

ALL WHO HAVE A Desire to Serve

More than ever before, every worthy young man and young woman who desires to serve the Lord as a missionary can do so.

By Sally Palmer

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When young men or young women have a desire to serve a mission, are worthy to serve a mission, but are unable to serve a proselyting mission, it can be a great challenge for them. How can they fulfill their desire to serve? And how can we help them? Recent changes to Church programs can make a big difference for young people—and for the Lord’s work.

Under the direction of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, the recommendation and application process for missionary candidates has changed to allow young people to serve where they can best use their talents and capabilities in the great work of teaching and blessing God’s children. Now, truly, “if ye have desires to serve God ye are called to the work” (Doctrine and Covenants 4:3).

These changes are rolling out in the United States and Canada.

Previously, if a young person was unable to serve a full-time mission because of physical, mental, or





How Missionaries Are Called



Interview with bishop	
Complete application in online Missionary Recommendation System	
Interview with stake president	
Recommendation by stake president to Church headquarters	
Review at Church headquarters	
Assignment by member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles	
PROSELYTING MISSION	SERVICE MISSION
Call letter from President of the Church	Call letter from President of the Church
Proselyting missionary call packet and materials	Service missionary assignment packet and materials
Speak in sacrament meeting	Speak in sacrament meeting
Set apart by stake president	Set apart by stake president



Details on Service Missionaries

Where do they live? At home.

Where do they serve? At approved nonprofit community organizations, Church operations, or in stake service assignments.

How long do they serve? From 6 to 24 months, working as close to full-time as they are able.

Who can serve a service mission? Worthy young men ages 18–25 or young women ages 19–25 who have a desire to serve the Lord and are unable to serve a proselyting mission. A worthy young man who is unable to serve a proselyting mission does not have a priesthood duty to serve a service mission.

Can a young person choose to serve either a proselyting mission or a service mission? No. A young person simply applies for missionary service. Under divine inspiration and with the information provided in the application, an Apostle

of the Lord determines the type of mission a person will serve. All applicants are considered first for proselyting missions.

Do they have financial obligations? The missionaries and their families are responsible for expenses related to their service, including transportation, food, clothing, medical care, and insurance.



emotional challenges, he or she was honorably excused from missionary service. Though some may still be honorably excused from service, the Church now offers a way for many more worthy young men age 18–25 or young women age 19–25 to use their abilities in the Lord’s service.

Called and Assigned

Young people who desire to serve the Lord will:

- Go through the same application process.
- Be assigned by a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to a particular mission and type of labor (proselyting away from home or service while living at home).
- Receive a mission call from the Lord’s prophet.

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, “An assignment to labor in a specific place is essential and important but secondary to a call to the work” (“Called to the Work,” *Ensign*, May 2017, 68). All missionaries are called to represent the Savior, whether through proselyting or service. As the Apostle Paul taught, “He that planteth and he that watereth are one: . . . for we are labourers together with God” (1 Corinthians 3:8–9). Similarly, President Russell M. Nelson has said: “Through a lifetime of service in this Church, I have learned that it really doesn’t matter *where* one serves. What the Lord cares about is *how* one serves” (“Ministering with the Power and Authority of God,” *Ensign*, May 2018, 68).

Proclaiming the Gospel and Serving

The Church’s missionary program strives to follow Jesus Christ’s command to “go . . . into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). This is why missionaries’ teaching of the gospel is so important. For those unable to fulfill a proselyting mission, service is also a vital part of this labor.

Proselyting missionaries spend up to 10 hours a week performing service. Service missionaries dedicate all of their time to service, building goodwill for the Church and representing God and helping His children feel His love.

With the help of local service mission leaders and priesthood leaders, each service missionary receives an assignment customized to their



Service Mission Experiences

Leadership

- Stake president
- Service mission leaders
- Managers or other supervisors

Daily Activities

- Study and preparation
- Service

Other Regular Activities

- Devotionals
- Conferences
- Temple visits
- Other unifying activities with service missionaries



abilities and preferences. They may serve in:

- Approved community charitable organizations such as refugee services, food banks, animal shelters, and museums.
- Church-owned operations, such as Deseret Industries, bishops' storehouses, family history centers, and seminaries.
- Stake-assigned compassionate service assignments, such as visiting hospitals, engaging in temple work, and assisting the elderly.

Service changes lives and can also lead to conversions. Like all Church members, service missionaries are encouraged to always share the gospel of Jesus Christ through their examples of goodness and Christlike service. For example, Sister Jessica Ager, serving at Deseret Mill and Pasta in Kaysville, Utah, helps to clean the facility and to package and box flour, rice, and pasta for bishops' storehouses. She loves to work around people and is not afraid to answer questions about the Church. Volunteers fulfilling community-service assignments at the mill have been touched by Sister Ager's service and friendship. She has referred a number of these volunteers to the proselyting missionaries, who taught them the gospel.

Richard Bramwell, a service mission leader, says: "The Light of Christ shines through these young men and women. By their actions, they touch people's hearts. They give people hope and encouragement, and they make a difference by their very goodness that just radiates from who they are."

Service missionaries at community charitable organizations leave a very favorable impression. Nadine Topozada, director of refugee services at Catholic Charities in San Diego, California, says: "We have used volunteers for many, many years. Service missionaries are different; they have a quality that is hard to put in words. The foundation for their service is their faith and their calling, and that is a quality you can't put on a scale of 1 to 10—it far exceeds the 10."

New Assignment, Same Calling

Occasionally, someone initially called to a proselyting mission may, for health reasons, be unable to complete their proselyting mission. In such cases, they may be reassigned as a service missionary. They are not released as missionaries, merely reassigned.





Those reassigned as service missionaries from proselyting missions continue serving and contributing to the Lord's work. One such missionary, Elder Julian Arellano, now working with the elderly in a residential facility, says: "Knowing I was coming home, I felt like I failed the Lord. But after being reassigned as a service missionary, I knew He still needed my help. It was a really good feeling to know that. Being able to serve is a wonderful thing. It's drawn me closer to the Lord."

Another reassigned missionary, Elder Gavin Zierden, agrees. "A service mission gave me the opportunity to continue to serve the Lord and help people. I was still a missionary."

The Blessings of Service

Through their service, all missionaries receive bountiful blessings from the Lord. For example, for six months Elder Christian Fugal's assignment at the Deseret Dairy in Salt Lake City involved packaging cheese and doing quality control on the powder line. But then the dairy staff and senior missionaries, who loved Elder Fugal, noticed that he was especially good at assembling and repairing equipment. They moved him to the maintenance team, where he began troubleshooting, tearing down and rebuilding machinery, and increasing his welding skills. Elder Fugal became known as "Welder Fugal," with all bottled milk at the dairy going through one of his welds.

Elder Fugal's service mission experiences included speaking at meetings, companion study, and holding leadership positions. These duties helped Elder Fugal, who has struggled with the challenges of autism since birth, to further his communication and relationship skills.

After his mission, the skills Elder Fugal acquired on his mission helped earn him a university scholarship and employment opportunities. Currently he is employed, driving his own car, serving in his ward and in the temple, and interacting well with family and friends. His father says, "We are so grateful that the Lord provided this miraculous, successful mission experience where he could lose his life in the Lord's service and find his own in return."

Like those serving proselyting missions, service missionaries find joy by participating in the Savior's great work. Elder Stephen Balik, who works at Habitat for Humanity, says: "Every time I help, it always brings a smile to my face. Just go out and serve; then that joy will come to you. And you'll find out what it's like to constantly serve, to constantly be happy."

Sister Kahla Oteo, who serves as a guide in a state park, sums up what any mission is all about: "We put on a name tag and a smile, and we do what we can. We go out and we love first. And that's what the Savior did." ■

MORE ON SERVICE MISSIONS

For more on service missions, go to www.lds.org/service-missionary.