

The Future Is Now

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Is there life after high school? Yes. And these teens from Boise, Idaho, get a firsthand look at it.

The future can often seem like an exotic, faraway place. Laurels and priests around Boise, Idaho, however, are taking a guided tour through their future by spending a Mutual night at the institute of religion at Boise State University.

Naturally, the program they participate in is called "Is There Life after High School? Be Smart!" The teens mingle with institute students and staff, watch skits and video presentations about the Church's educational system, eat, play games, and just have a good time. The program gives them a close-up look at what they can expect in the very near future, and they learn a lot. Take a quiz to see if you know as much as they do.

1. True or false:

Being active in the Church helps you prepare for your future education.

True.

Courtney Bronson of the Eagle Idaho Stake recalls what helped her.

"Growing up in the Young Women and Young Men program, you get the opportunity to speak in sacrament meeting. You get the opportunity in your callings to track how people are doing and interact with people. That's part of education, too. It's not only learning academics, but it's learning about the people around you."

"If I follow the prophet's words, I can be happy after high school," says Ryan Miller of the Eagle Idaho Stake. "And the Church allows me to do that and helps me along."

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO?

While many are able to attend Church-sponsored schools, most go elsewhere.

That's where institute comes in. Here are the enrollment numbers:

Church schools: 44,000
Institute: 359,000

2. True or false:

A good religious education and good LDS friends come only if you attend a Church-sponsored school.

False.

The Church-sponsored schools (Brigham Young University, BYU–Idaho, BYU–Hawaii, and LDS Business College) offer great opportunities for secular and religious education, but no matter where you go, you’re likely to find the institute program. There are about 600 institutes of religion in the U.S. and Canada and many more local institute groups throughout the world, with participants numbering in the hundreds of thousands.

“I actually didn’t know how many participated in the institute program,” says Courtney. “It just shows that almost anywhere you go to college there is a safe haven and that there are people doing the same things and working for similar goals.”

“Probably the greatest benefit of the ‘Be Smart’ program is that it shows teens that there’s a place they can go after high school, whether they’re working or going to college or vocational training,” says Elder Richard Johnson, a Church-service missionary, who, along with his wife, Lawana, helped start the program. “Whatever they do, there’s a place for them to come and gain greater religious education, and it’s a great place to be with friends.”

The high school students in Boise get to see firsthand what goes on at the institute. Above all, of course, the institute offers religion classes. The Boise institute has about 20 to choose from, including classes on the scriptures and the teachings of modern prophets. But institute has more to offer—from service and other extra-curricular activities to participating in the institute council, the various service committees, and the choir. And last but not least, the Boise institute offers the three Fs that all college students enjoy: fun, food, and friendship.

“Institute gives you somewhere to start,” says Camille Schiers of the Meridian Idaho Stake. “You can go where you can get the education you want and still have the institute to strengthen you.”





NO CAPS AND GOWNS, BUT . . .

Although there's no pomp and circumstance involved, there is such a thing as graduating from institute.

You must:

- Complete 14 total semester hours (or 21 quarter hours) in approved institute courses.
- Include in that total at least 8 semester hours (or 12 quarter hours) in scripture-based courses, with at least 4 semester hours (or 6 quarter hours) in Book of Mormon studies.

- Receive a worthiness clearance from your bishop or branch president.



Sydney

3. True or false:

A good education is more important for young men than young women.

False.

President Hinckley's counsel is clear: both young men and young women need to get as much education as they can (see "Seek Learning" on page 4 of this issue). His words are fresh on many teens' minds as they consider their future.

"I love President Hinckley, and I think it's cool that he's stressing that we women get an education," says Sydney Barney of the Meridian Idaho Stake. "I think it would be cool to both be smart and be a mom—to be a smart mom."

"The prophet sees us as equals," says Camille. "He said it's just as important for girls to have an education as the guys because both of our roles in the future are important."

Ryan says, "If my future wife knew how to rear our children well, teach them things that they need to know for school, and help them out, I think that would be great. I think it helps to be with someone that's around your educational level."

Ty Harris of the Meridian Idaho Stake remembers President Hinckley's recent counsel for boys to "rise up" when it comes to getting an education (see *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 60–61). "He was straightforward about it. He said that women are getting more college education than men. I think men need to step up and become the caretaker of their family and provide for their family."

"President Hinckley's talk was probably my favorite talk at that conference," says Shane Thomas of the Eagle Idaho Stake. "It was really good advice that I was needing. I was thinking that school wasn't as important as it really is, and I was kind of arguing with my parents about how important it is. And it helped me realize that it's important. It's coming from the prophet, so it's obviously important if he has to address it."



SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP

Many institutes have opportunities for student leadership and service, including:

- Institute of Religion Student Council.
- Latter-day Saint Student Association.
- Institute Men's Association.
- Institute Women's Association.

4. True or false:

The Church has a Web site to help you with your education decisions.

True.

At www.besmart.com you can find a variety of resources to help you plan for your education after high school. It has information on Church-sponsored colleges and the institute program, as well as advice on preparing for college.

“Our Church has such an amazing program to help us out with this kind of stuff,” says Camille. “That whole Web site giving us information about this—it just shows that the prophet and the General Authorities care about our getting a good education.”



OUTSIDE OF CLASS

In conjunction with wards and stakes, institutes frequently offer social activities like dances, dinners, parties, programs, picnics, sports, and many other fun activities.



5. True or false:

Your future looks bright.

True.

The teens who come to the Boise institute learn an important lesson: there is indeed life after high school, and it can be filled with success. You just have to “Be Smart” about it and prepare for the future right now.

For more, go to www.besmart.com.



FIRST INSTITUTE . . .
 Ever: Moscow, Idaho (1926)
 Outside the U.S.:
 Alberta, Canada (1952)
 Outside the U.S. and
 Canada: Mexico (1959)



INSTITUTE:
 It's where
 you want to go



NEWEST INSTITUTE
 Angola, Africa
 (2007)

MAP BY THOMAS CHILD; PHOTOGRAPHS BY MATT REEB, STEVE BUNDERSON, AND PHOTODISC

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Many institutes are housed in buildings near a college campus, but in areas without an institute building, classes can be taught in campus classrooms, ward meetinghouses, homes, office buildings—pretty much anywhere people can meet.

Only English-speaking countries are shown here, but institutes are all over the world. You can find an institute near you by using the online Institute Locator. Go to ldscs.org and click on Locate an Institute.

UNITED KINGDOM

AUSTRALIA

NEW ZEALAND

SOUTH AFRICA



INSTITUTE CLASSES

At the start of each school term, you can register for any classes the institute offers. In addition to classes about each book of scripture, you may find the following classes at an institute near you:

- Missionary Preparation
- Preparing for Eternal Marriage
- The Gospel and the Productive Life
- The Gospel and World Religions
- Latter-day Saint History
- Presidents of the Church
- Introduction to Family History
- Teachings of the Living Prophets

SISTER EVANS

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

ANZIANO BUNDERSON

CHURCHA DI
GESÙ CRISTO
DEI SANTI
DEI GIORNI ULTIMI