

New Relief Society Guidelines

Blessing Members

Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president, announced new guidelines for Relief Society meetings six months ago at the general Relief Society meeting, and the results are blessing the lives of sisters around the world.

The reception of the new guidelines has been generally warm, said Sister Beck, pointing out that members worldwide can now design meetings according to their individual needs, allowing more flexibility in a church that isn't confined to one culture or locale.

"This has been a very positive step for a global organization," Sister Beck said. "We love the sisters, we trust the sisters, and we know that if they make this a matter of faith and obedience, they won't have any problem with it."

Sister Beck's address, entitled "Relief Society: A Sacred Work" (*Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 110) should serve as the official policy regarding meetings, and Relief Society leaders with questions about the policies should counsel with their priesthood leaders.

General Changes

It was affirmed that Relief Society counselors should follow the pattern of the priesthood and be called the first or second counselor. The calling previously known as the home, family, and personal enrichment leader should be called the Relief Society meeting coordinator. The sister in this calling should continue to arrange Relief Society meetings held on weekdays under the direction of the presidency.

Relief Society Meeting Guidelines

In her address, Sister Beck told how the meetings formerly called "home, family and personal

enrichment" would now simply be called Relief Society meetings.

Sister Beck described how the ward Relief Society president should oversee all Relief Society meetings and counsel with the bishop or branch president, who approves all meeting plans.

The Relief Society president should oversee the meetings, but may ask the first or second

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counselor—or recommend a sister in the ward or branch be called—to be coordinator of the meetings. At least one member of the presidency should be present at all meetings.

Meetings generally should be held monthly, but at least quarterly, at a time other than Sunday or Monday evening. The bishop or branch president and the Relief Society president determine the frequency of the meetings, and sisters should not be made to feel it is mandatory to attend all these meetings.

When planning meetings, the Relief Society presidency should consider such issues as time commitment, cost, safety, and travel distance.

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to the spiritual and temporal needs of individuals and families.

In planning meetings the Relief Society presidency should give priority to topics that fulfill Relief Society purposes; meetings can focus on one topic or be divided into more than one class

or activity. Teachers should generally be members of the ward or stake.

“Using Relief Society meetings appropriately will increase the ability of the Relief Society to work in powerful ways with priesthood leaders in every ward,” Sister Beck said. ■