

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
OFFICE OF THE FIRST PRESIDENCY
47 EAST SOUTH TEMPLE STREET, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84150-1200

May 11, 2017

To: General Authorities and the following leaders in the United States and Canada: Area Seventies; Stake, Mission, and District Presidents; Bishops and Branch Presidents

Dear Brethren:

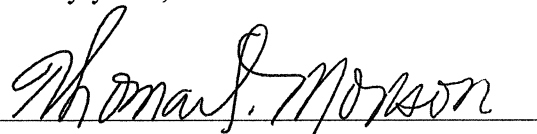
Discontinuation of Varsity and Venturing Programs in the Church

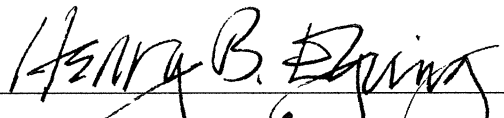
As part of the Church's ongoing effort to evaluate and improve its service to families and young people worldwide, the Church will no longer charter Varsity or Venturing units with the Boy Scouts of America and Scouts Canada effective January 1, 2018.

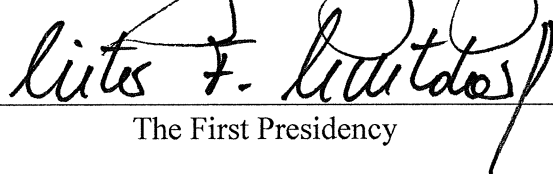
We express sincere appreciation and gratitude to all adult leaders who have supported young men in these programs and are grateful for our long-standing and continuing partnership with the Boy Scouts of America and Scouts Canada. Cub Scout and Boy Scout programs will continue to be chartered through local wards and branches. Young men over the age of 14 who desire to continue to work toward the rank of Eagle Scout or Queen Scout should be encouraged and supported in their efforts and should be properly registered as Scouts. Adult leaders who are assisting with merit badges or rank advancement with older boys should also be registered and complete required training.

New program guidelines for young men ages 14–18 are included with this letter and are available at ymactivities.lds.org. Please ensure that these guidelines are carefully reviewed and implemented.

Sincerely yours,







The First Presidency

This letter, with attachment, is being translated and will be distributed to units identified as French and Spanish in the United States and Canada. Distribution in these languages will be complete within two weeks. If leaders need this letter in languages not listed above, they may contact the member of the Presidency of the Seventy who supervises the area. Area leaders can forward requests to the Priesthood and Family Department at ext. 2-2933.

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Teacher and Priest Activity Program

May 11, 2017

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Building young men with strong testimonies in the Lord Jesus Christ, helping them magnify their priesthood duties and preparing to fulfill their divine roles is the purpose of the Young Men's 14-18 activity program. Stake, ward, and quorum leaders should use *Handbook 2*: chapters 8 and 13, and counsel together on how to implement this activity program. Activities should provide opportunities to be with youth, connect them with heaven, and let them lead (see ymactivities.lds.org).

Principles

Activities should:

- Provide belonging and support by strengthening quorum unity and building relationships with peers, leaders, and families (see *Handbook 2*, 13.1).
- Provide experiences that help young men fulfill their Aaronic Priesthood duties and their divine roles:
 - Accomplish the purposes of the Aaronic Priesthood (see *Handbook 2*, 8.1.3).
 - Develop temporal and spiritual self-reliance skills, such as time management, budgeting, and simple home and mechanical maintenance (see *Handbook 2*, 6.1.1).
 - Engage in becoming good citizens (see *Handbook 2*, 21.1.29).
- Be planned and executed by Aaronic Priesthood quorum leaders, with support from adult advisers (see *Handbook 2*, 13.2).
- Provide a balance of opportunities to serve others and to develop spiritually, socially, physically, and intellectually (see Luke 2:52; *Handbook 2*, 8.13.1; 13.2.6).
- Follow all Church safety and other policies and guidelines (see *Handbook 2*, 13.6).

Activity Guidelines

- Develop an annual calendar to ensure a balance of purposeful spiritual, social, physical, and intellectual activities (see *Handbook 2*, 13.2.6). Ideas for meaningful quorum activities can be found at ymactivities.lds.org and in *Handbook 2*, 13.1.
- Combined activities with young men and young women are particularly beneficial for youth ages 14 and older and could be held more frequently than once a month (see *Handbook 2*, 8.13.1).
- One youth conference or multiday high adventure activity should be held each year (see *Handbook 2*, 13.4). In addition, 2–3 overnight activities are also encouraged (see *Handbook 2*, 13.6.12).

- Mutual activities are generally held weekly but can be held less frequently based on needs and circumstances of quorum members, but they should be held at least monthly (see *Handbook 2*, 8.13.1).
- Ward Councils are encouraged to counsel together and consider the needs of all youth and families in their wards in applying these guidelines (see *Handbook 2*, 4.5.2; 13.2.8).

Fulfilling My Duty to God

- Provide ample opportunities for young men to learn, act, and share their experiences in Duty to God (see *Fulfilling My Duty to God: For Aaronic Priesthood Holders*, 95–98).
- Consider doing the “For the Strength of Youth” development activities as a quorum (see *Fulfilling My Duty to God*, 98–99).
- You may work as a quorum to fulfill the outlined projects (see *Fulfilling My Duty to God*, 55, 79, 84).