

Ministering Principles

MINISTERING THROUGH CHURCH ACTIVITIES





One way we can minister to our fellow ward members, neighbors, and friends is through Church activities. Whether you plan an activity around the needs or interests of someone you minister to or you invite them to participate in activities or service opportunities for others, activities on a ward, stake, or even multistake level can provide meaningful and entertaining ways to foster unity and strengthen members.

Church activities can also open the door to many opportunities to minister. For example, Church activities can provide opportunities to participate in service projects that bless others and build positive relationships in the community. Church activities can also be a chance to reach out to less-active members of the Church and to friends of other faiths or friends with no religious affiliation.

Including many people in Church activities creates an opportunity for the Lord to bless and strengthen our wards and branches, our neighborhoods, and our communities.

Building Positive Relationships

Winter was coming, and David Dickson had no idea how to keep his family warm.

David, his wife, and two daughters had just moved to the rural city of Fredonia, Arizona, USA, a high-desert landscape surrounded by majestic red cliffs, sagebrush, and evergreens.

The home the Dicksons had rented relied on a wood-burning stove as its primary heat source. David quickly learned that gathering firewood was a necessary skill because winters in Fredonia are full of snow and ice.

“I didn’t have any firewood or a chainsaw or even the knowledge of how to use one!” David says. “I didn’t know what I was going to do.”

Some ward members asked David if his family had enough wood to get through the winter. “It didn’t take them long to realize that I didn’t,” David says. “The elders quorum soon offered to help me gather wood. Overwhelmed with gratitude, I accepted their offer.”

David soon found out that this wood-gathering trip was typical of many well-planned, well-organized, and well-attended ward activities. One Saturday morning, David, the elders quorum, and other ward members headed into the mountains in a caravan of trucks and trailers.

“In a single afternoon, thanks to their tools and know-how, ward members provided my family with a woodpile that lasted us the better part of two winters,” David says. “Even more important, I was taught everything I needed to know about gathering wood on my own. By the time I left Fredonia, I knew how to handle a chainsaw, and I helped out on more ward wood-gathering activities than I can count.”

Such ward activities not only built positive relationships among members of the Church but also built positive relationships with everyone in the community.

“I remember one woman, not a member of the Church, who was new to the area,” David says. “She had been reduced to burning wood paneling from her home to keep warm. Once we learned about her plight, we made sure she had enough firewood to get through the winter. She was so thankful she could barely speak.”

Ministering efforts in Fredonia ensured that everyone stayed safe and warm through the winter.





Reaching Out to Others

While serving a mission in Romania, Meg Yost and her companion regularly visited a family who hadn't attended church in a long time. "The Stanicas were among the earliest members of the Church in Romania," Meg says, "and we loved them."

When it came time to plan and organize a branch activity, leaders decided that the branch would have a "Pioneer Night." This would be an evening to celebrate the courageous pioneers who crossed the United States to get to the Salt Lake Valley. It would also be an opportunity to honor the pioneers of the Church in Romania.

"We thought it would be a great way for some of the members to bear testimony of their conversion and how they have seen the Church grow in Romania," Meg says. "We immediately thought that the Stanica family should be involved. We invited them to participate, and they were excited!"

On the night of the activity, the Stanicas still hadn't arrived when it was time to start.

"We were worried that they wouldn't come," Meg recalls. "But just in time, they walked through the door. The Stanicas bore a beautiful testimony of the gospel and the Church. They also got to socialize with other members whom they hadn't seen in a long time."

The members of the branch opened their arms and welcomed the Stanicas. The next Sunday, Meg was pleasantly surprised to see Sister Stanica at church.

"When I visited the branch a few months later, she was still coming!" Meg says. "I think the chance to bear her testimony and to feel involved and needed in the branch really helped her."

4 Ideas for Ministering through Church Activities

- **Plan activities that meet needs:** Activities are a great way to meet many different needs. They may be planned to meet the specific needs of an individual or group. They should also meet the needs of those who participate, whether that need is to get to know each other better, learn more about the gospel, or feel the Spirit.
- **Invite everybody:** As you plan activities, make a special effort to invite those who would benefit from participating. Keep in mind new members, less-active members, youth, single adults, people with disabilities, and people of other faiths. Extend the invitation with their best interests in mind, and express how you would love to have them come.
- **Encourage participation:** Those you invite will get a lot more out of the activities if they have the opportunity to participate. One way to encourage participation is to have individuals use their gifts, skills, and talents during the activity.
- **Welcome everyone:** If your friends attend an activity, do all you can to make them feel welcome. Likewise, if you see people you don't know, be friendly and welcome them too! ■

DISCOVER MORE

On ChurchofJesusChrist.org, you can watch the video "Inviting Others to 'Come and Help'" to see how easy it can be to invite others to serve with us.





OPEN YOUR HEART

"We should always be attentive and look for new faces when attending Church activities and meetings. . . . We can do simple things to help these new

friends feel embraced and welcome . . . , such as giving a warm greeting, smiling sincerely at them, . . . introducing them to other members, and so forth. As we open our hearts to our new friends . . . , we are acting in the spirit of ministering."

Elder Ulisses Soares of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "One in Christ," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 38.

MINISTER BY INVITING

Check for upcoming ward or branch activities. Think of those you minister to and consider inviting them to activities.



SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES

Send us your experiences of ministering to others or being ministered to. Go to liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org and click "Submit an Article or Feedback."