

Four Days at the
HAMILTON
New Zealand
TEMPLE

By David Dickson
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FIND OUT WHAT 118 YOUTH CAN ACCOMPLISH WHEN THEY WORK TOGETHER.

When 118 youth from Auckland, New Zealand, and their leaders planned a four-day temple conference to the Hamilton New Zealand Temple, they had a simple but impressive goal: to perform as many baptisms for the dead as possible during their stay.

They began preparing for the trip many months in advance. As part of the preparation, young men and young women researched names from their family histories that they could bring with them to the temple.

All their preparation paid off in a big way. The youth and their leaders had a spiritual feast from the moment they arrived to when they set their sights back home four days later—not to mention all the blessings that came before and after the event because of their devotion to family history and temple worthiness.

The Best View Around

In order to spend as much time at the temple as they could, they wanted to stay near the temple instead of making the two-hour drive each direction every day. So for the whole temple conference, youth and leaders stayed in dorm rooms near the temple.

Being that close to the temple was its own reward for the youth. Nichalahr U., a Laurel from the group, said, “I didn’t want to come home after the temple conference because I got used to waking up to the view of the temple and how peaceful it was to just turn and look at it standing in front of you.”

Busy All Day

It wasn’t practical to have 62 young men and 56 young women all doing baptisms at once, so they decided instead to go to the temple in shifts. The youth were divided into five groups, and each group attended at least two shifts at the temple during the four days.

That might sound at first like there was a lot of downtime and waiting in between. But nothing could be further



You can enjoy the blessing of seeing the temple each day by putting a picture of one in your room.

“How peaceful it was to just turn and look at [the temple] standing in front of you.”



YOUR OWN TEMPLE RECOMMEND

The youth from New Zealand each obtained an individual recommend for the conference. Afterward, many of them brought out their recommends during family home evenings and asked if their parents could do the same so that they could talk about what it means to hold a recommend.

Several youth have explained that they have tried harder to live worthy of the recommend they carry.

Church leaders have counseled us to always live worthy of the blessings of the temple. Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, “May we always be worthy of holding a temple recommend. May that be one of our objectives in life, to consistently and regularly sit before our priesthood leader and declare our worthiness to have this tangible evidence that the Lord approves of the type of life we are living and finds us worthy to enter His holy house” (“My First Temple Recommend,” *New Era*, Apr. 2013, 4).

from the truth. When they weren't in a shift doing baptisms, the youth headed into the community to do service projects. Sometimes they walked over a mile (1.61 km) to reach their destinations—at which point they'd *begin* the service project.

They helped out with cleaning, yard work, and anything else families and organizations needed. One youth group helped replant a *marae*, an outdoor public meeting place in the New Zealand culture.

The youth were also in charge of cooking their own meals, which led to another goal the youth made for the conference: to learn how to prepare and cook food from 72-hour kits. This, too, required a fair amount of planning. Each young man and young woman had a budget to plan and shop for ingredients.

Although the dorm rooms had large kitchens to use, the youth all whipped up their masterpiece meals on a gas stove outside. Those meals were put to good use too, since the youth needed a lot of energy to keep up with the schedule. The only way they could fit everything in was to wake up at 5:00 a.m. and keep going strong until bedtime.

A Joyful Dance

Of course, this *was* a four-day youth conference, so there had to be at least a little recreational time! One fun event was a dance. Yet even here the dance became more meaningful than usual as a result of some visitors.

During the week, the youth had an unexpected treat when they met a group of Saints from New Caledonia (a group of islands in the southwest Pacific Ocean that belong to France) who were also visiting the temple. They quickly became friends and had the opportunity to sing hymns and also perform ordinances in the temple in English as well as French.

On the night of the dance, the Saints from New Caledonia came to visit these youth. As soon as they arrived, the youth from New Zealand danced joyfully in a circle around them to welcome them. They hugged each other in friendship formed over a shared love of temple work.





Temple Baptisms

Not surprisingly, the highlight of the conference was the actual time in the temple. Mahonri K., a priest, researched and brought names from his own family to do proxy work for them. “I was excited to help my ancestors who had passed on through the veil by being baptized and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost on their behalf,” he says. “My testimony of baptism has been largely strengthened.”

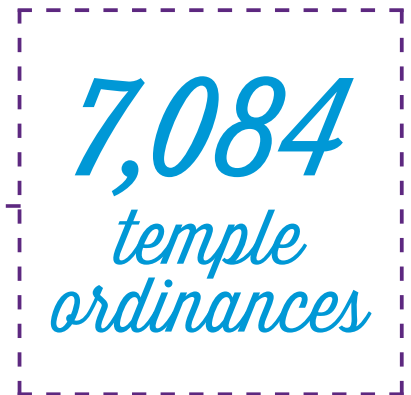
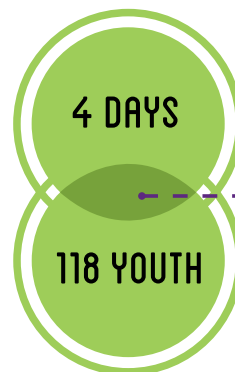
Throughout the week, the young men and young women felt a strong spiritual connection to the work. Sara M., a Mia Maid, said, “I now have a strong testimony of the gospel and the importance of temple work.”

A Big Goal

From the beginning, their goal was to complete as many baptisms as possible to help their ancestors. They succeeded rather spectacularly. The 118 youth performed baptisms and confirmations for 3,542 people, many of whom were their ancestors.

By the time the young men and young women were ready to leave, their testimonies were strengthened and their hearts were filled with gratitude. The youth even invited the sisters who work in the temple laundry to their closing exercises so that the youth could sing a closing song to them in appreciation for their hard work. (Just imagine how much laundry needed to be washed during this temple conference!)

The youth will remember the spiritual experiences they had during this temple conference for the rest of their lives. “The feeling that I received throughout each baptism was pure and innocent,” says Caleb R., a priest. “I could feel the warm embrace of the Savior’s love.”



Throughout the temple conference the youth strengthened their ties with the Savior, with each other, and with their ancestors. After gaining such new enthusiasm for the work, their journey in family history is only getting started. **NE**