

I Was a Stranger: Local Leader Guidelines

March 26, 2016

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The following guidelines are to help local priesthood and auxiliary leaders as they follow the direction from the First Presidency and the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary general presidents to invite sisters to reach out to refugees in their local areas. Teaching these guidelines will help protect and strengthen our members as they act on this invitation.

1. Guiding Principles

- Caring for the poor and needy among us is a fundamental part of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The intent of this effort is to be more involved in ongoing, one-by-one ministering efforts. Because the Church maintains complete political neutrality, please take great care not to let this effort become political.
- This focus is to be a personal invitation for the members to follow the Spirit in their lives and within their families to serve where they live, according to their individual circumstances.
- Priesthood and auxiliary leaders should be watchful to ensure that individuals and families do not “run faster than [they have] strength” (Mosiah 4:27) in responding to this invitation. This service should not place undue burdens on our members.

2. For Sisters: Questions and Answers

- *Where do I start?* Begin by praying to know what the Lord would have you do individually or as a family to help care for those in need. Look around your neighborhood, school, workplace, and other places you frequent for those who might need your help and love. Opportunities to help refugees are often available in local civic, community, or church organizations. More information can be found on IWasaStranger.lds.org. In the United States, members can call 2-1-1 to learn about opportunities to serve refugees in their communities. Outside the United States, leaders can contact their area welfare manager for help in identifying trusted organizations in their area.
- *Can meetinghouses be used for service activities?* Where appropriate, meetinghouses may be used for certain activities, following handbook guidelines; however, please refer to the First Presidency letter of March 26, 2016, to understand the scope and focus of this invitation.
- *Can local unit budget funds be used for service activities?* No.
- *Are fundraisers appropriate?* No.
- *Is citizenship a prerequisite when deciding whom we serve?* This invitation is to provide relief and support for God’s children, regardless of their race, religion, or citizenship status. Your efforts should focus on person-to-person aid, which follows the example Christ taught in His parable of the good Samaritan.
- *What are the legal restrictions on service or the guidance that individual countries offer?* Each area office will know the legal restrictions, if any, of the countries in that area. Local leaders should consult with area leaders for guidance.