

FAITH FACTS: THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS

WHO IS JOSEPH SMITH?

Joseph Smith is the founder of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He was born in 1805, in Vermont. When he was 14, he saw God and Jesus Christ in his first vision. When he was 17, he began to receive heavenly messengers who prepared him for the restoration of the church on earth. He is believed to be a prophet. The Church was founded in New York, on April 6, 1830, under Smith's leadership and has become international.

TEMPLES AND WORSHIP

Temples are the house of the Lord, the most sacred structures on earth. Only church members are allowed in temples.

In temples, members learn eternal truths; receive sacred ordinances; provide ordinances of baptism for those who have died without receiving the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The primary family worship service is called **sacrament meeting**. The meetings are held in **chapels** on Sundays, lasting about 70 minutes. Visitors and children are welcome.

A TYPICAL SACRAMENT MEETING WOULD INCLUDE:

- Hymns – religious songs, books provided.
- Prayer – offered by local leaders.
- Partaking of the sacrament (communion) – taken by members of the congregation.
- Speakers – usually 2 or 3 assigned speakers.

SPECIAL NOTES.....

No offering is requested at the sacrament meetings.

Those who attend will be dressed in their "Sunday best", which would be suits and ties for men and dresses or skirts for women. Children also dress up.

Local congregations are called wards or branches.

The spiritual leader of each ward is called the **bishop** (or the branch president for branches). He is a member of the congregation that has been asked to serve as a volunteer in this position. There are no paid clergy, so all Church service is voluntary.

Baptism is by immersion. Baptism is for the remission of sin, to become a member of the Church, and to enter the kingdom of God.

THE WORD OF WISDOM...

is a law of health to keep minds and bodies strong. Revealed to Joseph Smith in 1833, the law includes abstinence from tobacco, alcohol, coffee and tea, and illegal drugs.

BASIC BELIEFS....

- God is our Heavenly Father.
- Jesus Christ is the son of God. He is our Savior, redeemed us through the resurrection and saves us from sin as we repent.
- Through the atonement of Jesus Christ, we can return to live with God if we keep His commandments.
- The Holy Ghost helps us to recognize truth.
- The first principles of the gospel are faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism, and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost.
- The Church of Jesus Christ has been restored to the earth.
- The priesthood authority of God exists in His Church today, just as it did in the original Church.
- The Bible and the Book of Mormon are the word of God.
- God reveals His will to prophets today, just as He did anciently.
- Our life has a sacred purpose.
- Families can be together forever.
- Through serving others, we can experience joy and draw closer to God.

HOLIDAYS/SPECIAL OCCASIONS...

The two most spiritually significant holidays are **Christmas** and **Easter**.

Pioneer Day – July 24, celebrates the arrival of the first Latter-day Saint pioneers in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847. Members honor the pioneer heritage of this day. The Church offices are located in **Salt Lake City, Utah**.

Twice a year, usually the first weeks in April and October, the Church holds a **general conference** of all members. While not a holiday, members take time to be instructed and encouraged by leaders.

THE BIBLE AND THE BOOK OF MORMON

The Bible is a collection of sacred writings containing God's revelations and accounts of His dealings with His children in the Holy Land.

The Book of Mormon is another witness that Jesus Christ really lived, that He was and is God's Son. It contains the writings of ancient prophets, including Lehi, who was commanded to lead a group of people to America. It is named after Mormon, the last of the ancient prophets. The book contains the teachings of Jesus when he appeared to people in America after his resurrection, taught, and founded His Church there. It supports and verifies the Bible.