

“What can I do when I feel like I don’t fit in at church?”

Feeling like you don’t fit in can be an uncomfortable experience anytime and may even happen at church. As difficult as that can be, there are some things you can do to make the situation more comfortable.

First, think about why we attend church in the first place—because we love God and want to follow Him. We go to partake of the sacrament—a sacred ordinance. Another reason is to learn more about the Savior and His teachings. When Jesus was in His mortal ministry, some of His disciples stopped following Him. But when Jesus asked His Twelve Apostles if they would also abandon Him, Peter said, “Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life” (John 6:68). Just like Peter, we can gain the knowledge we need at church.

Second, think about what you can do to befriend those around you. For example, is there someone else who may be lonely? If so, reach out. You might be surprised that others are just hoping for someone else to be friendly to them too. When you serve others, you’ll find you feel more comfortable around them—and you’ll be a lot happier. Caden W., 14, of Arizona, USA, says, “If you truly feel like you don’t fit in at church, just think about the people who love you, like your parents, Jesus Christ, and Heavenly Father. Try your best to love other people and know deep down in your heart that you do fit in and that you are special. Remember that you are a son or daughter of God.” Our Heavenly Father will always be glad that you go to church. **NE**



Open Up

Look around to make friends. There might be a girl or boy who seems to be having

even more trouble with fitting in and just needs to have someone take notice. I recently moved to a new ward, and at first I tried to stay clear of everyone. I began to feel like an outcast but then realized I had to open up. Try to look around you and let your light shine. You’ll be surprised by the outcome.

Britney B., 15, California, USA



Focus on the Reason to Go to Church

When I feel excluded at church, I try to focus

on the reason I am there—which is to show my love for Heavenly Father and Jesus and to learn of them—instead of what others may think of me. I also try to let others know I am willing to be a friend to everyone.

Lillian K., 14, Utah, USA

Turn to Prayer

Sometimes the best advice is something simple. The most basic gospel principle is prayer, so get on your knees and pray. Ask God for His comforting Spirit and to bless you with a testimony. Once you have that testimony, you’ll feel more at peace. Remember when you feel alone that our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,



has been through it too, and He will comfort you.

Mattison S., 17, Chihuahua, Mexico

Serve Others

Everyone should feel welcome and loved whenever they walk through the doors into a place to worship the Lord, but because we're imperfect, sometimes we exclude others and do unkind things. When you feel like you don't fit in, you might read "Come, Join with Us," by President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency (*Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 21). Besides remembering that with Christ we are never truly alone, there are things we can do to ease our burden. Prayer, daily scripture study, obedience to commandments, and service to others will help. Finding opportunities to serve—no matter how seemingly small and insignificant—will allow you to get closer to both the other youth and the adults in your ward. I can testify that Church leaders and other adults care about you and want you to succeed and be happy in church.

Hannah F., 17, Arizona, USA



Make a Friend

When I'm visiting a new ward and don't know anybody there, I find someone who looks to be my age. I think that when we don't feel like we fit in at church we should try to take

action—introduce yourself to somebody and make a friend. We can help others feel welcome at church by introducing ourselves and helping them feel accepted.

Ryan L., 14, Texas, USA



Remember the Lord

For years I felt like I didn't fit in, and I was often teased by others. Then I realized something: going to church isn't about fitting in with the other members. Church is about coming unto Heavenly Father and the Savior. We go to church to express our love and respect for Them. When we go to church with the Lord in mind, we will feel better about what we learn and about ourselves. When you feel alone or isolated at church, remember that the Lord is beside you, and focus on what you can be taught.

Margaret M., 18, Utah, USA



COME, JOIN WITH US

"If you could see into our hearts, you would probably find that you fit in better than you suppose. . . . The Church is designed to nourish the imperfect, the struggling, and the exhausted. It is filled with people who *desire* with all their heart to keep the commandments, even if they haven't *mastered* them yet."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "Come, Join with Us," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 23.

Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as official pronouncements of Church doctrine.

UPCOMING QUESTION

"I'm starting junior high. There is so much swearing and bad stuff. How do I deal with it? Can I make a difference?"

Send your answer and photo by December 15, 2015.

Go to newera.lds.org, and click "Submit Your Work." Sign in with your LDS Account and then select "New Era" under "Choose Magazine." Click "Add File" to select your file and photos, and then click "Submit" to upload.

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.