

3.

Leadership in the Church of Jesus Christ

3.1

The Savior's Way of Leading

All Church leaders are called to help other people become “true followers of . . . Jesus Christ” (Moroni 7:48). To do this, leaders first strive to be the Savior’s faithful disciples, living each day so that they can return to live in God’s presence. Then they can help others develop strong testimonies and draw nearer to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. Church programs and activities help achieve these purposes.

Leaders can best teach others how to be “true followers” by their personal example. This pattern—being a faithful disciple in order to help others become faithful disciples—is the purpose behind every calling in the Church.

When leaders serve according to this pattern, they help Church members desire to be worthy of temple marriage and the blessing of an eternal family.

3.2

Principles of Gospel Leadership

3.2.1

Prepare Spiritually

The Savior commanded Peter, “When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:32). When leaders are converted and are growing spiritually, they can help others become converted and grow spiritually.

Leaders prepare themselves spiritually as they keep the commandments, study the scriptures and the teachings of latter-day prophets, pray, fast, and humble themselves before the Lord. With this preparation, they are able to receive inspiration to guide

them in their personal lives, their family responsibilities, and their callings.

3.2.2

Participate in Councils

In councils, leaders meet under the direction of presiding officers to discuss ways to help individuals and families. Guided by the Holy Ghost, they work together to determine effective ways to serve members of their organizations. Some examples of councils in the Church are the ward council, the stake council, bishoprics, and quorum and auxiliary presidencies. For guidance on participating in councils, see chapter 4.

3.2.3

Minister to Others

Like the Savior, leaders seek to minister to individuals and families, both spiritually and temporally. They care about each person, not just about managing an organization. They reach out to new members, less-active members, and those who may be lonely or in need of comfort.

The purpose of ministering is to help others become true followers of Jesus Christ. Ministering to others includes:

- Remembering their names and becoming acquainted with them (see Moroni 6:4).
- Loving them without judging them (see John 13:34–35).
- Watching over them and strengthening their faith “one by one,” as the Savior did (3 Nephi 11:15; 17:21).

- Establishing sincere friendship with them and visiting them in their homes and elsewhere (see Doctrine and Covenants 20:47).

In addition to being caring neighbors and good citizens, members of the Church also have specific assignments to serve individuals and families as ministering brothers and sisters (see 7.4, 9.5).

3.2.4

Teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ

All leaders are teachers. Effective teaching inspires people to strengthen their relationship with God and live according to gospel principles.

Leaders' most powerful teaching comes from their personal example. Leaders also teach by sharing their testimonies and conducting doctrinally based discussions in leadership meetings, classes, and activities. They teach from the scriptures and the words of latter-day prophets. They know that "the preaching of the word . . . [has] more powerful effect . . . than the sword, or anything else" (Alma 31:5).

In addition to teaching the gospel themselves, priesthood and auxiliary leaders are responsible for the quality of learning and teaching in their organizations. They ensure that teaching in their classes is meaningful, edifying, and doctrinally sound.

For additional guidance on teaching the gospel and overseeing efforts to improve learning and teaching, see 5.5.

3.2.5

Administer the Priesthood or Auxiliary Organization

Leaders are most effective in their efforts to strengthen others when they follow the Church's established guidelines. Guidelines for administering priesthood and auxiliary organizations are found in chapters 7–12.

3.3

Additional Instructions for Leaders

3.3.1

Represent the Lord and His Church

Because Church leaders have been called by the Lord through His appointed servants, they represent Him and His Church. As representatives of the Savior, leaders look to Him as their example. He said: "What manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am" (3 Nephi 27:27).

3.3.2

Build Unity and Harmony

The Lord has said, "Be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine" (Doctrine and Covenants 38:27). Presiding officers encourage unity by seeking counsel from the men and women who serve with them. Members of presidencies and councils help establish unity by sharing their honest feelings and ideas, communicating clearly, and listening to one another.

When leaders of Church organizations follow their priesthood leaders and when members of presidencies and councils are unified, they can receive guidance from the Holy Ghost and lead according to the Lord's will.

3.3.3

Prepare Others to Be Leaders and Teachers

In some wards, leaders rely repeatedly on a small group of people to give service in priesthood and auxiliary organizations. This can overburden the faithful few, and it can also deprive others of experiences that could help them learn and grow. Effective leaders give all members opportunities to serve.

As presiding officers prayerfully consider members to fill leadership and teaching positions, they should

remember that the Lord will qualify those He calls. Members do not need to be highly experienced before serving as teachers and leaders. They can learn from experience, by exercising faith and working diligently, and by receiving instruction and support from their leaders.

Presiding officers look for ways to give service opportunities to new members, members who are returning to Church activity, and young single adults. New and returning members are excited about the restored gospel, and they are often ready for opportunities to serve others and learn about the Church. Young single adults need opportunities to contribute to the Lord's work and grow spiritually.

For information about recommending members to serve in Church callings, see 19.1.1 and 19.1.2.

3.3.4 Delegate Responsibility and Ensure Accountability

Individual leaders cannot and should not do everything themselves. Leaders who try to do too much will “surely wear away” (Exodus 18:18), and so will the people they serve. Leaders should delegate service opportunities to others, such as counselors, clerks, and members of councils or committees.

Delegation includes more than giving someone an assignment. It includes the following elements:

- Explaining the purposes of the assignment, suggesting ways it could be done, and explaining when it should be completed. The assigned person should understand and accept accountability to perform the assignment and report on it.
- Keeping a written record of the assignment and checking progress from time to time.
- Respecting the assigned person's efforts to develop plans and fulfill the assignment. Leaders provide encouragement and assistance as needed.

- Asking the person to report back about the assignment. After receiving the report, the leader accepts the person's best efforts and expresses appreciation for the good things the person has done.

3.3.5 Warn against Sin but Love the Sinner

Leaders need to be firm and unyielding in their warnings against sinful behavior but merciful and kind to those who sin. They treat others as the Savior would treat them. Doing so helps members feel the Lord's love for them as they apply the Atonement in their lives.

3.3.6 Encourage Reverence

Reverence is a calm and peaceful attitude of worship and respect toward God. It leads to gospel learning and personal revelation. True reverence comes from within each individual.

Leaders can help cultivate a reverent atmosphere at Church gatherings. In sacrament meetings, stake conferences, and similar meetings, leaders set an example of reverence as they sit on the stand. Leaders also encourage reverence by arranging for worshipful music and inspiring talks. Teachers can encourage reverence in classrooms by preparing inspiring lessons, arranging the rooms in advance, using appropriate pictures and music, and greeting class members in a peaceful, loving way. Worship services and Church classes are enhanced when the entire ward makes an effort to be reverent.

3.3.7 Prepare Written Agendas for Meetings

Written agendas can serve as guides for leaders as they discuss ways to serve others. If agendas are distributed before council or planning meetings,

leaders will be more prepared for the discussions. Guidelines for preparing agendas for different meetings are found in chapter 4 and chapters 7–12.

3.3.8

Plan with Purpose

Leaders plan activities, lessons, and other efforts to bless the lives of ward members. They always plan with a purpose in mind so their efforts will benefit those they serve. In planning activities, leaders follow the principles in 13.1 and 13.2. In planning training and gospel teaching, they follow the principles in 5.5.

Leaders also make long-term plans for their organizations. This includes keeping an annual calendar, setting goals, and periodically evaluating progress in reaching those goals.

With help from secretaries, leaders maintain a written record of their plans and keep track of progress in completing assignments. After carrying out their plans, they evaluate how well the plans accomplished their purposes. This evaluation helps in future planning.

3.3.9

Use Church Resources to Learn Duties

Leaders use the following resources to help them learn and fulfill their duties:

- This handbook. Stake presidencies and bishoprics should become familiar with this entire handbook. Other leaders should become familiar with chapters 1–6, the chapters about their organizations, and any other information that relates to their responsibilities. The handbook teaches principles and practices that can help them serve effectively.
- Reports. Clerks and secretaries provide leaders with reports that show the progress of individuals and groups. This information helps leaders understand which people and organizations need their special attention.
- Instruction from local leaders. Soon after being sustained, every new leader should receive an orientation about the calling. The leaders who give the orientation continue to provide instruction and support through leadership meetings and personal communication.
- Church training materials. These materials are available in the Serving in the Church section of ChurchofJesusChrist.org or from Church headquarters or the assigned administrative office.
- Church magazines and other Church publications.

3.4

Leadership Purposes

The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles have established the following purposes for leaders to keep in mind as they magnify their callings.

Leaders encourage every member to receive all essential priesthood ordinances, keep the associated covenants, and qualify for exaltation and eternal life. Church leaders guide the efforts of priesthood quorums, auxiliaries, and stake and ward councils to help produce the following results:

Families: Teach the preeminence of the home and family as the basic organizational unit of the Church. Emphasize the place of the higher priesthood in helping individuals and families qualify for exaltation (see Doctrine and Covenants 84:19–22). Encourage each family member—parents and children—to study the scriptures, pray regularly, and live the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Adults: Encourage each adult to be worthy to receive the ordinances of the temple. Teach all

adults to identify their ancestors and perform vicarious temple ordinances for them.

Youth: Help prepare each young man to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood, to receive the ordinances of the temple, and to be worthy to serve a full-time mission. Help prepare each young woman to be worthy to make and keep sacred covenants and receive the ordinances of the temple. Strengthen youth through participation in meaningful activities.

All Members: Help priesthood and auxiliary leaders, ward councils, ward and full-time missionaries, and members work cooperatively in a balanced effort to rescue individuals, strengthen families and Church units, increase priesthood activity, and gather Israel through conversion, retention, and activation. Teach members to provide for themselves and their families and to assist the poor and needy in the Lord's way.