

WARD CONFERENCE GUIDELINES

Ministering Visits and Preparations for the Conference

The *ward council* and *high councilor* assigned to the ward meet 5 to 6 weeks prior to ward conference. The high councilor leads a 20-minute discussion to review these Ward Conference guidelines and help identify individuals or families that would benefit from a ministering visit. *The intent is for the bishopric to pair up with the stake presidency and for the ward organization presidents (Elders Quorum, Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary) to pair up with a corresponding stake leader.*

The ward leaders then 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 makes 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, ward and stake leaders 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 end before stake temple recommend interviews begin.

Stake organization leaders work with the stake presidency to coordinate the 2nd hour of the ward conference. The *ward Primary presidency* organizes singing time and classes as normal, with minor adjustments described on the next page.

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 be reflected adequately in a statistical report. Prayerfully ponder the following questions as you prepare for ward conference:

- How does your leadership help members of the ward 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?
- 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?

All members of the ward council should answer these questions individually, including each member of the bishopric, the ward clerk, and the ward executive secretary. Answers should be brief, and each person's answers should fit easily onto one page. The ward clerk compiles these answers and sends them to the assistant stake executive secretary at dpetla@gmail.com at least two weeks prior to the ward conference. The ward organization presidents should also send their report to the president of their corresponding stake organization. The stake presidency and others need time to review these reports before the ward conference.

Ward Officers Sustaining Form

Please review and prepare your Ward 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 or ward clerk meets with the high councilor assigned to the ward about one week prior to the ward 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, as well as missionaries who have been called to serve.

Bishopric Meeting

The Ward Conference - Bishopric 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, and the bishopric, including ward executive secretaries and the ward clerk.

- Agenda**
- Review of bishopric leadership reports
 - Children and youth
 - Work of salvation and exaltation

Ward Council Meeting

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

- Agenda**
- Ministering visits planning
 - Ward council leadership reports
 - Ministering/ministering interviews
 - Coordination meetings

Ward Conference

Ward conference will be held during the normal sacrament meeting time and will be presided over by the stake president. This meeting will be in person at the chapel and, like every sacrament meeting, should be streamed online for members to view from their homes if they are unable to attend in person. Note that there will be no intermediate hymn or musical number, so the ward music leader should be aware of this and should also be encouraged to select hymns that will preserve meeting time for the administration of the sacrament, the conduct of business, the two testimonies, and the talk by the stake president.

Order of Service

	Minutes	Cumulative Total
• Prelude music		
• Welcome and (brief) announcements by the member of the bishopric who is conducting	2	2
• Opening hymn	3	5
• Invocation (pre-assigned)	2	7
• Ward 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 (not a talk) by the Relief Society president	5	38
• Testimony (not a talk) by the bishop	5	43
• Talk by the stake president	12	55
• Closing hymn	3	58
• Benediction (pre-assigned)	2	60

Attendance

Ward conference is a special opportunity for the ward to meet and hear from stake leaders. All ward 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, Young Men, and Elders Quorum

Sunday School classes will not be held. Primary singing time and classes will follow the regular ward schedule. The stake president will briefly visit the Primary opening exercises to share a message, then will attend the Relief Society. The stake Primary presidency would also like to provide a spiritual message during singing time. Relief Society, Young Women, and Young Men classes will each 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.

Note: The same guidelines apply to branch conferences, with the obvious implied changes in nomenclature (e.g. *ward branch, bishop branch president, etc.*).