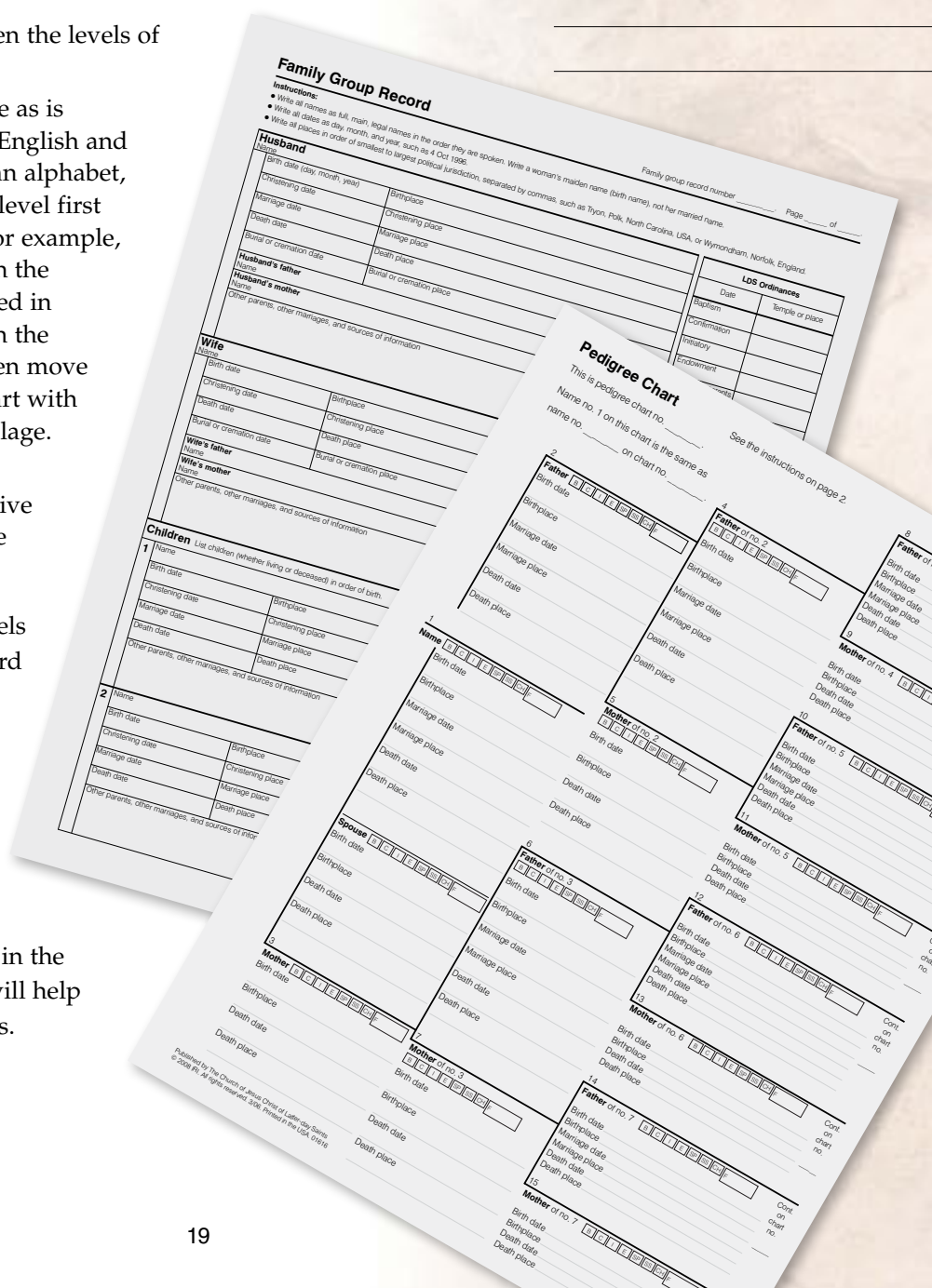
Use the following guidelines as you record place-names:

- Include the name of the country whenever possible.
- Put a comma and a space between the levels of the name.
- Record the levels of a place-name as is customary in your language. In English and other languages that use a Roman alphabet, record the smallest government level first and then move to the largest—for example, start with the town and end with the country. For place-names recorded in Asian writing systems, start with the largest government level and then move to the smallest—for example, start with the country and end with the village.
- You can spell the place-name in your own language or in the native language of the region where the place is located.

Incomplete places. When all the levels of a place-name are not known, record what is known. The FamilySearch Internet site will help you fill in the missing levels. For example:

- Ohio, United States
- Dafen, Carmarthen, Wales

Abbreviations. When writing place-names on paper forms, do not abbreviate them. If you record them in the FamilySearch Internet site, the site will help you clarify the complete place-names.



Notes



ASSIGNMENTS

- **Begin recording information** you have gathered from home. If you have access to the Internet, record the information directly in new.familysearch.org. If you do not have Internet access, record the information on paper forms.
- **Use the guidelines** in this chapter to help you record names, dates, and places correctly.
- **If you are taking the Temple and Family History course**, prepare for the next class by reading chapter 5.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Spencer W. Kimball, "The Angels May Quote from It," *New Era*, Feb. 2003, 32–35.
- "Keeping Family History Records," lesson 17 in *Young Women Manual 2* (1993), 60–64.
- "Family and Personal Histories," lesson 19 in *The Latter-day Saint Woman: Basic Manual for Women, Part B* (2000), 152–59.
- *Preparing a Family History for Publication* (36023; resource guide).

Notes

3. Set a time when you can conduct an interview with the person. Allow the person sufficient time to find papers or records or to think about what he or she can remember.

Prepare for the Interview

Make preparations for the interview in advance by doing the following:

1. Write down the questions you want to ask. Questions that require more than a “yes” or “no” response are usually most effective. See appendix B for sample questions.
2. Gather the information you already have about the family or person you want to learn more about, such as completed family group records and pedigree charts. Plan to share this information and ask if it is correct.
3. If you plan to visit in person, prepare any supplies or equipment you might need. Plan to record what you learn using pencil and paper, a tape recorder, a camera, or a video camera.
4. If you are interviewing an oral historian or a village elder, learn the proper ways to work with him or her.

Conduct the Interview

Use the following guidelines to help you make the interview most effective:

1. Bring or send family photographs, and ask the person if he or she can identify any people in the pictures who are unfamiliar to you.
2. Don't be in a hurry. Give the person time to think about what he or she wants to say. Let the person respond at his or her own pace.
3. Ask about family records, certificates, or photographs. As you are told about them, write down the information. Ask for permission to make copies of records. Take photographs or video footage of the items if you can.
4. If the person is the closest relative of any of your deceased ancestors who were born in the last 95 years, ask the person's permission for the ancestors to receive temple ordinances.
5. Express appreciation for the information you have received. Be prepared to come back later or to send additional correspondence.

Use the Information

After the interview, be sure to use the information you have gathered:

1. Update your records with any new information.
2. Make a transcript or report of your interview, being sure to record the date and place of the interview. Ask the person you interviewed to read the report and make corrections. Ask for permission to copy the

Notes

CHAPTER 6 GATHERING INFORMATION FROM PUBLIC RECORDS

More Than Your Own Strength

Once you have gathered and recorded the family history information readily available from your home and family, you may need to search public records to find more information. As your research becomes more challenging, remember the words of President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency:



“After you find the first few generations, the road will become more difficult. . . . You will be tempted to stop and leave the hard work of finding to others who are more expert or to another time in your life. But you will also feel a tug on your heart to go on in the work, hard as it will be.

“As you decide, remember that the names which will be so difficult to find are of real people to whom you owe your existence in this world and whom you will meet again in the spirit world. . . . Their hearts are bound to you. Their hope is in your hands. You will have more than your own strength as you choose to labor on to find them” (in Conference Report, Apr. 2005, 82; or *Ensign*, May 2005, 79–80).

Public Records to Search

There are many kinds of public records that you can search. Governments and churches often keep records of specific life events. These records may record events that occurred hundreds of years ago. In many cases the records were very carefully maintained. Examples include:

Vital records. Vital records often contain the dates and places of births, marriages, and deaths, which are important for temple ordinances. Vital records are usually found in government offices and churches near the places where your ancestors lived. In some countries, vital records are also called civil registration records.

Notes

3. **Use the Record Selection Table.** After you have decided what information you want to find, use the Record Selection Table in appendix C to help you decide which records you should search. If necessary, ask your family history consultant for help.
4. **Find the record.** Visit or contact the place where the record is kept. You can visit in person, or you can write, call, e-mail, or use the Internet to inquire about the records. Useful records could be stored in family history centers, libraries, archives, churches, courthouses, and on Internet sites. A few of these places are described below:

Family history centers. The Church has microfilmed public records from all over the world. Digital images of many of these records can be viewed online at www.familysearch.org. Some of these records are available only on microfilm. You can order copies of these microfilms at a family history center for a small fee and then use the films at the center for several weeks at a time. Ordering films from a family history center is an easy and less-expensive way to search through record collections without having to travel long distances.

Internet sites. Your family history consultant may be able to recommend Internet sites for you to search. National, state, provincial, and county offices across the world publish their record collections on the Internet. You can check these Internet sites for vital record collections, newspapers, local history records, and church records. Some of these sites allow users to view their record collections at no cost. Many family history Internet sites are available at your local family history center at no cost.

Archives and libraries. National, state, provincial, and county archives store records created by government organizations. Public libraries also store many valuable records, such as newspapers and obituaries. If you cannot find the records of your ancestors on the Internet, you may want to visit government archives or local libraries in areas where your ancestors lived. Ask your family history consultant to help you plan your visits to these organizations.

Notes

Keeping Notes on What You Find

A research log is a record of where you have looked for family history information and what you have found. A sample research log is included in appendix A. Research logs help you organize your work and keep you and others from repeating research that has already been done. Record the following information in your research log:

Who. Write the name of the person you are researching and the contact information for people who can help in your search.

What. Record your research objectives, the kinds of sources you use, and what you discover, even if all you discover is a dead end.

Research Log				
Ancestor's name: <u>James T. Lighter</u>				
Objective(s): <u>Find parents of James T. Lighter</u>			Locality: <u>Stillwater, Ontario, Canada</u>	
Date of search	Location/ call number	Description of source (author, title, year, pages)	Comments (purpose of search, results, years and names searched)	Doc. number
9/27/04	FHL Film # 6243,241	Vital records of Stillwater, Canada	To find if a birth record exists for James T. Lighter with his parents	#124
9/27/04	NAAW Stillwater, Ontario, Canada	Telephone call to Reese Cally	Ask what his father remembers about James T. Lighter	#125
9/29/04	Personal possession of Gloria Dunwood	Journal of James Lighter	James writes about his parents in detail, gives full names, along with extensive genealogy in Journal #1.	#126

Where. Record the location or call number for each source and the places where events occurred in the lives of your ancestors.

When. Include the date when you use a particular source, and record the dates of important events in the lives of your ancestors.



Notes



ASSIGNMENTS

- **Use the Record Selection Table** in appendix C to identify a type of record that might contain additional information about an ancestor.
- **Contact the place where the record is kept.** You can visit the place in person, or you can write, call, e-mail, or use the Internet to inquire about the records. See what information you find on the records.
- **Record the results** of your search in your research log (see appendix A). Record any new information in the FamilySearch Internet site or on paper forms.
- **If you are taking the Temple and Family History course,** prepare for the next class by reading chapter 7.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Henry B. Eyring, "Hearts Bound Together," *Ensign*, May 2005, 77–80.
- Alan E. Mann and Marvin R. Zautcke, "Family History via the Internet," *Ensign*, July 2000, 50–55.
- Sally Johnson Odekirk, "Putting the Puzzle Together," *New Era*, Nov. 2006, 18–22.
- *A Guide to Research* (30971).



begin to understand the urgency of temple and family history work. You may come to know why President Joseph F. Smith described missionary work in the spirit world as proclaiming “liberty to the captives” (D&C 138:31).

Policies for Preparing Names for Temple Work

Generally, you may perform temple ordinances for deceased persons one year or more after the date of death without regard to the person’s worthiness or cause of death. If you have questions, please contact your bishop or branch president.

Before you perform ordinances for a deceased person born within the last 95 years, obtain permission from the closest living relative. Relatives may not want the ordinances performed or may want to perform the ordinances themselves. The closest living relatives are, in this order: a spouse, then children, then parents, then siblings.

Determining Which Names to Submit

You are responsible to submit names of the following individuals for temple work (the individuals must have been deceased for at least one year):

- Immediate family members.
- Direct-line ancestors (parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and so on, and their families).

You may also submit the names of the following individuals who have been deceased for at least one year:

- Biological, adoptive, and foster family lines connected to your family.
- Collateral family lines (uncles, aunts, cousins, and their families).
- Your own descendants.
- Possible ancestors, meaning individuals who have a probable family relationship that cannot be verified because the records are inadequate, such as those who have the same last name and resided in the same area as your known ancestors.

Do not submit the names of persons who are not related to you, including names of famous people or names gathered from unapproved extraction projects, such as victims of the Jewish Holocaust.

You may submit the names of individuals with whom you shared a friendship. This is an exception to the general rule that members should not submit the names of individuals to whom they are not related. Before performing ordinances for a deceased individual who was a friend, you should obtain permission from the individual’s closest living relative.

Notes

Determining What Ordinances to Perform

Use the following policies to help you know what ordinances need to be performed:

When ordinances are not needed. The FamilySearch Internet site will indicate when ordinances are not needed for a person, such as in these situations:

- Children who are born after their mother has been sealed to a husband are born in the covenant. They do not need to receive the ordinance of sealing to parents.
- Temple ordinances are not performed for stillborn children. However, a child who lived even briefly after birth should be sealed to his or her parents. In some countries, particularly in Europe, children who died shortly after birth were often recorded as stillborn. Children listed as stillborn on records from these countries may be sealed to their parents. The FamilySearch Internet site will let you know if a sealing ordinance needs to be performed for a child who was recorded as stillborn. You should record all births, indicating any stillborn children.
- No baptism or endowment is performed for a child who died before the age of eight. Only sealings to parents are performed for such children. If the child was sealed to parents while he or she was living or if the child was born in the covenant, no vicarious ordinances are performed.

Sealing couples with undocumented marriages. You may have a deceased couple sealed to each other if they lived together as husband and wife, even if the marriage cannot be documented. You can use the FamilySearch Internet site to prepare these names for temple ordinances without any other approval process.

Deceased women married more than once. You may have a deceased woman sealed to all men to whom she was legally married. However, if she was sealed to a husband during her life, all her husbands must be deceased before she can be sealed to a husband to whom she was not sealed during life.

Deceased persons who had mental disabilities. Temple ordinances for deceased persons who had mental disabilities are performed the same as for other deceased persons.

Persons who are presumed dead. You may have temple ordinances performed for a person who is presumed dead after 10 years have passed since the time of the presumed death. This policy applies to (1) persons who are missing in action or lost at sea or who have been declared legally dead and (2) persons who disappeared under circumstances where death is apparent but no body has been recovered. In all other cases of missing persons, temple ordinances may not be performed until 110 years have passed from the time of the person's birth.

Notes

Other policies. Please see your bishop for information about the following:

- Temple ordinances involving living people.
- Temple ordinances to seal the living to the dead.
- Any policies not covered above.

Submitting Names to the Temple

After you have found all the required information about an ancestor and it is entered into the FamilySearch Internet site (see chapter 4 of this guide), you are ready to prepare a Family Ordinance Request form to take to the temple. This form will make it possible for temple ordinances to be performed for the person. Follow these steps to prepare the form:

1. **If you have a computer with Internet access**, go to the FamilySearch Internet site and select the temple ordinances that need to be provided for your ancestor. Select only as many ordinances as can be done in a reasonable amount of time. Then print a Family Ordinance Request form. The FamilySearch Internet site allows you to request that someone other than yourself take the Family Ordinance Request to the temple and perform ordinances for your ancestor. (Refer to the Help Center at new.familysearch.org for detailed instructions on how to use the Internet site.)
2. **If you have filled out paper forms**, ask a family history consultant to help you obtain a Family Ordinance Request for the temple ordinances that need to be provided for your ancestor. You will need to provide your Helper Access Number. (This number is the last five digits of your Church membership record number. You can get this number from your ward clerk.)

Give your family group records to the family history consultant, who will arrange to have the information on your forms typed into the FamilySearch Internet site. After the information has been entered into the computer, the consultant will give you a Family Ordinance Request, which you can take to the temple.

You may do ordinance work only for persons of your own gender. Those who do baptisms and confirmations at



the temple must be at least 12 years old, must be baptized and confirmed, and must have a current temple recommend. Males must hold the priesthood. Those who do other temple ordinances must be endowed and have a current temple recommend.

Performing Temple Ordinances

Scheduling a Visit to the Temple

At some temples you will need to schedule a time to do ordinances. At others, you can simply go whenever the temple is open. If you have any questions, contact the temple as you plan your visit. Your bishop or branch president can tell you how to contact the temple.

Temple ordinances should be done in this order:

1. Baptism and confirmation.
2. Priesthood ordination for males and initiatory ordinances.
3. Endowment.
4. Sealings. (The marriage sealing should be done after both the husband and the wife have received the endowment. Children may be sealed to parents after the parents have been sealed to each other.)

At the Temple

Take the Family Ordinance Request form with you to the temple. There, a temple worker will print ordinance cards for you, and you can use the cards to do ordinance work.

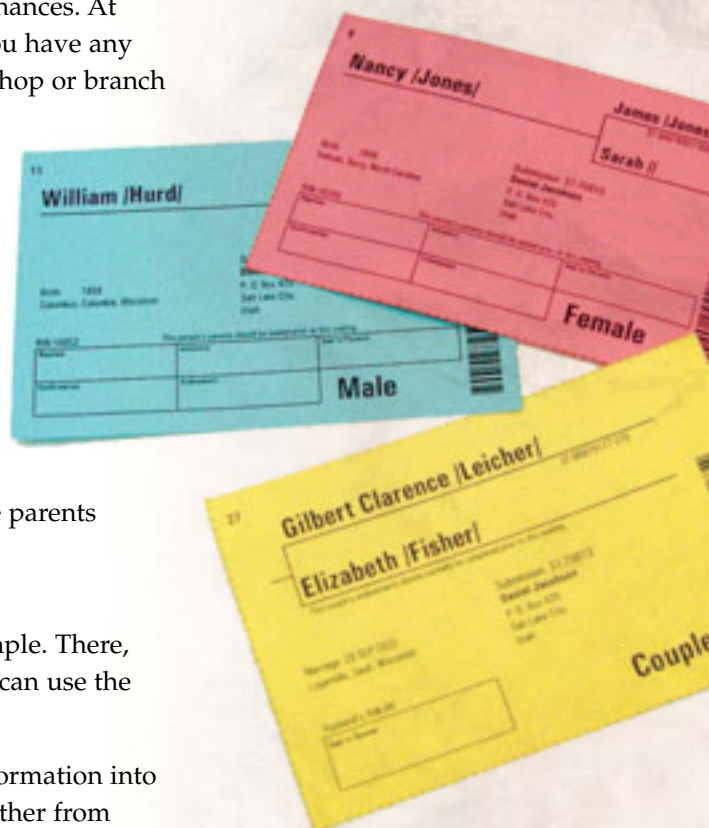
Whenever possible, you should enter your family history information into the FamilySearch Internet site before attending the temple, either from home or from a family history center. If you cannot do this, temple workers at some temples may be able to help you enter the information and print ordinance cards if you bring the family group records you have prepared. Contact the temple before you go to see if this service is provided.

After Attending the Temple

Once you have completed temple ordinances for an individual, you can verify that the work has been recorded. Just look up the person's name on the FamilySearch Internet site.

If you have a computer with Internet access, go to the FamilySearch Internet site and sign in to the system. Review the information about yourself and your ancestors, and verify that the ordinance work was recorded correctly.

Notes



Notes

If you do not have access to the Internet, ask a family history consultant to print a family group record from the FamilySearch Internet site showing the ordinances completed for your family members.

Blessings of Temple Work

Latter-day prophets have consistently emphasized the importance of performing temple work for our ancestors. President Thomas S. Monson taught:



“The work of seeking out our dead and ensuring that the ordinances of exaltation are performed in their behalf is a mandate from our Heavenly Father and his Beloved Son. They do not leave us to struggle alone but rather, in ways which are sometimes dramatic, prepare the way and answer our prayers” (“Happy Birthday,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1995, 58).

President Gordon B. Hinckley said:



“In a spirit of love and consecration, we must extend ourselves in the work of redemption of the dead through service in the temples of the Lord. This service more nearly approaches the divine work of the Son of God, who gave his life for others, than does any other work of which I know” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1983, 8; or *Ensign*, May 1983, 8).

President Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke of the blessings that come to those who engage in this work:



“Family history work has the power to do something *for* the dead. It has an equal power to do something *to* the living. Family history work of Church members has a refining, spiritualizing, tempering influence on those who are engaged in it. . . .

“Family history work in one sense would justify itself even if one were not successful in clearing names for temple work. The process of searching, the means of going after those names, would be worth all the effort you could invest. The reason: You cannot find names without knowing that they represent people. You begin to find out things about people. When we research our own lines we become interested in more than just names or the number of names going

Notes



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Russell M. Nelson, “Personal Preparation for Temple Blessings,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 32–35.
- Howard W. Hunter, “A Temple-Motivated People,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1995, 2–5.
- “Ordinances,” in *True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference*, 109–10.
- “Temples,” in *True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference*, 170–74.
- Doctrine and Covenants 128.

Pedigree Chart

See the instructions on page 2.

This is pedigree chart no. _____.

Name no. 1 on this chart is the same as

name no. _____ on chart no. _____.

2

Father B C I E SP SS CH F

Birth date _____

Birthplace _____

Marriage date _____

Marriage place _____

Death date _____

Death place _____

4

Father of no. 2 B C I E SP SS CH F

Birth date _____

Birthplace _____

Marriage date _____

Marriage place _____

Death date _____

Death place _____

1

Name B C I E SP SS CH F

Birth date _____

Birthplace _____

Marriage date _____

Marriage place _____

Death date _____

Death place _____

Spouse B C I E SP SS CH F

Birth date _____

Birthplace _____

Death date _____

Death place _____

3

5

Mother of no. 2 B C I E SP SS CH F

Birth date _____

Birthplace _____

Death date _____

Death place _____

6

Father of no. 3 B C I E SP SS CH F

Birth date _____

Birthplace _____

Marriage date _____

Marriage place _____

Death date _____

Death place _____

Mother B C I E SP SS CH F

Birth date _____

Birthplace _____

Death date _____

Death place _____

7

Mother of no. 3 B C I E SP SS CH F

Birth date _____

Birthplace _____

Death date _____

Death place _____

8

Father of no. 4 B C I E SP SS CH F

Birth date _____

Birthplace _____

Marriage date _____

Marriage place _____

Death date _____

Death place _____

9

Mother of no. 4 B C I E SP SS CH F

Birth date _____

Birthplace _____

Death date _____

Death place _____

10

Father of no. 5 B C I E SP SS CH F

Birth date _____

Birthplace _____

Marriage date _____

Marriage place _____

Death date _____

Death place _____

11

Mother of no. 5 B C I E SP SS CH F

Birth date _____

Birthplace _____

Death date _____

Death place _____

12

Father of no. 6 B C I E SP SS CH F

Birth date _____

Birthplace _____

Marriage date _____

Marriage place _____

Death date _____

Death place _____

13

Mother of no. 6 B C I E SP SS CH F

Birth date _____

Birthplace _____

Death date _____

Death place _____

14

Father of no. 7 B C I E SP SS CH F

Birth date _____

Birthplace _____

Marriage date _____

Marriage place _____

Death date _____

Death place _____

15

Mother of no. 7 B C I E SP SS CH F

Birth date _____

Birthplace _____

Death date _____

Death place _____

Instructions for Using This Form

- Write all names as full, main, legal names in the order they are spoken. Write a woman's maiden name (birth name), not her married name.
- Write all dates as day, month, and year, such as 4 Oct 1996.
- Write all places in order of smallest to largest political jurisdiction, separated by commas, such as Tryon, Polk, North Carolina, USA, or Wymondham, Norfolk, England.
- If you need room to write additional information, use the "Notes" section below.
- The status boxes under each name are described below. All except the "F" status box are for LDS ordinances. Mark the boxes as the ordinances are done for each person. When you fill out a family group record for a person, write the number of the family group record in the box next to the "F" (for example, F 6). If a person had multiple families and therefore has multiple family group records, write all of the family group record numbers (for example, F 6, 9, 41).

B Baptism

C Confirmation

I Initiatory

E Endowment

SP Sealing to parents

SS Sealing to spouse

CH Ordinances are complete for all children

F This person is listed on the following family group records

Contributor's Name and Information

Contributor's name	Birth date	Phone (with area code)
--------------------	------------	------------------------

Address

Date prepared	Helper access number (last 5 digits of contributor's Church membership record number)
---------------	---

Notes Attach additional sheets as necessary.

Family Group Record

Instructions:

- Write all names as full, main, legal names in the order they are spoken. Write a woman's maiden name (birth name), not her married name.
- Write all dates as day, month, and year, such as 4 Oct 1996.
- Write all places in order of smallest to largest political jurisdiction, separated by commas, such as Tryon, Polk, North Carolina, USA, or Wymondham, Norfolk, England.

Husband			LDS Ordinances	
Name			Date	Temple or place
Birth date (day, month, year)	Birthplace		Baptism	
Christening date	Christening place		Confirmation	
Marriage date	Marriage place		Initiatory	
Death date	Death place		Endowment	
Burial or cremation date	Burial or cremation place		Sealing to parents	
Husband's father Name <input type="checkbox"/> Deceased			Sealing to spouse	
Husband's mother Name <input type="checkbox"/> Deceased				
Other parents, other marriages, and sources of information				
Wife			Baptism	
Name			Confirmation	
Birth date	Birthplace		Initiatory	
Christening date	Christening place		Endowment	
Death date	Death place		Sealing to parents	
Burial or cremation date	Burial or cremation place		Sealing to spouse	
Wife's father Name <input type="checkbox"/> Deceased			Sealing to spouse	
Wife's mother Name <input type="checkbox"/> Deceased				
Other parents, other marriages, and sources of information				
Children List children (whether living or deceased) in order of birth.			Baptism	
1	Name <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female		Confirmation	
	Birth date	Birthplace		Initiatory
	Christening date	Christening place		Endowment
	Marriage date	Marriage place	Spouse's name	Sealing to parents
	Death date	Death place		Sealing to spouse
	Other parents, other marriages, and sources of information			
2	Name <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female		Baptism	
	Birth date	Birthplace		Confirmation
	Christening date	Christening place		Initiatory
	Marriage date	Marriage place	Spouse's name	Endowment
	Death date	Death place		Sealing to parents
	Other parents, other marriages, and sources of information			Sealing to spouse

Family Group Record—continued

Family group record number _____ Page ____ of ____.

Husband Name			Wife Name				
Children—continued List children (whether living or deceased) in order of birth. Number each child (3, 4, 5, and so on).					LDS Ordinances		
Name <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female						Date	Temple
Birth date		Birthplace				Baptism	
Christening date		Christening place				Confirmation	
Marriage date		Marriage place		Spouse's name		Initiatory	
Death date		Death place				Endowment	
Other parents, other marriages, and sources of information						Sealing to parents	
						Sealing to spouse	
Name <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female						Baptism	
Birth date		Birthplace				Confirmation	
Christening date		Christening place				Initiatory	
Marriage date		Marriage place		Spouse's name		Endowment	
Death date		Death place				Sealing to parents	
Other parents, other marriages, and sources of information						Sealing to spouse	
Name <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female						Baptism	
Birth date		Birthplace				Confirmation	
Christening date		Christening place				Initiatory	
Marriage date		Marriage place		Spouse's name		Endowment	
Death date		Death place				Sealing to parents	
Other parents, other marriages, and sources of information						Sealing to spouse	
Name <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female						Baptism	
Birth date		Birthplace				Confirmation	
Christening date		Christening place				Initiatory	
Marriage date		Marriage place		Spouse's name		Endowment	
Death date		Death place				Sealing to parents	
Other parents, other marriages, and sources of information						Sealing to spouse	

Additional Children

Check this box if this couple has more children. Then attach as many copies of this page as needed. Number each additional child (7, 8, 9, and so on), and number the pages of this family group record accordingly (page 1 of 3, page 2 of 3, and so on).

Contributor's Name and Information

Contributor's name		Birth date	Phone (with area code)
Address			
Date prepared		Helper access number (last 5 digits of contributor's Church membership record number)	

Notes

18. Who are your grandchildren?
19. What memories do you have of extended family members, such as aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents?
20. Where did some of these extended family members live?
21. What can you remember about births, marriages, and deaths of other family members?
22. Where are family members buried?
23. Did you or any of your relatives serve in the military?
24. Which wars did you or other relatives fight in?
25. Will you share some of their war stories with me?
26. What jobs do you remember your parents and other family members doing?
27. What religion or religions were practiced in your home?
28. What are some important spiritual experiences you have had?
29. Was anyone in the family interested in family history?
30. Are there any family members who kept a journal or who wrote a historical account of your family? Who are they? Are any of these accounts available for me to read?
31. Are you aware of any ancestors who emigrated from their home country to this country?
32. Does anyone in the family own a family Bible, a family history, or genealogical records of any kind? Who are these family members, and where do they live?
33. Will you show me some of your old family documents or artifacts?
34. Will you show me some of your old family photographs?

APPENDIX C

RECORD SELECTION TABLE

Use this table to determine which records would be useful in finding information about your ancestors. The first column lists important types of information about your ancestor and events in your ancestor's life. The second and third columns show groups or organizations that may have created records about your ancestor. Check for records listed in the second column before checking for records listed in the third column.

Event	Look for These Records First	Then Look for These Records
Birth	Government: Vital records Family: Bible records Church: Parish records, membership records Other: Cemeteries	Government: Census, military, taxation Newspaper: Obituaries
Birth, foreign	Government: Census, emigration, immigration, naturalization, citizenship Family or library: Bible, biography, genealogy	Church: Parish records, membership records Newspaper: Obituaries Library: Histories, maps, gazetteers
Death	Government: Death, probate Newspaper: Obituaries Church: Parish records, membership records Other: Cemeteries, funeral homes, hospitals	Newspaper: Articles Government: Military, court, land and property
Marriage and maiden name	Government: Vital records Church: Parish records, membership records Newspaper: Announcements, obituaries Family: Bible records	Government: Military, probate, land and property, nobility Family or library: Biography, genealogy Other: Cemeteries
Divorce	Government: Court records, divorce records	Newspaper: Articles Government: Vital records
Immigration, emigration	Government: Immigration, emigration, naturalization, citizenship Family or library: Genealogy	Government: Census Library: Biography Newspaper: Articles Church: Membership records
Family members	Government: Vital records, census, probate Church: Parish records, membership records Newspaper: Obituaries	Family: Bible Government: Immigration, emigration, land and property
Place of residence	Government: Census, land and property, military, vital records Family or library: History, genealogy Church: Parish records, membership records Other: Directories	Government: Taxation Newspaper: Obituaries
Religion	Church: Parish records, membership records Library: History, biography Government: Civil registration	Family or library: Bible records, genealogy Newspaper: Obituaries Other: Cemeteries

THE CHURCH OF
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OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

