

For Stake Presidencies

Encouraging Senior Missionary Service

Suggested 15-minute Talk Outline for
Saturday Evening Session of Stake Conference

ENCOURAGING SENIOR MISSIONARY SERVICE

Suggested 15-minute Talk Outline for Saturday Evening Session of Stake Conference

Purpose

- To increase the number of senior missionaries serving throughout the world
- To increase awareness of senior missionary opportunities, both full-time and Church-service
- To deliver a call to action for mature members to start actively preparing and responding to the invitation to serve missions

Preparation

- Read and consider the following materials, including the suggested talk outline, scriptural references, and talks from General Authorities.
- Prayerfully select the resources most applicable to the members in your congregations.
- Consider giving a demonstration of the senior missionary website as part of your talk. At minimum, share the website address (seniormissionary.lds.org), and give the congregation time to find and bookmark the website on their smartphones.
- Judiciously consider inviting a recently returned senior missionary or couple to share a brief testimony as a supplement to this talk.

Suggested Talk Outline

Optional: To introduce the senior missionary topic, you may choose to show the five-minute “Senior Missionary Service” video found at seniormissionary.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/srsite/help/training. This enjoyable video shows how members can start exploring and planning for senior missions and addresses some common fears and challenges.

1. Explain the need for more senior missionaries. Encourage members to start planning now for a future mission.
 - A. There is a significant need for both full-time and Church-service missionaries.
 - B. The number of senior missionaries serving around the world accounts for only half of the current need.
 - C. Mature members are encouraged to consider full-time missionary service.
2. Share the great blessings promised to those who choose to serve the Lord.
 - A. Mature members can provide a powerful example of faith to their families by serving a mission.
 - B. Acting on the call to serve will be an example to their children and grandchildren that “in this family we serve missions!” (Jeffrey R. Holland, “We Are All Enlisted,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 46). This will create a legacy of faith in their families.
3. Discuss common misconceptions of senior missionary work.
 - A. Senior missionary work is not reserved only for couples. Couples do serve together in full-time missionary roles, but single individuals are also welcome to serve.
 - B. Single sisters may serve either full-time or Church-service missions.

- C. Single brothers may serve Church-service missions.
- D. Senior missionaries are given more flexibility than young missionaries. This includes having the ability to communicate more often with loved ones at home via phone calls, Skype, FaceTime, and so on.
- E. Your preferences matter. While all full-time mission calls are extended by an Apostle, information brings about inspiration. The Brethren want to know what talents and strengths you can bring to the work and in what ways you would like to contribute.
- F. Senior missionaries are not required to proselyte, learn a foreign language, or maintain the same rigorous schedule as their young-adult counterparts.



- 4. Encourage members to plan and prepare now. Assure them that this applies to everyone, even if they feel senior missionary work isn't relevant to them yet.
 - A. Counsel members to begin now to prepare. Encourage them to make a goal, whether individually or as a couple, to serve as a senior missionary.
 - B. Remind members that full-time, away-from-home service is the goal, but they should be willing to think outside the box if health or other issues prohibit a full-time mission.

- C. Members need not be retired or over 65 to serve. Some Church-service opportunities requires as few as eight hours per week.
 - D. Planning is required to get finances and family concerns in order so that members can serve at the appropriate time.
5. Share examples of Church-service opportunities in your specific stake or area.
 6. Introduce the new senior missionary website (seniormissionary.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).
 - A. The new senior missionary website combines the content from two previous websites for Church-service and full-time missionaries.
 - B. The website is interactive and encourages mature members to input information about their talents, skills, financial and family situation, and so on in order to direct them to opportunities that may be a good fit.
 - C. The website is comprehensive, giving a wonderful overview of many different kinds of missionary opportunities, some of which may be surprising to members of the Church.
 - D. The opportunities to serve are as diverse as the men and women who make up the membership of the Church. There is a place for anyone who wants to serve.
 7. Give a brief overview and, if possible, demonstration of the website.
 - A. If a demonstration is not possible or desirable, give members time to use their smartphones to find and bookmark the site.
 8. Leave the congregation with an invitation to go to the website, watch the videos, explore the available options, and start thinking about how and when they will be ready to serve the Lord in His kingdom. If members feel inspired to serve, explain that they can initiate a conversation with their bishop about a senior mission; they do not need to wait for him to approach them.

Additional Resources

Scriptures

Luke 10:30–37

1 Nephi 3:7

1 Nephi 13:37

Doctrine and Covenants 31:3, 5

Doctrine and Covenants 58:27–28

Magazine Articles and General Conference Talks

Jeffrey R. Holland, “We Are All Enlisted,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 46.



“We need thousands of more couples serving in the missions of the Church. Every mission president pleads for them. Everywhere they serve, our couples bring a maturity to the work that no number of 19-year-olds, however good they are, can provide. . . .

“Bishops and stake presidents, discuss this need in your councils and conferences. Sit on the stand in your meetings and prayerfully look into the congregation for impressions about those who should receive a call. Then counsel with them and help them set a date for service. Brethren, when that happens, tell your wives that if you can leave your recliner and the remote control for a few short months, they can leave the grandchildren. Those little darlings will be just fine, and I promise you will do things for them in the service of the Lord that, worlds without end, you could never do if you stayed home to hover over them. What greater gift could grandparents give their posterity than to say by deed as well as word, ‘In this family we serve missions!’”

Vaughn J. Featherstone, “Too Wonderful for Me,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1998, 15–16.



“Some couples have a great misconception that missionaries must be doctrinarians, scriptorians, and proselyters and have missionary experience. Some mistakenly feel they will knock on doors all day and be subjected to the same hourly commitments and disciplines which younger missionaries are expected to abide. This is not so.”

“Our generation must do something that no other generation has ever done. We need thousands of couples desperately. . . .

“. . . What a marvelous and sacred legacy we could bestow upon our children and our children’s children.”

Robert D. Hales, “Couple Missionaries: A Time to Serve,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 25, 27.



“What is the best way to teach our children—and grandchildren—light and truth? What is the most important way to set our families, both immediate and extended, in order? Is it possible that in spiritual matters our example speaks louder than our words? Temple marriage, family prayer, scripture study, and family home evening are all vitally important. But there is another dimension—the dimension of service. If we are willing to leave our loved ones for service in the mission field, we will bless them with a heritage that will teach and inspire them for generations to come. . . .

“It is proper for a mature sister or couple to let their priesthood leaders know that they are willing and able to serve a mission. I urge you to do so.”

Russell M. Nelson, “Senior Missionary Moments,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2016, 66–67.



“The truth is, no senior missionary finds it convenient to leave home. Neither did Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor, or Wilford Woodruff. They had children and grandchildren too, and they loved their families just as we do. But they also loved the Lord and wanted to serve Him. Someday we may meet these stalwarts who helped to establish this dispensation. When we do, we will rejoice that we did not seek the shadows when we should have served. . . .

“If you are tempted to think you’re not needed, let me reassure you that you are. There is not a mission president in the Church who would not love to have additional couples serving in his mission. Seniors strengthen the younger elders and sisters. They provide support that helps others to serve better in their own responsibilities. And can you imagine what it means to a leader who has only been a member for a few years to have ready access to seasoned Church members? Senior couples are often a literal answer to the prayers of bishops and branch presidents.”



Russell M. Nelson, “Senior Missionaries and the Gospel,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2004.



“At general conference in October 1925, President Heber J. Grant issued a clarion call for ‘men of mature years and sound judgment, who have had experience in the preaching of the gospel, . . . to go forth and labor in the mission field’ [in Conference Report, Oct. 1925, 10]. . . .

“As I extol the work of senior missionaries, I realize that there are many more who would like to serve but are not able to do so. Limitations imposed by age or by poor health deserve realistic appraisal, as do the important needs of family members. When desire burns within yet such limitations exist, you can extend your service through others. They can be your arms and legs, and you can provide needed funds. Still others can contribute time and talents as live-at-home missionaries. Each will be pleasing to the Lord, and each will receive His praise.”

James E. Faust, “Acting for Ourselves and Not Being Acted Upon,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 47.



“The Lord has a great work for each of us to do. You may wonder how this can be. You may feel that there is nothing special or superior about you or your ability. . . .

“The Lord can do remarkable miracles with a person of ordinary ability who is humble, faithful, and diligent in serving the Lord and seeks to improve himself. This is because God is the ultimate source of power.”

Henry B. Eyring, “Act in All Diligence,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2010, 63.



“Plead that the Spirit will show you what the Lord wants you to do. Plan to do it. Promise Him to obey. Act with determination until you have done what He asked. And then pray to give thanks for the opportunity to serve and to know what you might do next.”

Videos

“Senior Missionary Opportunities” (2 minutes, seniormissionary.ChurchofJesusChrist.org) highlights the different types of senior missionary opportunities.

“Senior Missionary Service” (5 minutes, seniormissionary.ChurchofJesusChrist.org) shows how members can start exploring and planning for senior missions and addresses some common fears and challenges.

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

© 2019 by Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved. Printed in the USA. Version: 8/18. PD60007225