

Adjusting to Missionary Life

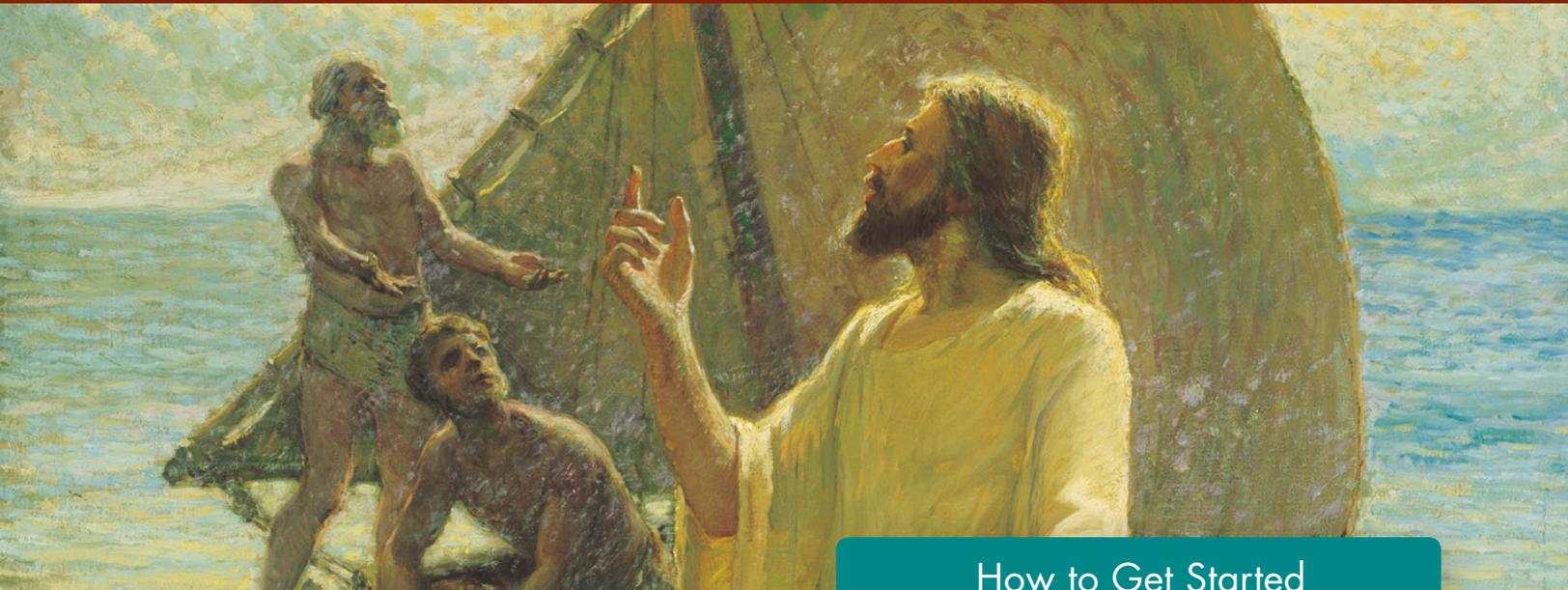


Adjusting to Missionary Life

Resource Booklet

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<i>(This section is a summary of the material you received online before entering the MTC.)</i>	

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Introduction

As a missionary, you are called to represent Jesus Christ in ministering to Heavenly Father’s children. The Savior loves you, and He will help you succeed. He has promised: “I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up” (D&C 84:88).

As you exercise your faith and act on the decision you have made to do the Lord’s work, you will develop the skills, gifts, and strengths you need more quickly. You will feel His help and grow in confidence in your ability to serve the Lord.

Even with a promise of the Lord’s help, many of the greatest missionaries in history recorded that they suffered and struggled in their missionary labors. Ammon and his brethren “suffer[ed] much, both in body and in mind, such as hunger, thirst and fatigue, and also much labor in the spirit” (Alma 17:5). At times, they apparently wanted to go home. “Now when our hearts were depressed, and we were about to turn back, behold, the Lord comforted us, and said: Go amongst thy brethren,

How to Get Started

1 Read “Understanding Stress”

To begin, read “Understanding Stress” on pages 3–10 to gain a general understanding of the nature of stress, the demands of missionary work that may cause it, and the resources available to manage these demands.

2 Complete the Self-Assessment

Use the Self-Assessment Record on pages 11–13 to determine which specific stresses or demands of missionary work might be causing difficulty right now.

3 Look Up Applicable Suggestions and Tools

Once you’ve identified stresses, look up the resource pages noted next to each section in the assessment. These suggestions will help you learn to manage your stress. Other missionaries and mission leaders can help you apply these tools and suggest other ideas.

4 Repeat if Needed

Repeat the self-assessment if needed throughout your mission. Return to this book for more ideas anytime you need them.

the Lamanites, and bear with patience thine afflictions, and I will give unto you success" (Alma 26:27).

Much of the secret to dealing with the discouragement and stress that are common to missionary service is to renew with the Lord your decision to serve. President Gordon B. Hinckley tells of his experience when he first began his mission in England.

"I was not well when I arrived. Those first few weeks, because of illness and the opposition which we felt, I was discouraged. I wrote a letter home to my good father and said that I felt I was wasting my time and his money. He was my father and my stake president, and he was a wise and inspired man. He wrote a very short letter to me which said, 'Dear Gordon, I have your recent letter. I have only one suggestion: forget yourself and go to work.' Earlier that morning in our scripture class my companion and I had read these words of the Lord: 'Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.' (Mark 8:35.)

"Those words of the Master, followed by my father's letter with his counsel to forget myself and go to work, went into my very being. With my father's letter in hand, I went into our bedroom in the house at 15 Wadham Road, where we lived, and got on my knees and made a pledge with the

Lord. I covenanted that I would try to forget myself and lose myself in His service.

"That July day in 1933 was my day of decision. A new light came into my life and a new joy into my heart. The fog of England seemed to lift, and I saw the sunlight. I had a rich and wonderful mission experience, for which I shall ever be grateful" ("Taking the Gospel to Britain: A Declaration of Vision, Faith, Courage, and Truth," *Ensign*, July 1987, 7).

President Hinckley found success in dealing with his discouragement as he renewed his decision to serve the Lord. He later said: "The best antidote I know for worry is work. The best medicine for despair is service. The best cure for weariness is the challenge of helping someone who is even more tired" ("Words of the Prophet: Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel," *New Era*, July 2000, 7).

Using This Booklet

Missionary work can be both joyous and stressful. This booklet will help you better understand stress and how it affects you, but it is not meant to be read all at once. Using the instructions listed on page 1, you will be guided to suggestions on the topics you select. These ideas will also help as you serve and minister to your companion and other missionaries.



Understanding Stress



Understanding Stress

Stress Is a Normal Part of Life

As you begin any new experience (like joining the Church or attending a new school), you feel excited about the opportunity—and nervous because you don't know quite what to expect. Over time you learn to meet these challenges, and you grow in the process.

Missions are no different. Sometimes a mission feels like a wonderful spiritual adventure—or at least a challenge you can handle. You calmly move forward with faith, realizing that much of the nervousness or worry you experience is temporary. You take courage in knowing you will adjust with time, grow spiritually, and develop many new skills. Experiences you once feared become more manageable. You even come to cherish aspects of missionary life that once felt overwhelming. You rely on the Spirit, grow in confidence, and find joy in your service.

At other times, however, you may face unexpected problems or experiences that are more difficult or unpleasant than you anticipated. You might wonder how you can succeed. Resources you once relied on to help you cope may not be available. Instead of feeling motivated to try, you might become anxious, irritable, exhausted, or frustrated. You might have physical symptoms like pain, upset stomach, sleeplessness, or illness. You could have trouble learning or connecting with people. You might feel discouraged or want to quit.

Like gauges on a car's dashboard that remind you to slow down, get gas, or check the engine, these symptoms are signals to remind you to slow down, fill up your spiritual "tank," and look for new solutions. This booklet has suggestions and tools that may help.

Four Levels of Stress

Stress is not always bad. In fact, stress is a normal physical and emotional response to the changes and challenges of life and is necessary for growth.

But experiencing too much stress for too long without a break can lead to problems.

As you work to manage your stress effectively, it may help to think of four levels of experiencing stress.

		Signs You Are at This Level	What to Do
		<p>Confident, happy</p> <p>Ready to meet challenges</p> <p>Recover quickly from setbacks</p> <p>Getting along with your companion</p> <p>Feel the Spirit</p>	<p>This is the ideal. Here you are handling the every-day stressors of missionary work, learning, and progressing.</p> <p>Continue to work hard and trust in the Lord.</p>
		<p>Tense, worried, insecure, anxious, unprepared</p> <p>Trouble getting along with others</p> <p>Difficulty feeling the Spirit</p>	<p>It is normal to spend some time at the yellow level.</p> <p>Being kind to yourself as you cope with challenges and learn new skills will help you become stronger and increase your ability to serve. Continue to pray and serve in faith. Look to the scriptures and conference talks, your district and zone leaders, and this booklet for help.</p>
		<p>Exhausted (physically and emotionally)</p> <p>Ill (e.g., upset stomach)</p> <p>Easily angered</p> <p>Deeply discouraged</p> <p>Inability to feel the Spirit</p>	<p>No one enjoys being at an orange level of stress, but this is rarely permanent.</p> <p>Pray for guidance as you study scriptures and apply the suggestions in this booklet. Let your mission president know if you stay at the orange level for more than three days, so he can help.</p>
		<p>Persistent depression, panic, or anxiety</p> <p>Hopelessness</p> <p>Trouble eating or sleeping (can lead to illness)</p> <p>Overwhelmed; inability to continue</p> <p>Feel as though you have been abandoned by God</p>	<p>If you are at this level, contact your mission president for help.</p> <p>Ask your companion or district leader for a priesthood blessing. Consider taking some time to write in your journal, ponder the suggestions in this book, pray, and perhaps take a break from the things you find most difficult about missionary work until you have a chance to speak with your mission president.</p>



Over the course of your mission, you may experience different levels of stress at different times. You may feel “orange” today and get back to “green” tomorrow. The purpose of this booklet is to help you stay at—or get back to—the green level.



Your Experiences Can Bless Others

As you read the following excerpt from a talk given by President Gordon B. Hinckley, think about how your experiences with stress as a missionary (new people, new language, new culture) can help you better understand the stress that many recent converts feel (new friends, new vocabulary, new culture). With this new understanding, how can you involve other members to help recent converts with the transition? Record your thoughts in your study journal.

“I received the other day a very interesting letter. It was written by a woman who joined the Church a year ago. She writes:

“My journey into the Church was unique and quite challenging. This past year has been the hardest year that I have ever lived in my life. It has also been the most rewarding. As a new member, I continue to be challenged every day.”

“She goes on to say that when she joined the Church she did not feel support from the leadership in her ward. Her bishop seemed indifferent to her as a new member. Rebuffed, as she felt, she turned back to her mission president, who opened opportunities for her.

“She states that ‘Church members don’t know what it is like to be a new member of the Church. Therefore, it’s almost impossible for them to know how to support us.’

“I challenge you, my brothers and sisters, that if you do not know what it is like, you try to imagine what it is like. It can be terribly lonely. It can be disappointing. It can be frightening. We of this Church are far more different from the world than we are prone to think we are. This woman goes on: *‘When we as investigators become members of the Church, we are surprised to discover that we have entered into a completely foreign world, a world that has its own traditions, culture, and language. We discover that there is no one person or no one place of reference that we can turn to for guidance in our trip into this new world. At first the trip is exciting, our mistakes even amusing, then it becomes frustrating and eventually, the frustration turns into anger. And it’s at these stages of frustration and anger that we leave. We go back to the world from which we came, where we knew who we were, where we contributed, and where we could speak the language’* (“Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 108, italics added; see also *Preach My Gospel* [2004], 214 [Activity: Personal or Companion Study]).

Demands of Missionary Work

Serving “with all your heart, might, mind and strength” (D&C 4:2) will bless you greatly. Missionary work is not easy. The demands of missionary work fall into several categories:

General (see pages 17–22). You experience many changes and transitions throughout your mission. Familiar ways of coping are not always available, and you must learn new ones. Evenings and weekends that used to be relaxing are now your busiest times. You may feel awkward. At times you may struggle. You may wonder how to help other missionaries who struggle.

Physical (see pages 23–28). You may be on your feet 11–12 hours a day, walking, biking, climbing stairs, and standing. You may not get as much sleep as you are used to. The food may be unfamiliar. You will be out in bad weather and exposed to new germs. Just the newness of the situation can be fatiguing.

Emotional (see pages 29–34). You may feel anxious about all you have to do, and you may have trouble unwinding. You may get homesick, become discouraged, get bored, or feel lonely. You may face rejection, disappointment, or even danger. You may worry about family and friends when you are not there to help them.

Social (see pages 35–39). You will live in close quarters with a companion with whom you may or may not have much in common. You are expected to talk to strangers, interact with Church leaders, get to know Church members quickly, and learn to love investigators.

Demands



LEARNING
Challenging Material
GETTING ALONG
with People
RULES
Expectations
LEAVING
Comfort Zone

Intellectual (see pages 41–43). You may be learning a new language. You will need to master lessons and scriptures, acquire teaching skills, and resolve concerns that arise. You will need to plan, manage goals, adapt to changes, and solve all kinds of practical problems.

Spiritual (see pages 45–49). You will stretch to strengthen your testimony, resist temptation, and learn to feel and recognize the Spirit. You will need to take correction, repent, face your weaknesses and regrets humbly, and rely on the Lord more than ever before.

Resources

HOLY GHOST

Support from Other People

NEW SKILLS

Make a Plan **PRAYER**

DIET & EXERCISE

Change How We Think

SCRIPTURES *Work*
The Atonement

Resources to Help You Stay in Balance

When you have resources to meet the demands of missionary work, you grow and contribute and you stay in the green level. Sometimes you can achieve this balance by reducing unnecessary demands, such as unrealistic self-expectations or worrying about what others think. However, many of the demands of a mission cannot be reduced. You will need to learn new material, get along with other people, obey rules, teach and testify, and leave your comfort zone.

You can still stay in balance by increasing your resources to meet these demands. Some of the most important resources for meeting the demands of missionary work are prayer, scripture study, the guidance of the Holy Ghost, and serving others. Additional resources include *Preach My Gospel*, help from mission leaders, and many others found in this booklet.

Using these resources will enable you to rely on the Savior Jesus Christ and His Atonement. He is the ultimate source of help in dealing with the demands and stresses of missionary life.

“I have often said one of the greatest secrets of missionary work is work! If a missionary works, he will get the Spirit; if he gets the Spirit, he will teach by the Spirit; and if he teaches by the Spirit, he will touch the hearts of the people and he will be happy. There will be no homesickness, no worrying about families, for all time and talents and interests are centered on the work of the ministry. Work, work, work—there is no satisfactory substitute, especially in missionary work.”

—PRESIDENT EZRA TAFT BENSON,
THE TEACHINGS OF EZRA TAFT BENSON (1988), 200





Look unto Me

Remember, our Heavenly Father loves you. Trust in Him and in the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ to heal and redeem you. God has a perfect plan for His imperfect children; this is the good news you carry to the world. Remember these promises: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, as I said unto my disciples, where two or three are gathered together in my name, as touching one thing, behold, there will I be in the midst of them—even so am I in the midst of you.

“Fear not to do good, . . . for whatsoever ye sow, that shall ye also reap; therefore, if ye sow good ye shall also reap good for your reward.

“Therefore, fear not, little flock; do good; let earth and hell combine against you, for if ye are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail.

“Behold, I do not condemn you; go your ways and sin no more; perform with soberness the work which I have commanded you.

“Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not.

“Behold the wounds which pierced my side, and also the prints of the nails in my hands and feet; be faithful, keep my commandments, and ye shall inherit the kingdom of heaven” (D&C 6:32–37).



What Should I Do Next?

If you are feeling excessive stress, use the Self-Assessment Record on the next page to identify sections in this booklet that may help you with your specific concerns. Read those sections now. Come back to other sections if you need them.



Self-Assessment Record

Self-Assessment Record

Directions:

1. Put today's date in the first box at the top left.
2. Look over the written items. In the first column of boxes under today's date, check any items you want more information about.
3. For each item below, the second column lists the page number and section in this booklet where you can find tools and suggestions. Read those ideas for each item you checked. Then prayerfully choose one or two to try for a minimum of two to three weeks. Remember that many suggestions will take practice in order to be effective.

Date

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GENERAL

I'm having difficulty with: Page, Section

responding positively to stress	17, A								
responding to a "stress emergency"	20, B								
helping other missionaries who are overstressed	20, C								

PHYSICAL

I'm having difficulty with: Page, Section

learning to work hard	23, A								
staying healthy and energetic	24, B								
managing head, stomach, or muscle pain	24, C								
sleeping, going to bed on time	26, D								
getting up on time	27, E								
eating healthy foods	27, F								
getting motivated to exercise	28, G								

Date

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

EMOTIONAL

I'm having difficulty with:

Page, Section

feeling homesick	29, A								
feeling depressed or discouraged	30, B								
feeling self-critical	31, C								
feeling anxious or inadequate	32, D								
feeling easily irritated or angry	33, E								
feeling exhausted or unmotivated	33, F								
worrying about loved ones at home	34, G								
feeling lonely	34, H								

SOCIAL

I'm having difficulty with:

Page, Section

talking with strangers	35, A								
wanting to be alone	36, B								
communicating openly with a companion	37, C								
loving the people	38, D								
getting along with mission leaders	38, E								
managing sexual or romantic feelings	39, F								

INTELLECTUAL

I'm having difficulty with:

Page, Section

learning the language	41, A								
staying organized with goals and plans	41, B								
not feeling as smart or as capable as others	43, C								

SPIRITUAL

I'm having difficulty with:

Page, Section

learning to strengthen my testimony	45, A								
learning to repent	46, B								
learning to pray meaningfully	47, C								
learning to love the scriptures	47, D								
learning to rely on the Spirit	47, E								



Suggestions and Tools



General Principles

for Managing Stress

This section contains general suggestions for preventing and coping with excessive stress. These suggestions can be helpful to all missionaries.

A Responding Positively to Stress

■ **Pray fervently and often, alone and with your companion.** Tell the Lord about your feelings, experiences, plans, and concerns. Ask the Spirit to be with you in all things. Write down impressions you receive as you pray and study the scriptures. Be alert to guidance you may receive throughout the day. As you hearken to the voice of the Spirit, you will continue to receive additional guidance, comfort, and help. “For behold, again I say unto you that if ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:5). Commit

to the Lord that you will do your best to always follow spiritual promptings you receive.

■ **Recognize the hand of the Lord in all things.** You have a front row seat to the greatest miracle of all: the effect of Christ’s Atonement on individuals and families. Practice focusing every day on blessings you are grateful for. Notice the Spirit’s influence in your life, and write about it. (See Moroni 10:3.)

■ **Identify and memorize comforting scriptures.** As you study, list scriptures that strengthen and comfort you. Memorize them or read them often.



“Behold, I am a disciple of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I have been called of him to declare his word among his people, that they might have everlasting life.”

— 3 NEPHI 5:13

■ **Focus on the needs of those you are serving.**

Think about what you can do to bless the investigators you are teaching and the members you are serving. Seek inspiration on how you can serve them and strengthen their faith.

■ **Sing.** Memorize the words to a few of your favorite hymns. When you are feeling stressed or discouraged, sing to yourself or with your companion. “Hymns can lift our spirits, give us courage, and move us to righteous action. They can fill our souls with heavenly thoughts and bring us a spirit of peace” (“First Presidency Preface,” *Hymns* [1985], x).

■ **Remember what you’ve learned.** You have been coping successfully with change and difficulty your whole life. During personal study time, list what you have learned from past transitions and periods of high stress (like adjusting to the MTC). How can you apply these skills now? “Remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts” (Moroni 10:3).

■ **Serve from your strengths.** Make a list of your strengths, talents, and spiritual gifts. Your strengths are part of the Lord’s storehouse, from which He draws to bless His children and build His kingdom. A crucial part of your mission is to cultivate your gifts and consecrate your strengths to help

others come to Christ. Focus more on what you do well than on what you do wrong. Plan ways each week to develop and use your gifts to serve and bless others. (See D&C 82:18–19.)

■ **Befriend your companion.** Share ideas, serve each other, help each other, and forgive each other. Friends are a great resource for dealing with stress. “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you” (John 15:12).

■ **Examine your expectations.** Don’t expect everything to turn out the way you hoped. You will not do everything perfectly. Not every missionary will be totally obedient and kind. Your investigators may receive anti-Mormon misinformation. You may never speak the language like a native. Remember the Lord’s counsel to Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail: “All these things shall give thee



Breathing Exercise

- Sit in a comfortable position or stand quietly. Take a few deep, slow breaths through your nose, pausing after each one.
- Relax your shoulders and try to breathe so your stomach moves, not your shoulders.
- Continue to breathe slowly and calmly for five minutes or until anxious feelings ease up.

experience, and shall be for thy good. . . . Therefore, hold on” (D&C 122:7, 9).

■ **Exercise.** Regular exercise is one effective way to manage stress. Choose to participate in a variety of activities that are both enjoyable and physically challenging. As you focus on the activity at hand, you may find yourself energized and better able to forget the worries of the day. Regardless of the activity you choose, exercise can help increase your stamina and capacity to serve the Lord. (See *Preach My Gospel*, viii.)

■ **Don’t try to control things you cannot.** While you will make your best effort to meet your proselyting goals, the outcome of your effort is dependent on the agency of others, which you cannot force. “No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned” (D&C 121:41). “Therefore, dearly beloved brethren, let us cheerfully do all things that lie in our power; and then may we stand still, with the utmost assurance, to see the salvation of God, and for his arm to be revealed” (D&C 123:17).

■ **Remember the importance of rest and relaxation.** For example, use the progressive relaxation exercise (see right) at night to slow down and relax before bed, or the breathing exercise (see left). Plan preparation days to include time to rest, enjoy, and unwind so you will be refreshed for the week to come. In addition to necessary activities like shopping and writing home, try:

- Cultural activities. Visit historical sites, museums, or local festivals.
- Social activities. Participate with others in sports, games, art, meals, or appropriate music.

- Time in nature. Visit parks or nature preserves or go hiking.
- Rest and reflection. Take a nap, meditate, or write about your feelings.

“And [Jesus] said unto [His disciples], Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going,



Progressive Relaxation Exercise

Deep relaxation helps your body recover from stress. Practice this at night before you sleep to train your body to relax. Do a shorter version of this exercise during the day any time you feel overstressed.

- Lie or sit comfortably and close your eyes.
- Concentrating on one part of your body at a time, look for any tension. Consciously relax that part of your body. Feel all the tension draining away, like sand running through your fingers. Then move on to the next part of your body. Take your time. If you are not sure if there is still tension, tighten that part of your body for 10 seconds; then completely relax for 10 seconds before moving on.
- Focus on these areas, one at a time: 1. head and face; 2. eyes; 3. jaw; 4. neck; 5. shoulders and back; 6. arms; 7. hands and fingers; 8. chest and abdomen; 9. legs; 10. feet and toes.
- Mentally scan your body for any remaining tension. Completely relax.
- Choose a “personal scene”—a memory or an imagined setting—that brings you joy and peace. Try to imagine this scene as vividly as possible.

and they had no leisure so much as to eat” (Mark 6:31).

“And 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” (Mosiah 4:27).

B Responding to a “Stress Emergency”

A stress emergency occurs when you suddenly move into the orange or red stress zones. If you are in physical or emotional danger, call your mission president immediately. For other situations, try the following suggestions:

- **Take a short break.** If you feel very upset or overstressed, take a break. Take several slow, deep breaths, stretch, and relax physically. When your body and mind are calm again, you will be able to think more clearly. Take a walk with your companion, get some food or a drink, or just sit and think for a few minutes.
- **Be kind to yourself.** Talk to yourself with the same kind, comforting words you would use with someone else. Everyone gets frustrated or makes mistakes sometimes. Know that the Lord understands. Imagine Him sitting close to you, listening and offering support. Remember, thoughts of helplessness, hopelessness, or harsh condemnation are not from the Lord.
- **Refocus on gratitude.** Notice what is around you. Focus for a few minutes on what is right, good, and positive about yourself and the world. Offer a prayer of gratitude for at least five specific things.
- **Take one step at a time.** Identify the immediate problem, and take one step at a time to solve

it. Remind yourself, “All I have to do right now is ____.” For example, “All I have to do right now is wait for the bus.” or “All I have to do right now is find this address.”

- **Help someone else.** Refocus your energy by serving someone else. Smile at people, help them out, and offer service. (See *Preach My Gospel*, 168–69.)
- **Talk back to negative thinking.** Right now, or before bed tonight, list your negative thoughts from today on paper; then rewrite them to be more hopeful, truthful, and encouraging (see example on right).

C Helping Other Missionaries Who Are Overstressed

- **Notice missionaries who are struggling.** Let them know that you understand they are struggling. Assure them that you will do the work with them and that with the Lord’s help, you can succeed together. If appropriate, suggest they take a short break, such as taking a walk with their companion, getting a change of scenery, or changing to a less stressful activity if possible. Pray for help silently or with the missionary.
- **Think of your baptismal covenant.** We promise “to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light; . . . mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times” (Mosiah 18:8–9). Apply this covenant by (1) sharing the missionary’s burden, (2) offering empathy and comfort, and (3) testifying of God’s love.



"God does notice us, and he watches over us. But it is usually through another person that he meets our needs" (*Ensign*, Dec. 1974, 5).

— PRESIDENT SPENCER W. KIMBALL

Talking Back to Negative Thinking

MY THOUGHTS	MY REWRITE
I can't learn this language.	If I keep practicing, I'll learn it well enough to do my job and teach with the Spirit. The Lord will help me.
Sister Smith must think I'm an idiot.	I can't read her mind so I don't know what she thinks, but I can ask if I've upset her and apologize.
I hate having to get up so early.	I don't have to like it. I think I can do this. Once I get up and start moving, I'll probably feel better.
That lesson was a disaster.	Some lessons go better than others. It is good that I want to improve. Maybe my companion can help.
I'm always so disorganized.	Sometimes I'm disorganized, and sometimes I'm better organized. I can pick one thing at a time to work on organizing better.
I'll never make it through this day.	I've made it through every day so far, and I'll make it through today. All I have to do right now is what is in front of me, one step at a time. After this lesson I'll relax for five minutes to calm down.
I should know my way around by now.	Who says I should? I am doing my best, and the Lord and others will help me if my best is not enough to get the job done.
I don't care what my companion thinks. I'm doing this my way.	I do care; I'm just frustrated. Maybe if I listen better and ask more questions, I'll understand more why my companion sees this differently.



“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

—JOHN 14:27

- **Ask a few questions, but don’t force the missionary to talk.** Try, “You seem upset. What happened?” or “Would you be willing to tell me about it?”
- **Listen to understand and offer support and encouragement.** Until a person feels understood, offering advice and suggesting solutions is often not helpful. Ask questions and help the person find his or her own answers. While you should not take on the role of counselor with investigators or missionaries of the opposite sex, you can be an empathetic listener who helps and supports other missionaries. (See *Preach My Gospel*, 185–86.)

- **Focus on what needs to be decided right now.** Sidestep big issues (such as, “I’m not sure I even have a testimony”), and focus on the immediate decisions to be made (“For now, let’s just decide how we want to handle this next lesson”). Offer to help (“I can bear my testimony this time”). When things have calmed down, come back to the bigger problem and look for solutions (“What do you think a testimony is? How does a person get one? What have you tried? Where could we get more ideas?”). Remind the missionary that the Lord can help with solutions over time if we do what we can and then turn it over to Him.
- **Remind the missionary of what he or she does well.** (“I really appreciate your integrity and your desire to serve God.”)
- **Bear your testimony.** Share your conviction of God’s love and willingness to help.
- **Be wise as you minister to others.** Yours is a holy office. Be trustworthy, keep confidences, and always stay with your companion.
- **Let your mission president know if the situation does not improve.**





Resources for Managing Physical Demands

Excessive stress can affect our health, ability to sleep, and ability to handle temptation. Good nutrition and exercise help us manage stress better. If you are having physical challenges, prayerfully choose one or two suggestions that seem right for you. Not every suggestion will work for every person, but most ideas must be practiced for at least two to three weeks to begin to be helpful. Look in the “General Principles for Managing Stress” section on pages 17–22 for additional suggestions.

A Learning to work hard

- **Break down big or difficult tasks into smaller pieces.** If they still feel too hard, break them down more. Then act. If you wait to “feel like” working before starting, you may wait a long time. Get started, and motivation will follow.
- **Pace yourself.** Vary the work you do, and don’t work too long at just one activity. Remind yourself: All I have to do right now is _____.
- **Get enough sleep, healthy food, water, and exercise to have the stamina you need.**
- **Look for and welcome support, suggestions, and encouragement from others.** Support and encourage others as well.
- **Express gratitude.** Be grateful not only for your blessings but for your challenges and adversities and what you can learn from them. This will open the door for the Lord to bless and help you.



“And all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones; And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures; And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint. And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them. Amen.”

—DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS 89:18–21

B Staying Healthy and Energetic

■ Study and apply Doctrine and Covenants 89.

■ Ask for a priesthood blessing.

■ Follow the *Missionary Health Guide* to strengthen your immune system. Get to bed on time. Drink 6–12 glasses of clean water per day, depending on the climate. Except when fasting, don’t skip meals, especially breakfast. Avoid sugar. Take a multivitamin each day. Eat some protein each day (for example, nuts, tofu, beans, milk, yogurt, cheese, eggs, fish, poultry, meat). Wash your hands often or use hand sanitizer, especially if your companion is ill. Don’t let food sit around that should be refrigerated—when in doubt, toss it out.

■ Exercise regularly. Thirty minutes of exercise each day strengthens your immune system, increases your energy, and stabilizes your mood. If you walk or bike all day, do something different for your exercise. (See *Preach My Gospel*, viii.)

■ Dress for the weather. If it is unusually hot or humid, break up your missionary activities so you can spend 30–60 minutes in the shade or in air conditioning. Run cool water over your wrists or

neck to cool down, and wear sunblock and light clothing. If it is cold, wear layers, gloves, and a hat (most body heat is lost through the head). In general, follow the direction received from your mission president regarding the climate you work in.

■ Keep your apartment clean and dust free.

This is especially important if you have frequent colds or allergies. Wash towels and sheets regularly to reduce allergens. A clean apartment will also lift your spirits.

C Managing Head, Stomach, or Muscle Pain

■ Practice physical relaxation. This may help reduce physical symptoms like headaches, stomachaches, diarrhea, back pain, joint pain, racing heart, trouble catching your breath, or feelings of panic. To train your body to relax, practice the progressive relaxation exercise (page 19) or the breathing exercise (page 18) every day for at least three weeks. Also, when you have symptoms or feel overstressed, use these skills to reduce tension and feel calmer.

■ Break your work into small pieces, and take on only one task at a time. At each step, remind



Keep a Log

Keep a log of physical symptoms you experience, as in the example below. Look for patterns to help you identify things you can change to reduce the anxiety that leads to symptoms.

WEEK 7

Date	Time	Symptoms	Rate 1-5	Where/Doing What	Who With	Thinking/Feeling	What Would Help
4/10	3pm	Headache	4	walking home from church - Kim family didn't come & they cancelled appt. tonight	Elder Jimenez	Wondering if the Kims will ever come to church - frustrated about appt - hungry	Stop worrying about things I can't control
4/17	7am	Headache	4	Companion study - trying to prepare lesson for Peter	Elder Jones	Is Peter really going to agree to be baptized.	Do what you can, let God make up the difference
4/21	8pm	Headache	3	Missionary Correlation Mtg talking about member fellowship-ing	Elder Jones Bro. Winn	I hope I don't get transferred after all this work with the members	Do my best, let God make up the difference
4/25	11 am	Headache, not too bad	2	Apartment - making phone calls	Elder Jones	Feeling apprehensive about contacting Kims and finding members to come with us	Getting better at doing my best and realizing what I can & can't control

Notes and To Do Items

yourself, "All I have to do right now is _____." For example, "All I have to do right now is call the ward mission leader" or "All I have to do right now is get dressed for the day."

■ **Keep a log for a week.** This will help you see when your physical symptoms occur (see example above). Look for patterns. For example, you might notice you are more likely to feel ill:

- Under certain circumstances (such as on Sundays, when you are around leaders, or when you haven't eaten for several hours).
- When you think a certain way (such as when you think about transfers or think you should have done something better).
- When you have certain feelings (such as anxiety about making phone calls or anger you don't want to talk about).

See if there is a way to alter the situation (like carrying healthy snacks with you), change your thoughts (see “Talking Back to Negative Thinking” on page 21), or calm your feelings (see “Responding Positively to Stress” on page 17). Find more suggestions under “Resources for Managing Emotional Demands” on pages 29–34.

- **Seek medical attention.** If symptoms persist or you are injured, consult with your mission president to receive medical help.
- **Forget yourself.** If you notice thoughts like “I’m going to forget what to say” or “I am making a fool of myself,” remind yourself that everyone makes mistakes, and the Lord chooses to work through the weak and simple (see D&C 1:24–28).

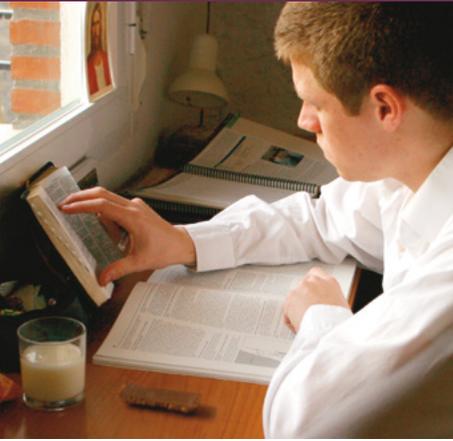
D Sleeping, Going to Bed on Time

- **Unwind and relax during the last hour of the day.** Write in a journal, have a light snack like milk or fruit, listen to appropriate music, talk to your companion, or practice relaxation skills. If you often have work to do during this hour, get a second alarm clock and set it for 30 minutes before you should go to bed. When it goes off, stop work. Begin to relax and prepare for bed.
- **Don’t nap if you have trouble sleeping.** Doing so may cause you to not be tired enough to sleep at night. Go to bed on time instead. If you do nap, don’t sleep more than 20 minutes.
- **Follow a routine each night.** This will train your body that it is time to sleep. For example, use the progressive relaxation exercise on page 19. It

may be helpful to refrain from doing anything in bed (like reading or eating) except sleeping.

- **Write a list of what is keeping you awake.** Then set it aside, putting your mind at rest that you won’t forget something important. Remind yourself that you will work out specific plans in the morning. Focus your nightly prayers on gratitude and reporting what you learned that day.
- **Warm up or cool down.** It is more difficult to sleep if you are too hot or too cold. Take a cool shower or get an extra blanket.
- **Avoid sugar or exercise for an hour before bedtime.**
- **Don’t worry about not sleeping.** If you relax your muscles and thoughts, you will be resting even if you are not sleeping.
- **Block out light as much as possible, and mask noise by running a fan or wearing ear-plugs.** Even a little light or noise keeps some people awake.





“Cease to be idle; cease to be unclean; cease to find fault one with another; cease to sleep longer than is needful; retire to thy bed early, that ye may not be weary; arise early, that your bodies and your minds may be invigorated.”

—DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS 88:124

E Getting Up on Time

- **First, get to bed on time.** If you are not getting enough sleep, go to bed 30 minutes earlier. (See *Preach My Gospel*, viii.)
- **Get regular exercise.** After three to four weeks of exercising 30 minutes a day, you may notice you need less sleep. As your body gets stronger, it has more energy and relaxes more easily. (See *Preach My Gospel*, viii.)
- **Avoid sugar before bedtime.** Doing so may help you feel less groggy in the morning.
- **Plan positively.** Each night at 9:00 p.m., plan for a positive, productive morning so you will feel more like facing it. Review your plan with the Lord in prayer. Write down promptings or ideas that come to mind as you pray, and prepare to act on them. Daily planning can allow your mind to more fully relax as you go to sleep.
- **Program your brain.** Tell yourself the night before what time you want to wake up.
- **Get a timer and attach it to a light.** Set the timer to turn the light on 15–20 minutes before it is time to get up. Light signals your brain to wake up.

F Eating Healthy Foods

- **Get ideas from mission leaders.** Ask them about recipes and healthy foods in your area.
- **Plan before shopping.** Make a plan for meals and healthy snacks before you shop for food.
- **Eat a variety of foods.** Aim for at least five fruits or vegetables each day, if available.
- **Eat protein each day.** Foods high in protein include nuts, beans, tofu, milk, yogurt, cheese, eggs, fish, poultry, and meat.
- **Reduce sugar and avoid caffeine.** Both tend to make people moody and tired in the long run.
- **Drink water and other liquids.** Stay hydrated by drinking 6–12 glasses per day, depending on the climate.



Record in your planner

- Healthy snacks you like
- Relaxing evening routines
- Progress with improving health habits



“And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them.”

—ETHER 12:27

■ **Lose weight gradually.** If trying to lose weight, don't try to lose more than one to two pounds (one kilogram) per week, and drink extra water.

G Getting Motivated to Exercise

■ **Pray for the desire to exercise if you have trouble getting motivated.** Then start by telling yourself you only have to do five minutes. Motivation usually follows action. In other words, we become more motivated once we get started.

■ **Remind yourself of the benefits of exercise.** Imagine having better immunity, increased energy,

better stress management, improved mood, and better weight management. These benefits even come to people who don't really like exercise.

■ **Make it a game.** While you exercise, plan a fun service project, work out to approved music, or share favorite mission stories with your companion. Keep a scorecard and reward yourself for meeting your exercise goals by taking time on preparation day to go to a park, restaurant, or store.

■ **Find a type of exercise you enjoy (or dislike least).** For example, you might march to approved music, jog with your companion, jump rope, stretch, or do push-ups, sit-ups, or yoga.



Resources for Managing Emotional Demands

Strong emotions like depression or anxiety help us know we are overstressed. Read “General Principles for Managing Stress” on pages 17–22 for overall suggestions. In addition, the suggestions below may help with specific emotions.

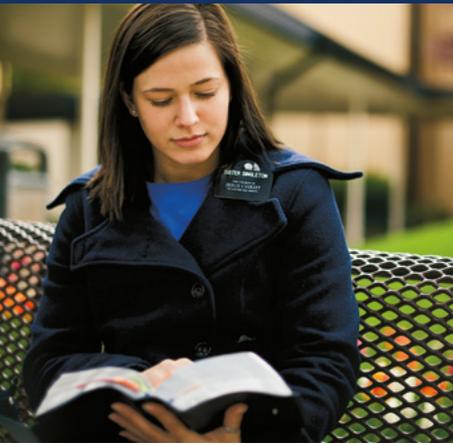
A Feeling Homesick

■ **Keep busy.** Homesickness is common, especially if you haven’t been away from home much. Let yourself feel sad for a few minutes, but then get up and get busy. The best way to combat it is to distract yourself from worry or self-pity by keeping busy and serving others.

■ **Unpack and settle in.** Don’t live out of your suitcase. Set up your personal space. Put up a picture that helps you feel the Spirit and remember why you want to serve the Lord. Clean out old

trash, and make your apartment “yours.” Make foods you enjoy.

■ **Make a long list of things that have not changed about you.** Think of your relationships, your strengths, and other things that are still the same, even though a lot has changed. Examples: “I have a sense of humor; my parents love me; I want to serve.” Add things you would still have to do if you were home: “I would still have to make decisions; I would still have to get along with others; I would still have to work hard.”



“By small and simple things are great things brought to pass; . . . and by very small means the Lord doth confound the wise and bringeth about the salvation of many souls.”

—ALMA 37:6–7

- **Review your reasons for coming on a mission.** Consciously offer your mission as a gift of thanks to the Savior, and list your blessings. Remind yourself of what supportive leaders or loved ones at home would tell you about your service.
- **Ask for a priesthood blessing.**
- **Remove distracting photos.** Put away any photos or pictures that distract you from feeling the Spirit or that stir homesickness. You may choose to bring some of them out again once you are more adjusted. Encourage your family to write only once a week so you, like Jesus’s disciples of old, can leave your “nets” behind (see Matthew 4:18–22) and focus on the work.
- **Be patient.** It generally takes about six weeks to begin to adapt to a new environment. Put off making any decisions, and give yourself time to adjust. Take one day at a time. (See *Preach My Gospel*, 120.)

B Feeling Depressed or Discouraged

- **Review uplifting scriptures and stories.** Collect scriptures, personal experiences, quotations, and family stories that encourage and uplift you. When you read these accounts, imagine

your name in them. (Examples: 2 Nephi 4; Mosiah 24:13–14; Alma 36:3; D&C 4; 6; 31; Proverbs 3:5–6; Helaman 5:12; and “Adversity” in *True to the Faith*.)

- **Review your patriarchal blessing for guidance.** Look for ways your gifts and strengths can contribute to the work.
- **Don’t procrastinate.** Putting things off can lead to depression. Break down big tasks into smaller pieces. Get started, reminding yourself, “All I have to do right now is _____” or “I’ll just do this a few minutes and then take a break if I want.”
- **Listen to approved music or sing.** Choose music that is calm and soothing if you are anxious, or music that is upbeat and cheerful if you feel down.
- **Don’t let resentment build up.** If you feel resentful about something, ask for help with solving the problem without criticizing or blaming others. If you don’t want to talk about it, then don’t let yourself resent it.
- **Set realistic goals, and make specific plans for how you will accomplish them.** Tackle things that distress you one at a time. Depression responds well to goals and plans. (See *Preach My Gospel*, 146.)



Listen to Hymns

"Hymns move us to repentance and good works, build testimony and faith, comfort the weary, console the mourning, and inspire us to endure to the end" ("First Presidency Preface," Hymns [1985], x).

30	Come, Come, Ye Saints
85	How Firm a Foundation
97	Lead, Kindly Light
102	Jesus, Lover of My Soul
105	Master, the Tempest Is Raging
114	Come unto Him
115	Come, Ye Disconsolate
124	Be Still, My Soul
129	Where Can I Turn for Peace?
140	Did You Think to Pray?
142	Sweet Hour of Prayer

■ **Let go of what you cannot control.** The past, the agency of others, the rules, the weather, government bureaucracies, the culture, your limitations, or the personality of other missionaries are outside of your control. Focus on things you can do something about, such as your behavior, your part in a relationship, your current choices, and your attitude.

■ **Accept the reality of some boring routines.**

Not all of life is deeply meaningful and exciting. Avoid creating drama, intensity, or conflict to deal with boredom. Instead, appreciate and enjoy the good around you, and look for ways to improve and serve.

■ **Find things to enjoy.** While respecting the dignity of your calling, rediscover humor, savor the beauty in the world, notice the kindness of others, and delight in the Spirit's presence.

■ **Do the basics: prayer, scripture study, and service.** Focus on gratitude. When reading scriptures, be careful to focus on the parts that most apply to you. For example, don't overfocus on God's anger with sinners if you tend to be a perfectionist. (See *Preach My Gospel*, viii.)

■ **Read Alma 26 and discover what Ammon did when he was discouraged.** Also read Doctrine and Covenants 127:2 and note how Joseph Smith kept discouragement at bay. Don't get depressed about being depressed, creating a vicious circle. It is normal to have days when we feel discouraged, stressed, or homesick. Most of the time it will pass.



Feeling Self-Critical

■ **Focus on what you do right, and avoid comparing yourself to others.** People with excessively high expectations tend to overfocus on their weaknesses and failures. Then, instead of improving, they may feel hopeless. When reading scriptures, focus on the parts that most apply to you as a beloved servant of God. Look for evidences of God's patience, grace, hope, and mercy with those who love and desire to serve Him. (See *Preach My Gospel*, 10–11.)



“When our hearts were depressed, and we were about to turn back, behold, the Lord comforted us, and said: . . . bear with patience thine afflictions, and I will give unto you success.”

—ALMA 26:27

- **Talk positively to yourself.** See “Talking Back to Negative Thinking” on page 21.
- **Realize that everything you do can’t be above average.** You still want to work hard to improve, but no matter how good you become at something, you will perform below your personal average some of the time. This is not a cause for alarm.
- **Give yourself extra credit for doing something you don’t enjoy or don’t do well.** Don’t tell yourself it only counts if you are happy about it or if you did it perfectly.
- **Work on one or two major goals at a time.** Avoid the common practice of trying to improve too many things at once; this can be overwhelming and may lead to failure.
- **Listen to the Spirit, not negativity.** If you are having thoughts that are belittling, mocking, angry, sarcastic, murmuring, critical, or name calling, they are not from the Lord. Shut them out.
- **Seek good counsel.** Ask your mission president and others to help you know if you are trying hard enough or too hard, and accept their counsel. Many self-critical people are not very good at making this distinction.



Record in your planner

- Favorite scriptures
- Goals you want to accomplish



Feeling Anxious or Inadequate

- **Enjoy being a beginner when you are new at something.** You aren’t expected to be an expert. It is enough to be curious, interested, humble, and willing to try. Enjoy it!
- **Cheerfully do what you can, and let God make up the difference.** Sometimes missionaries feel useless or ashamed when others look more successful. If Satan tempts you to doubt yourself or compare yourself to others, remember that this is God’s work, and He chooses the weak and simple to do it. He has chosen you! Trust Him. He trusts you!
- **Envision success.** Worrying can be a way of mentally practicing failure. Instead of rehearsing what can go wrong or constantly worrying about “what if,” mentally practice positive outcomes and make plans to achieve them. Then if things don’t work out as you hope, imagine yourself learning from the setback and going forward.

■ **Don't try to control what you can't.** Trying to control things you cannot control only makes you feel more out of control, increasing your anxiety. Focus your energy on things you can do something about.

■ **Ask, "What is the worst that can happen?"** If the worst possible outcome is something you can live with or something the Savior can help you overcome, move on without fear.

■ **Try slowing down by 10 percent if you tend to rush a lot.** You may be more efficient if you are calmer.

■ **Serve.** As you serve your companion, investigators, members, neighbors, or the poor and needy, you will think less about yourself and be happier. (See *Preach My Gospel*, 168–69.)

E Feeling Easily Irritated or Angry

■ **Give your brain time to override your emotions.** The part of your brain that can reason and use good judgment is slower than the part of your brain that gets angry. Turn away from the situation for a few minutes, and take some deep breaths to give your rational brain time to engage.

■ **Don't feed anger.** People are more likely to feel angry when they choose to see others as (1) threatening, (2) unfair, or (3) disrespectful. Instead, see if you can think of a more charitable explanation for their behavior. For example, perhaps they are tired, uninformed, insecure, or think they are being helpful. Make the choice not to fuel anger.

■ **Be calm, curious, and compassionate.** Be curious about what others are thinking and feeling. Ask questions, listen carefully, tell the other

person what you think you heard, and ask if you understood correctly. If not, try again.

■ **Resist the tendency to blame or shame others or yourself.** Instead, figure out what the problem is and ask the other person for help in fixing it, regardless of whose fault it is.

■ **Be willing to apologize and ask what you can do to make things right.** Apologizing is a sign of spiritual strength, not a sign of weakness.

■ **Smile and be willing to laugh at yourself.** Look in the mirror to see what you look like when you are angry.

■ **Serve those you are prone to be upset with.** Apply the Savior's counsel to "love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you" (3 Nephi 12:44).

■ **Take good care of yourself.** Make sure you are eating well, sleeping, exercising, and praying so you have more emotional resources for dealing with frustration.

F Feeling Exhausted or Unmotivated

■ **Focus on your strengths.** What are the values, talents, experiences, and gifts you bring to the mission? How could you use those strengths in creative ways this week? If you have trouble seeing your strengths, ask others for help.

■ **Take one step at a time.** Remind yourself, "All I have to do right now is _____."

■ **Make it fun!** Respecting the dignity of your calling, set interesting goals for yourself, and make



“Therefore, dearly beloved brethren, let us cheerfully do all things that lie in our power; and then may we stand still, with the utmost assurance, to see the salvation of God, and for his arm to be revealed.”

—DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS 123:17

a game out of meeting them. Be creative and congratulate yourself for success.

■ **Don't overwhelm yourself with too many personal goals at once.** Set one or two personal goals at a time (like being more cheerful or less messy). Don't expect perfection, and include a plan for how you will get back on track when you have a bad day. Remind yourself often of why you want to change.

■ **Share your goals with your companion and mission president.** They can support you and offer helpful ideas.

■ **Realize that motivation follows action.** Getting started is often the hardest part. Tell yourself, “Just do it for 10 minutes” when you need to start something you don't want to do. Once you get started, you will feel more motivated.

G Worrying about Loved Ones at Home

■ **Study Doctrine and Covenants 31:1–6.** From the early days of the Church, missionaries have been called to leave loved ones in difficult circumstances. Pray that blessings of your service will be consecrated to the benefit of your loved ones. Honor them by serving the Lord with all your heart. Trust the Lord to bless them and you, according to His timing and will.

■ **Write your family every week.** Share your testimony and positive experiences and stories. Tell them often when you have seen the hand of the Lord in your life. Pray for them. Remember birthdays and special events.

■ **Expect some challenges to come to your loved ones.** Most of these would occur whether or not you were serving a mission. Your loved ones have agency and may make decisions that worry you, especially if you are used to being a leader or peacemaker at home. It may bless their lives to work through challenges on their own. Respect their choices, and continue to express your love and confidence.

H Feeling Lonely

■ **Get curious about others.** Ask how they handle feeling lonely. Ask about their experiences and feelings so you'll understand them better.

■ **Share more.** We feel lonely when we don't feel known and valued for who we really are.

■ **Write in your journal.** It helps to at least feel understood by yourself.

■ **Define what you mean by “lonely.”** Define what feelings, thoughts, and behaviors go with it for you. Then address these specifically.



Resources for Managing Social Demands

Relationships can be both a source of stress and a blessed resource for coping with stress. When we are overstressed, relationships can suffer. Consider these suggestions for building good relationships. Also refer to the “General Principles for Managing Stress” section on pages 17–22 for additional ideas.

A Talking with Strangers

■ **Identify and use your strengths.** Some people find talking with people energizing; others find it tiring. Both types of people can be effective missionaries. If you are someone who becomes weary talking with strangers, don’t give up trying. You have other strengths to contribute to missionary work, such as being a good friend to those you know well, having creative ideas, being insightful about people, or excelling at planning. You may assume others don’t like you, even though they really do. Seek inspiration and listen to the Spirit to help you use your strengths in His service and

develop more of the attributes of Christ that you have access to as a missionary. You represent Jesus Christ, not yourself.

■ **Learn to ask inspired questions.** Learn and practice questions to get other people talking. Ask people about their work, hobbies, family, or personal history. Ask about what matters most to them, what they yearn for or worry about. Listen for opportunities to testify of a gospel principle that will be relevant to them. Show your sincere interest. Be willing to answer their questions about you as well, keeping the focus on their needs and your message. (See *Preach My Gospel*, 183–84.)



“My joy is carried away, even unto boasting in my God; for he has all power, all wisdom, and all understanding; he comprehendeth all things, and he is a merciful Being, even unto salvation, to those who will repent and believe on his name. Now if this is boasting, even so will I boast; for this is my life and my light, my joy and my salvation, and my redemption from everlasting wo. Yea, blessed is the name of my God.”

—ALMA 26:35–36

■ **Find simple ways to get others’ attention.** Try simply smiling, making eye contact, waving, saying hello, paying them a compliment, offering help, or asking questions that start with *who, what, when, where, why, or how*.

■ **Learn how to end conversations.** When you have discussed what you have felt was appropriate and have asked for referrals, try, “It’s been great to meet you (or talk to you). We better _____ (be going, get back to work, get to the bus, find Brother Smith before he leaves). We’ll see you later!”

■ **Make a goal to get to know one new person at every meeting you attend.** Use the person’s name in the first minute and when you end the conversation. Write down the name to help you remember.

■ **Practice at district meetings.** This is an ideal setting to practice social skills like listening and asking questions.

■ **Ask for feedback.** Not everyone is good at “reading” other people. Ask your companion for help if you have been told you have trouble noticing when other people are uncomfortable or uninterested.

■ **Give yourself permission to sound confident, even if you don’t feel it.** The counsel President

Hinckley received from his father can apply to you as well: “Forget yourself and go to work” (*Ensign*, July 1987, 7). We can do this by ignoring our fears about our own performance and refocusing on our calling to serve others and preach the gospel.

■ **Focus on helping and ministering to others.** As you turn your attention to others’ needs, you will feel less self-conscious about your own needs or inadequacies (see Mosiah 2:17).

B Wanting to Be Alone

■ **Create a sense of privacy occasionally by writing, praying, reading, or planning.** Even though you need to stay with your companion at all times, you can take a few minutes to close your eyes and be still.

■ **Ask directly for some quiet time to think.** Reassure your companion that you are not upset. Continue to invest in your relationship and communicate with kindness.

■ **Break up your day.** Don’t do one type of activity for too long at a time. Vary the type of work you do. Intersperse your planned activities with small moments of stillness and appreciation; then return to work.

C Communicating Openly with a Companion

■ **Listen first.** When you live with someone 24/7, you will notice some things that annoy you. You come from different backgrounds and have different expectations and “rules” for what is appropriate or normal. Your companion’s behavior makes perfect sense to him or her, even if it doesn’t to you. During companion inventory, find out more about how he or she sees things by asking questions and listening carefully. (See *Preach My Gospel*, 185–86.)

■ **Respectfully explain what is bothering you.** If you are critical or angry, your companion is likely to become defensive rather than cooperative. Explain your problem and what you need rather than criticizing your companion’s

bothersome behavior. For example, “I have a real dislike for dirty dishes, but I also don’t like doing them all myself. I wonder if we could set up a way to share this job.” Or, “I worry you’re angry with me when you’re so quiet. Could you tell me what you’re thinking?”

■ **Be straightforward and kind.** Avoid negative labels or judgments. Don’t bolster your position with long lists of your companion’s faults. Try to keep an even tone that is not angry or self-pitying (see Ephesians 4:29–32).

■ **Don’t take offense.** Take suggestions, even if rudely given, with as much grace and humor as you can muster.



Make a List

Things I am learning to love about the culture, history, and lifestyles of the people I serve:



“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure.”

—MORONI 7:48

- **Compliment your companion often.** Thank him or her for things you appreciate.
- **Ask your companion for suggestions on how you can improve.** Also ask the Lord to help you see your weaknesses (see Ether 12:27).
- **Try to do something nice for your companion every day.** Fix lunch, listen, shine shoes, make his or her bed, smile, hang up towels, put away dishes, write a thank-you note to his or her parents, iron a shirt, compliment him or her.

D Loving the People

- **Learn about the culture, history, and lifestyles of the people you serve.** Keep a list of things you love and appreciate.
- **Pray for the gift of charity.** Do so “with all the energy of heart” (Moroni 7:48). Ask for eyes to see others as God sees them.
- **Serve Church members, investigators, and others.** Ask them questions about their lives, beliefs, and experiences until their behavior makes more sense to you.
- **Pray for people.** Include in your prayers the ones who reject you and hurt you (see 3 Nephi 12:44).

E Getting Along with Mission Leaders

- **Be humble (see D&C 112:10).** Humility is the fountain of all virtues. Ask your leaders for suggestions on how you can improve. Be willing to take counsel, and let them know they can count on you. Thank your leaders for their service, both verbally and in writing. (See *Preach My Gospel*, 120–21.)
- **Ask a leader or trainer for help and patience.** Some missionaries distrust authority figures or find it hard to take direction because they are used to being their own boss. Others feel competitive with leaders who are peers. Let leaders know if you have these challenges. Pray for humility to be a good follower.
- **Pray for your leaders.** Pray especially for any toward whom you have unkind feelings.
- **Realize that leaders are human.** If we think leaders are supposed to be much better than other people, we will be disappointed and become critical when they make mistakes, get impatient, show poor judgment, or misunderstand us. Expect imperfections, and look for positive attributes (see Mormon 9:31).

- **Learn from your leader’s strengths and mistakes.** Make a list of qualities you want to emulate or avoid when it is your turn to lead.

F Managing Sexual or Romantic Feelings

- **Develop self-mastery.** Sexual and romantic thoughts and feelings are normal and God-given. As we keep our relationships and behavior within the bounds the Lord has set for us as missionaries, we will grow in strength and gain great blessings. Build your motivation to do so by prayerfully studying Doctrine and Covenants 121:45; 1 Corinthians 9:24–27; Mosiah 3:19; and Alma 38:12. Look up the terms “virtue,” “self-mastery,” and “temperance” in the Topical Guide. List blessings and advantages that will come to you now and in the future as you develop these traits.

Replace the thought. Instead of becoming preoccupied with sexual or romantic thoughts and feelings, distract yourself; relax and get involved with something else. Sing hymns. Memorize scriptures and recite them. Focus on what you are grateful for. Think about plans for the day. Exercise. Re-commit to your work. Have fun and be creative.

- **Avoid temptation.** Avoid places, circumstances, conversations, or people that provoke temptation. If you are exposed to a provocative image or idea, don’t dwell on it. Change your mental channel to other things, and get away from the situation as soon as you can. (See *Preach My Gospel*, 118–19.)
- **Continue in hope and faith.** If you are struggling to manage your sexual feelings appropriately, the Lord wants you to know He still loves you.

Never abandon your relationship with God because you feel unworthy. Though you may struggle to manage these feelings, He will not reject you. More than anyone, He understands what you are going through and values your efforts to resist temptation, learn from errors, and repent. Seek the counsel of your mission president, and continue striving to overcome these challenges. (See *Preach My Gospel*, 116–17.)

- **Don’t get too hungry, lonely, tired, bored, or stressed.** All of these things can make temptation more difficult to resist. Get a snack, take a short break from or change your activity, have a good conversation, or practice relaxation exercises (see page 19).

- **Keep yourself safe.** Remember to always stay with your companion and never be alone with a member of the opposite sex. If you feel yourself being attracted to someone, contact the mission president and seek his counsel. If you sense that someone is trying to flirt with you, ask your companion to help you. Call the mission president to let him know what you are sensing.

- **Fast and pray for understanding and strength.** When we fast, we ignore our normal, healthy hunger for food for a period of time in order to seek spiritual strength and develop skills like self-control, empathy for those who are hungry, and sensitivity to the Spirit. These same skills can help us ignore normal, healthy sexual or romantic feelings as a missionary. Fasting will not eliminate sexual feelings, but monthly fasting may help us gain strength, self-awareness, and motivation to manage these feelings appropriately. (See *Preach My Gospel*, 93–95.)



Resources for Managing Intellectual Demands

Intellectual demands affect us differently. The abilities we have will be enough to accomplish God's work if we trust Him to make up the difference between our skill and what is needed. Suggestions below may help with some issues. Also refer to the "General Principles for Managing Stress" section on pages 17–22 for additional ideas.

A Learning the Language

- **Study *Preach My Gospel*, chapter 7.** Prayerfully apply this chapter, "How Can I Better Learn My Mission Language?"
- **Keep working hard.** Trust the Lord to bless you with the gift of tongues as you need it to accomplish what He desires. Remember, few missionaries become completely fluent in a new language. The Lord knows you, called you, and will use your strengths to bless others. He will

compensate for your weakness. Contribute all the gifts you have.

- **Have fun with your new language.** Sometimes it is easier to speak a new language when we don't expect ourselves to be experts.

B Staying Organized with Goals and Plans

- **Use the scheduling tools you were given in *Preach My Gospel*.** Study chapter 8, "How Do I



“Just as we should not lower the standards that the Lord has established for the conduct of His servants, we are also not authorized to raise them. . . . Be sure that you do not have higher standards for yourself or others than the Lord has established” (“Perfection, Perceptions, Pressures, and Principles” [Provo Missionary Training Center devotional, Mar. 19, 2002], 2–3).

—ELDER CECIL O. SAMUELSON JR.

Use Time Wisely?” These tools have been carefully developed for missionaries and will help you accomplish your purpose. Focus on one thing at a time, and don’t get overwhelmed.

■ **Don’t rely on just your memory.** Write down names, addresses, appointments, lesson plans, and goals. Post reminder notes for important things on the door, the fridge, by your bed, or in your planner.



Record in your planner

- Ways to use small amounts of time wisely
- Preparation-day plans
- Names, addresses, appointments, lesson plans

■ **Put everything you’ll need the next day in a specific place before you go to bed.** Then you won’t risk forgetting something important. Keep important things in the same place so you don’t waste time looking for them.

■ **When you get distracted, kindly but firmly direct your attention back to your task.** Do this as often as you need to.

■ **Turn your day over to the Lord.** Once you have done what you can to plan thoroughly, ask Him to work things together for your good. Be flexible and responsive to the Spirit.



Not Feeling as Smart or as Capable as Others

- **If reading, studying, or memorizing is hard for you, be patient with yourself.** Take short breaks frequently at first; then gradually study for a few minutes longer at a time. Take notes on what you read to help you remember. Read out loud (quietly) if it helps. Try memorizing by (1) repeating things out loud, (2) reading or writing things several times, or (3) moving around and acting things out as you learn. See which technique works best for you. Use other strengths you have, such as contacting potential investigators, navigating, or being cheerful.
- **Keep your sense of humor when you make a mistake.** Then try again.
- **Find the strength in a weakness.** Sometimes having a weakness teaches us strengths like compassion, empathy, patience, humility, and reliance on the Lord. Sometimes a weakness (like being easily distracted) has a strength that goes with it (like noticing things others miss). Look for the strengths that might come from your weaknesses.
- **If you feel jealous of someone else's skills, re-focus your attention on your personal mission.** Put your energy into developing your strengths and contributing them to the work. This is *your* mission. (See *Preach My Gospel*, 10–11.)



Resources for Managing Spiritual Demands

Among missionaries, a common reaction to excessive stress is to question the strength of their testimony or the truthfulness of the gospel. This struggle often stems from a lack of resources to deal with excessive stress rather than a lack of testimony. If you have such difficulties, try the suggestions below that seem right to you. Also refer to the “General Principles for Managing Stress” section on pages 17–22 for additional ideas.

A Learning to Strengthen My Testimony

- **Realize that questions are healthy.** Joseph Smith received many revelations in response to honest questions. Scriptures, teachers, and reason can help with some questions, but only the Spirit can confirm that God is real, that Jesus is the Christ, and that the Church is true.
- **Understand what faith is.** To have faith is to trust the Lord’s perfect goodness, love, wisdom,

and fairness, even though we do not perfectly understand. Alma teaches that “faith is not to have a perfect knowledge of things; therefore if ye have faith ye hope for things which are not seen, which are true” (Alma 32:21). You do not need “perfect knowledge” to have faith. Study Alma 32 for help in building your faith. (See *Preach My Gospel*, 116–17.)

- **Be patient.** Time and experience will help you make sense of some things that are confusing now. Remember Nephi’s assertion: “I know that



“Search diligently, pray always, and be believing, and all things shall work together for your good, if ye walk uprightly and remember the covenant wherewith ye have covenanted one with another.”

—DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS 90:24

[God] loveth his children; nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things” (1 Nephi 11:17). Build on what you know by the Spirit to be true about God. (See *Preach My Gospel*, 120.)

■ **Keep the commandments.** We gain trust in the Lord when we learn by experience the value of His teachings. “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself” (John 7:17).

and honestly. He will help you make these things right.

■ **Forgive yourself after repentance.** If you have repented and still feel guilt and shame, remember we all regret past sins and mistakes. Trust that Christ’s Atonement is sufficient, even for you. Remember that repentance is not just the backup plan. Repentance is the plan of happiness

B Learning to Repent

■ **Be honest with your mission president.**

If you need to repent of serious sins you have not dealt with, talk to your mission president openly





Be still, my soul: Thy God doth undertake
 To guide the future as he has the past.
 Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing shake;
 All now mysterious shall be bright at last.
 Be still, my soul: The waves and winds still know
 His voice who ruled them while he dwelt below.

—HYMNS, NO. 124

for every person. Make sure the things you worry about most are things that really matter (for example, the progress of your investigators), not simply matters of personal pride (like what others think of you).

- **Understand the role of confession.** If you feel a need to confess less serious sins or to confess repeatedly, even after priesthood leaders have assured you that your confession is sufficient, you are probably taking confession too far. Continuing to feel regret and sadness about past sins is normal and does not mean you need to confess again. Distract yourself from such thoughts with other activities, and make the deliberate choice to believe in the Lord’s forgiveness. Ignore the temptation to become anxious or ashamed.

- **Talk to your mission president if you continue to struggle.**

C Learning to Pray Meaningfully

- **Try praying out loud, even if only in a whisper.** Try preparing for prayer by writing your questions or concerns. Visualize the Lord nearby. Ask God what you can do for Him today; then act on ideas that come to mind. On occasion use your prayer only to thank God for the many good things with which He has blessed you.

- **Study “Pray with Faith” in *Preach My Gospel*.** This section, found on pages 93–95, provides suggestions on prayer.

D Learning to Love the Scriptures

- **Pray specifically for help understanding and enjoying the scriptures.** Use some of your study time to write your feelings and reactions, what you learn, or spiritual impressions you receive.

- **Review “Study Ideas and Suggestions” in *Preach My Gospel*.** This section, found on pages 22–25, gives suggestions for more rewarding scripture study.

E Learning to Rely on the Spirit

- **Practice with patience.** Learning to recognize the voice of the Spirit is much like learning a language—it takes practice, patience, humility, and a willingness to learn from mistakes without giving up.

- **Learn from general conferences.** For ideas on how to cultivate personal revelation, study general conference addresses on this topic.

- **Study *Preach My Gospel*.** Pages 96–99 contain additional suggestions and insights on recognizing and relying on the Spirit.



Scripture Resources

Study the passages on the following pages to strengthen your faith that God will provide you with comfort and help. As you remember the Savior, you “may have his Spirit to be with [you]” (D&C 20:79).

Isaiah 41:10	“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”
John 14:27	“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”
2 Timothy 1:7	“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”
1 Nephi 1:20	“The tender mercies of the Lord are over all those whom he hath chosen, because of their faith, to make them mighty even unto the power of deliverance.”
Jacob 3:1	“He will console you in your afflictions, and he will plead your cause.”
Jacob 4:7	“The Lord God showeth us our weakness that we may know that it is by his grace, and his great condescensions unto the children of men, that we have power to do these things.”
Mosiah 4:27	“And 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.”
Mosiah 24:13–14	“Lift up your heads and be of good comfort, for I know of the covenant which ye have made unto me; and I will covenant with my people and deliver them out of bondage. And I will also ease the burdens which are put upon your shoulders, that even you cannot feel them upon your backs, even while you are in bondage; and this will I do that ye may stand as witnesses for me hereafter, and that ye may know of a surety that I, the Lord God, do visit my people in their afflictions.”
Alma 7:12	“He will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities.”

Alma 26:27	"When our hearts were depressed, and we were about to turn back, behold, the Lord comforted us, and said: . . . bear with patience thine afflictions, and I will give unto you success."
Alma 38:5	"As much as ye shall put your trust in God even so much ye shall be delivered out of your trials, and your troubles, and your afflictions."
Ether 12:27	"And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them."
Doctrine and Covenants 6:32–36	"Even so am I in the midst of you. . . . Therefore, fear not, little flock; do good; let earth and hell combine against you, for if ye are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail. Behold, I do not condemn you. . . . Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not."
Doctrine and Covenants 58:2–4	"He that is faithful in tribulation, the reward of the same is greater in the kingdom of heaven. Ye cannot behold with your natural eyes, for the present time, the design of your God concerning those things which shall come hereafter, and the glory which shall follow after much tribulation. For after much tribulation come the blessings."
Doctrine and Covenants 122:7–9	"All these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good. The Son of Man hath descended below them all. . . . Therefore, hold on."
Bible Dictionary, "Fear"	"The first effect of Adam's sin was that he was afraid (Genesis 3:10). . . . Ever since the Fall, God has been teaching men not to fear, but with penitence to ask forgiveness in full confidence of receiving it."
Other scripture resources:	



Missionary Preparation

Adjusting to Missionary Life

This section is a summary of the material you received online before entering the MTC.

It is common for new missionaries to experience some degree of stress or discomfort when they leave behind family, friends, and the things they used to do. The normal transitions of transfers, new companions, and new assignments will also require some adjustments. Be patient as you learn to recognize the blessings of devoting your life more fully to the Savior. Remember, the Spirit will be with you as you make this transition and will

assist you in adjusting to your new missionary responsibilities.

Adjusting to New Experiences

Like many who are entering a new situation, missionaries often go through four phases, or stages, in their emotional adjustment when they enter the MTC and again when they enter the mission field:

Four Stages of Adjustment

<div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">1</div> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Anticipation</p>	<div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">2</div> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Discovering the Unexpected</p>	<div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">3</div> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">"I Can Do This"</p>	<div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">4</div> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Emotional Self-Reliance</p>
<p>You may feel eager for the challenge (see 1 Nephi 3:7).</p> <p>You may feel an increased sense of purpose and allegiance to Heavenly Father (see 3 Nephi 5:13).</p> <p>You may feel happy and look forward to meeting new people and experiencing new places.</p>	<p>You may begin to miss home, family, and friends and even question your decision to serve (see Alma 26:27).</p> <p>You may notice physical manifestations of stress, such as disturbed sleep, appetite changes, or irritability.</p> <p>You may unexpectedly find yourself critical and impatient with rules and expectations.</p>	<p>Your teaching and language skills begin to improve.</p> <p>You learn to willingly comply with mission rules and expectations.</p> <p>You display patience with yourself as you learn "precept upon precept" (see Isaiah 28:10; Mosiah 4:27).</p> <p>Your physical symptoms of stress, if you had any, begin to diminish.</p>	<p>You feel comfortable navigating the daily routine.</p> <p>You recognize your personal strengths and progress.</p> <p>You attain an understanding of what it means to take life one step at a time (see D&C 98:12).</p> <p>You develop greater self-confidence and an increased desire to serve.</p>



Things You Can Do Now

- **Find ways to serve others.** Missionary work is a call to service. Focus on looking outside of your own feelings of discomfort to minister to those who are in need of a kind word, an act of charity, or friendship. (See *Preach My Gospel*, 168–69.)
- **Talk with others about this adjustment.** Make time to discuss the following questions with parents, priesthood leaders, or returned missionary friends:



Remember, the Spirit will be with you as you make this transition and will assist you in adjusting to your new missionary responsibilities.

“And whoso receiveth you, there I will be also, for I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up.”

—DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS 84:88

- What can we learn from scriptural examples of God requiring people to do things that are beyond what they feel capable of doing? (See Exodus 4:10–12; Jeremiah 1:6–9; Alma 17:10–12; 26:27; Ether 12:23–27; Moses 6:31–32.)
- Why is it important to go to bed and wake up on time, maintain good nutrition, get regular exercise, and have personal prayers?
- How can writing in a journal help us during challenging experiences?
- How can we respond when troublesome thoughts or feelings don’t go away?

■ **Read the article “Preparing Emotionally for Missionary Service”** by Robert K. Wagstaff (in *Ensign*, Mar. 2011, 22–26; available online at LDS.org).

■ **Focus on strengthening your relationship with your Heavenly Father.** Seek His Spirit through personal prayer, scripture study, uplifting music, reading your patriarchal blessing, and other ways you have found to be helpful.

■ **Be kind to yourself and others.** Talk to yourself with the same comforting, kind words you

might imagine the Savior using. Remember, thoughts of helplessness, hopelessness, or harsh condemnation are not from the Lord.

■ **Expect the unexpected.** Your experiences as a missionary will not be the same as someone else’s. Everything will not go exactly as you’ve planned or as you think it should. Examining your expectations will help you be open and receptive to change.

Summary

As you serve your mission, prepare to embrace change. Life as a missionary will likely be different than anything you’ve yet experienced, but if you come with a positive attitude, exercising faith in the Lord, and anticipating the need for patience with yourself and others, the Lord will reward and bless you. Remember the counsel given to the Prophet Joseph Smith at a very difficult time in his life: “Know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good” (D&C 122:7).

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

