

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
OFFICE OF THE FIRST PRESIDENCY
47 EAST SOUTH TEMPLE STREET, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84150-1200

June 20, 2018

To: General Authorities; Area Seventies; General Auxiliary Presidencies; Stake, Mission, and District Presidents; Bishops and Branch Presidents; Stake and Ward Young Women and Young Men Presidencies

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Guidelines for Interviewing Youth

Bishops have a sacred responsibility to lead, teach, and inspire youth. Effective personal interviews are one important way they do this. These interviews provide opportunities to help youth become disciples of the Savior, repent of transgressions, and live the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Those who conduct interviews with youth should prepare themselves spiritually to be guided by the Holy Ghost. As part of that preparation, we encourage them to carefully review the guidelines for interviews and counseling in chapter 7 of *Handbook 1*. Section 7.1.7 of that chapter, "Guidelines for Youth Interviews," has been updated in the enclosure and will soon be updated online and in the Gospel Library. Also, the language in question 7 for limited-use recommends has been simplified.

To help ensure that youth and parents are aware of the topics and questions covered in these interviews, the bishop should share the enclosed guidelines with them before the first interview.

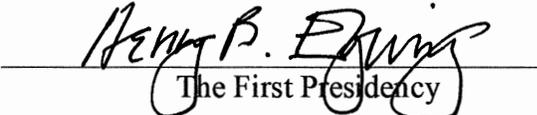
Generally, children younger than 11 are not interviewed except in preparation for baptism or to be sealed to their parents in the temple. These interviews are different in nature from youth interviews, and parents are typically present.

Thank you for your faithful efforts to help strengthen youth spiritually and to prepare them to make and keep sacred covenants.

Sincerely yours,







The First Presidency

This letter is being translated and will be distributed to units identified as Albanian, Armenian, Bislama, Bulgarian, Burmese, Cambodian, Chinese, Chinese (Simplified), Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Estonian, Fijian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Icelandic, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Kiribati, Korean, Lao, Latvian, Lithuanian, Malagasy, Maltese, Marshallese, Mongolian, Nepali, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Samoan, Serbian, Sinhala, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish, Tahitian, Thai, Tongan, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese. If leaders need this letter in languages not listed above, they may contact the Area Presidency. Area leaders can forward requests to the Priesthood and Family Department at ext. 2-2933. 15790

Guidelines for Interviewing Youth

June 20, 2018

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

These guidelines should be shared with youth and their parents before the first interviews held by a bishop, branch president, or counselor in the bishopric or branch presidency. References to a bishop and his counselors may also include a stake, district, or mission president and his counselors. See the First Presidency letter “Guidelines for Interviewing Youth,” dated June 20, 2018.

From Handbook 1, 7.1.7, “Guidelines for Youth Interviews”

Role of Parents

Parents have the primary responsibility for teaching their children the gospel of Jesus Christ. They help their children grow spiritually and prepare to make and keep sacred covenants. Parents also counsel with their children regarding worthiness and help them repent and improve. Bishops and other Church leaders support parents in these efforts.

The Bishop’s Communication about Interviews

As a young woman prepares to become part of the Young Women organization, and as a young man prepares to receive the Aaronic Priesthood, the bishop shares with youth and their parents the following information about interviews. He could do this as part of the annual Temple and Priesthood Preparation meeting or at other times as needed.

- Parents have the primary responsibility to teach and nurture their children.
- Typically, the bishop or one of his counselors will interview the young man or young woman at least twice a year for the reasons outlined in “Purposes of Interviews” below. A bishopric member may also meet with youth to answer questions, give support, or extend assignments.
- To help youth prepare spiritually, interviews are required for sacred matters such as temple recommends, priesthood ordinations, and mission calls. Leaders work with parents to help youth prepare for these interviews.
- Parents encourage their children to meet with the bishop when they need his help with spiritual guidance or with repentance.
- If a youth desires, he or she may invite a parent or another adult to be present when meeting with the bishop or one of his counselors.

Purposes of Interviews

Bishops and their counselors have a sacred responsibility to lead, teach, and inspire youth. Effective personal interviews are one important way they do this. During these interviews, the bishop and his counselors teach youth about becoming disciples of the Savior. They help youth consider how well they are following the Savior and His teachings. Interviews should be uplifting spiritual experiences.

Interviews provide an opportunity to reaffirm each youth's limitless potential as a child of God. Interviews also provide an opportunity to inspire youth to develop plans to draw closer to Heavenly Father and to improve in all areas of their lives.

As representatives of the Savior, bishops are divinely appointed judges in Israel. In this role, they conduct interviews to determine worthiness and to help youth repent of transgressions.

Those who conduct interviews express love and listen carefully. They encourage youth to talk rather than doing most of the talking themselves.

Frequency of Interviews

The bishop typically interviews each young man and young woman at least annually. If possible, he interviews each 16- and 17-year-old twice a year. If this is not possible, he assigns a counselor to conduct some of these interviews.

Six months after the annual interview with the bishop, each young man and young woman ages 12 through 15 usually has an interview with the counselor in the bishopric who oversees the Aaronic Priesthood quorum or Young Women class in which the youth participates.

Acting with inspiration and wisdom, bishops may adjust the frequency of interviews. Some youth may need added attention, while others may need less frequent interviews than are suggested, though all should be interviewed at least annually. Ward size, geography, schedules, and other circumstances may also affect the frequency of interviews.

Matters for Discussion

Key matters for discussion include the growth of the young person's testimony of Heavenly Father, the mission and Atonement of Jesus Christ, and the restored gospel. The bishop and his counselors emphasize the importance of keeping baptismal covenants. They teach youth to prepare to make and keep temple covenants through daily righteous living. Bishopric members encourage youth to pray regularly in private and with their family and to study the scriptures. They also encourage youth to stay close to their parents.

When discussing obedience to the commandments, the bishop and his counselors make appropriate use of the limited-use temple recommend interview questions and the standards and explanations in *For the Strength of Youth*. Leaders adapt the discussion to the understanding and questions of the youth. They ensure that discussions about moral cleanliness do not encourage curiosity or experimentation.

The bishop and his counselors may also address the matters listed below:

Priesthood ordination. With young men, they discuss the blessings and duties of holding the Aaronic Priesthood (see Doctrine and Covenants 20:46–60; 84:31–48; recent general conference addresses on the subject; and *Handbook 2*, 8.1.1 and 8.1.3).

Seminary. For youth of the appropriate age, they encourage regular seminary attendance and emphasize the blessings that come from regular participation.

Missionary service. They give special attention to preparing youth to serve a full-time mission (see 4.2). Young men are encouraged to serve (see 4.3.1), and young women may be

recommended to serve (see 4.3.2). They discuss preparing spiritually by being worthy, studying the gospel, and building a testimony. They also discuss preparing physically, mentally, emotionally, and financially.

Standard interview questions for full-time missionary candidates are available at [lds.org/mss](https://www.lds.org/mss). The bishop reviews these questions with the candidates and their parents before the mission interview.

Members of the bishopric should be sensitive to the circumstances under which young men are honorably excused from full-time missionary service (see 4.5.3). The bishop discusses opportunities for young Church-service missions with young men and young women, as applicable (see 4.12).

Temple. They ensure that youth understand the blessings of temple covenants and temple marriage and the requirements for receiving these blessings. To issue or renew a temple recommend, they ask the standard limited-use temple recommend questions. As needed, they adapt the questions to the age and circumstances of youth.

Interview Questions for a Limited-Use Temple Recommend

1. Do you have faith in and a testimony of God the Eternal Father; His Son, Jesus Christ; and the Holy Ghost?
2. Do you have a testimony of the Atonement of Christ and of His role as Savior and Redeemer?
3. Do you have a testimony of the Restoration of the gospel in these, the latter days?
4. Do you sustain the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as the prophet, seer, and revelator and as the only person on the earth who possesses and is authorized to exercise all priesthood keys? Do you sustain the members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators? Do you sustain the other General Authorities and local authorities of the Church?
5. Do you live the law of chastity?
6. Is there anything in your conduct relating to members of your family that is not in harmony with the teachings of the Church?
7. Do you support any group or person whose teachings oppose those accepted by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?
8. Do you strive to keep the covenants you have made, to attend your sacrament and priesthood meetings, and to keep your life in harmony with the laws and commandments of the gospel?
9. Are you honest in your dealings with your fellowmen?
10. Are you a full-tithe payer?
11. Do you keep the Word of Wisdom?
12. Have there been any sins or misdeeds in your life that should have been resolved with priesthood authorities but have not been?
13. Do you consider yourself worthy to enter the Lord's house and participate in temple ordinances?

From *Handbook 1*, 7.4, “Protecting against Misunderstandings”

When a member of a bishopric or stake presidency or another assigned leader meets with a child, youth, or woman, he or she should ask a parent or another adult to be in an adjoining room, foyer, or hall. If the person being interviewed desires, another adult may be invited to be present during the interview. Leaders should avoid all circumstances that could be misunderstood.