

Annual Histories Curriculum

The information in this curriculum can be used to prepare a short (10-15 minute) presentation for priesthood and mission leaders, or a longer (60 minute) lesson for clerks and Church History Specialists, or Church History Advisers.

The resources listed below should be utilized to create a lesson plan that is tailored to your audience. Do not try to use all the resources, since it is not possible to include them all in an hour-long lesson.

Objectives

For Priesthood and Mission Leaders

- Decide whether their unit should prepare a basic or comprehensive annual history
- Know they should call someone to prepare and submit their annual history
- Be able to direct those they call to applicable resources and training

For Clerks and Church History Specialists

- Be able to successfully complete and submit an annual history
- Know where to go for additional resources and training

For Church History Advisers

- Have a good understanding of how to prepare and submit an annual history
- Be able to successfully train others to prepare and submit annual histories

Resources for Annual Histories

The first three resources below are available at www.lds.org/annualhistories. Those with an asterisk are available only to Church History Advisers at www.history.lds.org/churchhistoryadviser.

- *Stake, District, and Mission Annual Histories Guide*
- Stake, District, and Mission Instructions and Cover Sheet
- Annual Histories e-learning course
- Annual Histories Overview Handout
- *Annual Histories Curriculum with Sample Lesson Plan* *
- *Annual Histories Presentation for Mission Presidents* *
- *Annual Histories Presentation for Priesthood Leaders* *
- *Annual Histories Presentation for Clerks and Church History Specialists* *
- Fictional Basic Annual History example *
- Fictional Comprehensive Annual History Example *

Teaching Suggestions

- Consider the background knowledge of students. Briefly discuss what they already know so you can adapt the rest of the lesson to fit their needs.
- Consider your objectives and how much information students can receive given your time constraints and their level of understanding.
- Provide multiple opportunities for students to interact. Participation helps students remember the content of the lesson.
- There are several activities included in the sample lesson plan to help you do this. You may use these, adapt them, or create your own.
- Stop frequently to check for understanding. Often, when you ask a question and a student does not respond immediately, he/she is likely formulating a response. Give the student enough time to think and then to answer. Sometimes gently encouraging participation by calling on individuals is appropriate.

Sample Lesson Plan

The lesson plan that follows corresponds to the *Annual Histories PowerPoint for Clerks and Church History Specialists*. You may choose to follow this lesson plan or adapt it to fit the individual needs of the group you will teach. The column on the right will show which visuals correspond to that section of the lesson. Any text in red will be additional instructions for the teacher. This lesson should take between 45 to 60 minutes to complete, including the answering of questions.

Lesson Materials Needed

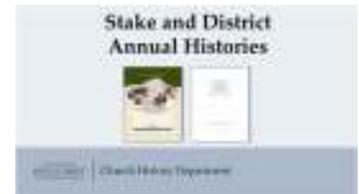
- Laptop computer with VGA cable and internet connection if possible (not required)
- Projector and screen
- Speakers to plug into the laptop computer
- Copies of the Church History Guide *Stake, District, and Mission Annual Histories* for each student
- Fictional Basic Annual History example
- Fictional Comprehensive Annual History Example

Annual Histories Sample Lesson Plan

Introduction

Distribute the [Annual Histories Overview Handout](#) to the students.

An Annual History is a historical record of a Stake and District that is compiled each year and submitted to the Church History Department.



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Doctrinal Foundation

From the day the Church was organized, the Lord commanded his Church to keep a record.

Why do you think keeping a history is important to the Lord?

This scripture from Doctrine and Covenants 69 directed the Church Historian to encourage Church leaders from all around the world to send in an account of their stewardship. One of the ways that is done is through the annual history program.

From Doctrine and Covenants 85 we learn that our records should focus on more than just an administrative history. It should include stories about people and their lives.



Discussion 1

Have students read the scriptures out loud from the screen. Ask them to share their feelings about the importance of keeping a record. How did record-keeping help the Nephites? (See Alma 37:8) How does record keeping bless our lives today?

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Purpose

The purpose of the annual history is to:

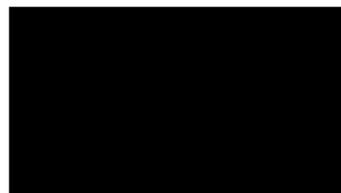
- Bring members closer to Christ by helping them remember what God has done for His children and that He always fulfills His promises.



- Document continually the contemporary history of the Church.
- Present leaders and missionaries with an opportunity to reflect on their efforts to help individuals and families qualify for exaltation.

The annual history is more than just a clerical exercise, it should be a tool for helping us remember God’s hand in our lives and to reflect on our responsibilities and how well we have fulfilled them.

Go to next slide. The next slide will play Elder Snow’s message about the importance of record keeping.



Discussion 2

At the end of this video, ask students to reflect on what they heard. They may express their thoughts and feelings to someone sitting next to them, or they may share with the entire class.

Annual History Cycle

There are five steps to the annual history cycle. This cycle should be repeated every year. The rest of this class will focus on each of these steps.

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Assign

In January, the presiding leader (Bishop/Stake President) should assign a person to be responsible for their unit’s annual history.

During this lesson, I will refer to a ward and a bishop, but you should substitute branch, district, or stake in place of a ward, and president in place of a bishop if applicable.

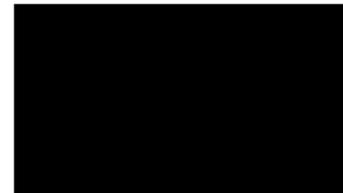
This person could be their clerk or a history specialist. A specialist could be either a woman or a couple.

The responsibility to create and submit an annual history is outlined in Handbook 1 for Stake Presidents and Bishops.

There is training available for those who are called to do this work. Simply navigate to www.lds.org/annualhistories.



Go to next slide. The next slide will play Elder Snow's message to Priesthood Leaders.



Discussion 3

At the end of this video, ask students to identify what blessings they and others can receive by keeping the annual history. Write a list of at least five blessings.

Gather

There are two options for preparing an annual history. The priesthood leader over the unit should decide which option is appropriate for his unit.

The first is a very simple approach to gathering a basic history for the unit. It can normally be prepared by one person in just an hour or two.

A basic annual history has four parts:

1. A cover sheet identifying the unit and year. A cover sheet can be downloaded from lds.org/annualhistories. Annual history folders can also be ordered from the Distribution Center.
2. Your unit's calendar, if they create a calendar.
3. A copy of the "Officers sustained form" read at your ward conference. The stake includes the form read at stake conference.
4. A brief narrative describing the year's important events and developments. This might consist of 2-3 pages with a paragraph or two on each of the year's major events. These accounts are best written right after the event.

The second option is more comprehensive. It includes all the items in the basic history plus two additional sections.

5. Reports from each priesthood quorum and auxiliary organization. This works best if the unit's leader (bishop or stake president) creates a short list of priorities at the beginning of the year and then invites each of the priesthood and auxiliary leaders to report how their organizations have contributed to the



fulfillment of these priorities. For example, the Relief Society President might report what the Relief Society did to help the sisters attend the temple more frequently or what they did to help rescue those who have lost their way. If needed, there is a template, based on the prophetic priorities, in the guide.

6. Finally, you should include any significant records created by or about the unit. For example, newsletters, programs from special events, and newspaper articles.

Discussion 4

Distribute copies of the Church History Guide *Stake, District, and Mission Annual Histories*, and invite students to quickly review the pages that discuss basic and comprehensive options. Ask students to silently identify which option is best for them this year.

Discussion 5

Ask students to list two or three things their priesthood leader wants to accomplish this year. List these goals.

Explain that sections of the unit's annual history can be based on these goals, that those who help carry them out can report on their accomplishments, and that those reports work very well as sections in the annual history.

Ask students to write down two or three examples of significant records from their unit they can include in an annual history. (See *Stake, District, and Mission Annual Histories Guide* for examples.) Share ideas with the class. Encourage students to also share these thoughts with and receive counsel from their respective priesthood leaders later on.

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Including photographs is a good way to make the history more interesting. When including photographs, make sure they are clearly identified. Who, what, where, when, etc. is a helpful rule to remember. When you have large groups of photos, summarize them as a block of photos. You should also have the photographer sign the "Permission to Use Photographs" form found in the back of the guide. Do the best that you can with this form. It's better to include photos than not to include them if you're worried about filling out the form completely. If the form is not filled out completely, or if no



form accompanies a photo, the Church History Department can still accept the photos, but the Church will not be able to use them out of the context of your annual history.

Avoid including information about a person's worthiness or any confidential information that is not publically known.

Often countries have privacy laws that limit what personal information can be shared publically. For this reason, do not include directories or birth dates.

Do not include information about non-members without receiving their signed permission first. A consent form can be found in the back of the guide and should be included with your annual history.

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Compile

At the end of the year, compile and organize all the information you have into a single report. How you organize the report is up to you. If the report is large, you may want to include a table of contents or use tabs for each section.

Do not use staples, paperclips, protective sleeves, or bind the pages together as a book. Someday these reports will be digitized and these things will slow down the scanning process.



Discussion 6

Invite students to review the Fictional Basic Annual History Example and the Fictional Comprehensive Annual History Example. Have students note what components are contained in each. Note how they are organized. Invite students to compare these fictional examples with their memories of other annual histories they may have been involved with. What are the similarities and differences?

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Approve

When the report has been compiled, the unit's priesthood leader (Bishop) should review the report and sign the cover sheet. He does not need to read every word, although he may want to. Either way, he should ensure the annual history records what he wants future generations to remember about his unit.



Go to next slide. A video explaining how annual histories should be submitted will automatically play.



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Summary

Elder Snow's message to Clerks and Specialists will automatically play.



Give out your contact information so you can clarify items from this lesson in the future.



Discussion 7

Invite students to share their reactions to this lesson, as well as what they plan to do in the next few months. Remind them that they may access necessary materials and helpful training at www.lds.org/annualhistories.

