

Priesthood Ordinances and Blessings



Priesthood ordinances are sacred acts given by the Lord and performed by the authority of the priesthood. Priesthood blessings are given by the authority of the priesthood for healing, comfort, and encouragement. Brethren who perform ordinances and blessings should prepare themselves by living according to gospel principles and striving to be guided by the Holy Spirit. They should perform each ordinance and blessing in a dignified manner and comply with the following requirements; the ordinance should be:

1. Performed in the name of Jesus Christ.
2. Performed by the authority of the priesthood.

3. Performed with any necessary procedures, such as using specified words or using consecrated oil.
4. Authorized by the designated priesthood leader who holds the proper keys, if necessary.

Ordinances that require priesthood leader authorization are naming and blessing children, performing baptisms and confirmations, conferring the priesthood and ordaining to a priesthood office, blessing and passing the sacrament, and dedicating graves.

When several brethren participate in an ordinance or blessing, each one places his left hand lightly on the shoulder of the brother to his left. The practice of inviting large numbers of

priesthood holders to assist is discouraged.

The ordinances and blessings explained in this section will help fathers serve as patriarchs in their families.

Naming and Blessing Children



“Every member of the church of Christ having children is to bring them unto the elders before the church, who are to lay their hands upon them in the name of Jesus Christ, and bless them in his name” (D&C 20:70). In conformity with this revelation, only worthy men who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood may participate in naming and blessing children. *The ordinance of naming and blessing children requires authorization from the presiding authority.*

When blessing a baby, men who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood gather in a circle and hold the baby in their hands. When blessing an older child,

brethren place their hands lightly on the child’s head. The person who gives the blessing:

1. Addresses Heavenly Father.
2. States that the blessing is given by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood.
3. Gives the child a name.
4. Gives a priesthood blessing as the Spirit directs.
5. Closes in the name of Jesus Christ.



Baptism

Under the direction of the presiding authority, a worthy priest or man who holds the Melchizedek Priesthood may perform a baptism. To do so, he:

1. Stands in the water with the person who will be baptized.
2. For convenience and safety, holds the person’s right wrist with his left hand; the person being baptized holds the left wrist of the one performing the baptism with his or her left hand.

3. Raises his right arm to the square.
4. States the person's full name and says, "Having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen" (D&C 20:73).
5. Has the person hold his or her nose with the right hand for convenience; the one performing the baptism places his right hand high on the person's back and immerses the person completely, including the person's clothing.
6. Helps the person come up out of the water.

Two priests or men who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood witness each baptism to be sure it is performed properly. The baptism must be repeated if the words are not spoken exactly as given in Doctrine and Covenants 20:73 or if part of the person's body or clothing was not immersed completely. The person being baptized and the person performing the ordinance are to wear white clothing that is not transparent when wet.

Confirmation

Converts who are age nine or older and those who are eight whose parents are both nonmembers are confirmed in a sacrament meeting (see D&C 20:41). Eight-year-old children may be confirmed immediately after the baptism at the baptism location if at least one parent is a member of

the Church and both parents give permission for the baptism and confirmation. *Under the direction of the bishop or branch president*, one or more men who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood may perform this ordinance. They place their hands lightly on the person's head. The one who performs the ordinance:

1. States the person's full name.
2. States that the ordinance is performed by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood.
3. Confirms the person a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
4. Bestows the gift of the Holy Ghost by saying, "Receive the Holy Ghost."
5. Gives a priesthood blessing as the Spirit directs.
6. Closes in the name of Jesus Christ.



Conferring the Priesthood and Ordaining to Priesthood Offices



The bishop or branch president oversees the conferral of the Aaronic Priesthood and ordinations to the offices of deacon, teacher, and priest. Before a person is ordained to an office in the Aaronic Priesthood, he must be interviewed by the bishop or branch president and found worthy. Also, he must be sustained in a sacrament meeting. With the authorization of the bishop or branch president, a priest may confer the Aaronic Priesthood upon another person and ordain him to an Aaronic Priesthood office.

The stake or mission president oversees the conferral of the Melchizedek Priesthood and ordination to the offices of elder and high priest.

To confer the priesthood or ordain a person to a priesthood office, one or more men who hold the required priesthood and who have been authorized by the presiding authority place their hands lightly on the person's

head. The one who performs the ordinance:

1. Calls the person by his full name.
2. States the authority (Aaronic or Melchizedek Priesthood) by which the ordination is being performed.
3. Confers the Aaronic or Melchizedek Priesthood, unless it has been conferred earlier.
4. Ordains the person to an office in the Aaronic or Melchizedek Priesthood and bestows the rights, powers, and authority of that office.
5. Gives a priesthood blessing as the Spirit directs.
6. Closes in the name of Jesus Christ.

Sacrament



The sacrament is a very sacred ordinance. Partaking of the sacrament provides opportunity to remember the life, teachings, and Atonement of Jesus Christ. It is a time to renew the covenants made with the Lord at the time of baptism (see Mosiah 18:8–10).

Teachers and priests may prepare the sacrament; priests may bless it; and deacons, teachers, and priests

may pass it. Brethren who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood may prepare, bless, and pass the sacrament but normally will do so only when too few Aaronic Priesthood brethren are available. If a person has committed a serious transgression, he should not prepare, bless, or pass the sacrament until he has repented and resolved the matter with his bishop or branch president.

Those who prepare, bless, or pass the sacrament are administering this ordinance to others on behalf of the Lord. Each one who holds the priesthood should approach this assignment with a solemn, reverent attitude. He should be well groomed, clean, and dressed modestly. Personal appearance should reflect the sacredness of the ordinance.

Brethren who prepare the sacrament should do so before the meeting begins. They place unbroken bread in clean bread trays and place trays of sacrament cups containing fresh water on the sacrament table. They cover the bread and water with a clean, white cloth.

During the sacrament hymn, those at the sacrament table remove the cloth from the bread trays and break the bread into small pieces. After the hymn, the person who blesses the bread kneels and offers the sacrament prayer for the bread. Brethren then pass the bread to those present in a reverent and orderly manner. The presiding authority at the meeting receives the sacrament first. When

everyone present has had an opportunity to partake of the bread, those passing it return their trays to the sacrament table. Those blessing the sacrament cover the trays again as soon as the bread has been passed.

Those at the sacrament table remove the cloth from the water trays. The person who blesses the water kneels and offers the sacrament prayer for the water. Brethren then pass the water to those present. The trays are returned to the sacrament table and are covered again. The brethren who bless and pass the sacrament then take their seats with the congregation.

The sacrament is for Church members, including children. The person conducting the meeting should not announce that it will be passed to members only; nothing should be done to prevent nonmembers from partaking of it.

The sacrament prayers are to be spoken clearly, accurately, and with dignity. If the person who blesses the sacrament makes an error in the wording and does not correct it himself, the bishop or branch president asks him to repeat the prayer and offer it correctly.

The prayer on the bread follows:

“O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it, that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal

Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given them; that they may always have his Spirit to be with them. Amen” (D&C 20:77 and Moroni 4).

The prayer on the water follows:

“O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this [water] to the souls of all those who drink of it, that they may do it in remembrance of the blood of thy Son, which was shed for them; that they may witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they do always remember him, that they may have his Spirit to be with them. Amen” (D&C 20:79 and Moroni 5).

The sacrament should be cleared from the table as soon as possible after the meeting. Any bread that remains may be used for food.

Blessing and passing the sacrament requires authorization from the presiding authority.

Consecrating Oil

One man (or more) who holds the Melchizedek Priesthood consecrates pure olive oil for its holy purpose of anointing the sick or afflicted. The one who consecrates the oil:

1. Holds an open container of olive oil.
2. Addresses our Heavenly Father.

3. States that he is acting by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood.
4. Consecrates the oil (not the container) and sets it apart for anointing the sick and afflicted.
5. Closes in the name of Jesus Christ.



Administering to the Sick

Only men who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood may administer to the sick or afflicted. Normally, two or more administer together, but one may do it alone. If consecrated oil is not available, a man who holds the Melchizedek Priesthood may give a blessing by the authority of the priesthood.

A father who holds the Melchizedek Priesthood should administer to sick members of his family. He may ask another man who holds the Melchizedek Priesthood to assist him.

Administering to the sick has two parts: (1) anointing with oil and (2) sealing the anointing.

Anointing with Oil

One man who holds the Melchizedek Priesthood anoints the person who is sick. To do so, he:

1. Puts a drop of consecrated oil on the person's head.
2. Places his hands lightly on the person's head and calls the person by his or her full name.
3. States that he is anointing the person by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood.
4. States that he is anointing with oil that has been consecrated for anointing and blessing the sick and afflicted.
5. Closes in the name of Jesus Christ.

Sealing the Anointing

Normally, two or more men who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood place their hands lightly on the head of the person who is sick. One of the men seals the anointing. To do so, he:

1. Calls the person by his or her full name.
2. States that he is sealing the anointing by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood.
3. Gives a blessing as the Spirit directs.
4. Closes in the name of Jesus Christ.

Father's Blessings and Other Blessings of Comfort and Counsel



Father's blessings and other priesthood blessings are given to provide direction and comfort as guided by the Spirit.

A father who holds the Melchizedek Priesthood may give father's blessings to his children. Such blessings may be especially helpful when children go away from home, such as to attend school or go on missions, or when they begin employment, get married, enter military service, or face unusual personal challenges. These blessings can be a great strength to a family. A family may record a father's blessing for family records, but it is not preserved in Church records. Parents should encourage children to seek father's blessings in times of need.

Worthy men who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood also may give blessings of comfort and counsel to their wives, extended family members, and others who request them.

To give a father's blessing or other blessings of comfort and counsel, a man who holds the Melchizedek Priesthood, either alone or with one or more worthy men who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood, places his hands lightly on the head of the person receiving the blessing. No oil is necessary for such blessings. The one giving the blessing:

1. Calls the person by his or her full name.
2. States that he is giving the blessing by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood.
3. Gives a blessing as the Spirit directs.
4. Closes in the name of Jesus Christ.

Dedicating Graves

A person who dedicates a grave must hold the Melchizedek Priesthood and *must be authorized by the priesthood officer who conducts the service.*

To dedicate a grave, he:

1. Addresses Heavenly Father.
2. States that he is dedicating the grave by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood.
3. Dedicates and consecrates the burial plot as the resting place for the body of the deceased.
4. Where appropriate, prays that the place will be hallowed and protected until the Resurrection.
5. Asks the Lord to comfort the family and expresses other thoughts as the Spirit directs.
6. Closes in the name of Jesus Christ.

If the family prefers, a person (preferably a man who holds the Melchizedek Priesthood) may offer a graveside prayer rather than a dedicatory prayer.