



MISSION LIFE

The breadth and depth of a missionary's experience are defined by his or her purpose: to invite others to come unto Christ.

The alarm clock's steady, rhythmic buzz cuts through the quiet apartment. 6:30 again—the start of another day. Another day of studying, praying, planning, working, teaching, helping, and serving. Another day to cherish. Another day as a missionary.

When each of the more than 75,000 full-time missionaries of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints arises each day, many different activities and experiences may await him or her—lessons, visits, and meetings, plans that go smoothly and plans that fall through, acceptance and rejection, and a lot of hard work and prayer.

Throughout it all, [the common thread of mission life is a missionary's purpose](#): “Invite others to come unto Christ by helping them receive the restored gospel through faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement, repentance, baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end” (*Preach My Gospel* [2004], 1).

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“When missionaries have internalized the purpose of bringing people to Christ through the principles and ordinances of the restored gospel, they will understand that **missionary work is not a program, it is a cause**—the cause of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They will understand that they are not salesmen or technicians but divinely authorized and commissioned teachers of righteousness. They will understand that the world has no access to atoning grace and salvation but through them and the Church they represent, The

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They will understand what they and this work are all about, and they will be up and about their Father’s business. As the sons of Mosiah, they will teach ‘with power and authority of God’ (Alma 17:3).”

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, seminar for new mission presidents, June 22, 2008.

To see how a missionary’s purpose permeates all areas of his or her life, take a look at some of the things missionaries do in a typical week.



► PLANNING SESSIONS

Missionaries have a two- to three-hour goal-setting and planning session once a week and a shorter session at the end of each day. As with everything they do, their daily and weekly planning sessions are focused on their purpose. Their planning is based on more than just a schedule; it's based on prayer, inspiration, and a concern for the needs of others as they come unto Christ. For instance, missionaries plan visits with investigators to teach and follow up, they plan visits with members to help them share the gospel with others, and they plan activities centered around finding, teaching, baptizing, and confirming people.

► PRAYER

Prayer becomes second nature to missionaries. They pray individually every morning and night and carry a prayer in their hearts throughout the day. They pray as companionships when they plan, study, teach, and eat together. They teach people how to pray. They pray with investigators and members. They know that their success hinges on having the Spirit with them and that "the Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith; and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach" (D&C 42:14).





"I frequently say to missionaries in the field, 'You make or break your mission every morning of your life. You tell me how those morning hours go from 6:30 a.m. until you are on the street in your mission, whatever time it is; you tell me how those hours go, and I will tell you how your day will go, I will tell you how your month will go, I will tell you how your year will go and how your mission and your life will go.'"

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, seminar for new mission presidents, June 26, 2011.



"Meaningful goals and careful planning will help you accomplish what the Lord requires of you. As you care for the people in your assigned area, you will account to Him and to your mission leaders."

Preach My Gospel, 137.

► DAILY PERSONAL AND COMPANIONSHIP STUDY

It is essential for missionaries to study daily—one hour by themselves, one hour as a companionship, plus, for some, an extra 30–60 minutes for language study. They focus on the scriptures and the doctrines of the lessons in *Preach My Gospel*.



"The Lord deserves our very best, and we cannot give that to Him without good, careful planning.

"If you plan well, you will have promptings, elders and sisters, telling you the things you should do, and you'll have some promptings telling you things you should not do. The power of this work is when we get to the point in our relationships with Heavenly Father that we know the voice of the Spirit, and we know it so well that we know exactly what we should do."

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, devotional address at the Provo Missionary Training Center, June 25, 2002.





► TEACHING PEOPLE

Whether they're in a home, on the street, at church, or online, missionaries teach and testify of the doctrines of the restored gospel, help people feel and recognize the Spirit, and invite people to make commitments to do the things that will help them become converted, including studying the Book of Mormon, praying to know the truth, repenting of sins, keeping the commandments, and attending church.

The basic teachings missionaries share with people are found in chapter 3 of *Preach My Gospel*. Missionaries study and internalize these doctrines and principles so that they know what to teach and so that they can follow the Spirit and adapt their teaching to the needs of each person.



► MAKING FOLLOW-UP VISITS WITH PEOPLE

When people have agreed to make a commitment to do something, missionaries try to follow up with them frequently—daily if possible. Missionaries encourage them, answer questions, resolve concerns, promise them that God will bless them, and offer any other help they can so that they will follow through with their commitments. For instance, missionaries might read from the Book of Mormon together with a person who has committed to read it but has not yet done so. Other commitments can be very hard for people to keep, such as the commitment to quit smoking or quit drinking alcohol. Missionaries give them support and offer them many ideas for overcoming the addictive behavior.





► CHURCH MEETINGS

Missionaries know that attending church several times before being baptized provides investigators a better chance of remaining active in the Church afterward. At church, investigators feel the Spirit, and missionaries introduce them to Church members and help them become familiar with what goes on in Church meetings.



“Change can be hard. Your role is to help strengthen people in their resolve to change. You should do all you can to help people keep their commitments. . . .
“ . . . You have not finished your ministry until people are living these commitments, or in other words, until they have repented (see 3 Nephi 18:32).”

Preach My Gospel, 200.



► TRANSPORTATION

To get from point A to point B in their day-to-day work, missionaries use whatever mode of transportation is available to them. In many places, that means walking. In other places, there are more options, such as bicycles or public transportation. Some missionaries are even given cars to drive. Often, however, missionaries don't just travel from one place to another as efficiently as they can. Instead, they may choose a mode of transportation that allows them opportunities to share the gospel with people they may meet as they travel, because missionaries should “talk with as many people as [they] can each day” (*Preach My Gospel, 156*).



► PREPARATION DAY

One day a week is set aside as missionaries' preparation day. It's not really a day off; it's more like a day to do all of the things they don't have time to do on any other day—like writing family, doing laundry, cleaning, shopping, and getting a haircut. They also participate in some cultural and recreational activities. But the purpose of this day is to help the missionaries be more productive, focused, and prepared during the rest of the week. And it's not even a whole day, actually. They go out and engage in normal missionary activities from 6:00 p.m. until the end of the day.



► DISTRICT MEETINGS AND ZONE CONFERENCES

Every week missionaries in the same local area meet for a district meeting for 60–90 minutes. One of the elders is the district leader and conducts the weekly meeting. The missionaries learn from one another through training, discussing challenges, and sharing testimonies and experiences. They also talk about how their investigators are progressing.

Every three months missionaries in several districts hold a zone conference, which is held under the direction of the mission president. Many of the missionaries will have to travel to these meetings, which are usually longer than the district meetings and can cover a wide range of topics.





“The purpose of our missionary work is to help the children of God fulfill a condition prescribed by our Savior and Redeemer. We preach and teach in order to baptize the children of God so that they can be saved in the celestial kingdom instead of being limited to a lesser kingdom. We do missionary work in order to baptize and confirm. That is the doctrinal basis of missionary work.”

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Why Do We Do Missionary Work?” *New Era*, Sept. 2009, 2.

▶ WORKING WITH MEMBERS

Church members and missionaries work together in a number of ways, and missionaries devote a good deal of attention to fostering good relationships with the members wherever they serve. Working with bishops and ward mission leaders, missionaries help members share the gospel, and they visit and strengthen those who are not active in the Church. As every missionary learns, “Local Church leaders and members are your best allies” (*Preach My Gospel*, 217). To see how members and missionaries work together, go to HasteningTheWork.Ilds.org.

▶ BAPTISMS AND CONFIRMATIONS

When a person accepts the missionaries’ invitation to be baptized, it is a moment of great joy. That joy is multiplied when that person, having overcome all obstacles, is actually standing in the waters of baptism, entering into a sacred covenant. Then they can be confirmed as members of the Church and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

▶ SERVING OTHERS

Missionaries are encouraged to participate in some sort of community service activity each week, as approved by the mission president. In addition, they are encouraged to listen to the Spirit at all times “to recognize opportunities for small, simple acts of kindness that [they] can offer to God’s children” (*Preach My Gospel*, 168). They serve out of a love for all of God’s children and a desire to help them, but they also are mindful of people who may want to know more about their message as a result of this service. **NE**



Find Out More

To learn more about preparing for missionary service, with videos, resources, and answers to frequently asked questions, visit Ilds.org/go/03Prepare.