

WHAT ARE THEY
TALKING
ABOUT?

NON-LDS STUDENT GUIDE

What are they Talking About?

Baptism: Latter-day Saints have the chance to be baptized at the age of 8. Converts to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are baptized after age 8 when they decide to convert. Baptism is the first saving ordinance in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

During a baptism, a worthy Latter-day Saint man, who holds the priesthood (see below) 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 church building. Following a baptism, priesthood holders lay hands on the head of the person who was baptized and believe this allows them to receive the Holy Ghost, which is part of the Latter-day Saint Godhead.

Baptism for the Dead: Latter-day Saints 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”, Latter-day Saints 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.

Bishop: The bishop is a Latter-day Saint man from the local community assigned to lead the ward, much like a priest or a pastor. He is not paid for this assignment, nor lobbies/applies/campaigns for it, and will usually only be a bishop for a few years until the next person is asked to be the bishop.

Brother/sister: Members of the Church of Jesus Christ believe that we are all children of God, and therefore, spirit siblings with each other. They often call each other “Brother or Sister” followed by the last name of the individuals. Some religion professors on campus are referred to this way.

Calling: Most members of the Church of Jesus Christ are asked to serve in a volunteer position within the organization of their ward or stake. These positions are called “callings.” They are believed to be divinely inspired and include positions such as the Bishop, Relief Society President, or Sunday School teacher.

Celestial or Eternal Marriage: Latter-day Saints 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 Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Come Follow Me: Come Follow Me is a weekly scripture study for Latter-day Saints. 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 Latter-day Saints follow. Latter-day Saints 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 on Tuesday at 11 a.m., there is a campus-wide devotional in the Marriott Center. A member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 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 asked to. Every other week, the men of the ward, or the Elder's Quorum, meet together to discuss relevant topics while the women meet in Relief Society.

Endowed and Endowment: Endowments are an ordinance completed in the temple. After endowment, Latter-day Saints begin to wear garments and believe they have made sacred covenants with God to keep certain standards. Latter-day Saints are endowed before they go on a mission or before they get married in the temple. They can also choose to be endowed before those life events.

Fast and Testimony Meeting: On the first Sunday of every month, Latter-day Saints fast for 24 hours or 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 Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and the gospel have provided them peace and truth.

Fasting: Latter-day Saints 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 Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints includes the prophet and his two counselors. All three of them are also known as Apostles.

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

Joseph Smith: Joseph Smith is the organizer of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Members of the Latter-day Saints church believe that Joseph was a prophet, that he reorganized Christ's New Testament Church, and that he translated the Book of Mormon from ancient works.

Latter-day Saint Sabbath Observance: Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints observe a Sabbath day on Sundays. Each family decides their own specific criteria for what is and is not permitted on Sundays. However, typically, Latter-day Saints 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.

Latter-day Saints Temple: Temples are where Latter-day Saints go to do sacred Latter-day Saint ordinances – including baptisms for the dead, 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 Latter-day Saint Sunday meetings. Only worthy members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints may enter the temple.

Mission Service: Latter-day Saints, especially men, are encouraged to serve full-time proselyting missions for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. 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. Latter-day Saints believe this assignment is divinely inspired. Missionaries spend 3-6 weeks in the missionary training center before going to their 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 Latter-day Saint missionaries are assigned to the BYU campus. They are designated to find non-Latter-day Saints who may be interested in taking lessons about the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from them. If you do not want to speak with the missionaries, respectfully state that you would not like to be contacted by them.

Mormon: In history, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints received the nickname “Mormon,” based on their belief and use of the Book of Mormon. In recent years, Russell M. Nelson, the prophet of the Church of Jesus Christ, has discouraged members and the public from using that nickname.

Preferred terms include “Church of Jesus Christ,” “restored Church of Jesus Christ,” “Members of the Church of Jesus Christ,” and “Latter-day Saints.” Students on campus who are not members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints may be referred to as “non-Latter-day Saints,” “non-members,” or “religiously diverse.”

Patriarchal Blessing: All worthy and baptized members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 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 Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He speaks for God to the Latter-day Saints, 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 Latter-day Saint men in good standing can receive the Priesthood. It is considered to be the power and authority of God that is given to man on earth. Latter-day Saints believe the Priesthood is necessary for the ordinances they perform such as baptism and ordinances performed in the temple.

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: Latter-day Saints believe that the modern-day church should be structured similarly to how the Christian Church was structured during the life of and after the death and resurrection of Jesus. Therefore, today, twelve men of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are appointed as Apostles.

Relief Society: All Latter-day Saint 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.

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 asked to.

Returned Missionary/RM: RMs or Returned Missionaries are people who have served a mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and then returned home.

Sacrament Meeting: Each Sunday, except during General Conference and Stake Conference, Latter-day Saints 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: Latter-day Saints 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. Latter-day Saints believe that the Book of Mormon was translated from golden plates that contained a record of the ancient people of the Americas. The Pearl of Great Price is a collection of revelations and translations from Joseph Smith. The Doctrine and Covenants include doctrinal statements and revelations that are believed to have been inspired by God.

Stake: A group of wards. Five to twelve wards make up a stake. Stake meetings (called stake conferences) occur twice a year, where all wards in the stake come together for meetings on Saturday and Sunday.

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

Stake President: The stake president is a Latter-day Saint 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 asked to take his place.

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: Latter-day Saints pay 10% of their income to the Latter-day Saints church. This money may be used by the Church of Jesus Christ for a variety of purposes.

Ward: A local congregation of Latter-day Saints. The ward is a group of people who meet together for Sunday meetings and activities during the week. Members 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.

Word of Wisdom: The Word of Wisdom is a commandment that Latter-day Saints follow that is related to health. It includes not taking or using drugs, alcohol, coffee, or tea.

YSA Ward: The Latter-day Saints organize congregations (wards) based on a number of factors. YSA (young single adult) wards are for unmarried young adults (age 18-30). They will attend church together.

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

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