

16.

## Single Members

Men and women who have not married or who are divorced or widowed make up a significant portion of Church membership. Priesthood and auxiliary leaders reach out to these members and include them in the work of the Church. Worthy single members should be given opportunities to hold leadership and teaching positions, including positions in elders quorum presidencies and auxiliary presidencies.

Leaders support single members by helping them draw near to the Lord, strengthen their testimonies, and take responsibility for their own spiritual, social, and temporal well-being.

In caring for single members, leaders seek to strengthen family life, not compete with it or detract from it. They teach and testify of the importance of marriage and parenthood. Even when young single adults are not living with their parents, Church leaders encourage them to honor and nourish their relationships with their parents. Leaders also support single parents in their efforts to teach and nurture their children.

Single members are divided into two groups: single adults (ages 31 and older) and young single adults (ages 18–30).

### 16.1

#### Caring for Single Adult Members (Ages 31 and Older)

Leaders encourage single members ages 31 and older to participate in the regular activities and programs of their conventional stakes and wards. These stakes and wards can provide a full range of Church experiences and can offer opportunities to serve, teach, lead, and associate with people of all ages. Conventional wards can also reinforce the

important role of the family and the home in the gospel plan. As an exception, stake presidents may recommend the creation of a single adult ward for single adults ages 31 to 45 according to the guidelines in *Handbook 1*, 9.1.9.

Leaders should make special efforts to understand and address the needs of single adults. Leaders should recognize that single adults' circumstances and interests are varied. Leaders should also be sensitive that single adults sometimes feel out of place when they attend family-oriented activities and classes.

### 16.1.1

#### Stake Single Adult Leadership

The stake presidency seeks to understand the needs of single adults and to provide ways to address those needs. The stake presidency may determine that single adults in the stake need opportunities to come together for service, gospel learning, and sociality beyond what their wards provide.

The stake president may assign one of his counselors to oversee the work with single adults in the stake. The stake president may also assign a high councilor to assist in this work. The same member of the stake presidency and the same high councilor may be assigned to work with young single adults as well.

### 16.1.2

#### Stake Single Adult Committee

The stake presidency may organize a stake single adult committee. A counselor in the stake presidency presides over this committee. The committee also includes a high councilor, a member of the stake Relief Society presidency, and several single adults. Normally this committee is organized separately from the stake young single adult committee.

The committee meets as needed. Committee members may plan ways to give single adults opportunities to come together for service, gospel learning, and sociality beyond their wards.

### 16.1.3 Multistake Activities

When multistake activities can provide single adults with needed opportunities for service, leadership, and social interaction, Area Seventies work with stake presidents to establish committees to plan and organize such activities.

### 16.1.4 Participation in Single Adult Activities

Participation in single adult activities is limited to single adult members, assigned Church officers, and single adult nonmembers who are willing to abide by Church standards. A person who is separated from his or her spouse or is seeking a divorce may not participate until the divorce decree has become final according to law.

### 16.1.5 Home Evening and Gospel Study

Bishoprics may organize one or more home evening groups for single adults who do not have children in the home and do not live with their parents. These groups are not referred to as families.

Informally and as organized by participants, single adults may gather to strengthen one another through gospel study. *Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families* may be a resource for those who desire to study together.

## 16.2 Caring for Young Single Adult Members (Ages 18 to 30)

Stake and ward leaders work continually to identify, locate, and shepherd young single adults in the following ways:

They help young single adults find and fellowship those in their age-group who are less active in the Church.

They create opportunities for young single adults to associate together in meaningful service, gospel learning, and social activities. A central purpose of these activities is to help young single adults find marriage partners and prepare to marry in the temple and raise righteous families.

They support young single adults in fulfilling worthy personal goals and in making decisions about marriage, education, careers, and finances.

They ensure that each young single adult has a copy of *True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference*. Young single adults are encouraged to use the book as a resource as they study gospel principles, prepare talks, teach classes, and answer questions about the Church.

## 16.3 Young Single Adults in Conventional Stakes and Wards

### 16.3.1 Stake Leadership

The leadership of the stake presidency is particularly important in the effort to care for young single adults. Young single adults are highly mobile. They may be unevenly distributed across the wards in the stake, and they may be difficult to locate. Because of these challenges, opportunities for social interaction, gospel learning, and service are often most effective at the stake or multistake level.

In his regular interview with each bishop, the stake president asks for a report on the progress of young single adults in the bishop's ward.

The stake president assigns one of his counselors to oversee the work with young single adults in the stake. The stake president also assigns a high councilor to assist in this work.

Stake leaders prayerfully consider what programs and activities will best serve the needs of the young single adults in the stake. A variety of options are listed in 16.3.5.

While most young single adults live in conventional wards (many with their parents), priesthood leaders may recommend the organization of a young single adult ward when the circumstances make this desirable (see 16.4).

### 16.3.2

#### **Stake Young Single Adult Committee**

A counselor in the stake presidency presides over the stake young single adult committee. This committee also includes the high councilor assigned to young single adults, a member of the stake Relief Society presidency, a couple called to serve as young single adult advisers, and the young single adult leaders from each ward. If wards do not have young single adult leaders, other worthy young single adults are called to serve on the committee. Normally the committee is organized separately from the stake single adult committee.

The committee meets as needed. Committee members may plan ways to give young single adults opportunities to come together for service, gospel learning (see *Handbook 1*, 11.2.2), and sociality beyond their wards (see 16.3.5). As they plan young single adult activities, they maintain a focus on spiritual growth and service, not just social experiences. In areas where campus institute programs are not accessible, this committee may serve needs

that would ordinarily be met by the institute advisory council.

The committee helps ensure that ward young single adult committees are functioning well in the wards where they are established.

### 16.3.3

#### **Ward Leadership**

##### 16.3.3.1

#### **Bishopric**

To understand and address the needs of young single adults in the ward, a bishopric member interviews each young single adult at least annually. The bishopric works with the ward council to find meaningful callings for all young single adults. The bishopric may also organize a ward young single adult committee.

A counselor in the bishopric oversees the young single adults in the ward. He receives regular reports from the counselors in the elders quorum and Relief Society presidencies who are assigned to work with young single adults in the ward. He may report on specific young single adults in ward council meeting.

##### 16.3.3.2

#### **Elders Quorum and Relief Society Counselors Assigned to Young Single Adults**

The elders quorum president and Relief Society president each assign a counselor to lead out in their organization's effort to care for young single adults. These counselors periodically visit with young single adults to provide encouragement and help. They provide the assigned bishopric counselor with information about young single adults based on ministering interviews and their own visits. They also report to the elders quorum president or Relief Society president. The elders quorum president and

Relief Society president may report on these efforts in ward council meeting.

#### 16.3.3.3

#### Young Single Adult Leaders

In a ward with a sufficient number of young single adults, the bishopric may call a young single adult brother and a young single adult sister to serve as young single adult leaders. These leaders report to a counselor in the bishopric. They also serve on the ward young single adult committee if one is formed. They meet with the elders quorum presidency or Relief Society presidency regularly to ensure that assignments to serve as ministering brothers and sisters help meet the needs of young single adults. They may be assigned to serve on the stake young single adult committee.

#### 16.3.3.4

#### Young Single Adult Advisers

The bishopric may call a worthy married couple as ward young single adult advisers. These advisers report to a counselor in the bishopric. They serve on the ward young single adult committee if one is formed. They may also be assigned to serve on the stake young single adult committee. They help young single adults have opportunities to gather for friendship, service, and gospel learning.

#### 16.3.4

#### Ward Young Single Adult Committee

In a ward with a significant number of young single adults, the stake president and bishop may feel that a ward young single adult committee is needed. A counselor in the bishopric presides over the committee. Other committee members include the elders quorum and Relief Society counselors assigned to young single adults, the young single adult leaders, and the couple called to serve as young single adult advisers.

This committee meets as needed. Committee members discuss ways to help young single adults participate in service, leadership, gospel learning, and social activities. They also find and fellowship less-active young single adults.

#### 16.3.5

#### Meetings, Classes, and Activities (Stake and Ward)

Young single adults should be offered a variety of gospel learning, service, cultural, and social activities that can take place at the ward, stake, or multistake level. These activities may include temple visits, priesthood or temple preparation seminars, missionary work, community service, choirs, cultural events, dances, and sports.

Supported by the stake young single adult committee and by ward leaders, the stake presidency establishes meetings, classes, and activities that will best meet the needs of young single adult members. They also determine whether activities should take place at the ward level, the stake level, or some combination of both.

Young single adult activities should comply with the policies and guidelines in chapter 13. Participation in these activities is limited to young single adult members, assigned Church officers, and young single adult nonmembers who are willing to abide by Church standards. A person who is separated from his or her spouse or is seeking a divorce may not participate until the divorce decree has become final according to law.

In planning young single adult activities, ward and stake leaders may consider the following options.

#### 16.3.5.1

#### Finding and Inviting

Because many young single adults change residence frequently, the stake may periodically organize activities designed to find and fellowship young single

adults in the stake. These activities may be done in connection with efforts of neighboring stakes. Active young single adults are the most valuable resource in such efforts, guided by ward and stake young single adult committees. Institute personnel may also assist at times.

#### 16.3.5.2

### Young Single Adult Service Committees

Young single adults should frequently be called to serve together on service committees. These committees report to a ward or stake leader assigned by the bishopric or by the ward or stake young single adult committee. Local leaders determine the nature of the committees' service. The service often focuses on Church programs such as welfare, family history, public affairs, missionary work, activation efforts among young single adults, or support for Church facilities or projects. This service may also focus on humanitarian needs locally or elsewhere. Service committees provide opportunities to develop friendships and meet potential marriage partners. They also teach leadership and social skills.

#### 16.3.5.3

### Home Evening and Gospel Study

Priesthood leaders may organize one or more home evening groups for young single adults who do not live with their parents and do not have children in their homes. If possible, priesthood leaders appoint a young single adult priesthood holder to lead each group. In stakes with few young single adults, stake leaders may organize home evening groups that cross ward boundaries. Home evening group leaders are accountable to assigned priesthood leaders. These groups are not referred to as families.

Informally and as organized by participants, young single adults may gather to strengthen one another through gospel study. *Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families* may be a resource for those who desire to study together.

#### 16.3.5.4

### Sunday School Classes

Wards with enough young single adults may have a separate Sunday School class for young single adults (see 12.4.2).

#### 16.3.5.5

### Weekday Gospel Study Classes

All young single adults are encouraged to enroll in institute classes (see *Handbook 1*, 11.2.2).

If institute classes are not available, local leaders may contact the Seminaries and Institutes of Religion area office for assistance. As needed, local leaders may organize other group opportunities for weekday gospel study.

#### 16.3.6

### Multistake and Area Activities

Multistake and area activities can give young single adults opportunities for social interaction, leadership, and service without leaving the ecclesiastical care of their bishops.

Area Seventies work with stake presidents to establish multistake committees to organize such activities. These Area Seventies work under the direction of the Area Presidency. Multistake committees should include young single adult leaders.

Multistake committees should plan activities that are varied, simple, and inexpensive and that allow for ample social interaction. These committees coordinate with young single adult wards and institutes of religion to achieve an appropriate balance of activities and to avoid duplication and scheduling conflicts.

For additional guidelines on organizing these activities, see 13.3.1.

**16.3.7****Funding for Activities**

Normally, funding for young single adult activities comes from the stake or ward budget. When multistake or area activities are held, the responsible priesthood leader ensures a fair allocation of funding among the stakes.

Funding for activities should be consistent with the policies in 13.2.8. As an exception, when large multistake or area events are held, young single adults may occasionally be asked to pay some costs themselves. However, leaders should ensure that all young single adults have the opportunity to participate without incurring unreasonable personal costs.

**16.4****Young Single Adult Wards**

Where local circumstances and the number of young single adult members make it desirable, priesthood leaders may recommend the creation of a young single adult ward according to the guidelines in *Handbook 1*, 9.1.6.

Eligible members may, in consultation with their parents, choose to be members of the young single adult ward or to remain in their conventional ward. The stake president may authorize the young single adult ward to find and fellowship other young single adult members of the stake who are less active. Those who become active may then choose to belong to the young single adult ward or to their conventional ward.

With approval from the stake president, the bishop of a young single adult ward may organize a second Relief Society for young single adult women and a second elders quorum for young single adult men to provide additional opportunities for young single adults to serve and associate with each other.

Membership in a young single adult ward is temporary. Leaders help young single adults prepare to

return to a conventional ward when they marry or reach age 31. This transition should provide sufficient time and communication to help the bishop of the conventional ward plan for a calling that helps each transitioning young single adult feel welcome and needed.

**16.5****Young Single Adult Stakes**

Priesthood leaders may recommend the creation of a young single adult stake according to the guidelines in *Handbook 1*, 9.1.7. That section also provides guidelines for membership and leadership in these stakes.

**16.6****Guidelines and Policies for Young Single Adult Wards and Stakes****16.6.1****Church Programs**

Young single adult wards use the regular program of the Church as much as possible. Stake presidents and bishops of young single adult stakes and wards follow the principles and instructions in this handbook and in *Handbook 1*. This includes instructions for welfare assistance, finances, and budget.

**16.6.2****Cooperation When Members Are Called to Serve in Young Single Adult Units**

Officers of conventional stakes and wards should cooperate fully when their members are requested by authorized priesthood leaders to serve as leaders in young single adult stakes and wards. However, these stake and ward officers should consult with the authorized priesthood leaders if they feel that a member's current Church responsibilities or family

circumstances would make such a calling unwise or inappropriate.

### 16.6.3

#### Home Evening and Gospel Study

The bishopric of a young single adult ward may organize home evening groups as outlined in 16.3.5.

Informally and as organized by participants, young single adults may gather to strengthen one another through gospel study. *Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families* may be a resource for those who desire to study together.

### 16.6.4

#### Ministering

In a young single adult ward, each brother is assigned ministering brothers. Each sister is assigned ministering sisters and ministering brothers.

### 16.6.5

#### Membership Records of Leaders

The membership records of young single adult ward bishopric members and their families normally remain in their home wards. The same is true for those who serve in the stake presidency, on the high council, or in the stake Relief Society presidency of a young single adult stake. These leaders and their families pay tithing and offerings through their home wards. They also go to their home ward and stake leaders to be interviewed for temple recommends.

### 16.6.6

#### Membership Records of Young Single Adults

The membership records of young single adults should be in the wards where they are members. Leaders and clerks take special care to keep records

current. To avoid delays and to avoid losing track of records or people, clerks may also keep an unofficial record for young single adults who move frequently.

### 16.6.7

#### Missionary Recommendations

For information about missionary recommendations, stake presidents and bishops may refer to *Handbook 1*, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, and 4.7.

### 16.6.8

#### Priesthood Ordinations

See 20.7.

### 16.6.9

#### School Breaks

If possible, young single adult wards should continue to function during school breaks. A young single adult ward that has few members during school breaks may meet with an adjacent young single adult ward. In such a circumstance, the wards keep separate records, reports of attendance, and finances.

### 16.6.10

#### Temple Recommends

In most cases, the stake president interviews members who are receiving their own endowment and members who are planning to be married in a temple. As an exception, in a young single adult stake, the stake president may authorize his counselors to interview those who are receiving their own endowment or being married in a temple.

### 16.6.11

#### Tenure of Service

Normally, brethren who are called to serve in the stake presidency, on the high council, or in the

bishopric of a young single adult stake or ward serve no more than three to five years in callings that keep them away from their home wards. This limitation includes cumulative service in different callings.

#### **16.6.12**

### **Young Single Parents**

Young single parents who have children at home normally remain in their conventional ward so the children will have the benefit of Primary and youth programs. However, the parents may attend the activities of the young single adult ward.

#### **16.7**

### Use of Senior Couple Missionaries with Young Single Adults

When needed, missionary couples (local Church-service missionaries or full-time missionaries) may be called to assist in retention and rescue efforts. They encourage service, build institute enrollment, assist with social activities, and mentor young single adults during this important stage of their lives.

Information on missionary opportunities for couples can be found on the Internet at [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org). For information about Church-service missionary opportunities, see [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/csm](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org/csm). (See *Handbook 1*, 4.11.1 and 4.12.1.)