

# RELIEF SOCIETY TRAINING GUIDE

## Introduction

The Lord admonished, “Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence” (*Doctrine and Covenants 107:99*). Leaders learn their duties by studying the instructions in Church and Stake handbooks.

Leaders should also seek personal revelation to help them learn and fulfill the duties of their callings. The Spirit will guide them in what to do and say (see *Doctrine and Covenants 84:85*).

## Purpose of Relief Society

“The Relief Society serves under the guidance of the priesthood as the Lord’s organization for sisters in the Church. The purpose of Relief Society is to assist priesthood leaders in carrying out the mission of the Church by helping sisters come unto Christ and qualify for exaltation and eternal life” (*Relief Society Handbook*, page 193).

## Objectives of the Relief Society

1. Build faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and teach the doctrines of the kingdom of God.
2. Emphasize the divine worth of each sister.
3. Exercise charity and nurture those in need.
4. Strengthen and protect families.
5. Serve and support each sister.
6. Help sisters become full participants in the blessings of the priesthood.

(For detailed explanations and scriptural references, please see *Relief Society Handbook*, page 193).

## Ward Relief Society Positions

- President, 1<sup>st</sup> Counselor, 2<sup>nd</sup> Counselor
- Secretary and optional Assistant Secretaries
- Enrichment Coordinator (one per ward)
- Enrichment Leader (one per Relief Society)
- Sunday Relief Society Teacher(s) (Gospel Teaching & Leadership Council)
- Pianist and Chorister (Music Council)
- Greeters

## Duties of the Presidency

1. Minister to the needs of the sisters in the ward by loving, serving, instructing, and watching over them. Befriend and minister to new members and less-active members. Pray for each sister.
2. Direct the efforts of the ward Relief Society to accomplish the Relief Society’s purpose and objectives. Ensure that your Relief Society is organized and functioning properly.
3. Involve sisters in the ward by giving them appropriate assignments in lessons, activities, visiting teaching, and service.
4. Plan and conduct ward Relief Society meetings and activities. Attend stake Relief Society meetings. Work closely with ward Relief Society specialist.
5. Stress the importance of visiting teaching and regular attendance at Sunday meetings.
6. Attend welfare and ward council as directed by the bishop.

## Duties of the President

1. The president’s main emphasis is to “consult with single members to determine their needs and make plans to help meet them” (*General Handbook of Instructions*, page 109). The president ministers to sisters in the ward by loving, serving, instructing, and watching over them.
2. Participate in the Three-fold Mission Councils meetings as described in “Monthly Relief Society Meetings” on Page 3 of this handout.
3. Review weekly how the eleven councils can help with sisters’ current needs and concerns.
4. Interview each member of the Relief Society at least once each semester. This is a time to give instruction, express love, discuss member needs, and plan how to help each of them. Interviews should be positive while leaving confidential matters to the bishop.

## Duties of the Counselors

1. The counselors conduct monthly stewardship visits with the visiting teachers.
2. This is an opportunity to develop friendships. These visits are designed to help you get close to the sisters in your Relief Society. It is also a time for them to share the spiritual and temporal well being of each sister they visit.
3. After the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month, counselors should make themselves available as a partner to complete unfinished visiting teaching assignments.
4. They support and counsel with the president. Counselors may also conduct meetings and should carry on the work in the absence of the president.

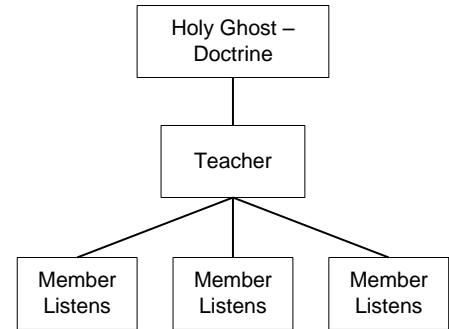
## Duties of the Secretaries

1. Under the direction of the president, the secretary and assistant secretaries make agendas, schedule appointments, and compile ALL information for the monthly report in a timely manner. Stake reports are usually due the first Sunday of each month for the previous month. The reports should be submitted in electronic format to the ward clerk who will send all ward reports to the stake.
2. Secretaries do not conduct Sunday meetings or teach the first Sunday presidency lesson.

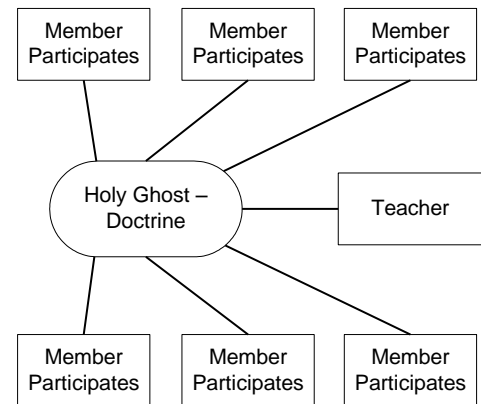
## Duties of Other Positions

1. **Sunday Instructors** prayerfully prepare lessons using the current Church manuals as their main resource. Each Sunday she may encourage and motivate the sisters to prepare themselves by reading the lesson that will be presented the following week. In this way, the lesson may be taught not as a lecture but as a discussion. Throughout the lesson, it is important to give sisters opportunities to help present parts of the lesson (perhaps 3-4 minutes each). Three to four individuals should be assigned at least one week in advance to allow time for them to pray and seek the Spirit in preparing their presentation; one or two may be given by sisters currently not attending regularly. The most successful lessons invite the Holy Ghost to witness the truths being discussed.

### Less Effective



### More Effective



2. **Ward Enrichment Leaders.** The three Relief Society presidents will choose a highly capable sister to be the enrichment coordinator. She coordinates with the enrichment leader in each Relief Society to 1) meet the needs of the individual sisters; 2) edify sisters now and in the future; 3) prepare sisters to become mothers, wives, and homemakers; and 4) support and grow together as Relief Society sisters, women and friends.
3. **Greeters** should be a member of the presidency or a Relief Society sister who may be rotated weekly. They are to welcome all sisters as they enter Relief Society. They should learn names and faces and express their love for the sisters. They are to set the stage for the meeting.
4. **Pianists** should ensure that appropriate music is used for hymn singing and during the 5-minute musical experience. She should be prepared to play both prelude and postlude music.
5. **Choristers** should direct and ensure that appropriate music is used for hymn singing and during the 5-minute musical experience. This

time should be uplifting and help to bring the Spirit into the meeting. “Music is food for the soul.”

## **Stake Relief Society Specialist Responsibilities**

1. TRAIN new presidencies immediately (1st week of semester)—SUPPORT the Relief Society presidencies by attending meetings and activities. Be a RESOURCE of on-going training and love.
2. Attend your weekly Sunday ward Relief Society meetings. (Rotate among the different Relief Societies.)
3. Attend weekly presidency meetings. Ward presidencies **must** accommodate the Relief Society specialist’s attendance by holding their meeting on Sunday. (Ward presidencies may meet during the week if additional meetings are necessary.) Be prepared to provide five-minute training sessions for each meeting.
4. Attend Ward Council. Be prepared to present any necessary stake information or participate in a training session.
5. Be a resource for the enrichment coordinator and leaders. Attend when possible.
6. Attend Visiting Teaching Workshops each semester.
7. Present leadership training at the stake leadership meeting each semester.
8. Be the liaison between the ward and stake.
9. Attend the Stake Return and Report (R&R) meeting with ward Relief Society presidencies. These will be scheduled by a stake assistant secretary.
10. Assure that the monthly stake reports are filled out completely by the first Sunday of the following month.
12. Be a resource to the bishop. Make yourself available. Take initiative.

## **Weekly Relief Society Meetings**

**Sunday Relief Society**— All presidency members should attend regularly and sit in front.

**Presidency Meeting**— Meet as a presidency with the other Relief Society presidencies and your ward Relief Society specialist at a time on Sunday convenient for the specialist. The specialist should give a short training and any stake announcements. Presidencies

should then split into groups to assess needs, set goals, plan with a purpose, solve problems, evaluate and report for their individual Relief Societies. Look for ways to involve the other councils in your ward in solving problems and making plans.

**Ward Council**— Held on Sunday, usually before or after your Sunday block. The president or, if she cannot attend, a representative should attend.

## **Monthly Relief Society Meetings**

**Counselors visits**— The two counselors hold these. These visits are important to the success of visiting teaching. Here, visiting teachers have the opportunity to discuss needs and concerns they may have about the sisters they visit or their own personal situation. Notes should be taken to be reviewed the following month. Visits should be with each sister individually.

**Interview with Bishop**— As determined by the bishop, Relief Society presidents meet with the bishop, review monthly reports, express concerns, and set goals to help fulfill needs of specific individuals.

**The Three-fold Mission Councils**— The elders quorum and Relief Society presidents oversee the Missionary and Fellowship, Spiritual and Temporal Welfare, and Temple and Family History Councils. With the approval of the bishop, these presidents meet with the chairs and co-chairs of these three councils to discuss ward needs, give direction and provide training. These meetings will be held monthly with the president of the first quorum of elders conducting and the high councilor and the Relief Society specialist attending as directed by the bishop. The purpose of these meetings is to help the elders quorum and Relief Society presidents achieve the mission of the Church by perfecting the saints, proclaiming the gospel, and redeeming the dead while being assisted by the three councils listed above.

**Return and Report (R&R) Meeting with Stake**—A short meeting with a stake Relief Society member, ward presidencies, enrichment leaders, and specialist will be held to discuss progress, goals, plans, and concerns, etc. A convenient time for both the stake and ward Relief Society attendees will be scheduled.

**Visiting Teaching Workshop**— Held at the beginning of each semester with the purpose of training and inspiring visiting teachers. Members of the stake Relief Society presidency should be invited to attend. This may be held jointly with all ward Relief Societies.

## Visiting Teaching

“The purposes of visiting teaching are to build caring relationships with each sister and to offer support, comfort, and friendship. In visiting teaching, both the giver and the receiver are blessed and strengthened in their Church activity by their caring concern for one another” (*Relief Society Handbook*, page 202).

### Determine How Visiting Teaching Should Be Done

Preserve existing companionships and assignments as much as possible or as the Spirit guides. Organize visiting teaching in partnerships as needed. Initially, the Relief Society president, presidency, or counselors should visit each sister personally to extend the visiting teaching assignment. Also, when a call is given to a companionship, please make sure that each sister understands the sacred trust that is invested in visiting teaching. Ask for specific commitments (i.e. “Will you do this?”).

Monthly visits are held by the two counselors with each of the visiting teachers to report on their stewardship and set goals for the next month. Notes should be taken.

Problems or concerns of a sensitive nature should be reported directly to the Relief Society president or bishop. When one of the companions is unable to visit teach, the presidency or another Relief Society sister may assist.

### Visiting Teachers Training

1. Visiting teachers should make an appointment before visiting. Suggest making the next appointment at the end of the current one—**PLAN AHEAD**.
2. Suggest the “5, 10, 15, 20 Rule”: make **contact** by the 5<sup>th</sup>, make an **appointment** by the 10<sup>th</sup>, **visit** by the 15<sup>th</sup>, and **report** by the 20<sup>th</sup>.
3. **Teach the importance of following the promptings of the Spirit.** If you feel a need to visit or call one of the sisters, **DO IT, DON’T WAIT**. The Spirit may be trying to tell you something.
4. Visiting teachers should be contacted as a *first resource* regarding compassionate service for the sisters they visit. Home teachers may also be contacted.

