

Home, Family, and Personal Enrichment

around the World



Left: Relief Society sisters in the San Miguel de Allende Ward, Celaya Mexico Stake, perform a cultural dance they learned at a home, family, and personal enrichment activity. Right: As part of an enrichment meeting and activity in the Mont St. Hilaire Ward, Longueuil Québec Stake, sisters learn how to grow sprouts—a healthy addition to their diet.



Left: Out of a desire to build self-reliance, Relief Society leaders in a Salt Lake City, Utah, singles ward asked the elders quorum to teach sisters how to change a flat tire and check the oil in their automobiles.



Left: Sister Adelma M. Linhares sews for a service project in her São Paulo, Brazil, ward. This enrichment activity benefited public hospitals in the area.

LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH BY JUAN CARLOS SANTOYO; TOP RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPH BY LAURENT LUCIUX; ABOVE: PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTINA SMITH; RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPH BY ANA CLAUDIA OLIVEIRA; BACKGROUND © DYNAMIC GRAPHICS, INC.

BY CONNIE D. CANNON
Relief Society General Board

A place “where hearts and hands are joined together in a safe, relaxed, and enjoyable environment” is how Bonnie D. Parkin, Relief Society general president, describes home, family, and personal enrichment meeting. It is a place where women of all ages can strengthen their faith in Jesus Christ and learn parenting and homemaking skills. It is a time when sisters can socialize, learn, and be uplifted.

Since January 2006, when the new guidelines for home, family, and personal enrichment went into effect, Relief Society sisters around the world have caught the vision of what this program can be.

Enrichment Meetings

Instead of monthly meetings, ward home, family, and personal enrichment meetings for all sisters are held

four times a year. One of these four meetings commemorates the March 17, 1842, organization of the Relief Society. In addition to ward or branch meetings, the stake or district Relief Society holds one or two enrichment meetings each year. One of these enrichment meetings is held in conjunction with the annual broadcast of the general Relief Society meeting in September.

Enrichment Activities

The ward or branch Relief Society also offers activities for groups of sisters with similar interests. In doing so, Relief Society leaders respond to the needs and wants of the sisters to determine what activities to offer.

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Meetings

In quarterly enrichment meetings, Relief Society sisters can “feel a sense of belonging as they participate in activities that build spiritual strength, develop personal skills, strengthen home and family, and exercise charity through service,” says Sister Parkin. “In these meetings bonds of sisterhood are strengthened, new and less-active members are fellowshipped, and missionary opportunities abound.”

Following are examples of what stakes and wards have done for their home, family, and personal enrichment meetings.

One ward celebrated the founding of Relief Society with a program they called “Sisterhood, a Tapestry of Love.” It was based on the talk given by President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, at the general Relief Society meeting in September 2002.¹ After dinner, eight sisters shared their experiences and thoughts on what Relief Society meant to them as a place for learning, making eternal friendships, enjoying sisterhood, and offering service.

One stake enrichment meeting focused on building faith in Jesus Christ with a sharing of testimonies. Stephanie Wilkey, stake Relief Society president, writes: “We had felt inspired to have a home, family, and personal enrichment meeting based on one of the principles of charity: kindness. It took every bit of faith we had to follow the promptings we had received as a presidency to carry through with this idea. My counselors assured me that the sisters would come and that they would stand and speak to us of the things of the heart. Oh, did they

come! Close to 350 sisters poured into the chapel on a windy, rainy evening. They stood and poured their hearts out to each other in magnificent testimonies of applying the principle of kindness in their lives. As the sisters left the building an hour and a half later, they expressed with words and tears that they had felt the love of the Lord and were so very grateful they had come.”

In another stake, Relief Society president Mickie Neslen realized that financial security helps strengthen families. She and the stake presidency prepared a stake home, family, and personal enrichment meeting that traveled from ward to ward. It began with a spiritual lesson on finances. Afterward, the sisters were invited to visit five different stations with 15-minute presentations by knowledgeable sisters:

1. “Budgeting” featured various ways to keep track of and manage money with notebooks, envelopes, or software.
2. “Money-Saving Tips” consisted of simple ways to save money each day.
3. “Finances for Kids” demonstrated a variety of ways to teach finances to children, including interactive games.
4. “Preparing for the Future” reviewed information about disability insurance, assisted living, nursing care, and other retirement concerns.
5. “The Cost of Credit” pointed out the dangers of debt and how to avoid it.

These enrichment meetings helped educate and strengthen the sisters in many important ways.

NOTE

1. See “You Are All Heaven Sent,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 110.



“We need to laugh together,” says one Relief Society sister in the Juniper Ward, Lancaster California Stake. “It balances out my life just to be with the sisters at home, family, and personal enrichment meetings.”

Right: Among the Relief Society activities in the Makati Second Ward, Makati Philippines Stake, was a presentation on how to prepare virgin coconut oil.



Above: In the Parleys Sixth Ward, Salt Lake Parleys Stake, a recently returned mission president and his wife teach a weekly class using the Preach My Gospel manual. Sisters and couples who attend improve teaching skills, which helps make them better parents and missionaries.



Left: Because Elvira Garza of the San Fernando First Ward, Valle Hermoso Mexico Stake, loves home canning, she was the perfect choice to teach the process at a home, family, and personal enrichment activity.

Below: Sisters in the Jardines Ward, Mexico City Ermita Stake, study the scriptures together.



Left: Each July the Mexico City Chapultepec Stake holds classes that teach basic skills. The sisters choose one class to attend from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. each day during the week. Here sisters learn to cut hair.



Left: After a spiritual lesson in the Odessa Tsentralny Branch in Ukraine, Relief Society sisters attend a class on storing food products safely. Below: Skilled hands sew a tote bag at a home, family, and personal enrichment activity in the Votorantim Ward, Sorocaba Brazil Barcelona Stake.



Above: Relief Society sisters around the world, such as these in Brazil, learn home decorating skills.



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Activities

Ward or branch home, family, and personal enrichment activities are less structured than the quarterly meetings. They can be organized by specialists, under the direction of the presidency. At first, the concept of activities seemed challenging to some leaders. But as they have assessed the sisters' needs, counseled with priesthood leaders, and prayed for inspiration, they have come up with good ideas and developed confidence. Some successful ideas include learning do-it-yourself home repairs, marriage enrichment classes, study groups using *Preach My Gospel*, bringing lunch to shut-in sisters, and a support group for sisters with infertility challenges.

"I wondered how this new program would bring sisters together if we met in smaller groups, but I was willing to try it," writes Richelle Pearce of the Shadowbrook Ward, Kaysville Utah South Stake. "I make bread a couple of times a week, so after making the proper arrangements, the Relief Society leaders invited anyone who was interested to come to my home for an activity.

"The next Thursday five sisters showed up at my door. They were from all different stages of life: one new mother, one working mom, one senior sister, and two with large families like mine. What happened over the next two hours was a testimony to me of the inspiration of this program. The sisters not only learned how to grind wheat and make bread, but they also talked, laughed, shared ideas, and really connected. By the time they left with their bread and wheat flour, I knew this program could bring sisters together in a wonderful way."

In Nigeria, learning how to bake bread did more than teach an important skill. A sister in the Ikot Ekpene Branch, Nigeria Uyo Mission, says enrichment activities changed her life. She explains that after her baptism and confirmation she had stopped attending church. Then a Relief Society sister invited her to an enrichment activity where they learned how to make soap, a commodity difficult to come by in the distant village where she lived. At another activity she learned to bake high-quality bread, which was not available close to her home. Her enthusiasm has continued as sisters gather regularly to bake bread for their homes and for the sacrament on Sundays.

In Mexico, interested sisters learned some methods for cutting hair. For many, learning this money-saving skill helped their families financially.

In one singles ward, Relief Society leaders asked the elders quorum to teach the Relief Society sisters how to change a flat tire and check the oil in their automobiles. This not only helped build self-reliance among the sisters, but it also provided an opportunity for these young single members to socialize with each other.

How, then, are the new guidelines for home, family, and personal enrichment being received by Relief Society sisters? They are being welcomed in many areas with faith, enthusiasm, and creativity. As time goes on, this inspired program will continue to grow and bless the lives of even more Relief Society sisters of all ages around the world. ■