

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

October 5, 2019

To: General Authorities; General Officers; Area Seventies; Stake, Mission, and District Presidents;  
Bishops and Branch Presidents; Stake and Ward Councils

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Strengthening Aaronic Priesthood Quorums and Young Women Classes

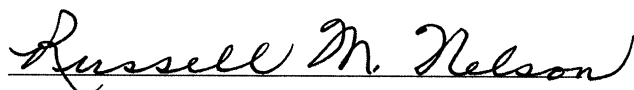
In an effort to help our children and youth reach their divine potential, we have implemented changes to strengthen the homes of our members. We now announce adjustments to support young men and young women at church—specifically in Aaronic Priesthood quorums and Young Women classes.

As taught in Doctrine and Covenants 107:15, “The bishopric is the presidency of this [Aaronic] priesthood, and holds the keys or authority of the same.” In accordance with this scripture, the young men and young women of the ward are the bishop’s first responsibility and priority. The callings of ward Young Men president, counselors, and secretary are now discontinued, so that the bishopric can focus on and serve with youth. In this essential work, the bishopric will now be assisted by Aaronic Priesthood quorum advisers and Young Women leaders (see Section 3 of the guidelines).

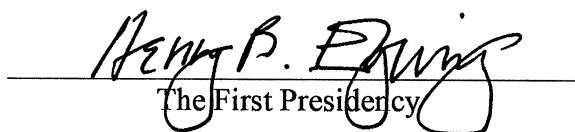
These adjustments will be accompanied by the organizational changes detailed in the enclosed information. These changes may begin as soon as branches, wards, districts, and stakes are ready but should be in place by January 1, 2020.

We express our love for the young men and young women of the Church, their families, and leaders. We have tremendous confidence in our youth. It is our desire for them to fully participate in the work of the Lord, which will bless them with the strength they need to progress on the path back to their heavenly home.

Sincerely yours,

  
\_\_\_\_\_

  
\_\_\_\_\_

  
\_\_\_\_\_

The First Presidency

This letter, with enclosure, is being translated and will be distributed to units identified as Albanian, Armenian, Bislama, Bulgarian, 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, Malay, Maltese, Marshallese, Mongolian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Samoan, Serbian, Sinhala, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish, Tahitian, Thai, Tongan, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese. If leaders need this letter in additional languages, they may contact the Area Presidency. Area leaders can forward requests to the Priesthood and Family Department at ext. 2-2933.

17182

# Organizational Changes for Aaronic Priesthood Quorums and Young Women Classes

Enclosure to the October 5, 2019, First Presidency letter “Strengthening Aaronic Priesthood Quorums and Young Women Classes”

---

THE CHURCH OF  
JESUS CHRIST  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The changes described below may begin to be implemented as soon as branches, wards, districts, and stakes are ready but should be in place by January 1, 2020.

## 1. The following changes relate to both Aaronic Priesthood quorums and Young Women classes

### Role of the Bishopric

As taught in Doctrine and Covenants 107:15, “The bishopric is the presidency of this [Aaronic] priesthood, and holds the keys or authority of the same.” The youth in the ward are the bishopric’s first and foremost responsibility.

As president of the priests quorum, the bishop sits in council with the priests, teaching them their duties (see Doctrine and Covenants 107:87–88). The first counselor in the bishopric has responsibility for the teachers quorum, as does the second counselor for the deacons quorum. Quorum presidents report directly to members of the bishopric.

In addition, the Young Women president counsels with and reports directly to the bishop. He does not delegate this opportunity to a counselor as he may have in the past. Like other ward officers, the Young Women president strives to lift the load of the bishop, where appropriate by helping young women regarding issues that do not require the bishop’s keys as a common judge and that do not involve abuse of any kind.

If bishoprics or Young Women leaders become aware of any issue regarding abuse, they should respond in accordance with Church policy and training.

### Role of Youth and Adult Leaders

Youth called as members of quorum and class presidencies have the responsibility to lead the quorum or class. With guidance from adult leaders, youth can conduct and plan Sunday meetings, carry out activities, and lead the quorum or class in the work of salvation. The primary responsibility of adult leaders is to mentor youth in fulfilling their leadership roles. When adult leaders mentor, rather than take upon themselves the work of the quorum or class presidency, youth grow in confidence, skill, and testimony.

### Quorum and Class Presidency Focus on the Work of Salvation

Each Aaronic Priesthood quorum and Young Women class presidency is responsible to minister to quorum and class members, to plan Sunday lessons as outlined in *Come, Follow Me*, to plan and implement service and activities, and to be leaders in the work of salvation (see *Handbook 2*, chapter 5). This work includes (1) member missionary work, (2) convert retention, (3) activation, (4) temple and family history work, and (5) teaching the gospel. Quorum and class presidencies are encouraged to focus on this important work as they fulfill their leadership responsibilities and as they serve as ministering brothers and sisters.

Adult leaders support, nurture, and help quorum and class presidencies succeed in these responsibilities.

## **Ward Youth Council**

The bishopric youth committee is now the ward youth council. This council, like the ward council, focuses on encouraging members to help bring others to Jesus Christ and to take an active role in the work of salvation. This council is composed of the bishopric, one of the bishop's priests quorum assistants, the teachers and deacons quorum presidents, the Young Women class presidents (or the full presidency if there is only one class), and the Young Women president. For more information, see *Handbook 2*, 18.2.9.

## **Quorum and Class Presidency Orientation**

Bishoprics have a responsibility to orient newly called Aaronic Priesthood quorum and Young Women class presidencies. Orienting a presidency is an important step in helping youth leaders succeed in their callings.

A document entitled "Aaronic Priesthood Quorum and Young Women Class Presidency Orientation" includes suggestions that could be used to orient new presidencies in ward youth councils or in other settings. For more information in coming months, see [AaronicPriesthoodQuorums.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://AaronicPriesthoodQuorums.ChurchofJesusChrist.org) and [YoungWomen.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://YoungWomen.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

## **Activities**

Activities for youth are no longer called "Mutual" but can be called "Young Women activities," "Aaronic Priesthood quorum activities," or "youth activities." Where possible, these activities should be held weekly and on a day and time determined locally.

## **Budget**

The local unit budget allowance (LUBA) for youth activities should be divided between the young men and young women with equal proportions, according to the number of youth in each organization. Likewise, a sufficient budget allowance for Primary activities should be divided between the boys and girls with equal proportions, according to the number of children.

## **2. The following changes relate specifically to strengthening Young Women classes**

### **Young Women Theme**

The Young Women theme is a statement of the divine identity and purpose of young women. Young women are encouraged to memorize and begin reciting the new Young Women theme during Sunday meetings and at other activities:

*I am a beloved daughter of heavenly parents, with a divine nature and eternal destiny.*

*As a disciple of Jesus Christ, I strive to become like Him. I seek and act upon personal revelation and minister to others in His holy name.*

*I will stand as a witness of God at all times and in all things and in all places.*

*As I strive to qualify for exaltation, I cherish the gift of repentance and seek to improve each day. With faith, I will strengthen my home and family, make and keep sacred covenants, and receive the ordinances and blessings of the holy temple.*

## **Young Women Classes**

Bishops and adult Young Women leaders should counsel together regarding the needs of the young women and then prayerfully decide how to organize Young Women classes. The organization of classes should fit the ages of the young women in the ward or branch and invite greater unity among young women. The class divisions should be evaluated and adjusted periodically as young women move into and from the ward and as 11-year-olds move into Young Women from Primary.

Age-groups may include all young women meeting as one class or divided into multiple classes. Each class should have enough members to serve in a class presidency. For example:

- A ward with five young women attending could meet together as one Young Women class and call a class presidency to serve the whole group.
- A ward with a large number of 12-year-olds and very few of other ages could have two classes, “Young Women 12” and “Young Women 13–18.”
- A ward with 40 or more young women attending could divide into four or five classes.

## **Young Women Class Names**

Young women classes are now referred to by the unifying name of “Young Women.” If needed, class names may include the specific ages of the young women meeting together in each class—for example, “Young Women 12–14”; “Young Women 15–18”; or simply “Young Women,” if all meet together. The class names Beehive, Mia Maid, and Laurel will no longer be used.

## **Progression between Classes**

As announced in December 2018, young women move from Primary to Young Women as a group at the beginning of January in the year they turn 12. Likewise, young women progress between Young Women classes as age-groups at the beginning of January in the year they turn the age of the next class.

## **Young Women Class Presidencies**

A class presidency should be called for each Young Women class. A full presidency should be called, with a president, two counselors, and a secretary. In a ward or branch with only one class, a partial presidency may be called if needed.

## **Adult Leaders**

Each class should have at least two adult leaders (see *Handbook 2*, 10.12.5) to mentor class presidencies in their leadership responsibilities. Adult leaders can be called in the following roles:

- **Adviser:** each class should have one adviser. Advisers assist the Young Women presidency in mentoring young women in their leadership responsibilities and, as needed, teach lessons in Sunday meetings. Presidency members and young women can also teach lessons in Sunday meetings.
- **Specialist:** Specialists are called on a long-term basis to assist the presidency and advisers; others can be called to assist with a particular event such as a camp or youth conference.

Working with the bishop, the Young Women president assigns presidency members, advisers, and specialists (as needed) to classes to best meet the needs of the young women.

### **3. The following changes relate specifically to strengthening Aaronic Priesthood quorums**

#### **Changes to Young Men Leadership at the Ward Level**

The callings of Young Men president, counselors in the Young Men presidency, and Young Men secretary have been discontinued at the ward level. The number of adult leaders of Aaronic Priesthood quorums, however, should not decrease. Able and dedicated adult brothers should be called so at least two are present at each quorum meeting and activity, allowing the bishopric to attend Primary occasionally and Young Women classes and activities regularly.

Adult leaders can be called in the following roles:

- **Adviser:** each quorum should have one adviser. A priests quorum adviser, teachers quorum adviser, and deacons quorum adviser assist the bishopric in mentoring young men in their leadership responsibilities and, as needed, teach lessons in Sunday quorum meetings. Bishopric members and young men can also teach lessons in Sunday quorum meetings.
- **Specialist:** Specialists are called on a long-term basis to assist the bishopric and quorum advisers; others can be called to assist with a particular event such as a camp or youth conference. A specialist may be called to keep track of attendance, or the quorum secretaries can work with the ward clerk to prepare information for the quarterly report.

Aaronic Priesthood advisers and specialists help the youth in planning activities but do not attend ward council. The needs and opportunities of young men are represented at ward council by the bishop and his counselors.

#### **Changes to Young Men Leadership at the Stake Level**

At the stake level, a member of the high council serves as stake Young Men president. His counselors can be brethren called from the membership of the stake or, as needed, can be the high councilor assigned to Young Women and the high councilor assigned to Primary. A stake Young Men secretary is a brother called from the membership of the stake.

The stake Young Men presidency serves on the stake Aaronic Priesthood–Young Women committee with the stake Young Women presidency, the high councilor assigned to Young Women, and the high councilor assigned to Primary. This committee is chaired by a member of the stake presidency.

The high councilors who serve on the stake Aaronic Priesthood–Young Women committee can, as directed by the stake presidency, serve as a resource to the bishop and Aaronic Priesthood quorums in a manner similar to the service provided by high councilors to ward elders quorums.

### **4. Additional changes**

#### **Changes to Sunday School Leadership at the Stake Level**

A member of the high council serves as the stake Sunday School president and, as needed, can serve on the stake Aaronic Priesthood–Young Women committee. The stake Sunday School president can serve with or without counselors and a secretary. If he has counselors and a secretary, they are brethren called from the membership of the stake.

### **Change of “Auxiliary” to “Organization”**

At all levels, Relief Society, Young Women, Young Men, Primary, and Sunday School are referred to as “organizations” rather than “auxiliaries.” Those who lead these organizations at the general level are “General Officers.” Those who lead organizations at the ward and stake levels are “ward officers” and “stake officers.” At the ward level, the bishopric leads the young men, so Aaronic Priesthood advisers are not “ward officers.”