

UBON WARD CAN DO IT!

Our ward members were rarely all together—even at church. What could we do to bring everyone together?

By Akanit Sapprasert

A lot of members here in Thailand have difficulty coming to church because of required school meetings, bad weather (most of our members travel by motorbike), and distance. The members in my ward, the Ubon Ward, face all of these challenges and more, which makes attending church difficult.

One Sunday, I was wondering how we could help the members recognize the blessings of exercising the faith to worship together more often. The idea came to me, “What if we picked a Sunday to focus on getting every member to church that day?” If we were able to get everyone to come on the same day, it would allow members to really see and feel the strength of the ward.

Other leaders and members in the ward liked the idea and became involved in planning for it. We decided on a date, June 17, 2018—the Sunday closest to the anniversary of when the Ubon Thailand Stake was founded—and started sending messages about it through social media. We named the event “Let’s Come to Church on the Same Sunday! 200 Sacrament Meeting Attendance—Ubon Ward Can Do It.”

Practically the whole ward was involved in encouraging each other to come. Everybody kept sending messages persuading others to join the event. Members also invited returning members and friends who weren’t members. And so many people said yes!

We realized that this was more than just a fun event to see how many people could come. We wanted it to be an especially spiritual

experience to help motivate members to make attending sacrament meeting a priority. So in the months leading up to the event, the bishopric encouraged people to avoid any activities that might minimize the importance of the sacrament or the worship of the Lord.

We even made bookmarks to help people remember the event and the Spirit that we knew would be there because of everyone’s efforts to attend. The bookmark had the name of the event and also a scripture: “I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High” (Psalm 82:6). We chose this scripture because we wanted everyone to realize that they are children of God and have the potential to be like Him.

Members planned for a long time to all be able to attend on the set day. Finally, the day came. But so did obstacles. It rained heavily the evening before and continued raining all through the night. Another obstacle for some members was that an important school meeting was happening at the same time as church.

We asked everybody to pray for these obstacles to be removed or overcome. At about 7:00 a.m. Sunday morning, the rain stopped. And when we arrived at church, we found those families who needed to go to the school meeting. When we asked them about their other meeting, they said, “We have to come to sacrament meeting first.” It was a great testimony to me of the importance of the Lord’s sacrament.

Members brought a lot of friends and neighbors to the meeting. One sister in the ward brought eight friends who had never been to church before! As more and more people arrived, we needed to open the overflow room. The count of the sacrament attendance was 215 people! All through the

meeting, I could feel that the Holy Ghost was with us and that God helped us to be successful in this endeavor.

After this amazing Sunday, the number of people who regularly attend sacrament meeting increased. This included three Melchizedek Priesthood holders who began attending church regularly with their families. One family even had two of their children baptized and confirmed the following month.

Our stake leaders saw what a good experience this was for our ward and decided to hold a similar event. For the stake event, the members in the stake each made a commitment to attend their own wards on the same Sunday. The event also had great success throughout the stake—I know that one ward in our stake had 208 people attend! I am so grateful for the blessings that I and my ward and my stake have received because of these events and for the Spirit we felt preparing for and participating in them. ■

The author lives in Isan, Thailand.



Weather, distance, and school schedules prevent many Thai members from attending church, so the Ubon Ward decided to set a date and encourage as many people as possible to attend.