

MTC

INSIDE THE

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A missionary training center is the first stop for most missionaries. Here's what to expect at the biggest one of all in Provo, Utah.

“Dear Mom, here’s a picture of my MTC district” (above right).

In the MTC bookstore, missionaries can get just about anything they’ll need—from shampoo to scripture cases (opposite center).

The cafeteria is one of the MTC’s most loved locales (opposite lower center).

The MTC president greets two elders in the hallway (lower right).

Today, the familiar tune of “Called to Serve” (*Hymns*, no. 249) holds special meaning for you as you hear its strains echo through the halls. You have been called to serve as a full-time missionary for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and now you’re about to gain a deeper understanding of the significance of that calling as you report to the Provo Missionary Training Center, or one of the other 16 missionary training centers around the world.

Your First Day

You arrive at the missionary training center (MTC) in missionary attire, perhaps accompanied by your family if they want to be there and can make the trip with you. You check in and receive a name badge with your new title: “Elder” or “Sister.” Sounds good, doesn’t it?

Next is a short orientation meeting. The MTC president and his wife speak, welcoming you and reassuring your family that you’ll

be well taken care of. A video presentation then gives you a glimpse of how the MTC can refine and prepare you to be the best missionary possible. At the end of this meeting, it’s time to tell your family good-bye and continue your orientation with the other missionaries. Of course, there are hugs and tears at this point, but as the speaker reminds you, saying good-bye is like pulling off a bandage: the quicker it’s done, the less it hurts.

You are then led to another area of the MTC. At the first stop, you receive your information packet. In it you find a card with your mailing address, your companion’s name, your residence hall and district assignment, and your branch president’s information. You also receive your schedule, which tells you when and where to be for your entire stay in the MTC. A volunteer explains all the information in the packet and answers any questions you have.

Next, you check some forms with your personal information and report any special



dietary or medical needs. Then a volunteer goes over your immunization record with you. Depending on where you're going, you might receive some additional shots at this point.

You then head to the MTC bookstore. You've taken a peek at your schedule and realize that a lot of your day will be spent in class. That means you'll need textbooks—just like in school. You're given a copy of *Preach My Gospel*

both in English and, if needed, in your mission language. Everything you do in class and during personal study will be connected to this book. Missionaries learning a language also get their workbooks here.

After you pick up your luggage, you find your room. There you meet your companion and other members of your district. Depending on your mission language, your district has between 8 and 12 missionaries, who could all be going to the same mission or several different missions.

In the afternoon, the MTC presidency hosts an orientation meeting for new missionaries. Here you get additional information on the organization of the MTC and the resources available to you.

After dinner in the cafeteria, you meet your branch presidency. While in the MTC, your branch president will conduct Sunday meetings, hold personal interviews, and be available to answer questions and help you solve





Classes at the MTC are very interactive (above).

After teaching a lesson to volunteer “investigators” at the TRC, missionaries review their video recording (right).

At the TEC, missionaries fine-tune their teaching skills (lower right).

In the LRC, missionaries learn about their mission language and culture from native-speaking volunteers (opposite left).

At the TALL lab, interactive computer programs help with language skills (opposite right).

problems. There are 56 branches at the MTC, divided into two districts with district presidencies (the equivalent of stake presidencies). The districts are presided over by the MTC presidency. After you meet your branch president, it’s lights out at 10:30 p.m.

The Training Begins

The purpose of the MTC is, after all, *training* missionaries, so a lot of what you do here takes place in classes with your district, or in larger meetings. The biggest blocks of time on your schedule say “classroom instruction.” Classes are very interactive, and your two teachers, both returned missionaries, share their enthusiasm and testimony with you. At least two to three hours of your classroom time each day is used at your discretion, so you can get help just where you need it. You and your companion decide together where to spend your missionary-directed time, or MDT. Here are some of your options.

* You can get hands-on teaching experience at the **Teaching Resource Center (TRC)**. In a living-room setting, you and your com-



panion teach a lesson you’ve prepared to a volunteer acting as an investigator. A video recording of the lesson helps you see ways to improve.

* For some extra teaching help, you can go to the **Teaching Evaluation Center (TEC)**. The teachers in the TEC are available to assist you in fine-tuning your teaching skills.



You can practice teaching, contacting, testifying, resolving concerns, or planning a lesson.

* If you're learning one of the several languages taught using the **Technology-Assisted Language Learning (TALL)** software, you spend up to two hours a day in the TALL lab. Interactive computer programs help you work



on vocabulary, grammar, tasks (like setting up appointments in your mission language), and phrases.

* In the **Learning Resource Center (LRC)** a volunteer, usually a native speaker of the language you're learning, can do language role-playing with you. Other LRC services include a learning lab, language and reading tutoring, and language films.

PREPARING FOR THE MTC

To help you prepare for the MTC experience, Steven D. Kohlert, former president of the Provo MTC, offers the following tips:

- 1. Gain a knowledge and testimony of the Restoration and the Atonement.** Begin studying *Preach My Gospel* now, especially chapter 3. Gain your own testimony of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and of His Atonement.
- 2. Get to know the scriptures.** As a missionary, your lesson material comes from the scriptures, so be familiar with them before you come.
- 3. Gain missionary experiences.** Don't wait until you're set apart to start talking about the gospel. Look for opportunities to share what you know and volunteer to go out with the missionaries in your area.
- 4. Take every opportunity to teach.** Accept invitations to prepare and present lessons in family home evening, seminary, and Sunday meetings.
- 5. Leave the world behind.** Don't justify bringing things with you to the MTC that aren't important for a missionary, whether objects or attitudes. Clear up any past sins or legal or financial problems before you come. Strictly avoid any situation where your worthiness could be endangered.
- 6. Start looking and acting like a missionary right now.** Avoid the attitude that you "just go" on a mission. You must *become* a missionary—starting now.

PROVO MTC BY THE NUMBERS

- 2,443**—Missionaries in the Provo MTC the day the *New Era* visited. The number ranges from 1,700 to 2,700.
- 4,300**—The most missionaries the Provo MTC has had at one time.
- 3, 8, or 12**—Weeks a missionary will spend in the MTC, depending on the language he or she is learning.
- 324**—New missionaries who reported to the MTC the day we visited. Between 200 and 500 arrive each Wednesday.
- 300**—Average number of missionaries who participate in the MTC choir.
- 50**—Languages taught at the Provo MTC, including Icelandic and Malagasy.
- 26**—Languages MTC meetings are translated into for missionaries learning English as a second language.
- 2,700**—Service people, including employees, service missionaries, and volunteers, who keep the MTC running.
- 15**—The smallest number of missionaries in a branch. The most is 75.
- 40%**—Percentage of investigators who call the Referral Center who then agree to have missionaries visit them.
- 25,000**—The most calls the Referral Center has received in one week.



* When people call the Church in response to TV ads or pass-along cards, those calls go straight to the **Referral Center (RC)** at the MTC. Here you're not role-playing; you're doing the real thing. As you answer calls, you have the opportunity to testify and to invite the caller to meet with missionaries in their area. Many baptisms result from referrals received in this way.

Additional Learning Experiences

To help you master important doctrinal topics, such as faith in Jesus Christ, the Restoration, and the Book of Mormon, you attend a total of eight Large Group Meetings while at the MTC. These meetings of 80–500 missionaries are taught by the most experienced teachers at the MTC and correlate with the gospel topic you're studying in the classroom that week.

Every Tuesday evening you attend a devotional presented by a General Authority or another special speaker. You sit with your branch at the devotional and then meet afterward as a district to talk about what you learned. Some of your most powerful spiritual experiences in the MTC can take place in these devotionals.

On the Sabbath, you will meet with your branch for

Relief Society or priesthood meetings, as well as sacrament meeting. Other Sunday activities include priesthood interviews, personal study, a leadership meeting, and a fireside with the MTC presidency.

MTC Services

There's a lot of learning going on in the MTC, but there are also some practical matters to take care of. During your weekly preparation time you can use any of the MTC services. The bookstore has writing supplies, backpacks, clothing, and hygiene products. You can also get photos processed here and mail letters and packages. Two doctors and several nurses are on site if you need medical care, and a barbershop is available for both elders and sisters.

You can use coin-operated washers and dryers once a week during your preparation time, and there are dry-cleaning facilities available if you need them.

You also attend the Provo temple each week. It's just a short walk from the MTC.

Every week your district helps with a cleaning or maintenance assignment to keep the MTC at its best. You also go to the gym four to five times a week for athletic games



with your district or for your own physical exercise.

Ready, Set . . .

Above all, there's a powerful spirit at the MTC. It's a place of training and anticipation, to be sure, but it's also a place where your energy and ability can continue to grow. **NE**

Visit the Provo MTC at www.mtc.byu.edu.

Missionaries gather in a Large Group

Meeting to study doctrinal topics (opposite).

Every Tuesday evening there is a devotional presented by a General Authority or other special speaker (far left).

Preparation time each week is often used to visit and write letters while doing laundry (left).

The Brazil MTC (below).

ALL AROUND THE WORLD

The first MTCs outside the United States were established in Brazil and New Zealand in November 1977. There are now 16 international MTCs located in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, England, Ghana, Guatemala, Japan, Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Philippines, South Africa, and Spain.

These centers train missionaries in Spanish, Portuguese, French, German, Italian, Samoan, Japanese, Korean, English, Tongan, Tagalog, and Cebuano.

The different types of training programs at international MTCs are:

- * For missionaries from that country or other countries in the area who all speak the same language.
- * For North American missionaries who do not attend the Provo MTC and receive all of their pre-mission training at the international MTC.
- * For North American missionaries learning Spanish who receive three weeks of initial training at the Provo MTC and then transfer to the international MTC for an additional five weeks of training.

The training curriculum and daily schedule at international MTCs are based on those at the Provo MTC, so they are organized similarly, use the same materials and programs, and have the same objectives.

Each MTC is presided over by an MTC president. He and his wife are called to serve for two years. A professional staff with other administrators and teachers assist the president.

Staff at international MTCs receive training from Church headquarters via video conference each month.

Missionaries at international MTCs can attend a nearby temple each week, and they receive frequent instruction from General Authorities in Area Presidencies.

