WHAT ARE THEY TALKING ABOUT?

NON-LDS STUDENT GUIDE
What are they Talking About?

**Baptism for the Dead:** LDS members believe that certain ordinances, including baptism, are necessary in order to reach the Celestial Kingdom (the highest degree of glory in heaven). They also believe that these ordinances can be completed on behalf of people who are already deceased. In “baptisms for the dead”, LDS members will be baptized in the temple on behalf of deceased people, who they believe will be able to accept or decline the ordinances in the afterlife.

**Baptism:** LDS members have the chance to be baptized at the age of 8. Converts to the LDS church are baptized when they decide to convert. Baptism is the first saving ordinance in the LDS church. During a baptism, a worthy LDS man, also known as a priesthood holder, submerges the person being baptized in water. This represents a death from sin and rebirth into spiritual life. Baptisms can be done in a variety of places, including a ward building, but they are not done in the temple. Following a baptism, priesthood holders lay hands on the person who was baptized and believe this allows them to receive the Holy Ghost, which is part of the LDS Godhead.

**Bishop:** The bishop is an LDS man from the local community assigned to lead the ward, much like a priest or a pastor. He is not paid for this assignment, and will usually only be a bishop for a few years until the next person is assigned to this job.

**Celestial or Eternal Marriage:** LDS members believe that marriage is eternal, and will exist in heaven. Eternal marriage between two people is completed with a “sealing” ceremony in the temple. Sealing is one of the necessary ordinances in the LDS church.
**Come Follow Me:** Come Follow Me is a weekly scripture study for LDS members. Each year, it covers a different scriptural book: the Book of Mormon, the Pearl of Great Price, the Bible, or the Doctrine and Covenants.

**Commandments:** The commandments are religious rules that LDS members follow. LDS members believe they are necessary for exaltation.

**Covenants:** According to churchofjesuschrist.org, “A covenant is a sacred agreement between God and a person or group of people. God sets specific conditions, and He promises to bless us as we obey those conditions. When we choose not to keep covenants, we cannot receive the blessings, and in some instances we suffer a penalty as a consequence of our disobedience. All the saving ordinances of the priesthood are accompanied by covenants.”

**Devotional:** Each week at BYU, there is a campus-wide devotional in the Marriott Center. A member of the LDS church gives spiritual encouragement in a lecture format. Much like a church meeting, a hymn will be sung and prayers will be said. During devotional, all campus services are closed, and no classes are occurring.

**Elder's Quorum President:** The Elder’s Quorum President is a man assigned to lead the Elder’s Quorum in his specific ward. He is not paid for the assignment, and will serve until another person is assigned to the job.

**Endowed and Endowment:** Endowments are an ordinance completed in the temple. After endowment, LDS members begin to wear garments, and believe they have made sacred covenants with God to keep certain standards. Most LDS members are endowed before they go on a mission or before they get married.
**Fast and Testimony Meeting:** On the first Sunday of every month, LDS members fast until dinner, and give whatever money they would have spent on food to the ward to use in assisting those without sufficient food (this is called a “fast offering”). At church, during Sacrament Meeting, members are invited to go to the front of the ward and share their personal testimonies about how the LDS church and gospel have provided them peace and truth.

**Fasting:** LDS members believe in fasting on Fast Sunday each month, but they may also fast at other times to seek guidance from God on personal matters.

**FHE:** Family Home Evening. FHE occurs on Monday evenings, and families are encouraged to spend time with one another doing gospel-oriented activities. At BYU, students are assigned to an “FHE family” in their wards, and they plan activities to do together on Monday evenings. Because of this, most campus events do not occur on Monday evenings.

**First Presidency:** The First Presidency of the LDS church includes the prophet and his two councilors, who are also known as Apostles.

**General Conference:** General Conference occurs twice a year at the Conference Center in Salt Lake City. Leaders of the LDS church, including the current prophet, address LDS members on important topics relevant to the current day. The conference happens on a Saturday and Sunday, and local wards do not meet so that members can watch the conference. LDS members may attend in person, but due to space constraints, most watch from home.

**Joseph Smith:** Joseph Smith is the founder of the LDS church. Member of the LDS church believe that Joseph was a prophet, and that he translated the Book of Mormon and Pearl of Great Price from ancient works.
**LDS Sabbath Observance:** Members of the LDS church observe a Sabbath day on Sundays. Each family decides their own specific criteria for what is and is not permitted on Sundays. However, typically, LDS members will attend church meetings, spend time with family, and limit time in public. They usually will not shop or eat at restaurants. Due to the observance of the Sabbath, on Sundays, BYU campus is only open for the buildings to be used for church meetings. The library is closed, and the Cannon Center is open for a select few hours so that students living in the dorms can eat.

**LDS Temple:** Temples are where LDS members go to do sacred LDS ordinances – including baptism, endowment, and sealing (marriage) - for themselves and on behalf of deceased ancestors. Temple work occurs during the week or on Saturday, but does not occur on Sundays. It is not part of LDS Sunday meetings. Only worthy members of the LDS church may enter the temple.

**Mission Service:** LDS members, especially men, are encouraged to serve full-time proselyting missions for the LDS church. Men may serve starting at 18 years old, and women may serve starting at 19 years old. Men serve for 24 months, and women for 18 months. Before a mission, you are assigned to a particular location and language. LDS members believe this assignment is divinely inspired. Missionaries spend 3-6 weeks in the missionary training center before going to your assigned location. During their missions, missionaries do not visit home, and are able to call their families and email their friends once a week.

**Missionaries on Campus:** Some LDS missionaries are assigned to BYU campus. They are designated to find non-LDS people who may be interested in taking lessons about the LDS church from them. If you do not want to speak with the missionaries, respectfully state that you would not like to be contacted by them.
**Patriarchal Blessing:** All worthy and baptized members of the LDS church should receive a patriarchal blessing from a worthy Melchizedek Priesthood holder ordained to be a patriarch. This blessing states which tribe of Israel they are descended from, whether literally or by adoption, and also gives personal guidance for their lives.

**President/Prophet:** Russell M. Nelson is the current President and Prophet of the LDS church. He speaks for God to the people of the LDS church, and members believe his thoughts are applicable to the whole world. He addresses the church at General Conference twice a year, as well as at other times when or if he sees fit.

**Priesthood:** All LDS men in good standing are considered to have the priesthood. Every other week, the men of the ward meet together to discuss relevant topics while the women meet in Relief Society.

**Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:** The LDS church believes that the modern-day church should be structured similarly to how the Christian Church was structured after the death of Jesus. Therefore, today, twelve men of the LDS church are appointed as Apostles.

**Relief Society President:** The Relief Society President is a woman assigned to lead the Relief Society in her specific ward. She is not paid for the assignment, and will serve until another person is assigned to the job.

**Relief Society:** All LDS women are part of the Relief Society. Every other week, the women of the ward meet together to discuss relevant topics while the men meet in Priesthood Quorum. The Relief Society may also coordinate other activities throughout the week.
**Returned Missionary/RM:** RM’s or Returned Missionaries are people who have served a mission for the LDS church and then returned home.

**Sacrament Meeting:** Each Sunday, excepting during General Conference and Stake Conference, LDS members participate in Sacrament Meeting at their designated ward meeting spot. Sacrament Meeting lasts an hour, and includes singing hymns, listening to talks from members of the ward, and taking the sacrament – a small portion of bread and water, that signify the body and blood of Christ.

**Scriptures:** LDS members believe that four books are scripture, or inspired by God. These books include the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. LDS members believe that the Book of Mormon was translated from golden plates found by Joseph Smith. Joseph Smith is also believed to have translated the Pearl of Great Price. The Doctrine and Covenants includes doctrinal statements that are believed to have been inspired by God.

**Stake Center:** Stake centers are similar to normal ward meeting buildings, but they hold stake conference and may be used for other activities related to the whole stake.

**Stake President:** The stake president is an LDS man from the local community assigned to lead the stake. He is not paid for this assignment. Typically, stake presidents serve for several years, until the next person is assigned to the job.

**Stake:** A group of wards. Five to twelve wards make up a stake. Stake meetings (called “stake conference”) occur twice a year, where all wards in the stake come together for meetings on Saturday and Sunday.
**Sunday School:** Sunday School occurs during the second hour of church services every other week. All members of the ward meet together and listen to a lesson based on the theme for the week.

**Tithing:** LDS members pay 10% of their income to the LDS church. This money may be used by the LDS church for a variety of purposes.

**Ward:** A local congregation of LDS members. The ward is the group of people who meet together for Sunday meetings and activities during the week. Members of the LDS church are assigned to a ward based on geographical location. People who live in the same area are assigned to the same ward. At BYU, wards meet in rooms on campus. Elsewhere, there are ward buildings.

**YSA Ward:** The LDS church organizes congregations (wards) based on a number of factors. YSA (young single adult) wards are for unmarried young adults. They will attend church together, led by married older adults.

If you have more questions please reach out to our BYU Chaplain

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