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LEADERS & MINISTRY

Church produces infographic to assist leaders in supporting and utilizing single Latter-day Saints

By Rachel Sterzer Gibson | 23 April 2021, 4:01 PM MDT



A trio of young women gather for worship at the newly formed Politecnico Young Single Adult Ward in Mexico City. The ward is believed to be the first YSA unit in Latin America. | Credit: Courtesy of Bishop Angel Orozco



Single members of the Church — whether divorced, widowed or never married — make up more than half of the adult membership of the Church.

Several senior Church leaders noted that statistic in their [April 2021 general conference](#) addresses as they encouraged local leaders to find ways to better support and utilize this important Church demographic.

Heavenly Father loves single members of the Church, [President M. Russell Ballard](#), Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said. “The Church wants and needs you. Yes, we need you! We need your voices, talents, skills, goodness and righteousness.”

On Thursday, April 22, the [Church released a new infographic](#) to assist leaders as they strive to better understand and involve single Latter-day Saints.

The infographic highlights what young single adults need, why they struggle and ideas from YSAs on how to help them.

As local leaders strive to implement solutions in their wards and stakes, the infographic reminds them to focus on those single members who struggle in their faith, who don’t fit in or those who lack social support, such as those who are new converts, identify as a minority because of race or sexual orientation, or are divorced or widowed.

Among other suggestions, the infographic includes the following ideas that were previously generated from YSAs throughout the United States: Plan more holistic weekly activities, create spaces at church to discuss hard topics, utilize YSAs in leadership positions and eliminate “fluffy or fake” callings.

Stake and ward leaders should call on single members “to serve, lift and teach,” President Ballard declared in his general conference address. “Disregard old notions and ideas that have sometimes unintentionally contributed to their feelings of loneliness and that they do not belong or cannot serve.”

On March 31, the update to [the General Handbook](#) included an expansion of callings that can be held by members in young single adult and single adult units.

Speaking of the changes to sections [37.2.2](#), [37.3.2](#) and [37.5.2](#) of the handbook, [Elder Quentin L. Cook](#) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles told Newsroom: “In recent months, our minds have been drawn with particular focus to Latter-day Saints who are single adults. We want you to know that you are loved — and so very needed in building the kingdom of God. For this reason, we felt to search carefully for policies and misperceptions that might limit the Church service of single members. What we found was that Church policy already allows for broad service by single adults — and it could be even broader.”

In his remarks during the [Saturday morning session of general conference](#), [Elder Gerrit W. Gong](#) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that one’s “standing before the Lord and in His Church is not a matter of our marital status, but of our becoming faithful and valiant disciples of Jesus Christ. Adults want to be seen as adults and to be responsible and contribute as adults.”

On Friday, April 23, the Church also announced a Face to Face event for single Latter-day Saints 31 or older scheduled for Sunday, June 13. The event’s hosts will be [Elder Neil L. Andersen](#) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Relief Society General [President Jean B. Bingham](#) and [Sister Sharon Eubank](#), who is single, of the Relief Society general presidency.

View the infographic [here](#).



Avery Beeson and Rebecca Adams attend a meeting of 10 young single adults with President Russell M. Nelson of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Phoenix on Sunday, Feb. 10, 2019. | Credit: Jeffrey D. Allred, Deseret News

Information to Assist Leaders and Young Single Adults (YSA)

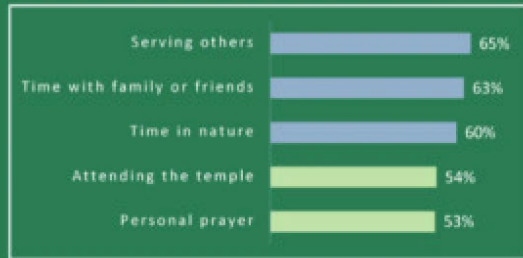
What YSA Need



Connection to God

Having a personal connection to God drives continuing personal religious behaviors. YSA need many personal spiritual experiences as they continue in their life journey. These experiences often occur in the context of deep personal connections with others.

Top 5 Sources of Spiritual Uplift for YSA in the US



How can we utilize service, time with friends or family, and time in nature to help young people increase connection to Jesus Christ, increase belonging and relationships, and stay on the covenant path?



Social Support and Belonging

Feeling like they fit in and having friends in the Church who make them feel welcome and important are key.



Relevance

Young adults need messages, activities, worship experiences, and interactions with leaders that resonate with their present circumstances and stage of life.

Why YSA Struggle



Disruptive Transitions

Transitions from youth to YSA and from YSA to SA can be very difficult. Religious routines and habits, as well as social networks, are disrupted, creating a time of discomfort and reevaluation.



Church Culture

YSA struggle with elements of Church culture that focus "on the outward appearance" (e.g., beards, second piercings, singleness, mission service) rather than "on the heart." Similarly, YSA struggle with features of the culture that make it difficult to discern between tradition and doctrine.



Feeling Judged

Some feel judged by other members, which leads to feeling alienated from the gospel. Males who don't serve a mission and those who don't marry "on time" are particularly affected.

How to Help YSA



Welcoming Culture

Help create a more welcoming Church environment that fosters deep and meaningful relationships. Also, focus on helping YSA feel understood and heard rather than just spoken to.



Relevant Experiences

Consider how to make Church experiences more relevant for YSA. Some possibilities are a more intimate second hour experience (fewer people), greater focus on meaningful service opportunities, a forum to discuss difficult issues, and a shift in how messages are framed and communicated by leaders.

As you consider solutions in your area ...

Focus on YSA who, regardless of the reason, ...

Remember that the process for developing solutions is as important as the solutions.

Struggle in their faith

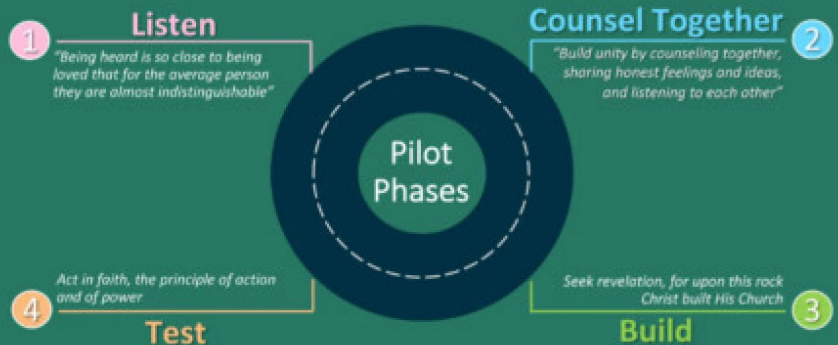
- Are unsure about their commitment to the Church
- Have expressed questions or doubts
- Have sinned and feel they don't have a way back

Don't fit in

- Are more introverted
- Look and act differently
- Have diverse political and social views

Lack social support

- Convert to the Church
- Have few member friends or family
- Are divorced or widowed
- Identify as minority (race, sexual orientation)
- Experience lower economic status



Consider ideas that have been previously generated by YSA throughout the US.

Activities and Socializing

- More holistic (i.e., fun, spiritual, social, physical) weekly activities
- YSA gathering places
- YSA conferences
- New and different Institute experiences

Worship Experience

- Spaces at Church to discuss hard topics
- Enhanced or flexible second hour options (e.g., smaller class sizes, more interactive teaching methods)
- Outside the sacrament ordinance, adjust or broaden the Sunday worship experience

Service and Contribution

- More YSA in leadership positions
- Eliminating "fluffy or fake" callings
- Local service ministries (e.g., soup kitchens, community gardens, JustServe, or other sustained service opportunities that the unit regularly participates in)



This graphic was created as a resource to help leaders and young single adult councils as they develop solutions to meet the needs of young single adults in their areas.

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