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The Role of the Quorum

OBJECTIVE

Each young man will understand that a major role of the priesthood quorum is to strengthen brotherhood among quorum members through love and service.

PREPARATION

1. Prayerfully study John 13:34–35, Mosiah 18:8–9, and Doctrine and Covenants 29:34–35.
2. Materials needed:
 - a. Copies of the standard works (each young man should bring his own).
 - b. Pencils for marking scriptures.

**SUGGESTED
LESSON
DEVELOPMENT**

Chalkboard
discussion

Quorums Help Their Members Fulfill Life's Responsibilities

- Why do people join clubs, gangs, fraternities, societies, and other organizations?

List the young men's responses on the chalkboard, which may include the following:

1. To share in common interests.
2. To satisfy a need for belonging.
3. To give service to others.
4. For protection.

Point out that membership in a priesthood quorum can meet all of these needs. Heavenly Father uses priesthood bearers to do his work (see Moses 1:39), which requires that we love and take a genuine interest in each other. The benefits of quorum membership go far beyond the limited benefits that come from belonging to other organizations.

- What benefits are derived from membership in a priesthood quorum? (You might also list these answers on the chalkboard to emphasize that the quorum can provide greater benefits than other organizations.)

Story

Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone related the following story that Les Goates told of how his father, George Goates, was helped by his priesthood quorum. During the terrible influenza epidemic in the United States during the autumn of 1918, George Goates had lost four of his family members through death within six days. Les and his brother Floyd were at that time serving in the army during World War I.

"After breakfast dad [George Goates] said to [my brother Francis], 'Well, son, we had better get down to the field and see if we can get another load of beets out of the ground before they get frozen in any tighter. Hitch up and let's be on our way.'

"Francis drove the four-horse outfit down the driveway and dad climbed aboard. As they drove along the Saratoga Road [west of Lehi, Utah], they passed wagon after wagon-load of beets being hauled to the factory and driven by neighborhood farmers. As they passed by, each driver would wave a greeting: 'Hi ya, Uncle George,' 'Sure sorry, George,' 'Tough break, George,' 'You've got a lot of friends, George.'

"On the last wagon was the town comedian, freckled-faced Jasper Rolfe. He waved a cheery greeting and called out: 'That's all of 'em, Uncle George.'

"My dad turned to Francis and said: 'I wish it was all of ours.'

"When they arrived at the farm gate, Francis jumped down off the big red beet wagon and opened the gate as we drove onto the field. He pulled up, stopped the team, paused a moment and scanned the field, from left to right and back and forth—and lo and behold,

there wasn't a sugar beet on the whole field. Then it dawned upon him what Jasper Rolfe meant when he called out: 'That's all of 'em, Uncle George!'

"Then dad got down off the wagon, picked up a handful of the rich, brown soil he loved so much, and then in his thumbless left hand a beet top, and he looked for a moment at these symbols of his labor, as if he couldn't believe his eyes.

"Then father sat down on a pile of beet tops—this man who brought four of his loved ones home for burial in the course of only six days; made caskets, dug graves, and even helped with the burial clothing—this amazing man who never faltered, nor flinched, nor wavered throughout this agonizing ordeal—sat down on a pile of beet tops and sobbed like a little child.

"Then he arose, wiped his eyes with his big, red bandanna handkerchief, looked up at the sky, and said: 'Thanks, Father, for the elders of our ward' " (in Conference Report, Apr. 1973, pp. 47–48; or *Ensign*, July 1973, p. 37).

Discussion

Invite the young men to react to the story. You might emphasize that the story is true and that there are many others like it. Then ask questions such as the following:

- What are some of the ways we might help those we know who have similar problems?
- Service projects such as the one for Brother Goates do not just happen. What makes them happen?
- What successful service projects have you been involved with in the past? What made them successful for those you served and for you?

Quotation

Explain that learning the needs, wants, likes, and dislikes of our brethren presents a great challenge as we attempt to strengthen each other. Read the following statement by Elder Rudger Clawson:

"The Priesthood is a great brotherhood, held together by the eternal and immutable laws that constitute the framework of the Gospel. The feeling of brotherhood should permeate the quorum. It should be the first concern of a quorum to help all members who may be in need temporally, mentally, or spiritually. The spirit of brotherhood should be the directing force in all the plans and operations of the quorum. If this spirit be cultivated, wisely and persistently, no other organization will become more attractive to the man who holds the Priesthood" (*A Guide for Quorums of the Melchizedek Priesthood*, 3rd ed. [Melchizedek Priesthood course of study, 1930], p. 3).

The Importance of the Quorum

Chalkboard discussion

- In the story about Brother Goates, the need for help was quite obvious. Many times people's needs are not so obvious. How can we become more aware of the wants and needs of those around us, particularly of our own quorum members?

List the young men's responses on the chalkboard. Do not be concerned if there is not too much discussion at this point. More specific questions follow.

- If a person is blind, deaf, crippled, or disabled in some other way, what might his needs be?
- What material possessions could we share with each other to enrich each other's lives?
- How could we help a young man who is struggling socially? in school? at home? (Be careful not to embarrass any young men. Emphasize the strengths that the young men have to offer rather than the weaknesses of those present who need help but do not want to admit it publicly.)

Scripture and discussion

Have the young men read Mosiah 18:8–9.

- How does mourning with those who have cause to mourn help them?
- How might we more effectively give comfort to those who stand in need of comfort?
- How might we become interested in what others' burdens are rather than being caught up in our own self-interests?

- How can we help those who have spiritual weaknesses and challenges? (Emphasize that our service should follow the pattern that Jesus Christ set and come from our sincere love of others.)
- What are some ways young people sometimes cause others to suffer?

Adviser presentation

Conclude this discussion by pointing out that not everyone in need of spiritual comfort will admit his need, nor will he seek help. We should look for those in our quorum who might be in need and plan how we might help them. This help might simply involve giving friendship. It might involve telling them that we recognize that they are having some difficulty and that we are willing to help. It is often important that the appropriate quorum member be designated to approach another member in need. In addition to recognizing the needs of others and trying to do something, we ought also to stop doing things that may cause others to suffer.

Conclusion

Scripture and discussion

Refer back to Elder Clawson's statement. Emphasize that although he said that the quorum should be concerned about mental, spiritual, and temporal needs, all our service is ultimately spiritual.

Have the young men read Doctrine and Covenants 29:34–35.

- Was the service that George Goates's quorum gave him temporal or spiritual?
- How was harvesting the beets a spiritual act?
- What effect did it have on Brother Goates?

Scripture reading and testimony

Ask a young man to read John 13:34–35. Explain that quorum membership gives us a great opportunity to fulfill the Savior's admonition to love one another as he did.

Bear testimony of the love we can have for one another. Invite the young men to be quick to support, forgive, and help each other. Remind them that the quorum should be second in importance only to the family in a young man's life. His priesthood brothers and their well-being should be a major priority in his life. The quorum provides a great opportunity to be of service to our fellowmen. When in this service, the Aaronic Priesthood holder is fulfilling important priesthood work.

Suggested activity

Option 1

Either as a quorum leadership or as a full quorum, analyze the needs of the young men. Prayerfully consider the less-active members or those with special needs in difficult circumstances; then organize to help them. Plan to do something specific to help each one.

Option 2

Organize an activity designed to help the young men get to know each other better. Spend a major part of the time having each young man tell about himself so that the others can better know, love, and understand him.