



How Do I Prepare People for Baptism and Confirmation?

Notes

Consider This

- What do I need to do to help prepare people for baptism and confirmation?
- How do I conduct an effective baptismal interview?
- How is a spiritual baptismal service planned and conducted?
- How do I work closely with the bishop to ensure that converts are confirmed?
- Why is it important to complete baptismal and confirmation records?

Prepare People for Baptism and Confirmation

The purpose of your teaching is to help others develop faith in Jesus Christ and repent of their sins. As Mormon taught, “the first fruits of repentance is baptism” (Moroni 8:25). The baptismal interview is the way established by the Church to ensure that each candidate meets the Lord’s standards for baptism and is prepared to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Through this interview, baptismal candidates fulfill the scriptural requirement that they witness before an authorized representative of the Church that they have “truly repented of all their sins” (Doctrine and Covenants 20:37). The commitments that people make prepare them to make and keep the covenant of baptism, be confirmed a member of the Church, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, enter the temple with a limited-use recommend, and receive the Aaronic Priesthood (for males 12 years of age or older). People who have kept the commitments that you invited them to make will be well prepared for the interview and for membership and activity in the Church.

As you teach people and prepare them for baptism and confirmation, make sure that they meet the qualifications for baptism. As they embark on the covenant path, remember that path leads to the holy temple, where they receive blessings necessary for eternal life.

Qualifications for Baptism

Doctrine and Covenants 20:37:

- Humble themselves before God.
- Desire to be baptized.
- Come forth with broken hearts and contrite spirits.
- Repent of all their sins.
- Be willing to take upon them the name of Christ.
- Have a determination to serve Christ to the end.
- Manifest by their works that they have received the Spirit of Christ unto a remission of their sins.

First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve:

- Make sufficient changes in their lives to qualify as commanded in Doctrine and Covenants 20:37.
- Develop faith in Christ.
- Repent of transgressions.
- Live the principles of moral worthiness.
- Live the Word of Wisdom.
- Commit to pay tithing.
- Receive all the missionary lessons.
- Meet the bishop.
- Attend several sacrament meetings.

(“Statement on Missionary Work,” First Presidency letter, Dec. 11, 2002)

When a person has set a firm baptismal date, schedule when you will complete all the events that lead to baptism and confirmation as listed in your daily planner. Carefully review the Teaching Record to ensure that you have taught the basic doctrine and that the candidates are prepared to address each question in the baptismal interview. Review this schedule with the person in your next meeting. If possible, the person should attend a baptismal service prior to his or her own baptism.

If you feel that the person you are teaching needs additional preparation, do not schedule an interview until he or she meets the standards. If the candidate is a minor, ensure that the parents or guardians have given permission, preferably in writing, for him or her to be baptized.

As you help people prepare for their baptismal interview, talk to them about the purpose of the interview. Teach them and bear testimony about the sacredness of baptism and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost. Explain that you want to make sure they understand the principles you have taught and the covenant they will make. Also explain that the interview is an opportunity for them to witness before the Lord’s representative that they are ready for these sacred ordinances. As they keep the baptismal covenant, they will receive a remission of sins. Share the questions the interviewer will ask about their belief in important gospel doctrine, their repentance of past sins, and their willingness to covenant to obey Jesus Christ throughout their lives. Emphasize that baptism by water is incomplete without baptism by fire through the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Remind the person that immediately after baptism and confirmation, he or she is worthy and eligible to receive a limited-use recommend to enter the temple to perform baptisms for deceased ancestors, and males 12 years of age and older may also be ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood. This will help set the person on the path toward making temple covenants that open the door to eternal life.

Activity: Personal or Companion Study

- Read each of the following passages, and make a summary list of the scriptural qualifications for baptism and confirmation.

2 Nephi 9:23; 31:4–13

Mosiah 18:8–10

Alma 7:14–15

3 Nephi 27:13–21

Moroni 6:1–4

Moroni 8:25–26

Doctrine and Covenants

20:37

Doctrine and Covenants

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Acts 2:37–39

- In baptismal interviews, candidates are asked whether they are willing to take upon themselves the name of Christ. What can you do to help them understand this question? As you ponder this question, study the following scriptures:

Mosiah 4–5

Mosiah 18:1–11

Mosiah 26:18, 21–27

3 Nephi 27:1–10

You may also want to look

for other passages that

help you understand this

principle.

How to Conduct the Interview

The person conducting the interview should use the baptismal interview questions with the guidance of the Spirit to determine whether the baptismal candidate meets the qualifications described in Doctrine and Covenants 20:37. He should also adapt the questions to the age and maturity of the candidate.

If a candidate does not qualify according to the baptismal interview questions, the baptism and confirmation should be postponed. The person should receive additional teaching by the full-time missionaries and fellowshipping from ward members.

The district leader or zone leader who conducts the interview should:

- Hold the interview in a comfortable, private place, conducive to feeling the Spirit of the Lord. When interviewing a child, youth, or woman, the interviewer's companion should be nearby in the adjoining room, foyer, or hall. If the person being interviewed desires, another adult may be invited to participate in the interview. Missionaries should avoid all circumstances that could be misunderstood (see "Preventing and Responding to Abuse," First Presidency letter, March 26, 2018).
- Open with prayer.
- Help the candidate feel comfortable.
- Make the interview a spiritually uplifting experience.
- Make sure that the candidate understands the purpose of the interview.
- Ask the baptismal interview questions. Use follow-up questions to get a feeling for the strength of the person's testimony and the sincerity of the person's repentance.
- Answer the candidate's questions.
- Invite the person to bear testimony and express his or her feelings.
- If the person has challenges with testimony or worthiness, explain that it would be best to postpone the baptism until he or she is better prepared.

Baptismal Interview Questions

1. Do you believe that God is our Eternal Father? Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Savior and Redeemer of the world?
2. Do you believe that the Church and gospel of Jesus Christ have been restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith? Do you believe that [current Church President] is a prophet of God? What does this mean to you?
3. What does it mean to you to repent? Do you feel that you have repented of your past transgressions?
4. Have you ever committed a serious crime? If so, are you now on probation or parole? Have you ever participated in an abortion? Have you ever committed a homosexual transgression?
5. You have been taught that membership in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints includes living gospel standards. What do you understand about the following standards? Are you willing to obey them?
 - a. The law of chastity, which prohibits any sexual relationship outside the bonds of a legal marriage between one man and one woman.
 - b. The law of tithing.
 - c. The Word of Wisdom.
 - d. The Sabbath day, including partaking of the sacrament weekly and rendering service to others.
6. When you are baptized, you covenant with God that you are willing to take upon yourself the name of Christ and keep His commandments throughout your life. Are you ready to make this covenant and strive to be faithful to it?

At the conclusion of a successful interview, congratulate the candidate. Rejoin the other missionaries, and explain what will happen at the baptismal service.

Explain that the confirmation will take place under the direction of the bishop in a sacrament meeting of the ward in which they reside.

When it is necessary to postpone a baptism, the district leader or zone leader and other missionaries should handle the situation sensitively and privately. Assure the candidate that he or she can succeed, and explain that some transgressions require more time for thorough repentance. Explain that the sacred nature of the ordinance requires high standards of worthiness. Assure the candidate that you and others will do all you can to support him or her. Then faithfully follow through to keep your promise.

Baptism and Confirmation: Questions and Answers

Who conducts the interview for baptism?

Normally the district leader interviews baptismal candidates taught by missionaries in his district, including candidates taught by his zone leaders. The zone leader interviews candidates taught by the district leader. The mission president or one of his counselors must interview people involved in serious sins. District or zone leaders do not interview baptismal candidates outside their own district or zone unless the mission president assigns them to do so.

What is the definition of a convert baptism?

Convert baptisms are baptisms of:

- Persons ages nine and older who have never been baptized and confirmed as members of the Church.
- Children age eight whose parents are not members of the Church or whose parents are being baptized and confirmed at the same time as the child.

Do I need permission to baptize a minor child?

The Church's concern with respect to children is their current and future well-being and the harmony of their home environment. For their protection, the following conditions must be met before you can baptize a minor child under legal age, as defined by local laws:

1. You must obtain permission of both parent(s) or legal guardian(s). You may ask for this consent to be in writing if you feel it will help prevent misunderstandings.
2. You have discerned that there is clear evidence that the child understands the baptismal covenant and will make every effort to keep it through obeying the commandments, including faithfully attending Church meetings.
3. The child's primary residence is not with parents who are polygamists or in a same-sex relationship. If one or both of the child's parents are polygamists, you must contact the mission president for additional information. For additional information regarding children of parents in same-sex relationships, see First Presidency letter, Nov. 13, 2015 ("First Presidency Clarifies Church Handbook Changes," LDS.org) and "Church Provides Context on Handbook Changes Affecting Same-Sex Marriages," Nov. 6, 2015 (www.mormonnewsroom.org).
4. The baptism is not prohibited by local laws and culture.

Do I need permission of the spouse in order to baptize a husband or wife?

Yes. Do not baptize a married person without the consent of his or her spouse.

If a parent in a family is not ready for baptism, should I baptize the family or wait until the parent is ready?

If a parent of a family is not ready for baptism and confirmation but other family members are, you may tell the parent you prefer not to baptize the family without him or her because the Church respects the wishes of the parents and because family members will progress in the gospel best as a family unit. If the parent continues to decline, you may baptize and confirm other family members with his or her consent.

Is it a good idea to ordain a father to the Aaronic Priesthood immediately after baptism so that he can baptize other family members?

No. The father must be confirmed in a sacrament meeting and, after an interview with the bishop, be sustained to receive the Aaronic Priesthood. Baptisms of family members should not be delayed so that the father can receive the priesthood and perform the baptisms himself.

May I teach and baptize a person who has been excommunicated?

Baptisms of excommunicated persons are not convert baptisms, and missionaries do not interview such persons for baptism. You may work with such persons only under the close supervision of the mission president and bishop.

What if a person has a scheduled baptismal date but is not keeping all of the commitments?

If you feel that someone you are teaching needs additional preparation, do not schedule a baptismal interview until he or she is keeping the commitments and meets the standards.

What do I do when people want to be baptized but are living together without being married?

Baptismal candidates who have been living with a person of the opposite gender out of wedlock must either marry or stop living together before they can be baptized.

Question 4 in the baptismal interview asks if a person has ever committed a serious crime (if so, are they on probation or parole), participated in an abortion, or committed a homosexual transgression. What should I do if someone confesses such a sin?

1. *Instructions for teaching missionaries.* Sometimes a person may volunteer information about such sins as you teach about the commandments and invite them to make commitments. However, if they do not say anything but you think they may have a problem, prepare them for the baptismal interview by asking them if they have been involved in any of these sins. If you become aware of a serious sin, do not ask about the details of the sin. Do not schedule a baptismal date or make any promises about whether they will be cleared for baptism and confirmation. Express your love and review the principle of repentance and forgiveness. Kindly explain that these sins are serious and that a person with more maturity and experience (your mission president or someone he assigns) will talk with them and help them with these matters. Always provide hope in Christ's Atonement. Then send a baptismal interview request directly to the mission president.
2. *Instructions for the person conducting the interview for baptism.* If the missionaries have properly taught the candidate before the baptismal interview, these issues, if they exist, should have been directed to the mission president. However, if they arise during the interview, express your love and review the commandments and the principle of repentance and forgiveness. Kindly explain that these sins are serious and that a person with more maturity and experience (your mission president or someone he assigns) will talk with them and help them with these matters. Always provide hope in Christ's Atonement. Then forward a baptismal interview request directly to the mission president.

Activity: Personal Study

Think about how you might feel if you were being interviewed. Consider the following questions:

- What aspects of the interview might be strange to you? What could the interviewer do or say to put you at ease?
- How would you want the interviewer to interact with you?
- How would you want the interviewer to respond if you expressed doubts or misunderstandings or if you confessed serious sins?

Write your answers to these questions in your study journal.

Complete the Baptism and Confirmation Form (Convert)

The missionary who conducts the interview should fill out a current Baptism and Confirmation Form (Convert), except the information about confirmation. He should explain that a membership record is created from the Baptism and Confirmation Form (Convert) and will contain important information about the new members and the ordinances they have received. The missionary should ask the candidate to verify the information on the form during the interview. The missionary who conducts the interview should bring the Baptism and Confirmation Form (Convert) to the baptismal service and give it to the person who is presiding.

The bishop ensures that a Baptism and Confirmation Form (Convert) is filled out for each candidate according to instructions on the form. Whenever members move, the membership record is forwarded to the new unit so that their new bishop can provide fellowship and assistance.

Activity: Personal or Companion Study

Study Mosiah 6:1–3 and Moroni 6:1–4. How do these passages relate to your responsibility for keeping accurate records of baptisms and confirmations?

The Baptismal Service

The Spirit is manifest strongly as the sacred ordinances of baptism and confirmation are performed. The baptismal service and subsequent confirmation should be spiritual highlights for new converts. You and the ward mission leader should do everything you can to ensure that the baptismal service is organized, inspiring, and memorable. These services should strengthen the new converts in their commitment to remain active.

Invite a member of the bishopric, quorum and auxiliary leaders, and ministering brothers and sisters (if assigned) to attend the baptismal service. Encourage the person being baptized to invite his or her friends and relatives (for example, by creating an event on social media) to attend the baptismal service and the sacrament meeting where the confirmation will take place. Consider inviting other people you are teaching to attend. These experiences will help them feel the Spirit and prepare them to accept an invitation to learn more about the gospel. Work with the person being baptized and the ward mission leader to invite the person's friends and relatives to attend. Then follow through after the service to discuss their experience and invite them to learn why their friend chose to be baptized.



The missionaries who taught the person being baptized coordinate with the ward mission leader to organize the service. If a baptismal service is scheduled on a Sunday, it should be held at a time that minimizes interference with regular Sunday meetings. Explain to the person being baptized what is planned and why. Discuss proper dress, including how the person will be given white clothing to wear for the baptism. Agree on the place and time for the baptism. A member of the bishopric or the ward mission leader normally conducts the service. Following are essential items to plan and organize.

A baptismal service may include:

1. Prelude music.
2. A brief welcome by the priesthood leader who is conducting the service (a member of the bishopric should preside, if possible).
3. An opening hymn and prayer.
4. One or two short talks on gospel subjects, such as baptism and the Holy Ghost.
5. A musical selection.
6. Performance of the baptism.
7. A time of reverence while the people who participate in the baptism change into dry clothes. This could include interlude music or singing well-known hymns and Primary songs. It could also include a brief gospel presentation by the full-time missionaries for nonmembers who may be present.
8. An opportunity for new converts to bear their testimonies, if desired.
9. A closing hymn and prayer.
10. Postlude music.

Confirmation

A person receives the ordinance of confirmation after he or she has been baptized (see Doctrine and Covenants 20:41). A new convert is considered a member of the Church only after the ordinances of baptism and confirmation are both completed and properly recorded (see John 3:5; Doctrine and Covenants 33:11). Converts are confirmed in a sacrament meeting in the ward where they live, preferably on the Sunday following their baptism. Converts are not confirmed at the baptismal service. The bishop is responsible for seeing that confirmation occurs as soon as reasonable after baptism. At least one member of the bishopric participates in the confirmation. The bishop should invite missionary elders who helped teach the convert to participate in the confirmation. Work closely with the bishop and the ward mission leader to make sure this essential ordinance is performed. The bishop does not conduct a separate interview for this ordinance.



After the confirmation, the bishop or ward clerk completes the confirmation information on the Baptism and Confirmation Form (Convert). The ward clerk then returns two copies of the form to the missionaries. The missionaries send one copy to the mission office for the creation of a membership record.

After the Baptism and Confirmation

Under the direction of the bishop, missionaries should continue to fellowship new members. Continue to teach them and review what has been taught. Encourage and support them, read the Book of Mormon with them, and help them share the gospel with family members and friends. As appropriate, continue throughout your life to communicate with those whom you have taught and to encourage and support them.

After the confirmation, teach all five missionary lessons again. Continue using the Teaching Record to record progress. Work closely with the ward mission leader and ward leadership to help the new convert stay active, build trusted relationships with local members, receive a limited-use temple recommend, and be ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood (for males 12 years of age and older). Support new converts and help them receive all the blessings of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

Remember This

- Properly prepare baptismal candidates for the interview for baptism and confirmation.
- Make sure candidates meet the requirements for baptism and confirmation.
- Help ensure that baptismal services are spiritually uplifting.
- Use baptismal services and confirmations as finding opportunities.
- Accurately complete the Baptism and Confirmation Form (Convert).

Ideas for Study and Application

Notes

Personal Study

- Make a list of the challenges that a baptismal candidate might encounter. Why is it important that candidates feel the love and friendship of Church members?
- Study Moroni 6 and Doctrine and Covenants 20:68–69. What do you learn from these verses about preparing people for baptism and confirmation? Write what you learn, and share your thoughts with your companion during companion study.

Companion Study

- President Henry B. Eyring explained why high standards are important. Discuss this counsel with your companion and evaluate how you feel about boldly helping people meet these standards. “The Lord sets His standards so that He can bless us. Think about those blessings: He promises those who meet the standards the help of the Holy Ghost. He promises personal peace. He promises the chance to receive holy ordinances in His house. And He promises those who endure in living His standards that they will have eternal life. . . . Because we love the people we serve, all of us want to do better in lifting our Heavenly Father’s children to the faithfulness and purity they need to have all the blessings of the Lord. . . . You begin by holding up the Lord’s standards clearly and without apology. And the more the world drifts from them and mocks them, the bolder we must be in doing that” (“Standards of Worthiness,” *First Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, Jan. 2003, 10–11).
- Share with your companion what you have learned from this chapter about preparing people for baptism and confirmation.
- Review the last baptismal service you attended. Compare it with the guidelines in the section titled “The Baptismal Service.” What went well? What could have been improved? Discuss how you will make sure that the services you plan will be spiritual and uplifting.
- Practice how you would prepare a specific person for the baptismal interview.
- Review the baptismal interview questions. Consider how you would handle different situations, such as the following:
 - The candidate didn’t tell you that he is on probation for a crime previously committed.
 - The person has not received a strong answer to prayer that Joseph Smith was a prophet.
 - The candidate smoked a cigarette two days ago.
 - The candidate isn’t sure whether she has received an answer to her prayers.
 - The family felt pressure from friends and aren’t sure whether they are ready for baptism.
- Review the Baptism and Confirmation Form (Convert). How can you ensure that the information you provide is correct and complete?

Notes

District Council, Zone Conferences, and Mission Leadership Council

- Review the importance of the baptismal interview. Discuss how missionaries should prepare people for the interview.
- Discuss how to use baptismal services and confirmations as finding opportunities.

Mission President, His Companion, and His Counselors

- Work with local priesthood and auxiliary leaders to ensure effective use of the Progress Record.
- Teach district leaders, zone leaders, and sister training leaders how to prepare people for the baptismal interview. Invite mission leaders to train other missionaries to prepare people for the baptismal interview.
- Teach district leaders and zone leaders how to conduct baptismal interviews.
- Instruct the members of the mission presidency and priesthood leaders how to conduct baptismal interviews for baptismal candidates who have committed serious sins.
- When possible, attend baptismal services for new converts. Take some time to talk with the new converts and learn their conversion experiences. Share what you learn with your companion and with other missionaries.