

8.

Aaronic Priesthood

8.1

Definition and Purposes of the Aaronic Priesthood

The priesthood is the power and authority of God. It is conferred upon worthy male members of the Church. Those who hold priesthood keys direct the administration of the ordinances of the gospel, the preaching of the gospel, and the government of the kingdom of God on the earth.

The Aaronic Priesthood holds “the key of the ministering of angels and the preparatory gospel; which gospel is the gospel of repentance and of baptism, and the remission of sins” (Doctrine and Covenants 84:26–27; see also Doctrine and Covenants 13:1; 107:20). The Aaronic Priesthood also “has power in administering outward ordinances” (Doctrine and Covenants 107:14).

For more information about the purposes of the priesthood and priesthood keys, see chapter 2.

8.1.1

Aaronic Priesthood Offices and Duties

The offices in the Aaronic Priesthood are deacon, teacher, priest, and bishop. Each priesthood office has rights and responsibilities of service, including authority to administer priesthood ordinances. For information about ordination to the offices of deacon, teacher, and priest, see 20.7.

8.1.1.1

Deacon

Worthy brethren may receive the Aaronic Priesthood and be ordained deacons beginning in January of the year they turn 12. A deacon has the following responsibilities:

He lives a righteous life and remains worthy to exercise the priesthood. He sets a good example for fellow quorum members and other Church members.

He passes the sacrament (see 20.4.3).

He is “appointed to watch over the church” (Doctrine and Covenants 84:111). He is also to “warn, expound, exhort, and teach, and invite all to come unto Christ” (Doctrine and Covenants 20:59). This responsibility includes fellowshipping quorum members and other young men, notifying members of Church meetings, speaking in meetings, sharing the gospel, and bearing testimony.

He assists the bishop in “administering . . . temporal things” (Doctrine and Covenants 107:68). This responsibility may include gathering fast offerings, caring for the poor and needy, caring for the meetinghouse and grounds, and serving as a messenger for the bishop in Church meetings.

He participates in quorum instruction by being an active student of the gospel.

He assists the bishopric in other ways consistent with the office of a deacon. He also assists teachers “in all [their] duties in the church . . . if occasion requires” (Doctrine and Covenants 20:57).

8.1.1.2

Teacher

Worthy brethren may be ordained teachers beginning in January of the year they turn 14. A teacher has all the responsibilities of a deacon. He also has the following responsibilities:

He prepares the sacrament (see 20.4.2).

He is to “watch over the church always, and be with and strengthen them” (Doctrine and Covenants 20:53). One way he does this is by serving as a

ministering brother. He is assigned as a companion to a Melchizedek Priesthood holder.

He is to “see that there is no iniquity in the church, neither hardness with each other, neither lying, backbiting, nor evil speaking” (Doctrine and Covenants 20:54). This responsibility includes being a peacemaker and being an example of moral integrity and uprightness.

He is to “see that the church meet together often, and also see that all the members do their duty” (Doctrine and Covenants 20:55).

He assists the bishopric in other ways consistent with the office of a teacher.

8.1.1.3

Priest

Worthy brethren may be ordained priests beginning in January of the year they turn 16. A priest has all the responsibilities of a deacon and teacher. He also has the following responsibilities:

He is to “preach, teach, expound, exhort, . . . and visit the house of each member, and exhort them to pray vocally and in secret and attend to all family duties” (Doctrine and Covenants 20:46–47).

When authorized by the bishop, he performs baptisms, confers the Aaronic Priesthood, and ordains deacons, teachers, and priests (see Doctrine and Covenants 20:46, 48).

He may administer the sacrament by officiating at the sacrament table and offering the sacrament prayers when authorized (see Doctrine and Covenants 20:46, 77, 79; see also 20.4.3 in this handbook).

He assists the bishopric in other ways consistent with the office of a priest.

8.1.1.4

Bishop

The bishop’s responsibilities regarding the Aaronic Priesthood are outlined in 8.3.1.

8.1.2

Aaronic Priesthood Quorums

A priesthood quorum is an organized group of brethren. The primary purposes of quorums are to serve others, build unity and brotherhood, and instruct members in doctrines, principles, and duties.

The bishop organizes the deacons into a quorum of up to 12 members, the teachers into a quorum of up to 24 members, and the priests into a quorum of up to 48 members (see Doctrine and Covenants 107:85–87). If quorum membership increases beyond these numbers, the bishop may divide the quorum. Before doing so, he considers the eventual size of the quorum, available leadership, and the effect on quorum members.

In a ward or branch with few young men, Aaronic Priesthood quorums may meet together for instruction and activities.

8.1.3

Purposes of the Aaronic Priesthood

Young men are in a time of preparation and personal spiritual growth. Accordingly, parents and the bishopric and other Aaronic Priesthood leaders help each young man to:

1. Become converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ and live by its teachings.
2. Serve faithfully in priesthood callings and fulfill the responsibilities of priesthood offices.
3. Give meaningful service.
4. Prepare and live worthily to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood and temple ordinances.

5. Have a limited-use temple recommend and, where possible, to use it regularly.
6. Prepare to serve an honorable full-time mission.
7. Obtain as much education as possible.
8. Prepare to become a worthy husband and father.
9. Give proper respect to women, girls, and children.

Parents and leaders help young men accomplish these objectives in home evenings, gospel study at home, meetings, activities, and interviews and by encouraging them to participate in the Duty to God program (see 8.12).

Young men should not recite these objectives in their meetings or activities.

8.2

Roles of Parents and Church Leaders

Parents have the first responsibility for the spiritual and physical welfare of their children (see Doctrine and Covenants 68:25–28). The bishopric and other Aaronic Priesthood leaders support but do not replace parents in this responsibility. They offer support in the following ways:

They assist parents in helping their sons prepare for priesthood ordinations, the temple endowment, full-time missionary service, temple marriage, and fatherhood.

They encourage communication between young men and their parents.

They ensure that quorum activities and other youth events do not put undue burdens on families or compete with family activities.

Leaders should be especially sensitive to young men who come from homes that lack strong support for gospel living.

8.3

Ward Aaronic Priesthood Leadership

This chapter focuses on administering Aaronic Priesthood quorums in a way that will strengthen individual young men and their families. Aaronic Priesthood leaders frequently review chapter 3, which outlines general principles of leadership. These principles include preparing spiritually, participating in councils, ministering to others, and teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In this chapter, the term *quorum leaders* refers to the deacons quorum presidency, the teachers quorum presidency, and the bishop and his assistants in the priests quorum. The members of the Young Men presidency are quorum advisers, not quorum leaders.

8.3.1

Bishopric

The bishop oversees the Aaronic Priesthood quorums in the ward. He and his counselors comprise the bishopric and the presidency of the Aaronic Priesthood in the ward (see Doctrine and Covenants 107:13–15). They watch over and strengthen individual young men, working closely with parents and with other leaders.

8.3.1.1

Bishop

The bishop is the presiding high priest in the ward. He is also the president of the priests quorum (see Doctrine and Covenants 107:87–88). In a branch, the branch president acts as the president of the priests quorum.

In the leadership of the priests quorum, the bishop serves with two assistants, both of whom are priests. Although the bishop delegates many responsibilities to his assistants, he serves personally and actively as

quorum president. He promotes a spirit of love and unity in the quorum. He regularly attends and presides over quorum presidency meetings and Sunday quorum meetings. He participates in quorum service and activities. In his absence, he designates one of his assistants to assume quorum leadership responsibilities. When a bishop is released, his assistants are also released.

The bishop interviews young men who are preparing to be ordained to the office of priest. He also interviews newly baptized brethren who are at least age 11 and turning 12 during the year to be ordained to the appropriate Aaronic Priesthood office (see 5.2.2, and *Handbook 1*, 16.7.2) and to receive a limited-use temple recommend (see *Handbook 1*, 3.4.6 and 3.4.14). He conducts this interview for new converts soon after their confirmation, normally within a week.

8.3.1.2

Bishop and His Counselors

The bishop assigns one of his counselors to oversee the deacons quorum and the other counselor to oversee the teachers quorum. These counselors promote a spirit of love and unity in the quorums. They attend quorum presidency meetings and Sunday quorum meetings as often as possible. They also participate in quorum service and activities.

With assistance from quorum advisers, the bishop and his counselors teach leadership skills to quorum leaders and help them fulfill their responsibilities.

The bishop assigns one of his counselors to oversee the ward Young Men organization under his direction. This counselor discusses Young Men matters regularly with the ward Young Men presidency. He reports on these discussions in bishopric meetings.

The bishop interviews each young man at least annually. If possible, he interviews each member of the priests quorum twice annually. If this is not possible, he assigns a counselor to conduct some of these

interviews. After each young man who is a member of the deacons or teachers quorum has his annual interview with the bishop, he has an interview with the counselor in the bishopric who oversees his quorum at another time during the year. For guidelines on youth interviews, bishops and their counselors may refer to *Handbook 1*, 7.1.7.

The bishop or an assigned counselor interviews young men who are preparing to be ordained to the offices of deacon and teacher.

The bishop or an assigned counselor interviews the deacons quorum president, the teachers quorum president, and the priests quorum assistants regularly. In these interviews, the bishopric member and the quorum leader discuss priesthood duties, the progress of individual quorum members, and the progress of the quorum as a whole.

The bishop and his counselors recognize each young man in sacrament meeting when he is to be ordained to an office in the priesthood. Young men do not come to the podium but stand in the congregation as their names are presented and they are sustained. Young men are also recognized in sacrament meeting when they have completed the Duty to God program.

The bishop and his counselors oversee Scouting where it is authorized by the Church (see 8.13.4).

The bishop calls and sets apart the Young Men president. He may assign his counselors to call and set apart counselors in the Young Men presidency, the Young Men secretary, assistant quorum advisers, and others who serve with the young men.

The bishop calls his assistants in the priests quorum. He or an assigned counselor calls deacons and teachers quorum presidencies and quorum secretaries. Members of the bishopric counsel together prayerfully to determine whom to call to these positions. They do not select leaders merely because of age or seniority in the quorum. The bishop and his counselors may consult with members of the

ward Young Men presidency as they seek inspiration about whom to call.

When a member of the bishopric calls a young man to serve as a deacons or teachers quorum president, he asks that young man to recommend whom to call as counselors and a secretary. The bishopric member counsels the quorum president to approach this responsibility prayerfully, seeking guidance from the Lord about whom to recommend. However, the bishopric member also helps the quorum president understand that final responsibility to receive inspiration on whom to call rests with the bishopric.

A member of the bishopric seeks permission from a young man's parents before asking him to serve in any of these callings.

After extending these callings, a member of the bishopric presents the quorum leaders for a sustaining vote in their quorum meeting. Then the bishop or an assigned counselor sets the young men apart. The bishop sets apart his assistants in the priests quorum. He also sets apart the deacons quorum president and the teachers quorum president because only he can give them the priesthood keys of their callings. He may assign his counselors to set apart counselors in deacons and teachers quorum presidencies and quorum secretaries.

A member of the bishopric announces these callings in sacrament meeting but does not ask for a sustaining vote.

8.3.2 Quorum Presidencies and Assistants to the Bishop in the Priests Quorum

Aaronic Priesthood quorum leaders “sit in council” with quorum members, “teaching them the duties of their office” (see Doctrine and Covenants 107:85–86). They seek inspiration in fulfilling their responsibilities. They also receive instruction and guidance from the bishopric and quorum advisers. Aaronic Priesthood quorum presidents hold the priesthood

keys to direct the work of the quorums over which they preside. Counselors in the deacons and teachers quorum presidencies and assistants to the bishop in the priests quorum do not hold priesthood keys.

Aaronic Priesthood quorum presidencies and assistants to the bishop in the priests quorum watch over and fellowship quorum members and other young men of quorum age. They give special attention to those who are new members or less active and those who have disabilities or other special needs. Quorum leaders strive to develop love and brotherhood among quorum members.

Aaronic Priesthood quorum leaders provide quorum members with opportunities for priesthood assignments, leadership experiences, and spiritual growth.

They hold regular quorum presidency meetings.

They conduct Sunday quorum meetings.

They help plan quorum activities, including Mutual.

They help quorum members set and accomplish goals in the Duty to God program.

On occasion, they may give gospel instruction in Sunday quorum meetings, with help from quorum advisers.

The deacons quorum president, the teachers quorum president, and one of the priests quorum assistants serve on the bishopric youth committee (see 18.2.9).

8.3.3 Quorum Secretaries

Quorum secretaries have the following responsibilities:

They compile and review attendance information and submit it to the Young Men secretary.

They consult with quorum leaders to prepare agendas for presidency meetings. They attend these meetings, take notes, and keep track of assignments.

They may help quorum leaders and advisers plan activities.

8.3.4

Ward Young Men Presidency (Aaronic Priesthood Quorum Advisers)

The ward Young Men presidency consists of a president and two counselors. They serve as advisers to the Aaronic Priesthood quorums. They work under the direction of the bishopric. They also receive orientation and ongoing support from the stake Young Men presidency.

8.3.4.1

Ward Young Men President

The Young Men president has the following responsibilities:

He serves as a member of the ward council. As a member of this council, he participates in efforts to build faith and strengthen individuals and families (see chapter 4). He is also a member of the bishopric youth committee (see 18.2.9).

He teaches other Young Men leaders their duties, using this handbook as a resource.

He oversees the records, reports, budget, and finances of the ward Young Men organization. The Young Men secretary helps with this responsibility.

8.3.4.2

Ward Young Men President and His Counselors

The Young Men president and his counselors serve as Aaronic Priesthood quorum advisers. The president is the adviser to the priests quorum, the first counselor is the adviser to the teachers quorum, and the second counselor is the adviser to the deacons quorum. They have the following responsibilities:

They guide Aaronic Priesthood quorums in fulfilling their priesthood duties.

They get to know each young man and become familiar with his talents, interests, and challenges. They look for ways to strengthen young men individually, help them grow in their testimonies, and encourage them to participate in their quorums. They give special attention to young men who are new members and young men who are less active.

They support each young man in his family.

They help young men work toward the objectives listed in 8.1.3. This includes helping them set and accomplish goals in the Duty to God program.

In response to assignments given in ward council meetings, they may work with quorum presidencies to organize service committees.

They may counsel with parents and priesthood leaders about the needs of young men.

They regularly teach lessons in Sunday quorum meetings, though they may share this responsibility with assistant advisers. They oversee efforts to improve gospel learning and teaching in the quorums. They participate in and encourage other leaders to participate in teacher council meetings (see 5.5.7). In these efforts, they follow the principles in 5.5.3 and 5.5.4.

They attend Aaronic Priesthood quorum presidency meetings and provide guidance as needed. They help the bishopric teach leadership skills and qualities to quorum presidencies and priests quorum assistants (see 8.14).

They work with quorum leaders to plan and carry out quorum activities, including Mutual activities.

They help the bishopric and quorum leaders build quorum unity.

They hold Young Men presidency meetings. They also meet regularly with the counselor in the bishopric who oversees the Young Men organization.

Where Scouting is authorized by the Church, members of the Young Men presidency are generally called to serve as Scout leaders, but they may be called to serve as assistant Scout leaders (see 8.13.4).

8.3.5

Ward Young Men Secretary

The Young Men secretary has the following responsibilities:

He consults with the Young Men presidency to prepare agendas for presidency meetings. He attends these meetings, takes notes, and keeps track of assignments.

He instructs quorum secretaries and oversees their work in keeping quorum attendance records. At least quarterly, he compiles attendance information, reviews it with the Young Men president, and submits it to the ward clerk.

He ensures that the bishopric and the Young Men presidency are aware of young men who are not attending meetings regularly and young men who will soon be eligible to be ordained to another office in the priesthood.

He may be assigned to record the progress of individual young men as they participate in the Duty to God program.

He helps the Young Men presidency prepare an annual budget and account for expenses.

8.3.6

Assistant Aaronic Priesthood Quorum Advisers

The bishopric may call assistant quorum advisers to help the Young Men presidency with their responsibilities. Assistant quorum advisers may teach some of the lessons in Sunday quorum meetings. They may also assist with activities, including Mutual.

Where Scouting is authorized by the Church, assistant quorum advisers are generally called to serve as assistant Scout leaders, but they may be called to serve as Scout leaders (see 8.13.4).

8.3.7

Sports Coaches

The bishopric may call men as coaches for Young Men sports teams. The coaches serve under the direction of the Young Men presidency. For information about sports programs, see 13.6.21.

8.4

Serving as Ministering Brothers

Serving as ministering brothers is a priesthood responsibility of teachers, priests, and Melchizedek Priesthood holders. For detailed information about this service, including instructions about giving assignments to Aaronic Priesthood holders, see 7.4.

All young men in the teachers or priests quorum may receive assignments as ministering brothers. They need not wait until their 14th birthday.

The guideline that two responsible adults be present with youth does not apply to the assignment of ministering companions. However, under the direction of their bishop, leaders should use wisdom and seek inspiration when assigning youth as companions to adults (see 7.4.3).

Adult companions should avoid situations that might be misunderstood. They should use care regarding isolated one-on-one situations so that young men have a safe and rewarding experience with ministering. Additionally, leaders should use wisdom in not assigning young men to difficult home or family situations. When youth are assigned to a companion who is not a parent, leaders should confirm that parents do not object to the assignment.

8.5

Gathering Fast Offerings

Where a ward is geographically concentrated and where safety conditions permit, the bishop may direct Aaronic Priesthood holders, especially deacons, to contact member households each month to give members the opportunity to contribute fast offerings.

Priesthood holders should go in pairs when gathering fast offerings. Melchizedek Priesthood holders may accompany Aaronic Priesthood holders if necessary.

Members should not give other contributions, such as tithing, to those who collect fast offerings.

Those who gather fast offerings deliver them promptly to a member of the bishopric.

8.6

Helping 10- and 11-Year-Old Boys Prepare to Receive the Priesthood

8.6.1

Parents and Ministering Brothers

The parents of a 10- or 11-year-old boy have the primary responsibility for helping him prepare to receive the Aaronic Priesthood. Other family members and ministering brothers assist. The support of ministering brothers may be especially important in homes where the father is absent or is not an active member of the Church.

8.6.2

Primary Leaders and Teachers

Primary leaders and teachers support families in helping 10- and 11-year-old boys prepare to receive the Aaronic Priesthood.

Each year, the Primary presidency prepares a meeting called Temple and Priesthood Preparation under the direction of the bishopric (see 11.5.5). The deacons quorum presidency and Young Men presidency may be invited to participate.

8.7

Helping Quorum Members Prepare for Full-Time Missions

The Lord expects each able young man to prepare spiritually, physically, mentally, emotionally, and financially for full-time missionary service. The earlier a young man decides to serve a mission, the more likely it is that he will serve.

Each young man should prepare by developing his own testimony and his own relationship with the Lord. He should also prepare by studying the scriptures, especially the Book of Mormon. Many of the goals and activities suggested in the Duty to God program can help a young man prepare for missionary service.

Parents have the primary responsibility for helping their sons prepare to serve full-time missions. Other family members, bishopric members, Aaronic Priesthood quorum presidencies and advisers, ministering brothers, and others support parents in this effort.

Helping quorum members prepare for missionary service is a high priority for bishopric members and quorum advisers. This preparation begins in the deacons quorum and continues throughout each young man's years in the Aaronic Priesthood. Leaders look for ways to include missionary preparation in quorum meetings, presidency meetings, quorum activities, and other settings.

Bishopric members and quorum advisers help young men prepare for full-time missions in the following ways:

They provide opportunities in quorum meetings and activities for quorum members to feel and recognize the influence of the Holy Ghost.

They encourage young men to have a limited-use temple recommend and, where possible, to use it regularly.

They teach young men the basic doctrines that missionaries teach, such as the Atonement of Jesus Christ, the restoration of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the plan of salvation, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. They may use *Preach My Gospel* as a resource for teaching these doctrines.

They encourage young men to study the scriptures, especially the Book of Mormon, on their own every day. They also encourage young men to study *Preach My Gospel*.

They teach young men and their parents about the expectations for full-time missionaries. These expectations include gospel knowledge and testimony, personal worthiness, physical fitness, social and emotional maturity, and financial preparation. Adult leaders guide young men in setting goals to reach these expectations.

They encourage young men to attend seminary.

They provide opportunities for service, including assignments for teachers and priests to serve as ministering brothers.

They give young men opportunities to teach the gospel in quorum meetings and other settings.

They encourage young men to share the gospel with friends and family members.

They provide opportunities for young men to learn from and interact with exemplary returned missionaries, in both formal and informal settings.

As part of this preparation, the bishopric and quorum advisers encourage priest-age young men to attend a missionary preparation class. Depending

on the number of these young men, this class may be organized by the bishopric at the ward level or by the stake presidency at the stake level. The main resources for this class are the scriptures, the *Missionary Handbook*, and *Preach My Gospel*. This class is not held during regular Sunday meetings. At the stake president's or bishop's discretion and based on local needs, it may be held at other times for individuals, families, or groups.

Additional instructions for bishops are provided in *Handbook 1*, 4.2.

8.8

Conferring the Melchizedek Priesthood on 18-Year-Old Young Men

Worthy brethren may receive the Melchizedek Priesthood and be ordained elders when they are 18 years old or older. Based on individual circumstances, such as a young man's testimony and maturity, school graduation, desire to continue with peers, and college attendance, the bishop determines whether a young man should be ordained an elder soon after his 18th birthday or remain with the priests quorum longer. In making this decision, the bishop consults first with the young man and his parents. By age 19, or prior to leaving home to attend college, serve in the military, or accept full-time employment, all worthy brethren should be ordained elders.

Young Men leaders and elders quorum leaders work together to make the transition into the elders quorum successful for each young man.

8.9**Leadership Meetings****8.9.1****Ward Council Meeting**

The Young Men president serves as a member of the ward council (see chapter 4).

8.9.2**Bishopric Youth Committee Meeting**

The bishop presides over the bishopric youth committee. This committee is composed of the bishopric, one of the bishop's priests quorum assistants, the deacons and teachers quorum presidents, the Young Women class presidents, and the Young Men and Young Women presidents. For more information, see 18.2.9.

8.9.3**Quorum Presidency Meeting**

Each quorum presidency holds a presidency meeting regularly. The bishop regularly attends and presides over the priests quorum presidency meeting, and one of his assistants conducts it. The deacons quorum president and teachers quorum president conduct their presidency meetings, and they preside unless a member of the bishopric attends. Quorum advisers and secretaries also attend these meetings. Secretaries take notes and keep track of assignments.

The agenda may include the following items:

1. Plan ways to strengthen quorum members, including new members and less-active members. Also plan ways to fellowship young men of other faiths.
2. Read and discuss scripture passages and instructions from Church leaders that relate to the responsibilities of priesthood leaders.

3. Plan to visit quorum members as needed.
4. Discuss ways to help each young man have success in the Duty to God program.
5. Plan quorum meetings and activities.
6. Consider items to discuss in bishopric youth committee meeting (see 18.2.9).
7. Receive leadership training from bishopric members or quorum advisers.

Where Scouting is authorized by the Church, quorum presidency meeting may be used to make plans for the quorum's Scouting unit after the items above have been discussed. If youth and adult Scouting leaders are not already present, they may be invited into the meeting for this discussion. Young men of other faiths who hold leadership positions in the Scouting unit may be included. The quorum president continues to preside over this part of the meeting. He may invite a youth Scouting leader to conduct it. Quorum advisers ensure that each Scouting activity is consistent with the objectives listed in 8.1.3.

8.9.4**Ward Young Men Presidency Meeting**

The Young Men presidency holds a presidency meeting regularly. The president presides at the meeting and conducts it. The secretary attends, takes notes, and keeps track of assignments.

The agenda may include the following items:

1. Evaluate how the young men in each quorum are accomplishing the objectives listed in 8.1.3. Plan ways to help individual young men accomplish those objectives more completely.
2. Read and discuss scripture passages and instructions from Church leaders that relate to the responsibilities of priesthood leaders.

3. Make plans to instruct quorum leaders in their duties.
4. Discuss the effectiveness of quorum activities. Discuss ways to include young men in planning meaningful activities.
5. Discuss gospel instruction in Sunday quorum meetings and plan ways to improve.
6. Review attendance records. Plan ways to help new members and less-active young men participate.
7. Review the Young Men budget and expenditures.

The counselor in the bishopric who oversees the Young Men organization may occasionally attend the Young Men presidency meeting to receive reports and give counsel. The Young Men presidency may also invite quorum leaders and assistant advisers to attend as needed.

8.9.5 Stake Priesthood Leadership Meeting

The stake presidency convenes a stake priesthood leadership meeting in connection with each stake conference (see 18.3.1, item 2). The presidency also convenes one other stake priesthood leadership meeting during the year, for a total of three such meetings annually.

Ward Young Men presidencies and secretaries attend these meetings. Deacons and teachers quorum presidencies and priests quorum assistants may be invited occasionally, such as when the meeting includes subjects that will be especially helpful for them in their callings.

8.10

Standards

Standards provide sure direction to strengthen and guide members of the Church. As young men keep gospel standards, they will be of great service in the Church and the world. They will also be worthy to receive the ordinances of the temple.

In the booklet *For the Strength of Youth*, the First Presidency outlines gospel standards and teaches youth how to apply them. Every young man should have a copy of *For the Strength of Youth*. He should review the standards often and consider how well he is living them.

Quorum advisers and assistant advisers should study the standards in the booklet and exemplify them. They should find ways to teach and reinforce these standards often in lessons and at Mutual activities, camps, youth conference, and other activities.

Bishopric members and quorum advisers can encourage parents to study gospel standards, exemplify them, and discuss them with their sons. They can also encourage young men to use *For the Strength of Youth* as a resource for home evening lessons and talks.

8.11

Aaronic Priesthood Quorum Meetings

Aaronic Priesthood quorum meetings are held on the second and fourth Sundays of each month. They last 50 minutes.

The purposes of quorum meetings are to strengthen faith in Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ; conduct quorum business; learn priesthood duties; and study the gospel. Quorum leaders and advisers prayerfully plan the meetings to accomplish these purposes.

Aaronic Priesthood quorums normally meet separately. However, in a ward or branch with few young men, quorums may meet together for instruction. Even when quorums meet together, separate quorums should be organized, with youth leaders called and sustained for each quorum. When possible, each quorum should begin to meet separately.

Quorum presidents preside at quorum meetings unless a person with higher presiding authority is present. A member of the quorum presidency or a priests quorum assistant conducts. He reminds quorum members of the *Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families* home study materials for that day and the following week. If quorums meet together, the priests quorum assistants and members of the teachers and deacons quorum presidencies take turns conducting.

Lessons in quorum meetings focus on gospel topics in *Come, Follow Me—For Aaronic Priesthood*. Leaders, assisted by quorum presidencies and assistants, select the lesson outlines that best meet the needs of quorum members. These outlines are provided at ComeFollowMe.ChurchofJesusChrist.org and in the printed *Come, Follow Me—For Aaronic Priesthood* manual. Leaders encourage each quorum member to bring scriptures where possible.

Lessons are usually taught by quorum advisers or assistant advisers. These brethren may divide this responsibility as needed. Bishopric members, quorum leaders, and other quorum members may assist in teaching. When quorum leaders or members give instruction, the adviser or a parent helps them prepare. Those who teach should follow the principles in 5.5.4.

Adults 19 and older who hold an Aaronic Priesthood office are prospective elders. They meet with the elders quorum for Sunday instruction. The bishop may also invite 18-year-old Aaronic Priesthood holders to meet with the elders quorum.

When a special need exists, Aaronic Priesthood quorums may meet together briefly before the young

men go to individual quorum meetings. Young men and young women may also meet together occasionally, as directed by the bishopric.

Sunday quorum meetings do not begin with a hymn or prayer, but they conclude with a prayer. Hymns may be used to enhance a lesson as appropriate.

8.12

Duty to God Program

All Aaronic Priesthood holders are encouraged to participate in the Duty to God program. This program gives Aaronic Priesthood holders opportunities to develop spiritual strength, learn and fulfill their priesthood duties, prepare to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood and serve full-time missions, maintain physical health, and improve their relationships with others.

Parents and leaders encourage young men to participate in the program soon after they are ordained to their first priesthood office. Young men continue to set goals throughout their years in the Aaronic Priesthood.

8.13

Activities

Quorum leaders and quorum advisers plan activities based on the needs and interests of quorum members. They make a special effort to reach out to all young men, including those who have recently joined the Church and those who are less active. Activities may help young men accomplish their goals in the Duty to God program. Quorum leaders should participate as much as possible in planning and carrying out activities.

Plans for quorum activities should be approved by a member of the bishopric and should follow the guidelines in chapter 13.

8.13.1**Mutual**

Most quorum activities occur during a time called Mutual. The term *Mutual* suggests shared experiences in which there is mutual respect and support for one another and opportunities to learn together. Mutual activities should provide youth with a variety of opportunities to serve others and to develop spiritually, socially, physically, and intellectually.

Mutual is generally held weekly. If travel or other restrictions make this impractical, Mutual may be held less frequently, but it should be held at least monthly. Mutual should be 1 to 1½ hours long and should take place on a day or evening other than Sunday or Monday.

The Young Men presidency, under the direction of the bishopric, oversees Mutual for young men.

Young Men and Young Women presidencies may use Mutual activities to prepare for stake or multi-stake activities (see 13.3).

8.13.1.1**Annual Theme for Mutual**

Each year, the First Presidency announces a theme for Mutual. Leaders emphasize this theme in Mutual opening exercises and in other youth activities.

8.13.1.2**Opening Exercises**

Mutual usually begins with brief opening exercises presided over by a member of the bishopric. The bishop's priests quorum assistants and members of the Laurel class presidency take turns conducting. Adult leaders prepare youth leaders for this responsibility.

Opening exercises include a hymn and prayer and may also include musical selections and opportunities for the youth to share their talents and testimonies.

8.13.1.3**Quorum and Class Activities or Combined Activities**

Following opening exercises, Aaronic Priesthood quorums and Young Women classes generally hold separate activities. In a ward or branch with few young men, all the young men may meet together for activities. Activities may also be planned for any combination of quorums and classes.

Combined activities for all young men and young women are normally held once a month. Members of the bishopric youth committee schedule, plan, and review these activities in their meetings. The activities are carried out under the direction of the bishopric.

Some examples of appropriate activities are service projects, music, dance, drama, cultural events, sports or athletic events, career exploration, and outdoor activities.

8.13.2**Bishopric Youth Discussions**

Bishopric youth discussions are planned and carried out by the bishopric. These discussions, which are held occasionally, give the bishopric opportunities to address subjects that are interesting to the youth and that strengthen the youth spiritually. Topics in *For the Strength of Youth* and *True to the Faith* are especially appropriate. Occasionally the bishopric may invite guests to participate. Guests are usually members of the ward or stake.

Bishopric youth discussions may be held with all of the youth together or with the youth of a certain age-group. They may be held during Mutual, on Sunday during the time for quorum meetings and Young Women classes, or at another time that does not put undue burden on families. The bishopric determines their frequency. They are scheduled in bishopric youth committee meetings.

8.13.3**Standards Events**

Standards events are special programs that emphasize moral values and eternal goals. They encourage young men to live the standards in *For the Strength of Youth*, which will bring them closer to the Savior.

These events are held annually, or more often as needed, usually during Mutual. They may be held on a quorum, ward, multiward, or stake level. Depending on how a subject is presented, these events may include any combination of Aaronic Priesthood quorums. They may also include mothers, fathers, mothers and fathers together, and young women.

8.13.4**Scouting**

Where Scouting is authorized by the Church, quorums may participate in Scouting activities during Mutual. Scouting should help young men put into practice the gospel principles they learn on Sunday.

Each member of the bishopric oversees the Scouting program for the Aaronic Priesthood quorum he oversees. Members of the ward Young Men presidency generally serve as Scout leaders. Or the bishopric may call assistant quorum advisers as Scout leaders, with members of the Young Men presidency called to serve as assistant Scout leaders.

In each quorum, the bishop usually appoints the quorum president or one of his assistants in the priests quorum to serve as the youth leader of the Scouting program. However, he may appoint other young men as youth Scout leaders.

Where Scouting is authorized by the Church, young men in the deacons quorum should be registered. Young men in the teachers and priests quorums should be registered if they are pursuing rank advancements.

All adult Scout leaders should register before they begin their service and should receive proper training in their responsibilities. In the United States, registered adult leaders receive liability protection from the Boy Scouts of America.

The Church pays all or part of the fees for registering young men and adult leaders in Scouting. The Church also pays for unit chartering. Registration and chartering expenses are paid from the stake general checking account. The Church provides these funds in addition to the budget allowance.

The bishopric organizes a ward Scout committee to ensure that Scouting functions properly as a supporting activity for Aaronic Priesthood quorums.

Where there are few young men, a Scout troop may be organized to serve multiple wards and branches or, in some instances, an entire stake or district.

For information about financing Scouting, see 8.13.7. For additional information about Scouting, see the Church's *Scouting Handbook*.

8.13.5**Stake and Multistake Activities**

See 13.3.

8.13.6**Youth Conference**

See 13.4.

8.13.7**Funding for Activities**

Funding for Aaronic Priesthood activities, including Scouting activities where they are authorized by the Church, should come from the ward budget (see 13.2.8).

8.13.7.1**Funding for an Annual Camp or Similar Activity**

If the ward budget does not have sufficient funds to pay for an annual extended Scout camp or similar activity for young men, leaders may ask participants to pay for part or all of it. If funds from participants are not sufficient, the bishop may authorize one group fund-raising activity annually that complies with the guidelines in 13.6.8.

In no case should the expenses or travel for an annual camp or similar activity be excessive. Nor should the lack of personal funds prohibit a member from participating.

8.13.7.2**Funding for Equipment and Supplies**

If possible, equipment and supplies that the ward needs for annual youth camps are purchased with ward budget funds. If these funds are not sufficient, the bishop may authorize one group fund-raising activity annually that complies with the guidelines in 13.6.8.

Equipment and supplies purchased with Church funds, whether from the ward budget or a fund-raising activity, are for Church use only. They are not for the personal use of individuals or families.

Church funds may not be used to purchase uniforms for individuals.

8.14**Teaching Leadership Skills and Qualities**

Quorum advisers and assistant advisers teach leadership skills and qualities as they work with quorum presidencies and the bishopric youth committee, as they help young men plan and carry out activities, and as they help young men give service together. In

this effort, advisers and assistant advisers may refer to chapter 3 in this handbook.

8.15**Stake Aaronic Priesthood Leadership****8.15.1****Stake Presidency**

Members of the stake presidency oversee the Aaronic Priesthood in the stake. As part of this responsibility, they instruct bishops in their duty to preside over the Aaronic Priesthood in their wards.

The stake president assigns one of his counselors to oversee the stake Young Men organization and Scouting in the stake (or other stake activities for young men in areas where Scouting is not authorized by the Church). Where Scouting is authorized by the Church, this counselor should receive proper training in his Scouting responsibilities.

For more information about the responsibilities of the stake presidency, see 15.1. For more information about Scouting, see the Church's *Scouting Handbook*.

8.15.2**High Councilor Assigned to the Stake Young Men**

The stake president assigns a member of the high council to work with the stake Young Men presidency. This high councilor's responsibilities are outlined in 15.3.

8.15.3**Stake Young Men Presidency**

The responsibilities of the stake Young Men presidency are outlined in 15.4.1.

8.15.4**Stake Young Men Secretary**

The responsibilities of the stake Young Men secretary are outlined in 15.4.2.

8.15.5**Stake Aaronic Priesthood–Young Women Committee**

The stake president assigns a counselor to preside over the stake Aaronic Priesthood–Young Women committee. Other committee members are the high councilors assigned to the stake Young Men and Young Women organizations, the stake Young Men presidency and secretary, and the stake Young Women presidency and secretary.

The stake presidency may invite youth to attend the committee’s meetings as needed. Youth should be included as much as possible in planning and carrying out activities such as youth conferences, dances, devotionals, and multistake events. Youth may also participate in discussions about challenges that the youth in the stake are facing.

8.16**Adapting the Young Men Organization to Local Needs**

In a ward or branch with few young men, Aaronic Priesthood quorums may meet together for instruction (see 8.11). They also may meet together for activities.

If adult leadership is limited in a ward or branch, the Young Men presidency may teach the Sunday lessons and administer the activity program without assistant advisers. In a very small unit, the Young Men president may be the only adult leader in the Young Men organization. In this case, he teaches the Sunday lessons and oversees activities for all young men. When possible, counselors and a secretary should be called.

Because youth often benefit from socializing in larger groups, the young men and young women in two or more small wards or branches may meet occasionally for combined activities. If neighboring wards and branches have few young men, the bishops and branch presidents may authorize the young men to meet together for weekly activities. When considering these options, bishops and branch presidents take into account factors such as distance and travel cost.

In a small stake or a district, the Young Men president may be the only stake or district Young Men leader. When possible, counselors and a secretary should be called.

For general information about adapting to local needs, see chapter 17.

8.17**Additional Guidelines and Policies****8.17.1****Participation in Camps, Youth Conferences, and Dances**

Youth in a class or quorum may enjoy the privileges that are appropriate for that class or quorum. With their parents’ approval, Beehives and deacons may attend camps before their 12th birthdays. Likewise, Mia Maids and teachers may attend dances and youth conferences before their 14th birthdays. However, a young woman or young man should be at least age 16 before beginning to date (see *For the Strength of Youth* [2011], 4).

8.17.2***True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference***

The Church has published *True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* as a companion to the study of the scriptures and the teachings of latter-day prophets. Members of the bishopric or quorum advisers

ensure that each young man has a copy of the book. Young men can use the book as a resource as they study and apply gospel principles, prepare talks, teach classes, and answer questions about the Church.

8.17.3

Young Men of Other Faiths

Young men of other faiths who agree to abide by Church standards should be welcomed warmly and encouraged to participate in youth activities. Expenses for their participation should be handled the same as for young men who are members of the Church. When these young men participate in Scouting, their parents may give donations to help fund activities.

8.17.4

Young Men Who Have Disabilities

Young men who have disabilities are normally included in their regular quorums. Exceptions may be made with the approval of the parents and the bishopric.

For information about understanding, including, and teaching young men who have disabilities, see 21.1.26 and disabilities.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

8.17.5

Two Responsible Adults

When adults are teaching children or youth in Church settings, at least two responsible adults should be present. The two adults could be two men, two women, or a married couple. Where it may not be practical to have at least two adults in a classroom, leaders should consider combining classes.

The guideline that two responsible adults be present with youth does not apply to the assignment of ministering companions. However, leaders should use wisdom and seek inspiration when assigning youth as companions to adults (see 7.4.3).

8.17.6

Age-Group Progression

See 11.8.9.