

By Julie B. Beck
Relief Society General President



USING Relief Society Meetings TO TEACH AND INSPIRE

Inspired Relief Society presidencies and priesthood leaders use Relief Society meetings to fulfill the purposes and work of Relief Society.

THE PURPOSE OF RELIEF SOCIETY

The purpose of Relief Society as established by the Lord is to prepare women for the blessings of eternal life by helping them:

1. Increase faith and personal righteousness.
2. Strengthen families and homes.
3. Seek out and help those in need.

As each sister in the Church does her part to ensure that the purposes of Relief Society are fulfilled, angels will be our associates and we will be participants in amazing miracles.



Sisters from around the world are finding that Relief Society meetings can help teach Latter-day Saint women and engage them in the Lord's work of salvation.

In the Philippines, Relief Society leaders wanted to support the Area Presidency in their desire to have members prepare to attend the Cebu Philippines Temple after it was dedicated. They discussed ideas with their bishop. As a result, they held additional Relief Society meetings on temple preparation, modesty in dress, and the blessings of paying tithing.

In Mexico City, where flooding often occurs during torrential rainstorms, Relief Society leaders organized projects to help the sisters and their families be prepared to leave their homes quickly. In another ward with 20 widows, leaders organized a Relief Society meeting to help support and strengthen those sisters.

In California, USA, one Relief Society president used ongoing parenthood

classes to strengthen and teach young mothers. They have now started these classes in Spanish.

In Moscow, Russia, sisters in one Relief Society wanted to focus on strengthening their families and homes by learning basic homemaking skills. They began classes on cooking, sewing, and making their homes lovelier.

Experiences such as these came as a result of Relief Society leaders implementing the new policy for Relief Society meetings, announced during the general Relief Society meeting on September 26, 2009.¹

Working Together

Relief Society is the largest women's organization in the world. The fact that it works under priesthood direction makes it completely unique. It allows our worldwide Relief Society to work in all cultures.

Every bishop or branch president has the responsibility for his specific unit. Each Relief Society president is called to





HOW TO ANNOUNCE RELIEF SOCIETY MEETINGS

Individual Relief Society meetings that are not held on Sunday can be called whatever they are: Relief Society service, classes, projects, conferences, or workshops. Following are a few examples of how to announce these meetings:

- “Please come to our Relief Society class on how to prepare for the temple.”
- “This Thursday we will have a Relief Society meeting for all sisters on using *Preach My Gospel* in family home evening.”
- “The Relief Society will be holding a workshop on gardening.”
- “A Relief Society service project will be held on Saturday morning.”

assist one bishop or branch president. Each priesthood leader and Relief Society presidency member has been set apart and blessed to receive inspiration for his or her particular responsibilities—and not for any other ward or branch or group of Relief Society sisters. As a result, all Relief Societies—whether in Chile, Hong Kong, Ghana, or elsewhere—can each plan what their sisters specifically need.

Following are examples of how two Relief Society presidents worked in partnership with their bishops:

A Relief Society presidency in Pleasant Grove, Utah, met with their bishop to discuss ward goals before planning Relief Society classes. Based on those goals, Relief Society leaders planned a meeting where a sister in the ward shared how she uses *Preach My Gospel* for family home evening. They also arranged several gardening workshops, including how to store food from one’s garden. Of the presidency’s meetings with the bishop, the Relief Society president says, “We feel our bishop’s love, knowing he is praying to the Lord in our behalf.”

A Relief Society president in Lehi, Utah, using information from reliefsociety.lds.org, proposed six months of meetings to the bishop. She says, “I encouraged my counselor to train our Relief Society meeting coordinator to focus on the purposes of Relief Society as they planned our monthly classes. When they met with the Relief Society committee members, they asked them to pray about how we could use the purposes of Relief Society to help meet the needs in our ward.

The committee came back with many ideas. Then with the bishop’s input and approval, we finalized our plans.”

Praying for Inspiration

Relief Society presidents who get on their knees and ask Heavenly Father to tell them what they need to learn will have revelation pouring down to them in beauty and detail. One Relief Society president says, “The Lord knows the hearts and minds of each of our sisters. He knows their struggles and heartaches, their joys and their sorrows. And only He truly knows what will best help them. Thus, our solution is to ask in faith for direction.”

The purpose of Relief Society will take on a new strength for Relief Society leaders, the sisters, and their families. Relief Society meetings will be a place where sisters can be taught and inspired in ways that meet their needs and, in turn, the needs of the ward or branch. ■

NOTE

1. See Julie B. Beck, “Relief Society: A Sacred Work,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 110–14.

For more information about Relief Society meetings, go to www.reliefsociety.lds.org.



SUMMARY OF CHANGES IN RELIEF SOCIETY MEETINGS

- Align the name of Relief Society meetings with Relief Society purposes and work.
- Encourage counseling between the Relief Society president and the bishop or branch president.
- Focus sisters on increasing their faith and personal righteousness.
- Emphasize strengthening families and homes.
- Give sisters opportunities to organize efforts to seek out and help those in need.

SUMMARY OF POLICIES FOR RELIEF SOCIETY MEETINGS

- The Relief Society president oversees all Relief Society meetings; she may ask the first or second counselor to assist her with Relief Society meetings.
- A sister in the ward or branch may be called as the Relief Society meeting coordinator. A Relief Society meeting committee may be called to assist her.

- Additional Relief Society meetings are generally held monthly, but the Relief Society presidency may recommend that they be held more or less often. Efforts should be made to hold the meetings at least quarterly, and they are usually held at a time other than on Sunday or on Monday evening. At least one member of the Relief Society presidency should attend all Relief Society meetings.
- In planning meetings, leaders should give priority to topics that fulfill Relief Society purposes, such as marriage and family, homemaking, provident living and self-reliance, compassionate service, temple and family history, sharing the gospel, and other subjects requested by the bishop or branch president.
- Meetings can focus on one topic or be divided into more than one class or activity. Generally, teachers should be members of the ward or stake.
- These meetings can be valuable supplements to Sunday instruction, especially for sisters who serve in Primary or Young Women or who are unable to attend Sunday meetings.
- Relief Society leaders should follow Church policies about finances and activities.

STAKE RELIEF SOCIETY MEETINGS

As approved by the stake president, one or two stake Relief Society meetings may be planned and carried out by the stake Relief Society presidency each year for all Relief Society sisters in the stake. One of these stake Relief Society meetings may be held in conjunction with the annual broadcast of the general Relief Society meeting, which is on September 25 this year.

COUNSELING WITH THE BISHOP OR BRANCH PRESIDENT

Using Relief Society meetings appropriately will increase the ability of the Relief Society to work in powerful ways with the priesthood leaders in every ward or branch.

- The Relief Society president should counsel regularly with her bishop or branch president regarding how these meetings can strengthen individuals and families.
- The Relief Society presidency makes recommendations about Relief Society meetings to the bishop or branch president for his approval, taking into consideration time commitments of sisters, family circumstances, travel distance and cost, safety, financial cost to the ward or branch, and other local circumstances.

