
Kent Washington Stake

**Aaronic
Priesthood
Activity
Guide**

December 2014

Dear Bishops, Bishop's Counselors and all brethren called to serve the Young Men of the Kent Washington Stake (Young Men Presidents, Counselors, Advisors, Scouting Leaders, etc.)

This document has been prepared as an overview and summary of selected policies and guidelines provided by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints pertaining to activities in general as well as to activities engaged in by the Young Men of the Aaronic Priesthood in particular. The information provided herein is summarized from chapters 8 and 13 of "Handbook 2: Administering the Church" to assist in preparation and service within the kingdom. This document in no way is meant to replace the original sources but is intended to serve as a ready reference to summarize and highlight selected key policies and guidelines. References to the sections of the source document where the policies are found are provided in the parenthetical expression at the end of the line. All leaders of young men are encouraged to read and study the official Church literature.

The document is divided into sections by particular application and subject matter. The document can be read in its entirety or used as a quick-guide, ready-reference for individual callings or responsibilities. We hope that this will be useful for the newly called as well as the experienced leader. We anticipate that it will expedite the time required to research the many important policies and guidelines and will serve to help standardize the Young Men's programs of the Kent Stake.

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Purposes of Church Activities

Church Activities in General

- Church activities should be planned to fulfill gospel-centered purposes. (13.1)
 - Activities...bring Church members together as “fellowcitizens with the saints” (Ephesians 2:19). (13.1)
 - In addition to providing fun and entertainment, activities should build testimonies, strengthen families, and foster unity and personal growth. (13.1)
 - Activities strengthen members by giving them a sense of belonging and mutual support. (13.1)
 - Activities should help members feel connected to others their age, to their leaders, and to their families. (13.1)
 - Activities should also help members see how living the gospel brings “the joy of the saints” (Enos 1:3). (13.1)
 - Leaders ensure that activities strengthen the family rather than compete with it. (13.2.2)
 - Leaders also ensure that activities do not become so numerous that they put undue burdens on members. (13.2.2)
 - Activities should support parents by teaching their children to be faithful followers of Christ. (13.2.2)
 - Those who plan activities should make a special effort to reach out to new members, less-active members, youth, single adults, people with disabilities, and people of other faiths. (13.2.3)
 - Leaders should be sensitive to any special circumstances of participants, such as physical limitations, family concerns, and cultural and language differences. (13.2.3)
 - Church activities should follow and teach Church standards. (13.2.4)
 - All activities should be opened and, when appropriate, closed with prayer. (13.6.16)
 - In addition to the general purposes mentioned above, other activities with gospel-centered purposes include:
 - Participating in service projects that bless others and build community relationships. (13.1)
 - Developing talents and appreciation for cultural arts. (13.1)
 - Improving fitness and learning sportsmanship. (13.1)
 - Gaining education and vocational training. (13.1)
 - Celebrating special occasions and commemorating Church or local historical events. (13.1)
 - Developing leadership skills. (13.1)
 - Developing self-reliance. (13.1)
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- Participating in missionary work, retention, activation, temple work, and family history work. (13.1)

Aaronic Priesthood–Related Activities

- Parents have the first responsibility for the spiritual and physical welfare of their children (see D&C 68:25–28). (8.2)
 - The bishopric and other Aaronic Priesthood leaders support but do not replace parents in this responsibility. They offer support in the following ways: (8.2)
 - They assist parents in helping their sons prepare for priesthood ordinations, the temple endowment, full-time missionary service, temple marriage, and fatherhood. (8.2)
 - They encourage communication between young men and their parents. (8.2)
 - They ensure that quorum activities and other youth events do not put undue burdens on families or compete with family activities. (8.2)
 - Leaders should be especially sensitive to young men who come from homes that lack strong support for gospel living. (8.2)
 - Quorum leaders and quorum advisers plan activities based on the needs and interests of quorum members. (8.13)
 - They make a special effort to reach out to all young men, including those who have recently joined the Church and those who are less active. (8.13)
 - Activities may help young men accomplish their goals in the Duty to God program. (8.13)
 - Quorum leaders should participate as much as possible in planning and carrying out activities. (8.13)
 - Plans for quorum activities should be approved by a member of the bishopric and should follow the guidelines in chapter 13 of "Handbook 2: Administering the Church." (8.13)
 - Scouting should help young men put into practice the gospel principles they learn on Sunday. (8.13.4)
 - Quorum advisers and assistant advisers teach leadership skills and qualities as they:
 - Work with quorum presidencies and the bishopric youth committee (8.14)
 - Help young men plan and carry out activities (8.14)
 - Help young men give service together (8.14)
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Plan Activities with A Purpose

General Guidelines

- Careful planning is necessary to ensure that activities accomplish gospel-centered purposes and meet the needs of those who participate. (13.2.1)
- Before planning an activity, leaders consider the spiritual and temporal needs of members. (13.2.1)
- Leaders seek the guidance of the Spirit to determine what kind of activity would help meet those needs. (13.2.1)
- Aaronic Priesthood Quorum leaders work with their Ward Young Men's Presidency and other adult advisors to help plan and carry out quorum activities, including Mutual. (8.3.4 and 8.9.3)
- Those who plan activities strive to have participants be actively involved, since participating is usually more beneficial than just observing. One way to encourage participation is to have members use their gifts, skills, and talents in the activity. (13.2.3)
- The ward Young Men Presidency discusses the effectiveness of quorum activities and ways to include young men in planning meaningful activities. (8.9.4)
- Church activities should be planned as far in advance as reasonable. (13.2.7)
- [Church activities] should be included on the ward calendar. (13.2.7)
- Leaders should keep parents informed of activities for children and youth. (13.2.7)
- Planning a yearly calendar helps leaders achieve a balance of...activities without creating excessive demands on members' time. (13.2.6)

Mutual

General Guidelines

- Most quorum activities occur during...Mutual. (8.13.1)
 - The term Mutual suggests shared experiences in which there is mutual respect and support for one another and opportunities to learn together. (8.13.1)
 - Mutual activities should provide youth with a variety of opportunities to serve others and to develop spiritually, socially, physically, and intellectually. (8.13.1)
 - The Young Men presidency, under the direction of the bishopric, oversees Mutual for young men. (8.13.1)
 - Young Men and Young Women presidencies may use Mutual activities to prepare for stake or multistake activities (see 13.3). (8.13.1)
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Opening Exercises

- Mutual usually begins with brief opening exercises presided over by a member of the bishopric. (8.13.1)
- The bishop's priests quorum assistants and members of the Laurel class presidency take turns conducting. Adult leaders prepare youth leaders for this responsibility. (8.13.1)
- Each year, the First Presidency announces a theme for Mutual. Leaders emphasize this theme in Mutual opening exercises and in other youth activities. (8.13.1)

Quorum or Combined Activities

- Following opening exercises, Aaronic Priesthood quorums and Young Women classes generally hold separate activities. (8.13.1)
- Combined activities for all young men and young women are normally held once a month. (8.13.1)
- Members of the bishopric youth committee schedule, plan, and review these activities in their meetings. (8.13.1)
- The activities are carried out under the direction of the bishopric. (8.13.1)
- Some examples of appropriate activities are service projects, music, dance, drama, cultural events, sports or athletic events, career exploration, and outdoor activities. (8.13.1)

Ward Youth Conferences

- Ward youth conferences are planned and carried out by the bishopric youth committee, under the direction of the bishopric. (13.4)
 - The purposes of youth conferences are to help youth build faith in Jesus Christ, strengthen their testimonies, develop talents, make new friends, and have fun with youth who share similar beliefs and standards. Youth can also learn leadership skills as they assist in planning youth conferences. (13.4)
 - The bishopric obtains the stake presidency's approval of plans for a ward youth conference. (13.4)
 - Youth conferences are to be funded from the stake or ward budget. Members should not be asked to pay for youth conferences. (13.4)
 - As leaders and youth plan a youth conference, they should observe the policies in...[Chapter] 13.4.
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Funding for Activities

Funding for Activities

- Funding for Aaronic Priesthood activities, including Scouting activities where they are authorized by the Church, should come from the ward budget (see 13.2.8). (8.13.7)
- Leaders ensure that expenses for activities are in accordance with the current budget and finance policies of the Church. (13.2.8)
- Most activities should be simple and have little or no cost. Expenditures must be approved by the...bishopric before they are incurred. (13.2.8)
- Stake and ward budget funds should be used to pay for all activities, programs, and supplies. Members should not pay fees to participate. Nor should they provide materials, supplies, rental or admission fees, or long-distance transportation at their own expense. Activities in which members provide food may be held if doing so does not place undue burdens on them. (13.2.8)
- [A] possible exception to the funding policy in the preceding paragraph [is if] the ward budget does not have sufficient funds to pay for [one annual extended Scout camp or similar activity for young men.] [In this case,] leaders may ask participants to pay for part or all of [it]. (13.2.8)
- If funds from participants are not sufficient, the bishop may authorize one group fund-raising activity annually that complies with the guidelines in 13.6.8. (13.2.8)
- In no case should the expenses or travel for an annual camp or similar activity be excessive. Nor should the lack of personal funds prohibit a member from participating. (13.2.8)
- For guidelines about funding travel that is associated with activities, see 13.6.24. (13.2.8)

Funding for an Annual Camp or Similar Activity

- If the ward budget does not have sufficient funds to pay for an annual extended Scout camp or similar activity for young men, leaders may ask participants to pay for part or all of it. If funds from participants are not sufficient, the bishop may authorize one group fund-raising activity annually that complies with the guidelines in 13.6.8. (8.13.7)
- In no case should the expenses or travel for an annual camp or similar activity be excessive. Nor should the lack of personal funds prohibit a member from participating. (8.13.7)

Funding for Equipment and Supplies

- If possible, equipment and supplies that the ward needs for annual youth camps are purchased with ward budget funds. If these funds are not sufficient, the bishop may authorize one group fund-raising activity annually that complies with the guidelines in 13.6.8. (8.13.7 and 13.2.9)
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- Equipment and supplies purchased with Church funds, whether from the ward budget or a fund-raising activity, are for Church use only. They are not for the personal use of individuals or families. (8.13.7 and 13.2.9)
- Church funds may not be used to purchase uniforms for individuals. (8.13.7 and 13.2.9)

Fund-Raising Activities

- Fund-raising activities are not usually approved because expenses for stake and ward activities are paid with budget funds. As an exception, a...bishop may authorize one group fund-raising activity each year. Such an activity may be held to raise funds for the following purposes only:
 1. To help pay the cost of one annual camp or similar activity as outlined in 13.2.8. (13.6.8)
 2. To help purchase equipment that the unit needs for annual camps as outlined in 13.2.9. (13.6.8)
 - If a fund-raising activity is held, it should provide a meaningful value or service. It should be a positive experience that builds unity. (13.6.8)
 - Contributions to fund-raising activities are voluntary. Priesthood leaders should take special care to ensure that members do not feel obligated to contribute. (13.6.8)
 - Stakes and wards that sponsor fund-raising activities should not advertise or solicit beyond their boundaries. Nor should they sell products or services door to door. (13.6.8)
 - Examples of fund-raising activities that are not approved include:
 1. Activities that would be taxable.
 2. Activities completed with paid labor, either by employees or by contract.
 3. Entertainment for which the stake or ward pays performers for their services, when admission is charged, and when the intent of the activity is to raise funds.
 4. The sale of commercial goods or services, including food storage items.
 5. Games of chance, such as raffles, lotteries, and bingo. (13.6.8)
 - The Friends of Scouting fund drive in the United States will continue as a separate, voluntary solicitation. (13.6.8)
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Scouting

- Where Scouting is authorized by the Church, quorums may participate in Scouting activities during Mutual. (8.13.4)
 - Scouting should help young men put into practice the gospel principles they learn on Sunday. (8.13.4)
 - Each member of the bishopric oversees the Scouting program for the Aaronic Priesthood quorum he oversees. Members of the ward Young Men presidency generally serve as Scout leaders. Or the bishopric may call assistant quorum advisers as Scout leaders, with members of the Young Men presidency called to serve as assistant Scout leaders. (8.13.4)
 - In each quorum, the bishop usually appoints the quorum president or one of his assistants in the priests quorum to serve as the youth leader of the Scouting program. However, he may appoint other young men as youth Scout leaders. (8.13.4)
 - Where Scouting is authorized by the Church, young men ages 12 to 15 should be registered. Young men ages 16 and 17 should be registered if they are pursuing rank advancements or if the stake president or bishop chooses to sponsor Scouting programs for young men of this age. (8.13.4)
 - All adult Scout leaders should register before they begin their service and should receive proper training in their responsibilities. In the United States, registered adult leaders receive liability protection from the Boy Scouts of America. (8.13.4)
 - The Church pays all of the fees for registering young men and adult leaders in Scouting. The Church also pays for unit chartering. The Church provides these funds in addition to the budget allowance. (8.13.4)
 - The bishopric organizes a ward Scout committee to ensure that Scouting functions properly as a supporting activity for Aaronic Priesthood quorums. (8.13.4)
 - Where there are few young men, a Scout troop may be organized to serve multiple wards and branches or, in some instances, an entire stake or district. (8.13.4)
 - For information about financing Scouting, see 8.13.7. (8.13.4)
 - For additional information about Scouting, see the Church's Scouting Handbook (https://www.lds.org/bc/content/shared/english/young-men/35814_scout-handbook_eng.pdf?lang=eng). (8.13.4) Another excellent resource is www.ldsbsa.org (LDS-BSA Relations).
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Sports

- Church sports activities provide opportunities for wholesome physical activity, fellowship, and sportsmanship. (13.6.21)
- The emphasis in Church sports is on participation, sportsmanship, and skill development, not competition. All team members should have regular opportunities to play. (13.6.21)
- Participants in Church-sponsored sports activities do not need to be Church members. However, they should live in the stake's boundaries and agree to follow Church standards and policies. (13.6.21)
- Please refer to Section 13.6.21 for more information regarding Church sports.

Adult Supervision

- Supervision by an adequate number of responsible adults should be provided for activities for children, youth, and young single adults. (13.6.2)
- The number of adults needed is determined by the size of the group, the skill level of the group (for activities requiring certain skills), anticipated environmental conditions, and the overall degree of challenge of the activity. (13.6.2)
- Parents should be encouraged to help. (13.6.2)

Parental Permission

- Parents or guardians should be informed and give consent when youth participate in a Church activity. (13.6.13)
 - Written consent is necessary if an activity involves travel outside the local area (as determined by local leaders) or staying overnight. (13.6.13)
 - Leaders may also request written consent for other activities when they feel it is appropriate. (13.6.13)
 - Parents and guardians give this consent by signing the Parental or Guardian Permission and Medical Release form. (13.6.13)
 - The person who leads the activity should have a signed form for each participant for each activity that requires written consent. (13.6.13) A Parental or Guardian Permission and Medical Release form is available at the end of this document or is available online at ldscatalog.com and LDS.org; or item number 33810. A copy of the form can also be accessed on the Kent Stake Young Men/Aaronic Priesthood website (www.kentstakeymap.org) – click on “Docs & Forms” and then “Church Related.” The Kent Stake Young Men/Aaronic Priesthood website has many other forms and timely information that can be a tremendous resource and assist adult leaders and youth.
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Safety

- Church units may not sponsor...activities that have a high risk of injury or illness or that require unusual expense or travel (see 13.6.20 and 13.6.24). (13.6.25)
- Activities should involve minimal risk of injury or illness to participants. Activities should also involve minimal risk of damage to property. (13.6.20)
- During activities, leaders make every effort to ensure safety. (13.6.20)
- By planning effectively and following safety precautions, leaders can minimize the risk of accidents. (13.6.20)
- Activities should include appropriate training and proper supervision. (13.6.20)
- [Activities] should also be appropriate for the participants' age and maturity. (13.6.20)
- Leaders should be prepared for emergencies that may occur. They should also know in advance how to contact local law enforcement and emergency services. (13.6.20)
- Leaders should also be familiar with the accident response and reporting guidelines outlined in Section 13.6.20.

Travel

- Members who travel in Church-sponsored groups should have the approval of the bishop or stake president. Travel for activities should not place undue burdens on members. (13.6.24)
 - Long-distance travel for activities is discouraged. If a stake president or bishop feels that such travel may be justified, he prayerfully considers the potential spiritual benefits of the activity, the cost of the travel, and the effect on families before approving it. (13.6.24)
 - If long-distance travel for an activity is approved, members should not provide it at their own expense. Nor should significant portions of the stake or ward budget allowance be retained from one year to the next to cover travel expenses. (13.6.24)
 - Leaders fill out an Activity Plan form for activities that involve travel outside the local area. (13.6.24) A copy of the form can also be accessed on the Kent Stake Young Men/Aaronic Priesthood website (www.kentstakeymap.org) – click on “Docs & Forms” and then “Church Related.”
 - When a Church activity for youth involves travel outside the local vicinity or staying overnight, parents should give written permission for their children to participate (see 13.6.13). Responsible adult supervision must be provided (see 13.6.2). (13.6.24)
 - When feasible, Church groups should use commercial transportation that is licensed and is protected by liability insurance. (13.6.24)
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- When Church groups travel in private passenger vehicles, each vehicle should be in safe operating condition, and each person should use a seat belt. Each driver should be a licensed, responsible adult. All vehicles and drivers should be covered with reasonable amounts of automobile liability insurance. (13.6.24)

Personal Liability Insurance

- Where possible, those who oversee activities should protect themselves by carrying reasonable amounts of liability insurance. (13.6.2)
- Such insurance may be available through homeowners insurance or other policies. (13.6.2)

Sabbath Day Observance

- No Church–sponsored sports events (such as games, practices, or travel) or recreational events (such as camping or hiking) are to be scheduled on Sunday. Nor should youth groups and others travel to or from camps or youth conferences on Sunday. (13.6.19)
 - When security risks or travel costs are serious issues, leaders can schedule some youth activities on Sunday. Such activities should be separate from the Sunday meeting schedule and in keeping with the spirit of the Sabbath. (13.6.19)
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THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS	Parental or Guardian Permission and Medical Release	
	Activity	Date
Ward	Stake	
Participant	Date of birth	Home telephone number
Participant's parent or guardian	Business telephone number	
Address	City	State/Province
Medical Information		
Does the participant have any of the following:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Special diet <input type="checkbox"/> Allergies <input type="checkbox"/> Medication <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic/Recurring illness <input type="checkbox"/> Surgery or a serious illness in the past year <input type="checkbox"/> Physical conditions that limit activity		
If yes, explain below. Use back if more space is needed.		
I give permission for my child/youth to participate in the activity listed above and authorize the adult leaders supervising this activity to administer emergency treatment to the above-named participant for any accident or illness and to act in my stead in approving necessary medical care. This authorization shall cover this activity and travel to and from this activity.		
Parent or guardian's signature		Date

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THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS	Parental or Guardian Permission and Medical Release	
	Activity	Date
Ward	Stake	
Participant	Date of birth	Home telephone number
Participant's parent or guardian	Business telephone number	
Address	City	State/Province
Medical Information		
Does the participant have any of the following:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Special diet <input type="checkbox"/> Allergies <input type="checkbox"/> Medication <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic/Recurring illness <input type="checkbox"/> Surgery or a serious illness in the past year <input type="checkbox"/> Physical conditions that limit activity		
If yes, explain below. Use back if more space is needed.		
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