

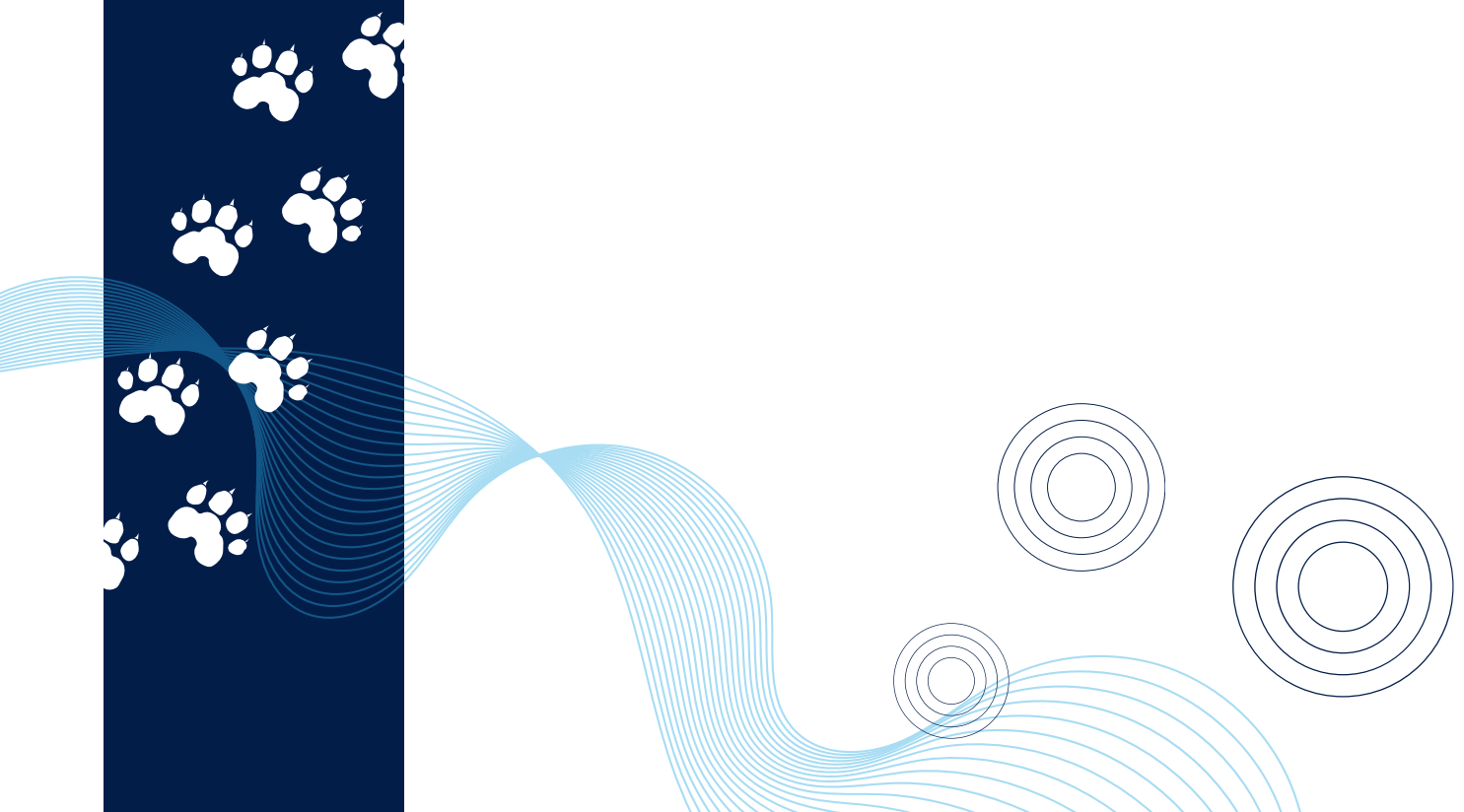


BYU STUDENT GUIDE

for students who are not members of The Church
of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

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Welcome to BYU!

We're so glad you're here.



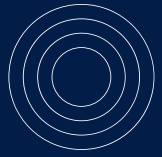
Brigham Young University is home to over 30,000 students, about 1% of whom are not members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. If you are part of this 1%, you will likely be asked regularly: “Why did you choose BYU?!” - and we know that each of your stories is unique.

During your time here, we hope that you are able to take full advantage of the many incredible resources available to you. We also recognize that there will likely be days where you are aware of the fact that you are among a small minority group on this campus. We hope that this guide will equip you with the necessary resources to approach difficult moments with adequate support. We also hope that the majority of your time here will be a positive experience where the greater campus embodies the characteristics of belonging outlined in the official BYU Statement on Belonging (see the next page).

Please read through this packet and reference it during your time at BYU. Although every resource may not be relevant to you now, there is a chance that it will be helpful in the future.

Thank you - whether you are a new student or have been here some time - for your contributions to our BYU community. We appreciate your unique perspective and know that it helps to broaden the horizons of our greater student body. You are valued, loved, and important to our staff at BYU!

Go Cougs!



BYU Statement on Belonging



We are united by our common primary identity as children of God (Acts 17:29; Psalm 82:6) and our commitment to the truths of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ (BYU Mission Statement). We strive to create a community of belonging composed of students, faculty, and staff whose hearts are knit together in love (Mosiah 18:21) where:

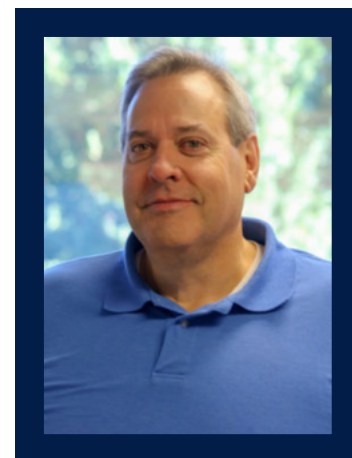
- All relationships reflect devout love of God and a loving, genuine concern for the welfare of our neighbor (BYU Mission Statement);
- We value and embrace the variety of individual characteristics, life experiences and circumstances, perspectives, talents, and gifts of each member of the community and the richness and strength they bring to our community (1 Corinthians 12:12–27);
- Our interactions create and support an environment of belonging (Ephesians 2:19); and
- The full realization of each student’s divine potential is our central focus (BYU Mission Statement).

People to Talk to

Jim Slaughter

UNIVERSITY CHAPLAIN

Jim's job as the chaplain is to provide ecclesiastical endorsements to all students who are not members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He is also available, by appointment or often by walk-in, to talk to any student who would like advice or a listening ear, or has suggestions for improving the experience for non-Latter-day Saint students on campus. Visit Jim in the Office of Belonging, Wilkinson Student Center room 2400, or reach out to him via email at james_slaughter@byu.edu.



Whitney Johnson Catt

ASSOCIATE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR FOR STUDENT-ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Student-athletes may visit Whitney in the Built for Life center on the 3rd floor of the Student Athlete Building. Whitney's job is to implement the vision of diversity and inclusion, especially for students of minority groups, within BYU Athletics. She is available to student-athletes by appointment and would love to get to know you. Reach out to Whitney via email at whitney_johnson@byu.edu.



BYU Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS)

BYU CAPS is located in the basement of the Wilkinson Student Center in room 1500. Students who would like to speak with a licensed mental health professional, either on a regular basis, in crisis, or when having a difficult day, can set up an appointment with CAPS for free.

Additional people to talk to

There are many other people on campus who would love to talk to you and connect with you. Whitney (if you are a student-athlete) and Jim would be happy to help you find someone particular to your needs. Please let them know if there is something specific you are seeking, and they will work to connect you to the right people!



Places of Worship

We would highly recommend that students of faith get connected with a local community that reflects their own religious views. These communities are a helpful support when attending a university of a different faith and can provide a sense of belonging outside of BYU campus.

The following list is not an exhaustive list of places of worship near BYU, and it is important to note that BYU does not endorse any particular place(s) of worship. Please supplement this list with your own research and experience.

You are also welcome to attend The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Visit maps.churchofjesuschrist.org to find a congregation.

If you would like to attend a local place of worship but have trouble finding transportation to do so, please reach out to the University Chaplain, Jim Slaughter, at james_slaughter@byu.edu.

Buddhist

Salt Lake Buddhist Temple

211 W 100 S SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84101 | SLBUDDHIST.ORG

Catholic

St. Francis Catholic Church

65 W 500 N, OREM, UT 84057 | OREMSTFRANCIS.ORG

St. Peter Catholic Church

634 N 600 E, AMERICAN FORK, UT 84003 | STPETERAF.ORG

The Cathedral of the Madeline

331 E SOUTH TEMPLE, SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84111-1226 | UTCOTM.ORG

Hindu

Krishna Temples

311 W 8500 S, SPANISH FORK, UT 84660 | UTAHKRISHNAS.ORG
965 E 3370 S, MILLCREEK, UT 84106 | UTAHKRISHNAS.ORG

Shirdi Sai Mandir of Utah

145 FORT UNION BLVD, MIDVALE, UT 84047 | SHIRDISAIUTAH.ORG

Sri Ganesha Hindu Temple of Utah

1142 W S JORDAN PKWY, SOUTH JORDAN, UT 84095 | UTAHGANESHATEMPLE.ORG

Jewish

Temple Har Shalom (Reformed)

3700 NORTH BROOKSIDE CT, PARK CITY, UT 84060 | HARSHALOMPARKCITY.ORG

Congregation Kol Ami (Conservative & Reformed)

2425 HERITAGE WAY, SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84109 | CONKOLAMI.ORG

Chabad of Utah County

LEHI, UT | JEWISHUTAHCOUNTY.COM

Muslim

Utah Valley Islamic Center

352 E 900 S ST, OREM, UT 84097 | UVISLAM.COM

Utah Islamic Center

948 W 9000 S WEST, WEST JORDAN, UT 84088 | UTISLAMICCENTER.ORG

Orthodox Christian

St. Xenia Orthodox Church (Antiochian)

1173 S 1950 W, PAYSON, UT 84651 | STXENIAPAYSON.COM

St. Anna Greek Orthodox Church

9201 S 1300 E, SANDY, UT 84094 | STANNAGOCUTAH.ORG

St. George Russian Orthodox Church

6790 S 1300 W, WEST JORDAN, UT 84084 | STGEORGESLC.ORG

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral

279 S 300 W, SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84101 | GOCSLC.ORG

Protestant

Mosaic Church

106 W CENTER ST, PROVO, UT 84601 | MOSAICPROVO.COM

Alpine Bible Church

310 E STATE ST, LEHI, UT 84043 | ALPINEBIBLE.COM

Fellowship Bible Church

375 N STATE ST, LINDON, UT 84042 | FBCLINDON.ORG

Center Point Church

550 SANDHILL RD, OREM, UT 84058 | CENTERPOINTUTAH.ORG

Good News Lutheran Church

3281 N 1120 E, LEHI, UT 84043 | GOODNEWSLEHI.COM

Grace Baptist Church

300 S 1200 W, OREM, UT 84058 | GRACEOFOREM.CHURCH

First Baptist Church Provo

1144 COLUMBIA LANE, PROVO, UT 84604 | FBCPROVO.ORG

Seventh-Day Adventist

Provo Seventh-day Adventist Church

255 S 700 E ST, PROVO, UT 84606 | SEVENTHDAYADVENTISTPROVO.ORG



Religion Classes

All undergraduate students at BYU must complete a number of religion classes in order to graduate. To ease the burden of religion classes on students who are not members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, BYU offers three classes specifically for these students. These classes are a simpler introduction to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints than normal religion classes, and also provide a way for students to meet others who are not of the Latter-day Saint background.

Introduction to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

REL C 100

Foundations of the Restoration

REL C 225 | ONLY OFFERED FALL SEMESTER

Teachings and Doctrine of the Book of Mormon

REL A 275 | ONLY OFFERED WINTER SEMESTER

To enroll in these classes, you may need to know the specific section number to add and/or may need an add code from Jim Slaughter, the University Chaplain. If you have any difficulty adding these classes or are in need of an add code, email Jim at james_slaughter@byu.edu



University Resources



Office of Belonging

WILKINSON STUDENT CENTER 2400

The Office of Belonging sponsors many events on campus to promote belonging. They also house the University Chaplain and address any reported discriminatory conduct on campus via a formal reconciliation process. Visit their website or office for more information, to report discrimination, or to browse further university resources.



Title IX Office

WILKINSON STUDENT CENTER 1320

The Title IX Office, in compliance with federal law, addresses any and all instances of sexual harassment and sexual discrimination on campus. To make a report or learn more, visit their website or stop in to their office.



Counseling & Psychological Services

WILKINSON STUDENT CENTER 1500

BYU Counseling & Psychological Services provides professional mental health services to all students who desire it, free of charge. Although there is sometimes a waiting list for recurring appointments, the office is always open for students in immediate distress. Visit their website or stop by in person to learn more.



University Accessibility Center

WILKINSON STUDENT CENTER 2170

The University Accessibility Center provides accommodations for students with disabilities. See their website or schedule an appointment for further information.



Women's Services & Resources

WILKINSON STUDENT CENTER 3326

Women's Services & Resources provides services, resources, and education tailored to women on campus. See their website or visit them in person for further information.

Religious Clubs & Resources



Muslim Prayer Rooms

WILKINSON STUDENT CENTER 3241 | OPEN 1PM TO 9PM
LIFE SCIENCES BUILDING 2112 | OPEN DAILY (EXCEPT SUNDAY)
WILKINSON STUDENT CENTER 3250 | FRIDAY SERVICE AT 1:40PM

Prayer rooms are available for Muslim students wanting to participate in daily prayers. Monday through Saturday, students may visit room 3241 in the Wilkinson Student Center in order to pray. On Fridays, a local Imam leads prayers at 1:40 PM in room 3250 in the Wilkinson Student Center. Students of all backgrounds are welcome to attend this weekly service.

For students further from the Wilkinson Student Center, the Life Sciences Building room 2112 is available for prayers. When using the room, please turn the sign to “occupied” and only use the room for 20 minutes at a time. After leaving the room, change the sign back to “vacant.”

**Prayer rooms will not be accessible on Sundays when campus is closed for church services.*

The Nonmember Project

INSTAGRAM @THENONMEMBERPROJECT
YOUTUBE & SPOTIFY “BYU NONMEMBER PROJECT”

The Nonmember Project is a video podcast created by non-Latter-day Saint students. It was first started as a project for the Council for Interfaith Engagement with the purpose of recording the unique and varied experiences of non-Latter-day Saint students at BYU. It is not affiliated with BYU or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and all opinions shared are those of the individuals represented.

The podcast may be watched on YouTube or listened to on Spotify, and quotes from each episode have been pulled and shared on Instagram. Although The Nonmember Project exists to share non-Latter-day Saint experiences with wider campus, it also serves to provide relatable accounts to non-Latter-day Saint students who may be interested.

How to Join BYUSA Clubs



1. Visit clubs.byu.edu
2. Click on “Find an Organization” or use the search bar
3. Search the club you are interested in joining, or browse the clubs list
4. When you find a club you want to join, click on it
5. Click “join club”
6. If you are not already logged in to your BYU account, you will be prompted to log in
7. Once you are a member of the club, they will send email updates to your BYU email regarding upcoming events

Newman Catholic Club

NEWMANCLUB@BYU.EDU

The Newman Catholic club meets regularly to participate in both social and religious events. Past events have included a bowling night, Stations of the Cross, Vespers, and access to a local priest on campus for confessions. Join the Newman Catholic Club to meet other Catholics and participate in religious traditions on campus! All students (non-Catholic included) are welcome.

Muslim Student Union

MUSLIMSTUDENTS@BYU.EDU

The Muslim Student Union participates in Friday prayers on BYU campus (see “Muslim Prayer Rooms” on the previous page) and helps to organize the annual Ramadan Iftar event on campus. Join the Muslim Student Union to meet other Muslims on campus and participate in religious and cultural activities related to Islam.

Cross Seekers Christian Fellowship

CROSS.SEEKERS@BYU.EDU

Cross Seekers meets weekly to study the Bible. In past semesters, they have studied through the books of Ephesians, James, Daniel, and 1 & 2 Timothy. They welcome a variety of perspectives, and regularly entertain members with diverse religious backgrounds who are passionate about studying the Bible. Visit Cross Seekers to meet Christian students on campus and study the Bible at depth from a Protestant-leaning perspective.

Frequently-Asked Questions

Why do we pray in class and what should I do if I'm asked to pray?



*Dear
Heavenly
Father...*

Because BYU is a religious private school and one of our educational goals is to be “spiritually strengthening,” professors often integrate prayer into the beginning of class. Some professors call on students randomly to provide this pre-class prayer. If you are uncomfortable with praying in front of the class, please feel free to politely decline. If you would like, you can let a professor know at the beginning of the semester that you would prefer not to be called on to pray before class.

If you are comfortable praying in front of the class, you are welcome to pray in whatever way you do so normally - it does not need to be similar to a Latter-day Saint prayer if that is not how you pray. Latter-day Saints typically pray with their arms folded and eyes closed, but during class prayers, you can sit in whatever posture you feel comfortable with as long as you do not disrupt the class.

Why do some businesses close earlier & stay closed on Sundays?

Many businesses and restaurants in Utah County close earlier in the evenings than students not from Utah may be used to, and many also remain closed all day on Sunday. Businesses being closed on Sunday reflects the Latter-day Saint culture which honors the Latter-day Saint day of worship (Sunday) by not shopping or going out to eat on that day. Before you go out later in the evening or on a Sunday, check that the business you are going to is open. Many do stay open, but there is a chance it will be closed!

Where are the missionaries getting my phone number and/or address?

Some non-Latter-day Saint students may receive unexpected texts, calls, or visits from local Latter-day Saint missionaries. Often, this is because their friends, acquaintances, or roommates have given their information to the missionaries. Proselyting is common at BYU, and most students have served their own Latter-day Saint proselyting missions. Although it can be annoying to have people you know give away your contact information, know that they likely do so because they care about you and want you to experience the joy they have found for themselves in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Also, know that it is perfectly acceptable for you to say “no” to people who share your contact information without consent. If someone has given your phone number or address to the missionaries and you are not in favor of this, it is most effective to state clearly and kindly that you would not like to have your contact information given out without your knowledge, and assure them that you will contact the missionaries yourself if you are interested in hearing a message from them.



What should I do about the missionaries?

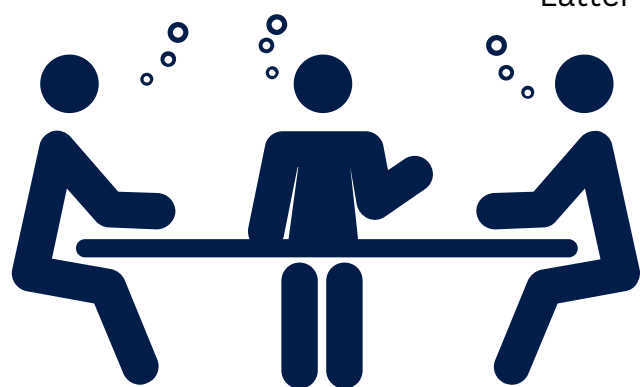
Most non-Latter-day Saint students will encounter Latter-day Saint missionaries via texts, on home visits, or on campus during their time at BYU. If you would like to speak with the missionaries about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and their beliefs, by all means, do so! If you do not want the missionaries contacting you, even if you have invited it in the past, send them a clear (not mean or unkind) message letting them know that you would not like to be contacted further and will reach out if you have any questions in the future. If missionaries continue to reach out to you after this, contact the University Chaplain at james_slaughter@byu.edu.

Why all the different identifying terms for students who aren't members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?

You will probably hear lots of different terms referring to students who are not members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. These most commonly include: “non-Latter-day Saint,” “non-LDS,” “non-member,” “religiously diverse,” and “students of other faiths.”



Although none of these terms are perfect, they are necessary to distinguish the group of students that are “not members of The Church of Jesus Christ of



Latter-day Saints” without writing out (or saying) that entire statement every single time. Over time, BYU has used different identifying terms in official capacities, and individual non-Latter-day Saint students have their own (often conflicting) opinions on each term, as well. If you are bothered by any of the terms listed above, please feel free to share this with people you are regularly in contact with, as well as sharing what term(s) you would prefer to be referred to by.

Where can I find other students who are not Latter-day Saints at BYU?

Many non-Latter-day Saint students have a better experience at BYU after meeting other non-Latter-day Saint students. There are many ways to find these connections. One way is to attend the University Chaplain’s events at the beginning of each semester. You can also attend religious clubs of other faiths on campus. If you are an athlete, there may be events specific to non-Latter-day Saints run by Whitney Johnson Catt. Check your BYU email for updates from the University Chaplain or Whitney Johnson Catt (if you are an athlete) to stay up-to-date on upcoming events. Also consider taking the religion classes offered for non-Latter-day Saint students (p.10), where all of your classmates will also be non-Latter-day Saints.

Can I get accommodations for my Latter-day Saint religion classes?

Several Latter-day Saint religion classes are required for graduation, and they are usually more difficult for students who are not Latter-day Saints. If you feel comfortable doing so, it may be helpful to share with your religion professor that you are not a Latter-day Saint. Most professors will provide necessary accommodations so that you can complete your coursework appropriately. If you are asked to do something that does not apply to you - such as “bear your testimony” about some part of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints - you should not be penalized for writing what you believe (even if it is not necessarily in line with the The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) or asking for an alternate assignment.

If you have a religion professor who is struggling to meet your needs as a student who is not a Latter-day Saint, reach out to the University Chaplain, Jim Slaughter (james_slaughter@byu.edu).



Why do people keep inviting me to church & church activities, & should I go?

Oftentimes, Latter-day Saints enjoy sharing their culture and beliefs with those who are not part of their church because they want others to experience the happiness they’ve found in their religion and feel included in the group. Going to Latter-day Saint church services or church activities may be valuable in increasing your understanding of the Latter-day Saint culture and religion, and can be a fun way to get to know the people who live near you. Many activities sponsored by individual wards (singular Latter-day Saint church congregations) are not very religious and are mostly a way to get to know other people and make friends.

However, you should never feel obligated to attend services or events if you do not want to. If you feel pressured into going to church activities that you do not want to go to, you should feel comfortable saying “no.” You are not required to attend church activities as a BYU student, even if they are integrated into your living situation (i.e., your roommates are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, team Firesides are held for your athletics team, or you live in a dorm where church activities occur in common areas).

What do people do to have fun with their friends since we can't “party” like at most universities?

Due to the Honor Code, BYU students have fun in ways that diverge from traditional college students. They may go to specialty soda shops instead of coffee shops, go to dance parties with energy drinks instead of alcohol, and have board game nights instead of wine nights. Outdoor activities, which are plentiful in the area, are a common pasttime - students often hike, camp, ski, snowboard, snowshoe, and more. Swing dancing is a common activity, as well. University sporting events are also attended by a high rate of students, and the university and local church congregations regularly plan fun activities for students. In fact, because of the Honor Code, many BYU students are extra creative in thinking of fun activities to do with their friends.

How does the dating scene look for students who aren't Latter-day Saints?

Latter-day Saints are encouraged to marry within their faith so most are serious about finding a husband or wife who will marry them in the Latter-day Saint temple. Because of this, many students who are not Latter-day Saints have reported a difficult time dating at BYU. You should be prepared for some people to reject you because you do not share their religion, or to



expect you to convert if you are interested in marrying them. If you get into a relationship with a Latter-day Saint (as with anyone), it is important to communicate about what you want in a relationship, especially when it comes to religion, so that you know what to expect.

Some non-Latter-day Saint students have preferred to widen their dating pools by dating students at UVU and the University of Utah, where there are more students who may share their worldview and/or religion.

Why can we drink caffeine & energy drinks but not coffee or tea?

The Honor Code is based on the Word of Wisdom, which was recorded by the Latter-day Saint prophet, Joseph Smith. In the Word of Wisdom, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are given a dietary code, which includes not drinking “hot drinks.” Latter-day Saints believe that each subsequent prophet of their church gives continued revelation from God, and prophets after Joseph Smith clarified that “hot drinks” included coffee and tea (except herbal tea). Therefore, Latter-day Saints are prohibited from drinking coffee and tea - including iced coffee, matcha, and other drinks that contain coffee and non-herbal tea, even if they aren’t technically hot. The Word of Wisdom never mentions caffeine, so Latter-day Saints still drink soda and energy drinks, which Latter-day Saint prophets and leaders have not spoken against, making them acceptable in the religion (and at BYU).



What should I do when I encounter awkward or inappropriate conversations about religion?

It is common for non-Latter-day Saint BYU students to have uncomfortable conversations about religion, especially when they start at BYU. Religion is a common discussion topic, and most people assume that any student they meet is a Latter-day Saint. This may lead to awkward encounters when someone assumes your religion, does not know how to react to the fact that you are not a Latter-day Saint, or says something untrue or uncalled for about another faith. You are never obligated to continue a conversation that makes you feel uncomfortable, nor to share details about your personal religious beliefs if you do not want to.

If you encounter discrimination or concerning comments toward people of another faith at BYU, whether from a staff member or another student, please reach out to the Office of Belonging to confidentially report your experience or speak with University Chaplain Jim Slaughter. While awkward conversations are unavoidable, discrimination is never acceptable, and BYU does not take these instances lightly.

Why are all of my friends going on missions? How does that work?

If you are a freshman living in Helaman or Heritage Halls, most of your friends from the dorms will probably leave on missions, which are strongly encouraged by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This will include a lot of different events that you may not be familiar with. People who go on Latter-day Saint missions must be endowed in the temple (see p.24), and after this, they will be required to start wearing Latter-day Saint religious garments (see p.25). Because of this, your friends may have to adjust their wardrobes to cover their new garments.

A few months before a mission, Latter-day Saints receive a “mission call” telling them when and where they will serve their mission, as well as what language they will speak. Many will go to foreign countries and learn other languages, while others will speak English and/or stay in the United States. Future missionaries can give a preference, but the location and language assigned to them is ultimately decided by leaders in their church who believe the assignments are inspired by God. Most Latter-day Saints have gatherings for their friends and families to watch them open their mission calls and read where they will be going for the next 18 months (for women) or two years (for men). These gatherings often happen in common rooms at Helaman or Heritage Halls.

Within the mission call, a Latter-day Saint is told which day they will leave to go to the Missionary Training Center or start training virtually at home. After this point, they will not have their phones until the mission is over, and will only be able to contact friends and family once a week on their “preparation day.” Otherwise, they will be working as missionaries full-time and contact will remain very limited, with specific regulations given by the area Mission President. Most missionaries will only be able to send emails to their friends for the duration of their missions. If you want to stay in contact with friends on their missions, make sure they add you to their email list before they leave.

Why can't I attend my friends' weddings in the temple?

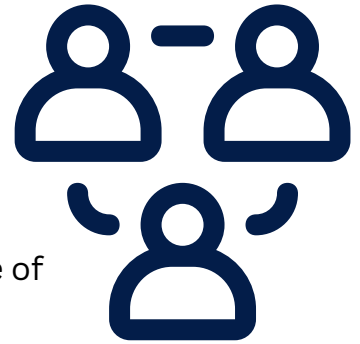
While you're at BYU, you will likely have several friends that get married. Young marriage is common here! For Latter-day Saints, marriage is an eternal covenant that is completed in the temple. Only Latter-day Saints who meet the necessary requirements of worthiness may enter the Latter-day Saint temple. This is why you cannot attend temple weddings. Usually, couples have receptions following their temple ceremonies so that everyone can participate in some of the festivities.



Helpful Tips

Get connected

Getting connected is imperative to any student's ability to have a positive experience at BYU, but without the typical church connections, this may be more difficult for students who are not Latter-day Saints. Finding communities to connect with that share common interests with you will positively impact the whole of your BYU experience. The sooner you get involved, the better! Check out the following as a place to start:



- Browse the BYUSA clubs list to find clubs that revolve around everything from religion to culture to ping-pong (clubs.byu.edu)
- Volunteer in an area that piques your interest with YServe (yserve.byu.edu) or BYUSA (sclcenter.byu.edu/byusa)
- Join or start an intramural sports team (studentwellness.byu.edu/intramural-sports)
- If you are a person of faith, look for a community outside of BYU that shares your beliefs - especially when surrounded by another religion, this can be helpful in finding a sense of belonging during your time at BYU (see p. 5-9 & search the internet for other local places of worship)
- Visit the Office of Belonging in room 2400 of the Wilkinson Student Center

Be honest & be yourself



Many students that are not Latter-day Saints report having a difficult time making friends at the beginning of their time at BYU. If this happens to you, you are not alone! It can be difficult not to share the religion that almost everyone else on campus has in common. Some students struggle with others viewing them as a novelty - interesting to talk to, but not seen as "normal." Aside from reaching out to the appropriate resources if you are struggling, focus on being honest and being yourself. It is tempting to want to conform to the culture around you, but in the long run, if you stay authentic to yourself, you will find people who value you for who you truly are.

Stay open to learning about new cultures

It may be useful to think of your experience at BYU as an exploration of new cultures. BYU is certainly a unique place - even for people who are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints - and there is much to learn from it! Even outside of the Latter-day Saint tradition, very few non-Latter-day Saint students will share your tradition, and you will likely have opportunities to learn about many of their cultures,



as well. Staying open-minded will lead you to encounter new ways of thinking, living, and believing, which can help you in your quest for “lifelong learning” (one of BYU’s educational aims). Check out events held by Multicultural Student Services, the Office of Belonging, and the Kennedy Center, as well as spending time with friends you’ve made on campus and attending general campus events. In the end, you can leave BYU full of knowledge and respect for the many ways others see the world.

Make change where you see the need for it

Just like any institution, BYU is not perfect. However, due to Latter-day Saint doctrine and culture, BYU is committed to continued progression and wants to see all of its students reach their potentials. As a student who is in a small minority, you may see particular areas at BYU that you think could change for the better. As cliché as it is, be the change that you want to see! Get involved on campus, ask for help if you need it, and think of specific ways you can help BYU to be better for all students. Your unique perspective is valuable and your contributions have the potential to serve all of the students who come after you.

If there are any specific things you would like to help improve at BYU but you do not know where to start, reach out to the University Chaplain, Jim Slaughter, who can connect you to the right resources or organizations. If your ideas are specific to BYU Athletics, contact Whitney Johnson Catt.

We are so glad you’re here and we can’t wait to see how you add to our BYU community!





Terms to Know

Baptism: Latter-day Saints have the chance to be baptized at the age of 8. Converts to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are baptized after age 8 when they decide to convert. Baptism is the first saving ordinance in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. During a baptism, a worthy Latter-day Saint man who holds the priesthood (p.27), also known as a priesthood holder, submerges the person being baptized in water. This represents a death from sin and rebirth into spiritual life. Baptisms can be done in a variety of places, including a church building. Following a baptism, priesthood holders lay hands on the head of the person who was baptized and believe this allows them to receive the Holy Ghost, which is part of the Latter-day Saint Godhead (see p.25).

Baptism for the Dead: Latter-day Saints believe that certain ordinances, including baptism, are necessary in order to reach the Celestial Kingdom (the highest degree of glory in heaven). They also believe that these ordinances can be completed on behalf of people who are already deceased. In “baptisms for the dead”, Latter-day Saints will be baptized in the temple on behalf of deceased people, who they believe will be able to accept or decline the ordinances in the afterlife.

Bishop: The bishop is a Latter-day Saint man from the local community assigned to lead the ward (see p.29), much like a priest or a pastor. He is not paid for this assignment, nor lobbies/applies/campaigns for it and will usually only be a bishop for a few years until the next person is asked to be the bishop.

Book of Mormon: see “scriptures” (p. 28)

Brother/Sister: Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believe that we are all children of God, and therefore, spirit siblings with each other. They often call each other “brother” or “sister” followed by the last name of the individual. Some religion professors on campus are referred to this way.

Calling: Most members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are asked to serve in a volunteer position within the organization of their ward (p.29) or stake (p.28). These positions are called “callings.” They are believed to be divinely inspired and include positions such as the bishop (p.23), relief society president (p.27), or Sunday school teacher.

Celestial or Eternal Marriage: Latter-day Saints believe that marriage is eternal and will exist in heaven. Eternal marriage between two people is completed with a “sealing” ceremony in the temple. Sealing is one of the necessary ordinances in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Come Follow Me: Come Follow Me is a weekly scripture study for Latter-day Saints. Each year, it covers a different scriptural book: the Book of Mormon, The Pearl of Great Price, the Bible, or the Doctrine and Covenants.

Commandments: The commandments are religious rules that Latter-day Saints follow. Latter-day Saints believe they are necessary for salvation/exaltation.

Covenants: According to churchofjesuschrist.org, “a covenant is a sacred agreement between God and a person or group of people. God sets specific conditions, and he promises to bless us as we obey those conditions. When we choose not to keep covenants, we cannot receive the blessings, and in some instances we suffer a penalty as a consequence of our disobedience. All the saving ordinances of the priesthood are accompanied by covenants.”

Devotional: Most Tuesdays at BYU, there is a campus-wide devotional in the Marriott Center at 11am. A member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints gives spiritual encouragement in a lecture format. Much like a church meeting, a hymn will be sung and prayers will be said. During devotional, all campus services are closed, and no classes are occurring. All are invited and encouraged, but not required, to attend.

Elder’s Quorum President: The elder’s quorum president is a man assigned to lead the Elder’s Quorum, or the group of men, in his specific ward. He is not paid for the assignment, and will serve until another person is asked to. Every other week, the men of the ward, or the elder’s quorum, meet together to discuss relevant topics while the women meet in relief society.

Endowed and Endowment: Endowments are an ordinance completed in the temple. After endowment, Latter-day Saints begin to wear garments, and believe they have made sacred covenants with God to keep certain standards. Latter-day Saints are endowed before they go on a mission or before they get married in the temple, although in some cases, they can also choose to be endowed separate from these life events.

Fast and Testimony Meeting: On the first Sunday of every month, Latter-day Saints fast for 24 hours or until dinner. Then, they give whatever money they would have spent on food to the ward, which uses it to assist those without sufficient food (this is called a “fast offering”). At church, during sacrament meeting, members are invited to go before the congregation and share personal testimonies about how The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and gospel have provided them peace and truth.

Fasting: Latter-day Saints believe in fasting on Fast Sunday each month, but they may also fast at other times to seek guidance from God on personal matters.

FHE: Family Home Evening. FHE occurs on Monday evenings, and families are encouraged to spend time with one another doing gospel-oriented activities. At BYU, students are assigned to an “FHE family” in their wards, and they plan activities to do together on Monday evenings. Because of this, most campus events do not occur on Monday evenings.

Fireside: A one- or two-hour event outside of normal church times where Latter-day Saints share religious thoughts, listen to religious speakers, and/or participate in religious musical items. Firesides are typically held for a specific group, such as BYU Student-Athletes or young adults of a specific ward or stake, and often occur in the evening.

First Presidency: The First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints includes the prophet and his two counselors.

Garments: Garments are religious white under-garments that are worn under all other clothing to remind Latter-day Saints of the covenants they make in the temple and to encourage modesty. Latter-day Saints begin wearing garments after they are endowed in the temple, which usually occurs when they are young adults or a year after baptism if they are adult converts to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

General Conference: General Conference occurs twice a year at the Conference Center in Salt Lake City. Leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, including the current prophet and apostles, address Latter-day Saints on important topics relevant to the current day. The conference happens on the first Saturday and Sunday of April and October, and local wards do not meet so that members can watch the conference. Latter-day Saints may attend in person, but due to space constraints, most watch from home.

Godhead: The Godhead is the Latter-day Saint concept of God: three separate beings that are united in purpose and doctrine. Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ are exalted beings with physical bodies, while the Holy Ghost is a spirit and does not have a physical form. According to Latter-day Saint doctrine, Jesus Christ, like us, is a literal descendent of Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother.

Gospel: Latter-day Saints often use the term “gospel” to refer to the whole of the beliefs of their church.

Institute: The Latter-day Saint Institutes of Religion offer many religious classes, workshops, and activities for young adults past high school graduation. Each individual institute is typically connected with a university to cater to university students’ needs.

Joseph Smith: Joseph Smith is the organizer of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believe that Joseph was a prophet, that he restored Christ’s New Testament church, and that he translated the Book of Mormon from ancient works.

Ministering: Latter-day Saints are encouraged to minister to other people in their wards both informally and through formal assignments to specific people or families. They will reach out to those they minister to, pray for them, talk with them, and respond to any specific needs they are aware of.

Mission Service: Latter-day Saints, especially men, are encouraged to serve full-time proselyting missions for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Men may serve starting at 18 years old, and women may serve starting at 19 years old. Men serve for 24 months, and women for 18 months. Before a mission, you are assigned to a particular location and language. Latter-day Saints believe this assignment is divinely inspired. Missionaries spend 3-6 weeks in the missionary training center before going to their assigned location. During their missions, missionaries do not visit home, do not date, and are able to call their families and email their friends once a week.

Missionaries on Campus: Some Latter-day Saint missionaries are assigned to BYU campus. They are designated to find non-Latter-day Saints who may be interested in taking lessons about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from them. If you do not want to speak with the missionaries, respectfully state that you would not like to be contacted by them.

Mormon: Historically, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints received the nickname “Mormon” based on their belief and use of the Book of Mormon. In recent years, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has discouraged members and the public from using that nickname. Preferred terms include “Church of Jesus Christ,” “Restored Church of Jesus Christ,” “Members of The Church of Jesus Christ,” and “Latter-day Saints.”

Patriarchal Blessing: All worthy and baptized members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, if they desire, receive a patriarchal blessing from a worthy Melchizedek priesthood holder ordained to be a patriarch. This blessing states which tribe of Israel they are descended from, whether literally or by adoption, and also gives personal guidance for their lives.

President/Prophet: The prophet of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints speaks for God to the Latter-day Saints, and members believe his thoughts are applicable to the whole world. He addresses the church at general conference twice a year, as well as at other times when or if he sees fit.

Priesthood: All Latter-day Saint men in good standing can receive the priesthood. Latter-day Saints believe the priesthood is the power and authority of God that is given to people on earth. They also believe the priesthood is necessary for the ordinances they perform, such as baptism and ordinances performed in the temple.

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: Latter-day Saints believe that the modern-day church should be structured similarly to how the Christian church was structured during the life of and after the death and resurrection of Jesus. Therefore, today, twelve men of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are appointed as apostles.

Relief Society: All Latter-day Saint women are part of the Relief Society. Every other week, the women of the ward meet together to discuss relevant topics while the men meet in Priesthood Quorum. The Relief Society may also coordinate other activities throughout the week.

Relief Society President: The Relief Society president is a woman assigned to lead the Relief Society in her specific ward. She is not paid for the assignment and will serve until another person is asked to.

Returned Missionary/"RM": RMs or returned missionaries are people who have served a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and then returned home.

Sabbath Observance: Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints observe a Sabbath day on Sundays. Each family decides their own specific criteria for what is and is not permitted on Sundays. However, typically, Latter-day Saints will attend church meetings and spend time with family. They usually will not shop or eat at restaurants. Due to the observance of the Sabbath, on Sundays, BYU campus is only open for the buildings to be used for church meetings. The library is closed, and the Cannon Center is open for a select few hours so that students living in the dorms can eat.

Sacrament Meeting: Each Sunday, except during General Conference and Stake Conference, Latter-day Saints participate in sacrament meeting at their designated ward meeting spot. Sacrament meeting lasts an hour, and includes singing hymns, listening to talks from members of the ward, and taking the sacrament – a small portion of bread and water that signify the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

Seminary: Seminary is a religious education course for Latter-day Saint high school students worldwide. For each of the four years of high school, Latter-day Saints are encouraged to attend class each weekday, which often occurs before school in a Latter-day Saint church building. Each year, students study a different set of scripture, rotating between the New Testament, Old Testament, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants.

Scriptures: Latter-day Saints believe that four books are scripture, or inspired by God. These books include the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. Latter-day Saints believe that the Book of Mormon was translated from golden plates that contained a record of ancient people in the Americas. The Pearl of Great Price is a collection of revelations and translations from Joseph Smith. The Doctrine and Covenants includes doctrinal statements and revelations that are believed to have been inspired by God.

Stake: A group of wards. Five to twelve wards make up a stake. Stake meetings (called “stake conference”) occur twice a year, where all wards in the stake come together for meetings on Saturday and Sunday.

Stake Center: Stake centers are similar to normal ward meeting buildings, but are typically larger, as they hold stake conference and may be used for other activities related to the whole stake.

Stake President: The Stake President is a Latter-day Saint man from the local community assigned to lead the stake. He is not paid for this assignment. Typically, a stake president will serve for several years until the next person is asked to take his place.

Sunday School: Sunday School occurs during the second hour of church services every other week. All members of the ward meet together and listen to a lesson based on the theme for the week.

Temple: Temples are where Latter-day Saints go to do sacred Latter-day Saint ordinances - including baptisms for the dead, endowment, and sealing (marriage) - for themselves and on behalf of deceased ancestors. Temple work occurs during the week or on Saturday, but does not occur on Sundays. It is not part of Latter-day Saint Sunday meetings. Only worthy members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints may enter the temple.

Testimony: In the Latter-day Saint context, a testimony is a Latter-day Saint’s account of how the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has personally blessed them and is true. This may include stories of how the church and its teachings have positively affected them (such as at Fast and Testimony Meeting) or may simply be a statement of various things they believe to be true. For example, “I would like to bear my testimony that Jesus Christ is my Savior, Joseph Smith was a prophet, and families can be together forever through the Plan of Salvation.”

Tithing: Latter-day Saints pay 10% of their income to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This money may be used by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for a variety of purposes, including building temples, maintaining church buildings, and sustaining missionary work.

Ward: A local congregation of Latter-day Saints. The ward is the group of people who meet together for Sunday meetings and activities during the week. Members are assigned to a ward based on geographical location. People who live in the same area are assigned to the same ward. At BYU, wards meet in rooms on campus. Elsewhere, there are ward buildings.

Word of Wisdom: The Word of Wisdom is a commandment that Latter-day Saints follow related to health. It includes not using drugs and not drinking alcohol, coffee or tea.

YSA ward: The Latter-day Saints organize congregations (wards) based on a number of factors. YSA (young single adult) wards are for unmarried young adults (age 18-30) from a specific geographic location. They will attend church together.



This list of vocabulary was designed with non-Latter-day Saints in mind, but is far from exhaustive. Further definitions and information about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints may be found on the church’s website, churchofjesuschrist.org, which can also be accessed using the QR code.