

BEFORE YOU ARE

CALLED



TO SERVE

What is it like to serve a mission?

By Ryan Carr
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Have you thought about serving a mission? If so, you've probably wondered what it's like. Here's your chance to ask some full-time missionaries (not real missionaries, but these answers are typical):

YOU: "Hi, elders. What is a typical day like?"

FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES: "We're up early—at 6:30 a.m. For the next couple of hours, we study the gospel and our mission language. We review our goals for the week and plan our day. We even think of backup plans if people aren't available for their appointments with us. Then we're out the door, and we work all day, finding people to teach, coordinating the work with members, and having teaching appointments."

YOU: "Have you ever felt homesick?"

FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES: "Yes, especially at the start of our missions. But we can email our families and read emails from them once a week. We've found that the best way to get over homesickness is to focus on our work."

YOU: "How do you feel about talking with strangers?"

FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES: "We were really nervous about that when we

first got here, but the Lord blesses us to get used to it because we do it every day. We know that not everyone wants to hear our message, but some are interested, so we have to be willing to speak up anytime. It actually becomes fun to meet people and get to know them."

YOU: "Is it hard to teach the gospel?"

FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES: "Yes, doing it well takes some practice, but we had good training in the missionary training center. We are trying to teach the lessons in a way that meets the needs and answers the questions of the people we're teaching. We study the gospel every day so we can teach it well. Most importantly, we feel guided by the Spirit. Being set apart as missionaries helps."

YOU: "Is a mission hard work?"

FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES: "Yes, we work about 70 hours a week, but it's so fulfilling. Of course we feel disappointed when people don't progress,

but overall, it's a blessing to be instruments in the Lord's hands to help people progress spiritually. We try to teach by the power of the Holy Ghost because we know that only the Spirit can help people gain testimonies and become converted."

YOU: "What if I'm not sure I have a testimony?"

FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES: "That's OK—keep praying and reading the scriptures! Go to church and seminary. Go to the temple if you can. Rely on the Lord and His teachings. The more chances you have to feel the Spirit, the stronger your testimony will become. Practice sharing your beliefs in family home evening. Read the Book of

Mormon. It will help you be able to teach the gospel."

YOU: "How did you prepare for your missions?"

FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES: "We studied the scriptures, especially the Book of Mormon. We got jobs and saved our money. But we wish we would have read *Preach My Gospel* and attended mission-preparation classes more often. We also wish we would have learned how to cook!"

YOU: "Do you think I could ever become a missionary?"

FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES: "Definitely! There are about 70,000 missionaries around the world. And

it all starts with desire: 'If ye have desires to serve God ye are called to the work' (D&C 4:3). But it will also take some preparation—you have to get ready not just spiritually but also financially, physically, emotionally, and socially."

YOU: "What else will help me prepare?"

FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES: "Make it a goal to live the gospel and keep the commandments the best you can. This will help strengthen your testimony and help you be worthy of the Spirit. When you're a missionary, you'll want to testify to people *from personal experience* that the gospel is true. So take the time now to learn more about gospel principles and live those principles in your own life."

FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES: "We would also recommend that you read the questions on the following pages. They're the ones that your bishop or branch president will ask you as you fill out your missionary forms. Discuss these questions with your parents and Church leaders. There are a lot of questions, but don't get overwhelmed—it's not like you have to report to the missionary training center tomorrow! Take the time you need to get ready so that when your first day on the mission arrives, you'll be worthy, excited, and ready to serve." ■

The author served as a full-time missionary in the Canada Montreal Mission.

