

Eight things that a Great Ward Mission Leader needs to get Right

By the Presidency of the Boston Massachusetts Mission 2014

Assignments as ward mission leader and ward missionaries are two of the most difficult – but among the most important – callings in the church. If you can wrap your arms around these seven dimensions of these callings, you can be very successful. We have prepared more in-depth guidance for you, listed at the end of this document, and we invite you to study these materials as you learn about your calling.¹ You can access these materials from the website, <http://www.missionaryleaders.org/>.²

1. Actively find people for the missionaries to teach. When you can testify in personal pronouns and present-tense verbs about sharing the gospel with others, the members of your ward will want to share the gospel with others, too.
2. Teach the missionaries and ward leaders how to weave the full-time missionaries into the fabric of the ward. This will help the missionaries win the love and trust of the members, and inspire the members to find people for the missionaries to teach.³ You need to orchestrate the annual “rhythm” of the ward, with the calendar of the missionaries, which is monthly. You should always know what the missionaries’ monthly goals are. If you help them achieve their monthly goals, they will be much more productive – and you will, too.
3. The components of a good ward mission plan builds upon permanent principles.⁴ Some ward plans include individual and family mission plans as well. A digital mission plan inside of your ward plan can give your plan a feel of “localness.” The ward council must return and report to itself on the ward mission plan at least monthly.
4. Most wards have “non-member members” – people who often come to ward activities and meetings. They know members and are comfortable when they attend. They are “low-hanging” fruit. You or one of your ward missionaries needs to serve to nourish them, helping each of these to become active investigators.
5. Members *want* to share the gospel, but they don’t know how. They cannot learn this in a single training meeting. Every week, every month you need to find more and better ways to teach the members of your ward how to do find people for the missionaries to teach. Ultimately the principles you teach should embedded into the culture of your ward through your ward mission plan.⁵
6. Help your missionaries teach towards conversion. There are three “venues of testimony” where investigators can learn that the church is true. These are: 1) Meetings with the missionaries; 2) Prayerfully and privately studying the scriptures at home; and 3) Feeling the love of God and of the members as they attend church. If you ensure that your missionaries, investigators and members use all three of these venues in a balanced way, many more of your investigators will accept the gospel.⁶
7. Keep your converts active and committed to the church by:⁷

- a. It is home, not church, where most new members make the decisions not to go to church, and not obey God’s commandments. Friends at home, therefore, are even more important than friends at church. So whenever possible baptize family and friends, too.
 - b. Help all converts to be baptized in the temple for family members within the first 4 weeks after their own baptism.
 - c. By delegation from your bishop, prepare in advance of baptism a calling that is custom-configured for each convert, which you can recommend to your bishop. The ideal calling has five characteristics: 1) Feels needed; 2) Requires Sunday attendance; 3) Straightforward; 4) Serve *with* someone – never alone; and 5) requires gospel study. Perhaps in addition to this calling, or as the calling itself, each convert can be called to be a Family History Consultant for their own family names – helping them with the above suggestion.⁸
8. Generally, about half of investigators who set baptismal dates actually are baptized. The reason? Too often the missionaries and ward mission leaders hear the commitment, spike the ball, declare victory over Satan, and walk off the field. Only later do they realize that they had only passed the 50 yard line. When an investigator has sets a date for baptism, great mission leaders and great missionaries will shift gears, and begin following “Ten Commandments” for Baptismal Dates.”⁹

¹ The following documents are available from the <http://www.missionaryleaders.org/> . Please study them, as the issues arise in your service to the Lord.

² See the booklet, “[Leading a Great Ward Mission.](#)”

³ We recommend that you first read the case study, “[Sister Susan Fulcher.](#)” Then we recommend reading a PowerPoint presentation, “[Weaving Missionaries into the Fabric of the Ward.](#)”

⁴ MissionaryLeaders.org has some great material on this topic. We first recommend “[The Mission of the Wilmington Ward](#)”, which you can download to read. You can also watch the video on YouTube. Second, read the first 10 pages of the booklet, “[Leading a Great Ward Mission.](#)” Finally, read the case study, “Why is missionary success so hard to sustain?”

⁵ You’ll see some great material for this topic on the <http://www.missionaryleaders.org/>. The best source of these principles is the book, *The Power of Everyday Missionaries*, published by Deseret Book. The principles also have been summarized into three lessons, “[Member Missionary Course,](#)” formatted to be taught in a Sunday School format. They also have been taught in an *Ensign* article, “[Seven Lessons on Sharing the Gospel.](#)” Finally, we recommend the article, “[Praying with your Feet,](#)” written by Russ Hancock, counselor in the Menlo Park Stake Presidency.

⁶ First, please read “Commit to Commitments.” Then please read the second section of *The Power of Everyday Missionaries*.

⁷ “[Helping New Members to Become Strong](#)”

⁸ The logic for doing this are in “[Helping New Members ...](#)”

⁹ “TEN COMMANDMENTS for Missionaries whose Investigators have set Baptismal Dates,” by Boston Massachusetts Mission.

Ten Commandments for Missionaries with Investigators have set Baptismal Dates

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1. **Teach ALL the lessons with a member present.** Select members who will connect spiritually with your investigators (*Preach My Gospel* p. 216).
2. **Develop a plan by which you or a member will contact your investigators daily.** Be sure to follow up on commitments you have given them (*Preach My Gospel* p. 200).
3. **Protect your investigators from the opposition** they will receive. Help them understand the opposition they will likely face because the adversary does not want them to progress. Help them use mormon.org to fill every day with inspiring things – and in the process direct them away from anti-Mormon literature (*Preach My Gospel* p. 187).
4. Continue daily the second venue of testimony: **private, thoughtful and prayerful study the Book of Mormon.** Help your investigators regularly receive revelations and answers to their questions as they do this (*Preach My Gospel* p. 39, 73-74, 110-111).
5. **Make sure they attend church weekly.** This is the third venue of testimony. Enlist speakers, teachers, ward leaders and members so that your investigators feel God’s love emanating from the members. Prepare their expectations (each of the three hours, reverence, attire, sacrament ordinance, talks, testimonies, etc.). Rather than week-by-week, help them **permanently arrange transportation** – with family and friends whenever possible, and lastly with members (*Preach My Gospel* p.148).
6. Help them **share the gospel** by invite family members and friends to hear the message. Bring them with you into your other teaching appointments, too (*Preach My Gospel* p. 84).
7. Ask your ward leaders to ask your investigators to **serve in the Church.** Good ideas include teaching part of a class, sharing a talent, serving as a junior companion in home teaching; working in service projects etc. (*Preach My Gospel* p. 87).
8. **Teach them the doctrine of temple work.** Help prepare them to go to the temple to be baptized for a loved one within a few weeks after baptism. (*Preach My Gospel* p. 86-87).
9. **Explain the Addiction Recovery Program** to them, and introduce them to the local leader if appropriate.
10. **Plan the baptismal service carefully.** Ask them to invite friends and family; and plan early the music, talks, invitations, clothes, and people performing the ordinances. This will strengthen their commitment to their date of baptism. Urge your investigators to speak at their own service, and help them prepare and practice it so that everyone attending the service will feel the Spirit. Review the interview questions with your investigators, so that they need only one interview.

