
LDSSA STUDENT ASSOCIATION

The LDS Student Association (LDSSA) is an organization which sponsors social, religious, and recreational activities for LDS college students and their friends. The organization provides a framework wherein students have access to all phases of the Church that affect their lives during the week.

The purposes of LDSSA are to help college and university students stay closely affiliated with the Church, succeed in their studies, and achieve a balanced educational-social life while on campus; to motivate LDS students to become a powerful influence for good on the campus; to provide meaningful activities that are consistent with Church standards; and to coordinate Church-related activities for college students. These purposes are accomplished under the direction of the priesthood and in cooperation with the institutes of the CHURCH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM. These student associations create a sense of belonging, an opportunity for leadership, and an expanded circle of friends who share similar values. For some students, LDSSA is the center of their school experience.

LDSSA was established in 1960, and has expanded to every college campus where there is an LDS institute of religion. In 1990, some 290 LDSSA organizations existed within the United States and Canada in post-secondary institutions, including community colleges, universities, and trade and technical schools. Each campus organization operates under the direction of an assigned local stake president who is also the priesthood leader for all LDS affairs on campus. He presides over an executive committee consisting of a student president, vice president(s), a secretary, and an education adviser, who is usually the director of the institute associated with the campus. The student leaders are called, set apart, and serve under the direction of the priesthood leader. The executive committee is the policymaking body for the local student association.

A student president presides over the chapter LDSSA council. The membership includes representatives of all LDS organizations that function on, or are influenced by, the school. These may include LAMBDA DELTA SIGMA sorority and SIGMA GAMMA CHI fraternity, young single adults, married students, campus stakes or wards, and other

interest groups. While each of these groups operates as an independent agency, their activities are correlated through the LDSSA council, which strives to meet needs without undue overlap. The type of institution, geographic location, number of LDS students, and the social, cultural, and academic traditions influence how LDSSA is organized and how it functions to meet local and individual student needs.

At the general level of the Church, a governing board is made up of an executive director, presidents of Sigma Gamma Chi and Lambda Delta Sigma, and representatives of the General Authorities, seminaries, and institutes.

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LEADERSHIP TRAINING

The local and general leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are lay members; they have not received professional training for the ministry (*see* LAY PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP). Instead, Church members prepare to fulfill their callings by personal scripture study, prayer, inspiration, and righteous living; observing other leaders; assuming informal apprenticeships; studying Church-produced handbooks and manuals; participating in leadership training (“in-service”) lessons; and accepting counsel and guidance from their presiding officers and from the General Authorities.

The expectation is that all faithful Latter-day Saints are entitled to the inspiration of the Holy Ghost and personal revelation to aid them in meeting the needs of those they teach, counsel, and serve. Reliance on divine guidance makes personal worthiness and Christlike attributes the most important qualifications for all callings in the Church. Attributes qualifying one for the work are “faith, hope, charity and love, with an eye single to the glory of God, . . . virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, diligence” (D&C 4:5–6).

There are Church handbooks that outline the duties and activities of every leadership position and state the general principles that should apply. These handbooks are prepared by and revised periodically by appointed committees and reviewed by the Correlation Committee.

All Church officers are responsible for training those who serve under them. Leadership training or instructional meetings are held regularly for every group of leaders. For example, members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve meet weekly in the Salt Lake Temple for counsel and instruction. These leaders hold training sessions for other General Authorities, who in turn instruct the STAKE PRESIDENTS and other stake leaders under their jurisdiction. Stake officers periodically conduct training sessions for WARD leaders, who in turn instruct other ward officers under their supervision.

Leaders are given virtual autonomy in the performance of their duties and responsibilities. At the same time, they are charged to follow the principles of the gospel and policies of the Church, and they are enjoined to be mindful of service, gentleness, and humility: “Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant” (Matt. 20:27). They are also charged to avoid unrighteous dominion: “No power or influence can or ought to be maintained . . . [except] by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned” (D&C 121:39–42).

Emphasis is placed on the need for leaders to learn their duties: “Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence. . . . He that learns not his duty and shows himself not approved shall not be counted worthy to stand” (D&C 107:99–100).

Leadership training of LDS boys and girls begins at a young age. As children, they observe their parents and other adults serving in a variety of callings. As youth they are called to serve in presidencies in their Aaronic Priesthood, Young Men, Young Women, and seminary organizations. The attempt is made to have all boys and girls hold some kind of leadership position during their teens. Serving missions places many young men and women into a wide variety of leadership positions (e.g., as senior companions, district leaders, zone leaders, and assistants to the mission president). Virtually all Latter-day Saints are asked to serve in the Church in one way or another. In general, the guidelines for leadership are the same for men and women.

For many callings, an unofficial apprenticeship system is followed. Often, a counselor in a PRESIDENCY or another officer in the respective organization will be called as its next president; similarly, a man trained as an assistant clerk may

be called as the next clerk. Sometimes, however, one is appointed to a position to which he has had no training, as the BISHOP or stake president follows the impressions of the Spirit in extending calls to service.

Bishops, Relief Society presidents, and other leaders concerned with the welfare of individuals employ many leadership and organizational skills, such as evaluating alternatives, scheduling, delegating, and motivating others. However, all Church leaders are encouraged to focus principally on people, to feed the sheep in the Lord’s flock, to know and love the members, to listen, love, and help with personal needs. “It is the leader’s duty . . . to teach the member to love—not the leader or teacher, but the truth of the gospel” (D. McKay, *IE* 71 [Dec. 1968]:108). To do this, leaders are frequently counseled to seek the spiritual gifts of discernment and wisdom (cf. Luke 12:12; D&C 84:85).

In addition to inspiration, leaders may look to others for training or assistance. A leader may confer with his or her own priesthood leader about a problem or need, especially in one’s “stewardship review”—a one-on-one session with one’s organizational leader. These personal interviews are customarily held four times a year, “for it is required of the Lord, at the hand of every steward, to render an account of his stewardship, both in time and in eternity” (D&C 72:3).

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LECTURES ON FAITH

Included under the title “Lectures on Faith” in the 1835 edition of the DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS, these seven “lectures on theology” (*HC* 2:176) were presented to the School for the Elders in the early winter of 1834–1835 in Kirtland, Ohio. The school was organized to help Church leaders and missionaries “[qualify] themselves as messengers