

150TH

Anniversary

of the YOUNG WOMEN ORGANIZATION

By Sister Bonnie H. Cordon
Young Women General President

As I think of all the marvelous things our Heavenly Father has done for His children, my heart is filled with absolute amazement and gratitude at how much the Lord loves His daughters. He loves YOU!

And because He loves you, 150 years ago He inspired Church leaders to create the Young Women organization to help you become the person God wants you to become. The prophet Brigham Young (1801–77) encouraged us to strengthen our testimonies by living the gospel: “There is a need for the young daughters of Israel to get a living testimony of the truth. . . . I wish our girls to obtain a knowledge of the gospel for themselves.”¹ He also said, “More testimonies

are obtained on the feet than on the knees.”²

The Young Women organization has adapted through the years to meet the needs of the time. But even as the program adapted, its objective for the young women has not changed—to help you gain a living testimony and, with faith, move forward on the covenant path. As you come to know who you are and act in faith, you will receive the blessings Heavenly Father has in store for you.

Young Women Classes *through the Years*

When Young Women first began, it was called a “Retrenchment Association” with the goal to “improve in everything

that is good and beautiful.” By the early 1900s, it became the Young Ladies’ Mutual Improvement Association, and classes soon included young women ages 12 to 24. The names of classes changed over the years and included Camp Fire Girls, Beehives, Guardians, and Gleaners. As the Church grew and young women met in other countries and languages, they did their best to adapt, with names like Mia Maid becoming “Rosenmädchen” (Rose Girls) in German, for example.

Today, with young women in almost every country, classes are organized according to the needs of each ward or branch, and all are known by the unifying name of Young Women.



Heavenly Father has a great work for you to perform
in preparation for the Second Coming of our Savior.

Requirements for the Young Women programs have also changed over the years. At right are a few of them.

The Children and Youth Program

As you look at these requirements through spiritual eyes, you will notice that they have a common thread. The past and the present come together, unified in helping young women draw closer to Jesus Christ and develop spiritually, intellectually, socially, and physically.

In 2019, a new personal development program was introduced that invites you to be both self-reliant and Savior-reliant. You are invited to seek the Holy Ghost and set your own goals as you strive to become more like our Savior, Jesus Christ! I love the trust this shows in you, the remarkable young women of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

With the support of your bishopric and Young Women presidencies, you are also led by class presidencies—your peers who are called and set apart to plan and implement the Young Women program. There are over half a million young women around the world today being led by their peers!

All young women are unified by a theme, which includes these foundational principles: you are a beloved daughter of heavenly parents; you are a covenant disciple of Jesus Christ; you seek and act upon personal revelation that comes through the Holy Ghost; and you are a shining witness of God as you strive to become like our Savior, Jesus Christ, and minister to others in His Holy name.



You Are Loved and Needed!

As beloved daughters of a living and loving Heavenly Father, you have been uniquely prepared to be “saviors on Mount Zion.”³ As President Russell M. Nelson has said: “Every prophet has talked about *our* day, when Israel would be gathered and the world would be prepared for the Second Coming of the Savior. Think of it! Of all the people who have ever lived on planet earth, *we* are the ones who get to participate in this final, great gathering event.”⁴

This is a sacred invitation to participate in temple and family history work, serve in leadership positions, minister to your fellow sisters, and share your testimony with your family and friends. You are loved, and you are needed!

My dear friends, Heavenly Father has a great work for you to perform in preparation for the Second Coming of our Savior Jesus Christ! You are a vital part of that work. He loves you; He wants you to take part in His work; He trusts you!

I add my faith and trust in you to that of our dear prophet, President Nelson, who declared: “You are among the best the Lord has *ever* sent to this world. You have the capacity to be smarter and wiser and have more impact on the world than any previous generation!”⁵

I pray that you will let the words of the Young Women theme sink deep into your heart and jump into the new program with both feet, embracing every opportunity to draw closer to the Savior and learn more of Him. Become the person He wants you to be. I know that as you do this, your life will be filled with opportunities to share His light and His love

with your families, friends, and everyone around you. As you strive to follow Him, your testimony will become firm and unshakable. **NE**

NOTES

1. Brigham Young, in *A Century of Sisterhood: Chronological Collage, 1869–1969* (1969), 8.
2. Brigham Young, in Susa Young Gates, *History of the Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Association of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from November 1869 to June 1910* (1911), 9.
3. Quentin L. Cook, Apr. 2014 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 48).
4. Russell M. Nelson, “Hope of Israel” (worldwide devotional for youth, June 3, 2018), 8, HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
5. Russell M. Nelson, “Hope of Israel,” 16–17.



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Lord has ever sent to this world.