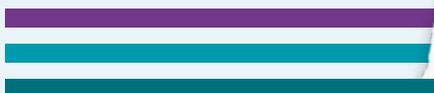
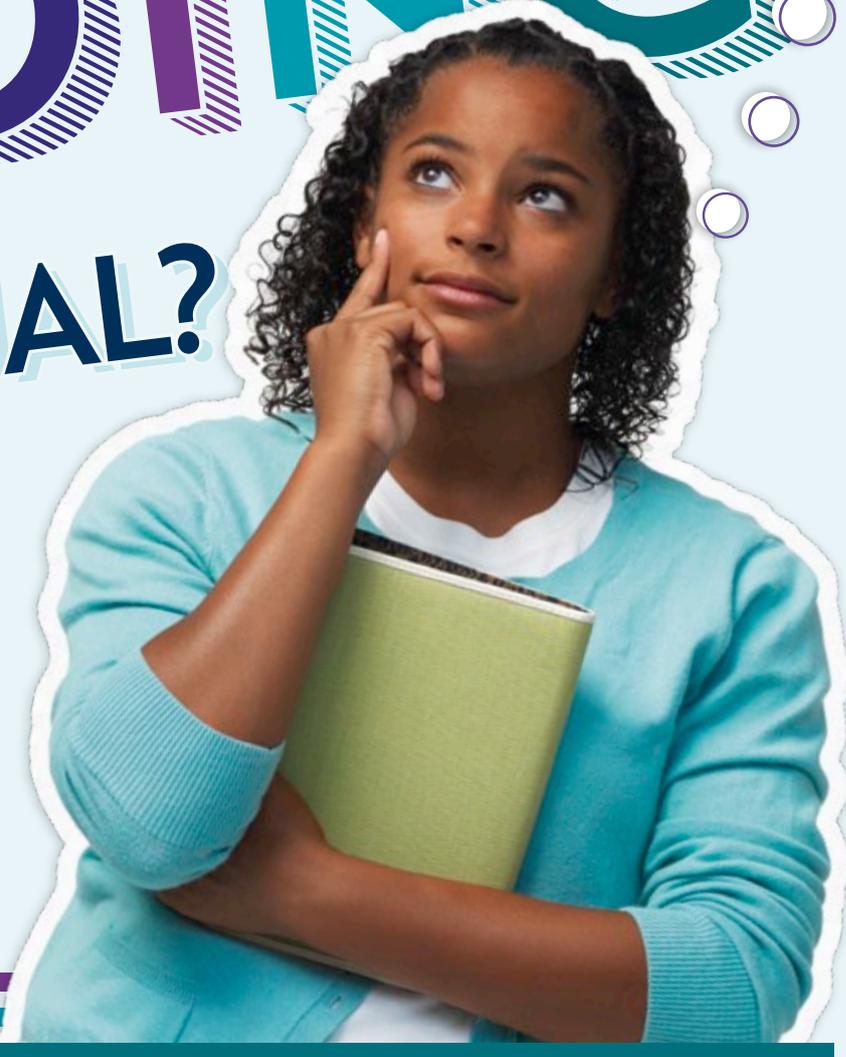




# WHAT ARE WE DOING AT MUTUAL?

*From making cookies for others to playing volleyball, teens all around the Church come together for wholesome activities at Mutual. While they're at it, they learn about cooperation, unity, and friendship.*



## By Sally Johnson Odekirk

Church Magazines

Sometimes Mutual night can be built around a fun activity, such as having a game night, playing sports, or doing service projects. And sometimes it can be more serious, with discussions on standards. But what comes out of these weekly activities is something more important: experiences that strengthen testimonies and friendships. For example, one ward planned a combined Young Men/Young Women activity of Dutch oven cooking. “We each prepared a dish, and while the dishes were cooking, we played games,” remembers John E. of Idaho, USA.

“It was a great experience,” says John, “because everyone was involved and had fun. I learned what I could do better next time, including giving better instructions on how to do Dutch oven cooking.”

At fun activities like these, teens are given a chance to gather together regularly in a safe setting and to practice gospel principles. These activities also help you grow, serve, and build friendships and unity, and they provide opportunities to fellowship or help rescue others.

### Gaining Strength from Activities

Mutual activities such as John’s help build unity. Natalie M. of Washington, USA, says, “It’s so nice to know that you can feel that you’re not alone in your beliefs and can associate with others who have the same standards.

“I LOOK FORWARD TO GOING TO MUTUAL AND INTERACTING WITH OTHERS, AS WELL AS BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING MY TESTIMONY, FEELING THE SPIRIT, AND HAVING FUN AT THE SAME TIME.”

—DUSTIN B., WASHINGTON, USA

It lifts you up every time you go to activities and get to know others a little bit better.” Lauren D. of Idaho adds, “I think some kids have a hard time with getting to know people, and Mutual makes it easier to make new friends.”

When the opportunity comes to plan an activity, those involved learn how to cooperate with others to make it a success. Taylor W. of Idaho says, “We planned a water-balloon volleyball game. We got big towels and balloons and tossed the balloons back and forth over a volleyball net with the towels. I felt good because I helped plan it and it went well. It also brought us closer as a quorum because we had to work together.”



#### THE PURPOSE OF PROGRAMS

“We have been charged to watch over one another and to serve one

another. . . . Our goal should always be to use the programs of the Church as a means to lift, encourage, assist, teach, love, and perfect people.”

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “O Be Wise,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 18.

### Learning from Leaders

In addition to building friendships and learning leadership and planning skills, teens bond with their leaders and learn from them. Brian C. of Washington observes, “The Young Men leaders in my ward have helped me advance through the Scouting ranks and let me know what the activities are. They make me feel good about myself because of all the work they’ve done to help me feel like a part of the Young Men group and to serve in my callings with dignity.”

Lani C. of Washington says she enjoys it when her ward has a bishop’s youth fireside. “It helps us to know our bishop. It’s important to know that our bishop and his counselors really care about us.”

“For me, it’s not just one single activity that makes a difference; it’s the regular Mutual activities that I go to every week,” says Dustin B. of Washington. “I look forward to going to Mutual and interacting with others, as well as building and strengthening my testimony, feeling the Spirit, and having fun at the same time.”

## HOW CAN I HAVE A SUCCESSFUL ACTIVITY?

Have you been asked to help plan an activity? Here are some words of advice:

- Plan ahead to be organized. Decide when the activity will be, and then estimate how many people will be there and who will bring what.
- Counsel together about the purpose of the activity, such as reaching out, serving others or improving spiritually, socially, or physically.
- Be willing to listen to quorum or class members. Get to know them to understand how they see things.
- Pray for guidance.
- Make it a team effort rather than having one person do everything.
- Make sure that there's something for everyone to do at the activity.
- Show up with a great attitude, and be ready to learn.
- Participate wholeheartedly. You can never tell how many blessings you're receiving or how grateful you'll be for just diving in and staying with it.



## YOUTH VOICES: FAVORITE ACTIVITIES

We often hear about ward and stake activities that encourage participation and build unity. Here are a few favorites that youth have told us about:



### VISITS WITH MISSIONARIES

"One Mutual night we paired off with the missionaries and went on visits with them. It was a big testimony builder of what being on a mission is like. Ever since then, we regularly schedule time to go with the missionaries."

**Eric U., Washington, USA**

### MODEST FASHION SHOW

"We had an activity where we were given a small amount of money and a ride to a thrift shop. We had to find modest clothing. After that, our mothers came to the meetinghouse, and we had a fashion show about modesty. It made a big impact on me, and I learned that it's cool to be modest."

**Lani C., Washington, USA**



## DANCES

"I love dances. It's not weird for me to go up to someone and say, 'Hey, do you want to dance?' and then dance and have a good time getting to know her."

**Levi J., Idaho, USA**

## SERVICE PROJECTS

"We went Christmas caroling at a retirement home. It was really fun to see how happy it made other people. We also did a service project to make pillowcases, and we gave them to cancer patients."

**Ashley S., Arkansas, USA**

## OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

"We have a campout every year where we meet at someone's house and have games and discussions about the Book of Mormon. Everybody gets involved, and we can express our feelings to each other. It really strengthens our quorum."

**Dominic F., Washington, USA**



## TESTIMONY MEETINGS

"Testimony meetings with the quorum help you realize how much your quorum members care about you and raise friendship to a deeper level. I feel more connected with them because I know they care."

**Neal M., Washington, USA**



## SKILL NIGHTS

"We've learned how to make pretzels, bagels, and a lot of different foods."

**Holly H., Pennsylvania, USA**

"There have been really fun things that we've done, such as painting little pumpkins. I've learned a new skill, and then we sit around the table and talk and bond with the other young women."

**Allie H., Arkansas, USA**



.... New website with over ....

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## MORE IDEAS

Have you heard about the new website for sharing Mutual activity ideas? At [lds.org/go/activitiesNE3](https://lds.org/go/activitiesNE3), you'll be able to search for activity ideas on a certain topic and even add your own activities! It also has a calendar where activity plans can be sent to the members of your Young Women and Young Men groups!