

Serving Young Single Adults

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Getting Started

Messages from Leaders

Leader Resources

🏠 / [SERVING YOUNG SINGLE ADULTS](#) / [BISHOP'S RESPONSIBILITIES FOR YOUNG SINGLE ADULTS](#)

Bishop's Responsibilities for Young Single Adults

The First Presidency has requested that priesthood leaders “achieve better accountability for young single adults residing in their units. Efforts should be made to identify, locate, and assume shepherding responsibility for all young single adults” (First Presidency letter, April 10, 2009; see also First Presidency letter, October 3, 2006).

Handbook 2: Administering the Church suggests that the bishop has two basic roles with respect to assuming shepherding responsibility for young single adults:

- First, teach correct principles to leaders about identifying and locating individuals, and **hold assigned leaders, particularly at the ward or branch level, accountable to minister to (or shepherd) individual young single adults**. It is usually advisable to begin by strengthening active young single adults and then organizing them to invite their less-active peers to return to full activity (see *Handbook 2*: 16.3.5, “Finding and Inviting”).
- Second, appoint and counsel with leaders regarding the organization of programs and activities that will meet the needs and interests of young single adults in your ward and will help them associate with one another. “A central purpose of these activities is **to help young single adults find marriage partners and prepare to marry in the temple and raise righteous families**” (*Handbook 2*: 16.2, paragraph 3; emphasis added).

These two roles are discussed in more detail below.

1. Teach and hold ward leaders accountable for ministering to individual young single adults.

As you train and follow up with ward leaders about their roles with young single adults, consider the following:

- You work with the ward council to adapt approved programs and activities (see *Handbook 2*: 16.3.5) to meet the needs of young single adults. If you are the bishop of a conventional ward, you assign one of your counselors to work with a counselor from the elders quorum presidency and another from the Relief Society presidency to make recommendations to the ward council regarding programs and activities for young single adults (see *Handbook 2*: 16.3.3). If you are the bishop of a young single adult ward, you use the ward council to accomplish the same purposes.
- You “assign specific responsibility for tracking and reporting the attendance of young single adults to elders quorum and Relief Society presidents” (Priesthood Department notice, November 15, 2009). Become familiar with the new fields in the Quarterly Report that ask for accountability for young single adult attendance at Sunday elders quorum and Relief Society meetings; read more in *Using the Quarterly Report*. You may want to use that report regularly in your interviews with the elders quorum and Relief Society presidents, and you should invite them to share regular reports in the ward council about their efforts with individual young single adults. You can use that information to foster discussions about coordinating efforts to help specific individuals (see *Handbook 2*: 4.5–4.6).
- In your interviews with the stake president, you make regular reports “on the progress of young single adults” (see *Handbook 2*: 16.3.1, paragraph 2).

2. Organize opportunities for young single adults to associate with one another in learning and living the gospel.

The stake presidency has a particularly important role to set the framework for young single adult involvement in the Church. In many stakes, the best way to help young single adults to meet and get to know peers is by organizing service, social, and gospel-learning activities (see *Handbook 2*: 16.3.1, paragraph 1); these activities could be held on a stake level, on a ward level, with a combination of wards, or even on the multistake level (see *Handbook 2*: 13.3.1 and 16.3.6). *Handbook 2* gives the stake president and bishops the flexibility to recommend activities that include associations beyond your ward (see *Handbook 2*: 16.3.1, paragraph 4, and 16.3.5).

Most young single adults live in conventional (family) wards, but you may discuss with the stake president the organization of a young single adult ward or branch if that seems appropriate (see *Handbook 1*: 9.1.6 and *Handbook 2*: 16.3.1, paragraph 5). View a chart comparing these two organizational configurations. In deciding which organization configuration is best for the stake, a stake president may consider these factors:

- Do enough young single adults live close enough to one another (with adequate transportation) and with sufficient interest to form a young single adult ward or branch?
- Are the ages and interests of the young single adults sufficiently similar to make associating together appropriate?
- Do enough worthy married priesthood leaders live in the stake who would work well with young single adults to form a bishopric?

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