

A New Balance between Gospel Instruction in the Home and in the Church

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Enclosure to the First Presidency letter dated October 6, 2018

The Council of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has approved a significant step in achieving a new balance between gospel instruction in the home and in the Church. Purposes and blessings associated with this and other recent changes include the following:

- Deepening conversion to Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ and strengthening faith in Them.
- Strengthening individuals and families through home-centered, Church-supported curriculum that contributes to joyful gospel living.
- Honoring the Sabbath day, with a focus on the ordinance of the sacrament.
- Helping all of Heavenly Father’s children on both sides of the veil through missionary work and receiving ordinances and covenants and the blessings of the temple.

Beginning in January 2019, the Sunday schedule followed throughout the Church will include a 60-minute sacrament meeting, and after a 10-minute transition, a 50-minute class period.

Sunday Schedule Beginning January 2019			
60 minutes	Sacrament meeting		
10 minutes	Transition to classes		
50 minutes	Classes for adults	Classes for youth	Primary

The 50-minute class period for youth and adults will alternate each Sunday according to the following schedule:

- First and third Sundays: Sunday School.
- Second and fourth Sundays: Priesthood quorums, Relief Society, and Young Women.
- Fifth Sundays: youth and adult meetings under the direction of the bishop. The bishop determines the subject to be taught, the teacher or teachers (usually members of the ward or stake), and whether youth and adults, men and women, young men and young women meet separately or combined.

Primary will be held each Sunday for 50 minutes and includes singing time and classes.

The adjusted Sunday schedule allows for, and members are encouraged to hold, home evening and to study the gospel at home on Sunday—or at other times as individuals and families choose. A family activity night could be held on Monday or at other times. To this end, leaders should continue to keep Monday evenings free from Church meetings and activities. However, time spent in home evening, gospel study in the home, and activities for families and individuals is scheduled

according to individual circumstances.

Informally, and as organized by those who so desire, young single adults, single adults, single parents, part-member families, new members, and others can gather to enjoy sociality and to strengthen one another through gospel study.

A new resource, *Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families*, will be provided to support gospel study at home.

Additional information is available at Sabbath.lds.org and in the questions and answers below.

1. How will we enhance gospel learning and living at home and in our personal lives?

Church leaders encourage all to participate on the Sabbath day—and throughout the week—in gospel study, family councils, home evening, family history and temple work, ministering, personal worship, and joyful family time.

Gospel study at home deepens conversion to Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ and strengthens our families. A study of the scriptures, supported by the new resource *Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families*, is the suggested course of gospel study at home. This rich resource provides a variety of study options for individual and family adaptation and aligns Sunday School and Primary curriculum with home study.

Individuals and families, however, seek inspiration as they choose to study what will best meet their needs. They prayerfully consider options such as the Book of Mormon and other standard works, general conference messages, Church magazines, information available on LDS.org, and other materials suggested by general or local leaders. There is no expectation that members will study all, or even most, of these resources at any one time.

2. What is the format for sacrament meetings?

Sacrament meetings last 60 minutes and are focused on deepening conversion to Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ and strengthening faith in Them. Allowing the ordinance of the sacrament to be the sacred center of members' worship on the Sabbath requires careful planning, including minimal announcements and consideration of speakers, hymns, and musical numbers. Ward choirs may participate as local circumstances allow. Sacrament meetings begin and end with a hymn and prayer. A hymn also precedes the blessing of the sacrament.

Sacrament meeting will be followed by 10 minutes to transition to classes.

3. How will members know what meetings will be held and what topics will be studied on Sunday?

During the week, leaders are encouraged to invite members to worship together on Sunday. They can send an invitation via email, text, social media, or other means, reminding members of the meeting schedule for the next Sunday, including topics for discussion. This reminder might be as simple as "This week we will hold Sunday School. We will study Luke 2 and Matthew 2."

In Sunday School, quorums, Relief Society, and Young Women, leaders and teachers will remind class members of the *Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families* materials and associated scriptures they might study at home. This simple reminder can be shared in writing, verbally, or both.

4. What is the format for youth and adult Sunday School classes?

The 50-minute Sunday School classes for youth and adults, on the first and third Sundays, focus on a study of the scriptures. Teaching materials are found in *Come, Follow Me—For Sunday School*. This study is aligned with the Primary curriculum and the individuals and families resource.

As needed, at the beginning of Sunday School classes, leaders from Young Women, Relief Society, and priesthood quorums may make brief announcements. After a brief welcome and a reminder of the *Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families* home study materials for that day and the following week, the teacher should begin the gospel instruction and discussion. Sunday School classes will not begin with a hymn or prayer but will conclude with prayer.

With Sunday School classes held every other week, leaders and teachers will need to adapt their materials, which currently include lessons for each week of the year. While individuals and families continue reading at home according to the weekly schedule in *Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families*, Sunday School leaders and teachers will need to select material from one or more lessons in order to stay aligned with the individuals and families resource. To avoid confusion, Sunday School presidencies may wish to advise teachers and class members about adjustments well in advance. More information can be found at ComeFollowMe.lds.org.

5. What is the format for Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood quorum meetings?

The 50-minute Aaronic Priesthood quorum meetings, on the second and fourth Sundays, focus on monthly gospel topics found in *Come, Follow Me—For Aaronic Priesthood*. Leaders and teachers will continue to select the lesson outlines at ComeFollowMe.lds.org or in the printed *Come, Follow Me—For Aaronic Priesthood* manual that best meet the needs of quorum members.

The 50-minute elders quorum meetings, on the second and fourth Sundays, focus on messages from the most recent general conference. Teaching suggestions are found in the May and November issues of the *Ensign* and *Liahona*, at LDS.org, and in the Gospel Library app for mobile devices. First-Sunday council meetings will be discontinued; however, as needed, elders quorums may use part of a quorum meeting to counsel about a specific topic.

Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood holders will no longer meet together but will gather in their respective quorum meetings. After a quorum presidency member offers a brief welcome, reminds members of the *Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families* home study materials for that day and the following week, and conducts any quorum business, the teacher should begin the gospel instruction and discussion. Quorum meetings will not begin with a hymn or prayer but will conclude with prayer.

Occasionally, when a special need exists, Aaronic Priesthood quorums may meet together briefly before quorum members go to individual quorum meetings.

6. What is the format for Relief Society meetings?

The 50-minute Relief Society meetings, on the second and fourth Sundays, focus on messages from the most recent general conference. Teaching suggestions are found in the May and November issues of the *Ensign* and *Liahona*, at LDS.org, and in the Gospel Library app for mobile devices. First-Sunday council meetings will be discontinued; however, as needed, Relief Societies may use part of a Sunday meeting to counsel about a specific topic.

After a Relief Society presidency member offers a brief welcome, reminds members of the *Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families* home study materials for that day and the following week, and conducts any other business, the teacher should begin the gospel instruction and

discussion. Relief Society meetings will not begin with an opening hymn or prayer but will conclude with a closing prayer. Hymns may be used to enhance a lesson as appropriate. Relief Society sisters and young women will not meet together for opening exercises but will gather in their respective meetings.

7. What is the format for Young Women meetings?

The 50-minute Young Women meetings, on the second and fourth Sundays, focus on a study of monthly gospel topics found in *Come, Follow Me—For Young Women*. Leaders and teachers will continue to select the lesson outlines at ComeFollowMe.lds.org or in the printed *Come, Follow Me—For Young Women* manual that best meet the needs of class members.

All young women will no longer meet together but will gather in their respective classes. After a class presidency member offers a brief welcome, reminds members of the *Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families* home study materials for that day and the following week, and conducts any other business, the teacher should begin the gospel instruction and discussion. Classes will not begin with a hymn or prayer but will conclude with prayer. Hymns may be used to enhance a lesson as appropriate.

Occasionally, when a special need exists, Young Women classes may meet together briefly before class members go to individual class meetings.

8. What is the format for Primary meetings?

The 50-minute Primary meetings will be held every Sunday, following the schedule below:

25 minutes	Prayer, scripture or article of faith, talk (5 minutes) Singing time: music that supports the scriptures studied in class (20 minutes)
5 minutes	Transition to classes
20 minutes	Classes: lesson from <i>Come, Follow Me—For Primary</i>

Note: If a Primary is large enough to separate into junior and senior Primary, the schedule above can be reversed for half of the children and times adjusted as needed. Junior Primary may begin with singing time while senior Primary begins with classes—or vice versa.

Singing time will focus on music that supports the scriptures that children study in their classes. The *Outline for Sharing Time* will be discontinued. More information about singing time in Primary will be found at Primary.lds.org and at ComeFollowMe.lds.org. Primary will begin with a prayer, a scripture or article of faith, and a talk given by a child. However, if singing time is held after children have attended their classes, it will end rather than begin with prayer.

During class, children will focus on a study of the scriptures aligned to the Sunday School curriculum and the individuals and families resource. Teaching materials are found in *Come, Follow Me—For Primary*. If classes are held before singing time, they begin with prayer. If they are held after singing time, they conclude with prayer.

9. Do we hold optional courses during church on Sunday?

Beginning in January 2019, the Gospel Principles class will be discontinued. Ward and full-time missionaries teach individuals and families the lessons found in chapter 3 of *Preach My Gospel*:

A Guide to Missionary Service in the home or at the meetinghouse, before and after baptism. On Sunday, all members and friends of the Church are invited to attend Sunday School classes and Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood quorums, Relief Society, or Young Women classes with other adults or youth in the ward.

Other courses, such as those for strengthening marriage and family, temple preparation, missionary preparation, and family history, will not be held during the second hour. However, at the bishop's discretion and based on local needs, these courses may be taught at other times for individuals, families, or groups.

10. When do teachers attend teacher council meetings?

Teachers attend teacher council meetings quarterly during the 50-minute class time. The council meetings are held according to the following schedule:

- Priesthood, Relief Society, and Young Women can attend on either a first or third Sunday, as determined by local leaders.
- Sunday School teachers can attend on either a second or fourth Sunday, as determined by local leaders.
- Primary teachers can attend on any Sunday, as determined by the ward Primary and Sunday School presidencies. If desired, Primary teachers may meet separately from other teachers to counsel about the unique needs of teaching children. More than one council may be held during a quarter for Primary teachers so not all miss Primary classes at the same time.

11. What is the role of a teacher?

Jesus Christ is the Master Teacher. Members of the Church called and set apart to serve as teachers receive a sacred trust and responsibility to follow His example and help God's children build their faith in Heavenly Father and the Savior and become more like Them. Those called as teachers are to teach with the power and authority of God.

The goal of every teacher is to teach the pure doctrine of the gospel. Teaching may include leading inspired discussions; however, it also includes many other teaching responsibilities that are not expressed in a term like *discussion leader*. The sacred responsibilities of a teacher are found in *Teaching in the Savior's Way* (see ComeFollowMe.lds.org). For this reason, we invite leaders and members to use the term *teacher* (and not *discussion leader*, *facilitator*, or *moderator*) when referring to those who have been called and set apart to teach in the priesthood and auxiliary organizations of the Church.

12. What is the Sunday schedule for multiple wards or branches sharing a meetinghouse?

Stake presidents consider members' travel time, security issues, and other local needs in determining when Sunday meetings will be held for meetinghouses with multiple wards and branches. Suggestions are included at "Sunday Scheduling Options" (Sabbath.lds.org), but these suggestions—including meeting start times—should be adapted to best meet the needs of each unit.