

YOUR MTC EXPERIENCE

WANT TO HAVE AN AMAZING MISSION? THE MISSIONARY TRAINING CENTER WILL TEACH YOU HOW.

By Joshua J. Perkey
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Imagine that today you finally received your mission call. Your assignment will include a specific place, mission language, and starting date. And on that date, you will likely report to one of 12 missionary training centers (MTCs) around the world. What will your experience at the MTC be like? Let's find out.

YOUR FIRST DAY

Unless you live close enough to the MTC to drive there, the Church will arrange for your travel.

At the MTC in Provo, Utah, USA, missionaries and staff direct you to a line in the parking area where you say goodbye to family, meet your host missionaries, and then check in. The host missionaries—missionaries who have been at the MTC for a few weeks—become your guides as you arrive. They make sure your bags get to your residence while you receive your name tag and find your classroom.

"Everyone is so nice. No matter if they're in your district or a random missionary you meet, everyone is willing to help you," says Sister Hanks, one of nine missionaries we interviewed at the Provo MTC who are learning Mandarin Chinese. Missionaries from her district will be serving in Taiwan, Canada, and California, USA.

Sister Prestwich says, "That was the coolest thing ever, knowing that you're finally here and you finally get to do this wonderful thing that you know you've been asked to do."



PERU MTC

PROVO MTC



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—Sister Prestwich

GUATEMALA MTC

PROVO MTC

YOUR FIRST CLASS

When you enter the MTC, learning begins quickly. On your first day, you'll enter your classroom and begin learning and practicing how to teach the gospel.

Sister Singleton says, "We walked into our classroom and all the older people in our zone were speaking Chinese and our teachers were speaking in Chinese."

Elder Adams says, "It took some time, but once you start picking it up, learning how to study effectively, your learning grows exponentially. It was just a positive growth cycle as you learn."

The training curriculum is exactly the same at all MTCs. At smaller MTCs, you will be interviewed by, taught by, and interact a lot with the MTC president and his wife. When members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles give a devotional talk at the Provo MTC, it is broadcast to the other MTCs.

YOUR NEW BRANCH

At larger MTCs, the missionaries are assigned to a branch with a branch presidency (local Melchizedek Priesthood holders called to serve at the MTC). They meet with their branch for sacrament meeting on Sundays. At smaller MTCs, missionaries meet together under the direction of the MTC presidency.

At larger MTCs, each missionary is assigned to a zone made up of several districts. This is the same organization the missionaries will experience in the mission field. In the MTC, districts may have only a couple of companionships, or they may have five or six. Zones may be made up of a couple of districts or a half dozen. The organization helps with training and learning. MTC presidencies and branch presidencies and their wives also provide counseling and support for missionaries as they adjust to missionary life.





FUN FACTS

- ▶ Approximately 40,000 missionaries pass through the MTCs each year.
- ▶ In smaller MTCs, as few as 35 to 150 missionaries may be there at one time.
- ▶ At the Provo MTC, there may be as many as 2,000 missionaries at one time.
- ▶ The Mexico MTC usually has several hundred missionaries but has the capacity for as many as 1,200.
- ▶ A total of 58 languages are taught at the various MTCs.
- ▶ Missionaries not learning a new language spend three weeks at the MTC.
- ▶ Missionaries learning a new language spend six to nine weeks at the MTC.



ENGLAND MTC



BRAZIL MTC



PHILIPPINES MTC



GHANA MTC



COLOMBIA MTC



BRAZIL MTC



PROVO MTC

“Before I got here, I thought maybe this was going to be hard, almost a little miserable. But it’s just a fun experience. It’s a blast. We’re having fun and working hard.”

—Elder Jackson

YOUR WEEKLY ROUTINE

Missionaries sleep in rooms they share with their companions and other missionaries—usually four to a room. Each day, they have exercise time (except for Sundays), planning time, and time for meals. The bulk of their time is spent in a classroom, where they receive training on gospel doctrine, language (if needed), and how to find people to teach, how to teach by the Spirit, and how to plan their time. This training is the primary purpose of the MTC—to hone your understanding of the gospel and learn how to effectively share the message of the gospel with others. Your teachers will be returned missionaries who know how to help you develop the missionary skills you need. The daily schedule is demanding but also rewarding.

Elder Jackson says, “Before I got here, I thought maybe this was going to be hard, almost a little miserable. But it’s just a fun experience. It’s a blast. We’re having fun and working hard.”

Missionaries also have service opportunities and a preparation day. This day gives them time to do laundry, clean their rooms, and write home. This is also a time when missionaries can visit the temple.

On Sundays missionaries attend church with their fellow missionaries. They may be invited to speak in sacrament meeting and teach priesthood or Relief Society meetings. Elders

participate in the blessing and passing of the sacrament. Outside of the regular Church meetings, missionaries also participate in district meetings, have interviews with their branch or MTC presidency, watch Church media, have companionship conversations, and do personal study. Missionaries assigned to serve as zone leaders, district leaders, and sister training leaders have leadership training on Sundays as well.

While most of the daily schedule for missionaries is outlined, they do have some unstructured time. Sister Hanks says she feels responsible to spend her time well: “You choose how you spend your time. It’s up to you how you use God’s time.”

YOUR FIRST COMPANION

Adjusting to missionary life can be challenging—feeling homesick, eating different food, having a demanding learning experience. An excellent resource is the Church publication *Adjusting to Missionary Life*, available in print, online at LDS.org, and in the Gospel Library app.

One of the biggest adjustments to life as a missionary is having a companion with you all the time. He or she may come from a different country, speak a different language, or have a different perspective on doing missionary work together. Missionaries have to learn to be comfortable spending so much time with someone else. And they have to learn how to teach together. Elder Juilfs recalls, “We had one lesson that was really rough. We had different ideas and were going against each other. But we learned how important it is to teach as a companionship and let ideas flow.”

How do you make that kind of adjustment? With love, humility, and communication. As Elder Lee explains, “There are companionship inventories where you take some time to review the day or week to understand your companion, how he would do things,

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—Elder Juilfs

and set yourself up so you can help the other person and you can grow together.”

As you strive to serve and show kindness to your companion, you also learn the power of unity. Elder Shaw says, “You have to forget about yourself a little bit, focus on your companionship as a team. Once you’re able to get that unity, it’s so powerful, and it’s so incredible.”

YOU MIGHT FEEL HOMESICK

As a new missionary at the MTC, you might find the stress of the work and being away from home challenging. Sister Saliva says, “It’s normal to be homesick in the first few days. But then it gets better because we find comfort with each other, and our leaders comfort us. Focusing on studying helps me. I still miss my family, but my focus is on doing the work.”

It’s normal to feel stress, and it’s normal to feel some ups and downs. Elder Juilfs says, “You’re going to have some really good highs, and for some reason, sometimes you’ll just feel a little bit down. But you just have to step back and remember: ‘I’m not learning this for me; I’m learning it for those I will teach. As long as I’m trying my best, it’ll come.’”

But there is a great support system, including trainers, leaders, and your companion. Sister Singleton says, “One time I was really discouraged from a lesson, and things kind of piled up. But I talked to my companion, and we went on a little walk. That’s what helped me—to talk about it, cry a little bit. Focusing on the work and having a positive attitude—that helps so much.”

YOU’LL LEAVE PREPARED

No matter your personal circumstances, if you come to the MTC with an open heart and a willingness to learn, trusting in the Lord to sustain you, the MTC will be a powerful training ground for your missionary service. Your testimony will be strengthened, you’ll learn to connect with and love the people you teach and those you serve with, and you’ll learn the language of the Spirit. You’ll also deepen your understanding of the gospel and learn how to teach it more effectively and how to adjust to different circumstances and challenges. When the time comes for you to depart for your mission, you’ll have greater confidence in yourself and in the Lord. **NE**



Provo UTAH



AREAS SERVED:
Worldwide

TRAINING LANGUAGES:
57
different languages

MISSIONARIES SERVED ANNUALLY:
20,515

Buenos Aires ARGENTINA



AREAS SERVED:
Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay

TRAINING LANGUAGE:
Spanish

MISSIONARIES SERVED ANNUALLY:
1,180

Mexico City MEXICO



AREAS SERVED:
Mexico, other countries of North, Central, and South America

TRAINING LANGUAGE:
Spanish

MISSIONARIES SERVED ANNUALLY:
4,848

Preston ENGLAND



AREAS SERVED:
Europe

TRAINING LANGUAGES:
English, French, German, Greek, Italian, Russian, Spanish

MISSIONARIES SERVED ANNUALLY:
785



MEXICO MTC



PROVO MTC

The number of MTCs may be increased or reduced as Church leaders continue to seek the best use of resources worldwide according to the needs and demands of each area.

**São Paulo
BRAZIL**



AREAS SERVED:
Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Mozambique

TRAINING LANGUAGES:
Portuguese, Spanish

MISSIONARIES SERVED ANNUALLY:
3,285

**Bogotá
COLOMBIA**



AREAS SERVED:
Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela

TRAINING LANGUAGE:
Spanish

MISSIONARIES SERVED ANNUALLY:
3,434

**Lima
PERU**



AREAS SERVED:
Bolivia, Peru

TRAINING LANGUAGE:
Spanish

MISSIONARIES SERVED ANNUALLY:
1,634

**Guatemala City
GUATEMALA**



AREAS SERVED:
Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama

TRAINING LANGUAGES:
K'ekchi, Spanish

MISSIONARIES SERVED ANNUALLY:
1,599

**Accra
GHANA**



AREAS SERVED:
DR Congo, Madagascar, West Africa

TRAINING LANGUAGES:
English, French

MISSIONARIES SERVED ANNUALLY:
1,740

**Johannesburg
SOUTH AFRICA**



AREAS SERVED:
Kenya, Madagascar, South Africa, Zimbabwe

TRAINING LANGUAGE:
English

MISSIONARIES SERVED ANNUALLY:
376

**Auckland
NEW ZEALAND**



AREAS SERVED:
Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tahiti, Tonga

TRAINING LANGUAGES:
English, French, Samoan, Tongan

MISSIONARIES SERVED ANNUALLY:
2,302

**Manila
PHILIPPINES**



AREAS SERVED:
Asia

TRAINING LANGUAGES:
Cambodian, Cebuano, English, Indonesian, Mandarin, Mongolian, Tagalog, Thai, Urdu, Vietnamese

MISSIONARIES SERVED ANNUALLY:
2,343