

WARD/BRANCH CONFERENCE GUIDELINES

Responsibilities Before Ward Conference

The *Ward Council* and *High Councilor* assigned to the ward will meet 5-6 weeks prior to ward/branch conference. The High Councilor will lead a 20-minute discussion to review these Ward Conference guidelines and help identify families that would benefit from a ministering visit. The ward leaders will arrange times for 1 or 2 visits per companionship immediately following the ward conference. At least one week prior to the ward conference the High Councilor will make necessary arrangements with the stake leaders who will participate. Every attempt should be made to book appointments in advance with those to be visited. If appointments fall through, stake and ward/branch leaders will prayerfully seek inspiration and make visits accordingly. The purpose of each visit should be discussed in advance (by those making the visit) and include an inspired invitation to come unto Christ. Visits scheduled for the Stake Presidency Counselors need to conclude before stake temple recommend interviews begin.

The *Stake Young Men Presidency*, *Young Women Presidency*, *Relief Society Presidency* and *Primary Presidency* could, at the bishopric's/branch presidency option and with the corresponding ward/branch leader, visit any families or individuals in the ward who would benefit from their visit (online if required or preferred).

The *stake organization leaders* will work with the Stake Presidency to coordinate the 2nd hour of the ward/branch conference. The *ward Primary Presidency* will organize singing time and classes as normal, though the Stake President would like to share a short message with the primary children at the beginning of primary opening exercises.

Leadership Report

Matters of greatest spiritual importance are difficult to measure. Love, prayer, repentance, forgiveness – these are only a few of the many principles of the gospel that cannot adequately be reflected in a statistical report.

Prayerfully ponder the following questions as you prepare for ward/branch conference:

- How does your leadership help members of the ward/branch increase their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?
- How does your leadership help strengthen parents and their families?
- What are the most significant spiritual and temporal challenges facing the various members of your ward/branch?
- How are you addressing these challenges and how do you know if you are succeeding?
- How can this conference help increase the faith and devotion of the Saints in your ward?

Each member of the ward/branch council, including each member of the bishopric/branch presidency and ward/branch clerks & executive secretary, should answer these questions individually. Answers should be brief, and each set of answers should fit easily onto one page. The ward/branch clerk compiles these answers together and sends them to the Stake Clerk markactuary@gmail.com at the latest two weeks prior to the ward conference. The ward/branch organizations should also send their report to the leader of their corresponding stake organization. The Stake Presidency would like to have some time to review these reports before the ward/branch conference.

Ward/Branch Officers Sustaining Form

Please review and prepare your Ward/Branch Officers Sustaining Form (available on LCR) in advance of the ward conference to make sure it is accurate and up to date. The stake clerk is available to assist where needed. The bishop/Branch President or ward/branch clerk will meet with the high councilor assigned to the ward/branch about one week prior to the ward/branch conference to review the pronunciation of names on the form. In addition to the form, add a page with a list of full time and service missionaries currently serving and missionaries who have been called to serve. Please provide a copy of the sustaining form for the stake president and the bishop/branch president to have at the sacrament meeting.

Bishopric/Branch Presidency Meeting

The Ward/Branch Conference – Bishopric/Branch Presidency Meeting starts 2 hours before the general ward conference session. This meeting will take about 30 minutes and should be attended by: The stake presidency, stake executive secretaries, stake clerk, the high councilor assigned to the ward/branch, and the bishopric/branch presidency, including ward/branch executive secretaries and the ward/branch clerk.

- Agenda**
- Ministering visits
 - Order of service
 - Ward Officers Sustaining Form

Ward/Branch Council Meeting

The Ward/Branch Conference – Ward/Branch Council Meeting starts 1.5 hours before the general ward/branch conference session. This meeting will take about 60 minutes and should be attended by those attending the Ward/Branch Conference Bishopric/Branch Presidency Meeting as well as all other ward/branch council members. This meeting gives opportunities for leaders to review the progress of individuals and organizations in the ward/branch. The high councilor will take notes of any action items from the meeting and will follow up accordingly.

- Agenda**
- Second Hour - Sunday School, Primary, Relief Society, Young Women, and Priesthood
 - Leadership reports

Ward/Branch Conference

Ward/Branch conference will be held in the normal sacrament meeting and will be presided over by the Stake President. This meeting will be in-person at the chapel and may be streamed online for members to view from their homes if they are unable to attend in person.

Order of Service

	Minutes	Running Total
• Prelude Music		
• Welcome and announcements by the member of the Bishopric conducting	2	2
• Opening Hymn	3	5
• Invocation (pre-assigned)	2	7
• Ward/Branch Business (This should be brief and include business which must be done on that day)	2	9
• Sustaining of Officers by the assigned High Councilor	6	15
• Sacrament Hymn	4	19
• Administration of the Sacrament	14	33
• Testimony by the Relief Society President	5	38
• Testimony by the Bishop/Branch President	5	43
• Talk by Stake President	12	55
• Closing Hymn	3	58
• Benediction (pre-assigned)	2	60

Attendance

Ward/Branch conference is a special opportunity for the ward to meet and hear from stake leaders. All ward/branch members should be invited and encouraged to attend in-person. Ministering brothers and sisters should be invited to extend invitations to those to whom they minister. Stake high councilors, stake organization leaders, stake executive secretaries, stake clerks, and the stake history specialist may also attend the conference.

Sunday School, Primary, Relief Society, Young Women, and Priesthood

Sunday school classes will not be held. The stake primary presidency would like to provide a spiritual message during singing time. Singing time and classes will follow the regular ward schedule (with messages from the stake primary presidency and the stake president). Relief Society, Elders Quorum, Young Women, and Young Men classes will be held separately, and instruction will be provided by the corresponding stake organization presidency. A counsellor in the Stake Presidency, with the assigned High Councilor, will instruct the Elders Quorum. The Stake President will briefly visit the primary to share a message, then will attend the Relief Society.