



**SERVICE  
MISSIONARY**  
*Handbook*



SERVICE MISSIONARY  
*Handbook*

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

I am a service missionary for The Church of Jesus Christ  
of Latter-day Saints.

I started my mission on \_\_\_\_\_  
and plan to serve for \_\_\_\_\_ months.

My service assignment(s)

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My parents or guardians \_\_\_\_\_

*Phone number* \_\_\_\_\_

*Email* \_\_\_\_\_

My bishop \_\_\_\_\_

*Phone number* \_\_\_\_\_

*Email* \_\_\_\_\_

My stake president \_\_\_\_\_

My service mission leader \_\_\_\_\_

*Phone number* \_\_\_\_\_

*Email* \_\_\_\_\_

My assignment supervisor(s) \_\_\_\_\_

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## Introduction

The Lord has said, “Therefore, if ye have desires to serve God ye are called to the work” (Doctrine and Covenants 4:3). You have the privilege of dedicating this period of your life to serving the Lord as a service missionary. In this calling, you will have opportunities to give service that will bless other people, your own life, your family, the Church, and the organizations where you serve.

This handbook outlines the basic standards and guiding principles for your service. Refer to it regularly and review the standards and principles. Bring it to all interviews with your priesthood leader.

## Note to Priesthood Leaders

For some service missionaries, it may be necessary to adjust some of the guidelines in this handbook. As directed by the Spirit, counsel with the missionary and his or her parents or guardians about which adjustments to make, if any. Record these in “My Modifications” on page 29.

You and the service missionary should also review, agree to, and sign “My Mission Commitment” on page 30.

In this handbook the terms *stake president*, *bishop*, *stake*, and *ward* apply also to district presidents, branch presidents, districts, and branches.



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## Your Calling

Each of us is sent to earth with different capabilities and talents. With your unique abilities, you can make a meaningful contribution to God's work on the earth. By faithfully serving as a service missionary, you will dedicate your time to the Lord.

*“That every man may improve upon his talent, that every man may gain other talents, yea, even an hundred fold” (Doctrine and Covenants 82:18).*

“In fulfilling its purpose to help individuals and families qualify for exaltation, the Church focuses on divinely appointed responsibilities. These include helping members live the gospel of Jesus Christ, gathering Israel through missionary work, caring for the poor and needy, and enabling the salvation of the dead by building temples and performing vicarious ordinances” (*Handbook 2: Administering the Church* [2010], 2.2).

The work in which you are engaged as a missionary contributes to these divinely appointed responsibilities. Service missionaries:

- Follow the example of Jesus Christ.
- Render meaningful service.
- Study and pray.
- Build life skills.

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- You are expected to maintain the highest standards of conduct and appearance by keeping the commandments and following the counsel of your local priesthood leaders, your parents or guardians, and your supervisors.

You will be called to serve in one or more assignments.

As you serve and obey with a willing heart (see Doctrine and Covenants 64:34), you will show the Lord your love for Him, earn the trust and confidence of others, and continue to qualify for the companionship of the Holy Ghost (see John 14:15–17, 21; 1 Nephi 10:17; Doctrine and Covenants 121:45–46).



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## Missionary Organization

### Stake President

The stake president is your ecclesiastical leader during your mission, sets the spiritual and behavioral expectations, and conducts worthiness interviews throughout your mission. He may delegate the responsibility to help oversee your mission service to one of his counselors, a high councilor, a stake service mission specialist, or your bishop.

The stake president or the priesthood leader he designates will provide guidance and support during your mission. This person conducts regular interviews to assist with your well-being and progress, counsel about life skills development, and review your missionary experience. Bring this handbook to the interviews. During these interviews, discuss your testimony of the Savior. Also report on your service accomplishments, personal development, gospel study, and adherence to the mission guidelines in this handbook.

*“It is wisdom in me; therefore, a commandment I give unto you, that ye shall organize yourselves and appoint every man his stewardship” (Doctrine and Covenants 104:11).*

***Additional scriptures:***  
Doctrine and Covenants 104:12; 136:2–3, 15–16

*“If you go on a mission . . . with lightness and frivolity in your hearts, looking for this and that, and to learn what is in the world, . . . you will go and return in vain. . . . Let your minds be centered on your missions”* (Discourses of Brigham Young, sel. John A. Widtsoe [1954], 325).

***Additional scriptures:***

2 Nephi 4:30–35;  
Alma 17:2–3;  
Doctrine and  
Covenants 39:1–13;  
50:26–29; 58:26–33;  
64:34

## Service Mission Leaders

An Area Seventy, under the direction of the Area Presidency, will call service mission leaders (usually a Church-service missionary couple) to help oversee the mission experience for each service missionary.

## Missionary Conduct

Strive to serve the Lord according to the highest standards of obedience and conduct. Keep your words, thoughts, and actions in harmony with the message of His gospel. Dating is not permitted for service missionaries. Righteous conduct will influence your effectiveness as a missionary and your personal salvation. Your conduct

also affects the trust and confidence others have in you. Conduct yourself at all times in such a way that everyone who sees you will recognize you as a representative of Jesus Christ.

## Performance

You may serve in more than one place. At each location, you will report to a supervisor who will provide the training, tools, and support you need to fulfill your responsibilities.

Arrive at your place of assignment on time and prepared to serve well. Be reliable and dependable. Follow directions from your supervisors carefully and completely. Do your best to contribute in meaningful ways to the work and to be a positive and uplifting influence on those with whom you serve. Work safely and always strive to improve.

## Language

Language is one of your most powerful tools. Be conscious of how you speak, and strive for humility, dignity, and simplicity in your language. When praying, express your respect for Heavenly Father by using the proper language

*“He that speaketh, whose spirit is contrite, whose language is meek and edifieth, the same is of God if he obey mine ordinances”* (Doctrine and Covenants 52:16).

*“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers”* (Ephesians 4:29).

***Additional scriptures:***  
Proverbs 15:2; Isaiah 50:4; 1 Corinthians 15:33; Colossians 4:6; James 1:26; 3:1–13; Doctrine and Covenants 90:11; Moses 6:6; 7:13

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of prayer (“Thee,” “Thou,” “Thine,” and so on). Always pray using words that show love and reverence.

Also express respect for others by the way you refer to them. Refer to other missionaries as “Elder” or “Sister,” followed by their surnames. Address those with whom you work by their proper names, not by nicknames or surnames alone. Address your group and Church leaders by their titles, such as “President,” “Bishop,” “Brother,” “Elder,” or “Sister.”

## Service Missionary Appearance

Appropriate dress and grooming will help you earn respect and trust. Your appearance is often the first message others receive about you, and it should support what you say and do. Wear clothing that is consistent with your sacred calling.



Keep yourself neat and clean. Shower or bathe daily. Use deodorant. Keep your clothes clean, mended, and wrinkle free. Never allow your appearance or behavior to draw attention away from your calling.

Maintain a high standard of modesty. Avoid clothing that:

- Is too tight or too loose.
- Is sheer or revealing in any way.
- Draws attention to any part of the body.
- Is wrinkled, sloppy, or faddish.

*“Thou shalt not be proud in thy heart; let all thy garments be plain, and . . . let all things be done in cleanliness before me” (Doctrine and Covenants 42:40–41; see also Alma 1:27).*



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Some service missionaries serve in assignments where dresses or suits and ties are not appropriate. Missionaries should wear clothing that is appropriate for their assignments.

Show respect for the Lord and yourself by dressing appropriately for Church meetings and activities, especially sacrament meeting.

## Elders

**Hair.** Wash your hair frequently and keep it relatively short and evenly tapered. Extreme or faddish styles, such as spiked, permed, or bleached hair, are not appropriate. Sideburns should reach no lower than the middle of the ear. You should shave every day.

**Jewelry.** Do not wear earrings or necklaces. Nose rings and body piercings are not acceptable. If you have tattoos, they should be covered.

**Clothing.** Choose traditional business-style clothing in conservative colors. Always wear a white shirt with a tie that is simple in color and design and professional in style. Ties should not have pictures or caricatures.

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## Sisters

**Hair.** Wash your hair frequently. The style, color, and length of your hair should be attractive and easy to manage and should not call attention to itself.

**Clothing.** Keep your clothes clean, mended, and ironed. Plan and purchase your clothing carefully. It should be attractive, colorful, conservative in style, and tailored to fit well. Choose colors and patterns that you can mix and match with a variety of outfits.

Do not wear clothing with low necklines. Sleeves should fully cover the shoulder and the upper portion of the arm, including the underarm. Shirts with cap sleeves should not be worn alone, but they may be worn under blouses or tops.

Skirts should cover the entire knee (front and back) when you are standing or sitting. Slits should not be above the knee when standing or sitting.

**Shoes.** Shoes should be practical, comfortable, and attractive. For safety purposes, wear closed-toe and closed-heel shoes. Flat-soled shoes are preferred. Wear dress shoes for Sunday meetings.

**Accessories.** For safety and security reasons, jewelry and other accessories should be simple and professional. Do not wear more than one earring in each ear. Nose rings and body piercings are not acceptable. If you have tattoos, they should be covered. Makeup, hair adornments, and nail polish should also be conservative.

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## Missionary Badge

It is an honor and a privilege to wear the missionary badge. Always wear it while you are at your missionary assignment and at Church meetings. Do not wear it at other times.

## Temple Garment

*(For those who are endowed)*

Wearing the temple garment is the sacred privilege of those who have taken upon themselves the covenants of the temple. The garment is a constant reminder of these covenants. When properly worn, it provides protection against temptation and evil.

Endowed members should wear the garment night and day, according to the instructions given in the endowment. You should not adjust the garment or wear it contrary to instructions in order to fit different styles of clothing, even when such clothing may be generally accepted. Both pieces of the two-piece garment should always be worn.

You should not remove the garment, either entirely or partially, for activities that can reasonably be done with the garment worn properly under the clothing. Nor should you remove it to lounge around at home. When you must remove the garment, you should put it back on as soon as possible.

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The garment should never be left on the floor. When garments need to be washed, they should be placed in a laundry basket or bag until they can be properly washed and dried.

As you carefully follow these principles, you will be guided by the Holy Spirit in considering your personal commitment to wear the garment. This sacred covenant is between you and the Lord. The proper wearing of the garment is an outward expression of your inner commitment to follow the Savior Jesus Christ.



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## Schedule and Planning

Together with your parents or guardians and stake president, make a general written schedule, including your time on assignment and your off-assignment hours. Review and follow your plan each day. Your daily schedule and activities should be adjusted to fit your individual circumstances, abilities, and assignments.

A sample daily schedule is provided on page 27. Working with your parents or guardians and your priesthood leader, fill out the blank schedule on page 28.

*“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven”*  
(Ecclesiastes 3:1).

***Additional scriptures:***  
Psalm 89:47; Doctrine and Covenants 60:13; 75:3; 88:124

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## Personal Study

Invest an hour every day in gospel study. Focus your study on the scriptures, especially the Book of Mormon. Personal study will increase your knowledge of the restored gospel and strengthen your testimony of the Savior and His Atonement.

Use the format that best meets your circumstances. This could include print, audio, or video formats. Report on your progress in your regular interviews.



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## Leader Communication

Email your stake president, bishop, operation supervisors, and parents or guardians an update of your mission experience each month. Include items such as recent successes and challenges, gospel study progress, personal development, and commitment and feelings about serving the Lord. If this type of reporting is not possible, use an alternate method, such as a simple checklist. Your stake president or another priesthood leader he designates can make adjustments as needed.

## Keeping a Journal

Keep a journal of your life during your mission. You can decide whether to maintain your journal in print, digital, or another format. Record your feelings and special experiences from your mission so you can refer to them and remember them in the future.

*“Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same”* (Doctrine and Covenants 1:38).

*“Treasure up in your minds continually the words of life, and it shall be given you in the very hour that portion that shall be meted unto every man”* (Doctrine and Covenants 84:85).

### ***Additional scriptures:***

John 5:39; 2 Nephi 32:3; Mosiah 1:6–7; Doctrine and Covenants 1:37; 26:1; 88:77, 118; 90:11; Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:37

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## Off-Assignment Time

When not serving in your mission assignment, take care of your personal needs, such as washing and ironing clothes and getting a haircut. Clean your living space daily as needed (see Doctrine and Covenants 42:41–42; 90:18). Use this time to prepare so you can give full attention to your service during your assigned work hours.

Schedule time to provide service to your family, ward, stake, or community during your off-assignment hours. Other appropriate activities could include doing family history research or indexing and attending the temple.

Your local priesthood leaders may give you a ward or stake calling if it does not interfere with your mission assignment. You may also serve as a ministering brother or sister.

*“See that all these things are done in wisdom and order; for it is not requisite that a man should run faster than he has strength. And again, it is expedient that he should be diligent, that thereby he might win the prize; therefore, all things must be done in order” (Mosiah 4:27).*

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## Sunday Meetings

Attend regular Sunday meetings (sacrament meeting, Sunday School, and priesthood meeting or Relief Society) and stake conference. Participate in broadcasts of general conference.

## Fasting

Generally, you should fast once each month. You may occasionally fast for a special reason, but do not fast for more than 24 hours at a time. When limited by health conditions, fast only as appropriate for your circumstances.

## Temple Attendance

When a temple is accessible, attend often and perform proxy ordinances. Unendowed missionaries are encouraged to perform baptisms for the dead. Endowed missionaries may perform initiatory ordinances, endowments, and sealings as a child or witness. Include regular temple attendance when planning your schedule (see page 28).

*“And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day” (Doctrine and Covenants 59:9).*

## Entertainment

### Games, Movies, and Television

Activities during your off-assignment time, such as video games, movies, and television, are acceptable with the approval of your stake president. Such activities should not interfere with your personal preparation, study, or service time. Avoid anything that detracts from the Spirit. You should not wear your missionary badge during these times.

### Ward and Institute Attendance

Attend your home ward or the young single adult ward in your area during your mission. You are also encouraged to participate in institute classes and activities. In addition, you may participate in young single adult activities sponsored by your ward or stake, such as family home evening activities, temple trips, devotionals, games, and picnics. Dating is not permitted for service missionaries.

*“O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind and strength, that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day. . . .*

*“And faith, hope, charity and love, with an eye single to the glory of God, qualify him for the work” (Doctrine and Covenants 4:2, 5).*

#### **Additional scriptures:**

Deuteronomy 4:29;  
Matthew 6:24;  
John 17:15–16;  
Titus 2:12; James 4:4; Doctrine and Covenants 53:2–3; 88:67–68; 133:5, 7, 14

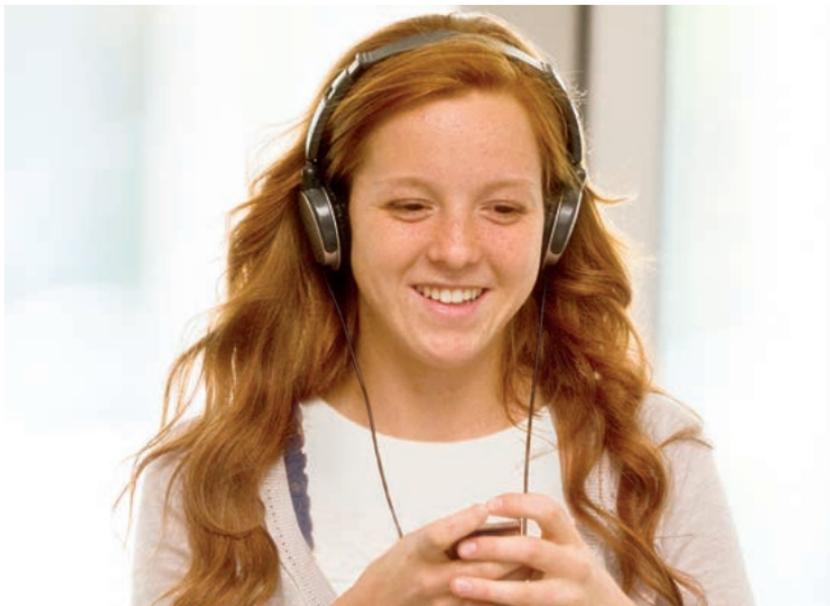
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## Cultural and Recreational Activities

Cultural and recreational activities that you participate in during off-assignment hours should be wholesome and uplifting.

### Music

Listen to music that is consistent with your sacred calling. Music should invite the Spirit, help you focus on the work, and direct your thoughts and feelings to the Savior. Do not listen to music that encourages immorality, glorifies violence, uses offensive language, or dulls your spiritual sensitivity through its beat, instrumentation, volume, lyrics, or intensity.



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## Electronic and Computer Equipment

All use of electronic devices and media, including cell phones and computers, should be in harmony with gospel principles. It should not detract in any way from the spirit and calling of your mission. Avoid anything that is vulgar, immoral, violent, or pornographic. Refrain from using your cell phone during your service assignment hours.

*“And go ye out from among the wicked. Save yourselves. Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord” (Doctrine and Covenants 38:42).*

## Pornography

Pornography is a transgression of God’s commandments. It drives away the Spirit, leads to other transgressions, and is highly addictive. Strictly avoid situations in which you might read, see, or hear pornographic material. Protect yourself, your family, and other missionaries from this spiritually destructive danger.

## The Law of Chastity

You are expected to strictly obey the law of chastity, which forbids sexual conduct of any kind outside of marriage between husband and wife.

God has commanded that sexual intimacy be reserved for marriage. His standard regarding sexual purity is clear and unchanging. Pay attention to the promptings of the Spirit so you can be clean and virtuous.

Do not participate in passionate kissing, lie on top of another person, or touch the private, sacred parts of another person's body, with or without clothing. Do not do anything that arouses sexual feelings in yourself or others. Keep your commitment to be sexually pure. By your words and actions, encourage others to do the same.

*“The sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2017, 145).*

*“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Thou shalt not steal; neither commit adultery, nor kill, nor do anything like unto it” (Doctrine and Covenants 59:6).*

***Additional scriptures:*** Psalm 24:4–5; Matthew 5:27–28; Doctrine and Covenants 88:86; 121:45

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## Relationships with Others

### Other Service Missionaries

Support each other in your mission assignments and help each other learn and grow. You can strengthen each other in times of difficulty and even provide protection from physical danger and temptation.

Love and respect those with whom you serve (see 1 John 4:7, 20–21). Look for good in everyone. Find ways to serve others.

Support the righteous actions of other missionaries. Obey the standards and guiding principles of missionary conduct outlined in this handbook. Violating missionary standards may lessen other missionaries' effectiveness and lead them to inappropriate behavior, which could have serious consequences. Care enough for other missionaries to ask for help from your supervisors or priesthood leaders before a problem becomes serious.

### Children

Because of increasing legal complexities regarding conduct toward children, be extremely careful around them. Never babysit or be alone with a child unless he or she is a member of your family.

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## Family Members and Friends

Be a strength and a good example to your family and friends. Share inspirational stories from your mission experiences.

Family members may need to assist you with physical needs, with transportation, or in other ways for you to serve successfully. There will be some adjustments to family life during your missionary service. You and your family may need to make some sacrifices to ensure the most meaningful and productive mission experience.

## General Authorities

It is not appropriate to approach or initiate contact with General Authorities. However, you may and should respond if one of them approaches you. Do not write to General Authorities.

## Physical and Temporal Well-Being

### Finances

The money you use during your mission represents sacrifices by you, your family, and others. Budget your money. Be thrifty and wise in how you spend it. Do not loan or borrow money.

If you need additional money, talk to your parents or guardians. If challenges persist, talk with your priesthood leader.

## Transportation

Public transportation is usually less expensive than driving and should be considered for getting to and from your mission assignment.

If you drive, drive defensively. Pray for the Lord's protection. Everyone in the car must wear an individual seat belt whenever the vehicle is moving.

Do not use a cell phone while driving. All passengers share responsibility for safety. Drive with headlights on both day and night. If you are involved in an accident while traveling to your mission assignment, contact the police or emergency services as appropriate.

As soon as possible, also contact your family. Then contact your assignment supervisors and priesthood leader. Service missionaries do not drive Church-owned vehicles while serving.

*“Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:119).*

*“All things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal; neither any man, nor the children of men; neither Adam, your father, whom I created” (Doctrine and Covenants 29:34).*

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## Health and Safety

Your health and safety are of great importance. Maintain your health so you can serve with all your heart, might, mind, and strength. Exercise daily as your circumstances allow. You and your family are responsible for your medical care needs. Visits to a physician or other health care professionals should be coordinated in advance with your supervisors.

Listen to and follow the promptings of the Spirit, which can warn you of danger. Be sensitive to anything that is out of the ordinary, especially anyone who watches you closely or asks probing questions.

Avoid situations that could lead to conflict. Be careful of what you say and write in public and in private. Always be wise and mature in your conduct.

*“Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?”*  
(1 Corinthians 6:19).

***Additional scriptures:***  
1 Corinthians 3:16–17; Doctrine and Covenants 88:124; 89:18–20

## My Schedule

Your stake president will help you establish your schedule using the following plan.

### Daily Schedule Example

#### **Morning:**

- Arise and pray.
- Exercise for 30 minutes. (Consult with your health care professional about your physical health and circumstances.)
- Finish preparations for the day.
- Take part in devotional or gospel study.
- Report to your assignment on time. (Attend a prayer meeting or devotional before your shift if one is scheduled.)

**Afternoon:** Serve until your assignment time is completed.

#### **Evening:**

- Follow your off-assignment plan from your daily schedule. This should include an hour of personal gospel study. It may also include temple attendance, institute classes, and activities.
- Pray and retire to bed.

## My Daily Schedule

SUNDAY	Morning: Afternoon: Evening:
MONDAY	Morning: Afternoon: Evening:
TUESDAY	Morning: Afternoon: Evening:
WEDNESDAY	Morning: Afternoon: Evening:
THURSDAY	Morning: Afternoon: Evening:
FRIDAY	Morning: Afternoon: Evening:
SATURDAY	Morning: Afternoon: Evening:



## My Mission Commitment

I accept my call to serve as a service missionary.

My stake president and I have reviewed and agree upon the guiding principles in this handbook and the adjustments listed on the “My Modifications” page to ensure the best possible mission experience.

I will:

- Follow the example of Jesus Christ.
- Render meaningful service.
- Study and pray.
- Build life skills.

As I commit to these principles, my life will be enriched and my testimony of the Savior and His mission will be strengthened.

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*My signature*

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*Stake president's signature*





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