

Leadership



The Savior's Example

Our Savior, Jesus Christ, has set the perfect example for members to follow as leaders in their families and in the Church. He loved His Father and loved the people He served. He lived to serve others, lifting the downtrodden and giving hope to the discouraged.

Jesus understood His calling and was prayerful and diligent in fulfilling it. He always did His Father's will and gave Him the glory, seeking none for Himself. He sacrificed everything for mankind, giving His life on the cross and atoning for the sins of all people.

As leaders follow the Savior's example, He will increase their ability to do His work. He will inspire them to know what they should say and do (see D&C 100:6). Leaders will truly become His fellow servants in building the kingdom of God. They will become students of the scriptures, learn the doctrines and principles of the gospel, and strive to teach them to those they serve.

Character Traits of Leaders

Faith

During His mortal ministry, the Savior admonished His disciples to exercise faith (see Matthew 17:14–21;

Luke 8:22–25). Leaders in the Church must have faith that Jesus Christ is our Savior and Redeemer. They develop this faith through prayer, scripture study, obedience, and repentance. As we nourish the seed of faith, it will grow within us and bear fruit that is most precious and sweet (see Alma 32:42).

Love

The Savior said: “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34–35). Leaders should love the people for whom the Lord has given them responsibility. As leaders love the people, they will want to serve them, teach them, and help them work for their salvation.

In the world, people seldom think of leaders as servants. But the Savior taught by His words and example that leaders should serve the people they lead. He told the Twelve, “Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant” (Matthew 20:27). When we serve others, we are serving the Lord (see Matthew 25:31–40; Mosiah 2:17).

Obedience

Jesus Christ set the perfect example of obedience and submission to

Heavenly Father’s will (see Matthew 26:39; John 5:30). Leaders need to obey the Lord’s commandments so they can set an example for others and be worthy to receive guidance from the Holy Ghost. Obedience shows love for the Lord (see John 14:15).

The Lord’s commandments are revealed in the scriptures, through Church leaders, and through the promptings of the Holy Spirit. As leaders obey these commandments, the Lord will help them fulfill their callings.

Unity

In His great intercessory prayer, the Savior prayed that those who believe in Him might be one, even as He and His Father are one (see John 17:20–23). Unity is essential for success in every organization of the Church. Priesthood and auxiliary presidents should not work independently of their counselors. Presidencies can accomplish much more when they are unified and counsel together.

Sacrifice

A rich young man asked the Savior what he must do to inherit eternal life. “Keep the commandments,” the Lord told him. The young man said he had kept the commandments from his youth, then asked, “What lack I yet?” Jesus, knowing what was in his heart,

told him to sell his possessions, give to the poor, and come follow Him. But the young man “went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.” (See Matthew 19:16–22.)

In this incident, the Lord teaches that leaders must be willing to sacrifice all things in following Him. Like the rich young man, leaders may be called on to sacrifice their possessions, or they may be asked to sacrifice their time, talents, and personal pursuits to further the Lord’s work. As leaders sacrifice for the Lord and His kingdom, He promises to bless them in all things (see Matthew 19:29; D&C 97:8–9).

Leadership Tasks

Setting Goals

Leaders learn that seeking direction from the Lord prayerfully about what He wants them to do is essential in their callings. Setting goals, with the guidance of the Spirit, will help them do the work the Lord has given them.

When setting a goal, a leader needs to plan how to reach it. For example, a district president may set a goal to increase attendance at sacrament meetings in the district. His plan might include asking the branch presidents to invite all branch members to commit themselves to attend sacrament meetings.

Leaders can encourage members to set and reach personal goals. Leaders may suggest goals for individuals, but they should set their own goals and make plans to reach them.

Planning and Delegating

The following steps will help both priesthood and auxiliary leaders plan meetings, activities, service projects, and goals for doing the Lord’s work and can be useful in fellowshipping members and friendship non-members. These steps will help leaders organize home teaching and Relief Society visiting teaching, and will help priesthood leaders in calling members to serve in branch positions.

1. Plan and organize. Leaders plan all meetings, activities, and goals to have a gospel purpose. In making these plans, leaders ask others, such as their counselors, to share ideas and help with organization.
2. Pray. Leaders pray for guidance through the promptings of the Spirit as they make and implement plans. They also pray for guidance to know whom they should call to help with the work.
3. Delegate. A good leader invites others to help because he knows he cannot and should not do everything himself. He delegates to help others enlarge their abilities by

giving them experience. He explains the plan to them. He then delegates (assigns) specific tasks to each person, explaining the duties and blessings of accomplishing the task.

4. Help and support. After a leader plans, prays, and delegates, he supports those to whom he has delegated responsibility. He teaches them what they need to know and offers to help but does not do the tasks he has asked them to do. He expresses his love and confidence and encourages them to use their own ideas and inspiration rather than insisting that things always be done his way. He redirects them or has them change what they are doing only when necessary.
5. Follow through. After giving an assignment, a leader periodically asks for a progress report. He may do so in a casual conversation, during a meeting, or in a private interview. During the report, the leader thanks the person and gives sincere praise and encouragement. He also may discuss how the assigned work could be done better.
6. Evaluate. When the assigned work is finished, the leader evaluates it with each assigned person. He expresses thanks, discusses the

value of what has been done, and may give the person another assignment.

Preparing an Agenda

An agenda is a plan for a meeting. It may include prayers, hymns, talks, announcements, business, reports on assignments, new assignments, and other significant items. A written agenda helps a leader make sure the most important matters are considered and helps ensure that the meeting time is used wisely. It also helps him direct the meeting in an orderly manner.

The person who presides or is in charge usually prepares the agenda. He or she ensures that it includes everything necessary to accomplish the purposes of the meeting. The one who prepares the agenda determines how much time each agenda item should take. If too little time is available to discuss all of the items, he or she puts some of them on the agenda for the next meeting.

Conducting Meetings

The person who conducts a meeting acts as the leader of that meeting. He or she announces the names of those who will pray, speak, lead the music, and do other things in the meeting. The one conducting the meeting

should be reverent and should conduct the meeting as guided by the Spirit of the Lord.

The person who presides at the meeting may conduct it or may ask someone else to conduct it under his or her direction. For example, a branch president may ask one of his counselors to conduct a sacrament meeting, or a quorum president may ask one of his counselors to conduct a quorum meeting. The same principle holds true for auxiliaries.

Councils



The Lord governs His kingdom by the principle of councils. Those conducting council meetings, such as branch council meeting, priesthood executive committee meeting, and priesthood and auxiliary presidency meetings (see the *Branch Guidebook*), should apply the following important principles:

- Focus on gospel doctrines and principles, not speculative matters.

- Focus on individuals and how to strengthen them in the gospel, remembering to always keep confidential information safely guarded.
- Promote free and open expression, giving all a chance to be heard. Leaders must listen as well as speak.
- Sustain and help carry out the decisions of presiding leaders.
- Lead with love and a caring concern for the needs and well-being of all.

Keeping Confidences

Leaders must not reveal confidential information to anyone, whether it comes up in formal interviews or informal conversation. Information resulting from interviews and confessions and such information as the amount of tithing and donations a person pays must be kept completely confidential. A leader must not discuss private matters about a person with others, including counselors and spouse, unless the person gives permission. A leader who is careless about keeping confidential matters strictly confidential can weaken the testimonies and faith of those he or she serves and diminish their trust and confidence in him or her.