

Understanding a Missionary's Responsibilities

OBJECTIVE	Each young woman will understand a missionary's responsibilities.
PREPARATION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Picture 12, Missionary Companions, located at the back of the manual. 2. Prepare a poster or chart of a missionary's daily schedule. 3. Optional: Prepare to have the young women sing "Called to Serve" (<i>Hymns</i>, no. 249). 4. Assign young women to present any stories, scriptures, or quotations you wish.
Note to teacher	This lesson discusses the responsibilities of full-time missionaries. All young men should serve missions. Unmarried women age twenty-one and older may also serve full-time missions. However, young sisters should not feel obligated and should not be urged unduly to serve full-time missions. A mission should not interfere with a young woman's opportunity for marriage.
SUGGESTED LESSON DEVELOPMENT	<p>Introduction</p> <p>Picture and story</p> <p>Show the picture of missionary companions, and tell the following story:</p> <p>After years of preparation, one elder was at the airport, finally ready to leave for Guatemala on his mission. He said: "When I reached the door leading to the boarding area, my father said, 'Son, obey all the rules, and you'll be happy in life.' I nodded a hurried 'Sure, Dad,' and was off. As I walked to the plane, I laughed to myself. 'Dad, you've got your "mords wixed" again. You meant to say, "Obey all the rules, and you'll be happy on your mission." ' With that, I tossed his advice into the oblivion of my memory, filed under 'Parental Counsel.'</p> <p>"Seven months later, my father was dead."</p> <p>In those first hours after his mission president told him of his father's tragic plane accident, he found himself confused and depressed. One part of him said, " 'What are you doing here? . . . [You] come to a strange land, with strange people and strange customs; and your father gets killed. Sure it's the happiest two years of your life. Two thousand miles away from home, and you're all alone.' "</p> <p>Another part of him said, " 'Stand tall, Elder. You had a great father you can be proud of, a mighty patriarch who taught you the gospel in all things. You <i>know</i> eternal life is a true principle of the gospel, and you <i>know</i> your father will be waiting for you. You've had a testimony of the gospel since you were old enough to cry. This is no time to start doubting.'</p> <p>"In the midst of this struggle between doubt and reality, my father's last words at the airport came echoing into my mind: 'Son, obey all the rules, and you'll be happy in life.' . . .</p> <p>" . . . His death became the highlight of my mission. That may be a strange thing to say, and I wish my father were still alive, but my mission thereafter became a living testimony to my father's life. I soon found how precious it is to live 'all the rules.' No matter how small or insignificant the rule seemed, if I obeyed, I was happy" (H. Kent Rappleye, "Obey All the Rules," <i>New Era</i>, Jan.-Feb. 1979, pp. 24-25).</p>
Discussion questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why are we given rules to follow at home, school, and Church? • What blessings have come to you because you decided to follow rules?

A Missionary Must Obey Mission Requirements

- Scriptures Have the young women read Mark 16:15 and Doctrine and Covenants 18:15.
- Why do you think the Lord considers missionary work so important?
- Teacher presentation When missionaries begin their missions, they are given rules and schedules that help make their important work effective and productive. Missionaries must commit to obey these in order to serve the Lord and have the Spirit to guide them. A daily schedule for most missionaries includes the following:
- Poster or chart Display the poster or chart.

6:30 A.M.	Arise
7:00 A.M.	Study time with companion
8:00 A.M.	Breakfast
8:30 A.M.	Personal study
9:30 A.M.	Proselyting
Noon	Lunch
1:00 P.M.	Proselyting
5:00 P.M.	Dinner
6:00 P.M.	Proselyting
9:30 P.M.	End proselyting; plan next day's activities
10:30 P.M.	Retire

- Teacher presentation Depending upon the mission and culture of the people, a missionary is expected to follow these additional rules:
1. Missionaries are asked to write to their parents once a week.
 2. Missionaries should not call their families or friends except when the mission president gives them permission.
 3. Missionaries give their mission president a weekly report and letter.
 4. Missionaries should not get into debt. They should use their money wisely and for things relating to their mission.
 5. Missionaries should not stay longer than an hour when they are invited to dinner, and they should use the time to motivate members in their missionary efforts.
 6. Missionaries are never to be alone with anyone of the opposite sex or have inappropriate associations with those of the opposite sex. They should not teach single members of the opposite sex unless an adult chaperon is present.
 7. Missionaries should not write to people who live in the mission boundaries.
 8. Missionaries are not to go outside their assigned areas without permission from the mission president.
 9. Missionaries must behave with dignity and keep their conversations free of debate and argument. They should read only literature authorized by the mission president. (See *Missionary Handbook*.)
- Quotation and discussion Read the following statement by Elder Gordon B. Hinckley: "Missionary work is rigorous. It is demanding. It is difficult. It has never been easy, and it never will be. It requires strength of body, strength of mind, strength of spirit" (Brian Kelly, "A Visit with Elder Gordon B. Hinckley about Missionary Work," *New Era*, June 1973, p. 31).
- Why do you think that these rules were given to missionaries?
 - What good things would come from having these rules?

Members Can Help Missionaries to Be Effective

- Teacher presentation Explain that missionaries have only a short time to devote to their missions. They must use each day to full advantage. They have invested a great deal in their missions—money,

the efforts of their families, years of training and preparation, time, and most important, themselves. As members, we can establish a proper relationship with missionaries and help them make the most of this investment. We can help them conquer the biggest challenge they face, that of forgetting themselves and losing themselves in their work.

Quotation

The following quotation explains how challenging it is for missionaries to lose themselves in their work.

“We all like comfort; yet industry is at the heart of missionary work. This has not changed since the time of the Savior. He said, ‘ . . . whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s the same shall save it.’ (Mark 8:35.) That is particularly true with missionary work. The greatest challenge has always been to go before the Lord in prayer and ask for strength and capacity and direction, and then go out and go to work. The Lord has declared: ‘If therefore thine eye be single [to my glory], thy whole body shall be full of light.’ (Matt. 6:22.) If a missionary works with an eye single to the glory of God, then the darkness goes out, the darkness of laziness, the darkness of sin, the darkness of procrastination, the darkness of fear, and these are all factors that influence missionary work” (Brian Kelly, “A Visit with Elder Gordon B. Hinckley,” p. 31).

Question and chalkboard discussion

- What can an LDS young woman do to help missionaries meet their responsibilities in their work for the Lord? List the young women’s suggestions on the chalkboard.

The young women may give some of the ideas found in the following quotation. If these are not mentioned, suggest them.

“We can introduce nonmember families and friends to the missionaries. We can also be careful not to infringe on the missionaries’ time. When we invite them to our homes for meals, we can serve them promptly. Then we can encourage them to leave and continue their work. We should not expect or allow them to help with dishes. We should not invite them to watch television with us. We can learn mission rules and help missionaries observe them.

“ . . . Young women should never be alone with a [male] missionary or encourage a close relationship with him. Young women should not correspond with or telephone missionaries in their area.

“As we all show respect for the missionaries and their callings, we will help them teach the gospel to others” (*The Latter-day Saint Woman, Part A*, p. 144).

Explain that young women can also encourage young men to serve missions. President Ezra Taft Benson said:

“[Young women] can have a positive influence in motivating young men to serve full-time missions. Let the young men of your acquaintance know that you expect them to assume their missionary responsibilities, that you personally want them to serve in the mission field, because you know that’s where the Lord wants them.

“Avoid steady dating with a young man prior to the time of his mission call. If your relationship with him is more casual, then he can make that decision to serve more easily and also can concentrate his full energies on his missionary work instead of the girlfriend back home” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1986, pp. 82–83).

Conclusion

Teacher presentation

Tell the young women that when Elder and Sister Vaughn J. Featherstone were on their mission in Texas, Sister Featherstone went to the Lord for help. She was so busy in the mission field that she could not find time for herself for even a few minutes a day. She prayed, “ Please, Heavenly Father, help me to find some time for myself while I am here.’ And she said that just as clear as anything in this world the words came into her mind, saying, ‘My daughter, this is not your time; this is my time’ ” (Vaughn J. Featherstone, in Conference Report, Oct. 1978, p. 34; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, p. 26).

Explain that missionaries are working for the Lord. No one has the right to take their attention away from that work. We need to treat missionaries with respect and friendliness, but also with formality. We can help missionaries live up to what is expected of them and share the gospel effectively with others.

Music

Conclude by having the young women sing “Called to Serve.”