

**ZION'S
RELIGIO-LITERARY
SOCIETY**

of the

**REORGANIZED CHURCH OF JESUS
CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS.**

HOW TO ORGANIZE.

Leaflet of Instruction No. 1.

Revised 1903.

“Onward and Upward.”

**ISSUED BY THE SOCIETY
AT THE HERALD PUBLISHING HOUSE,
LAMONI, IOWA.**

How to Organize and Conduct a Religio.

OBJECT.—“The object of this society shall be to interest and enlist the energies of the young in the field of Christian usefulness before them; to promote sociability and the spirit of brotherly solicitude and helpfulness among them and to help them to qualify themselves, spiritually and intellectually, for service in the church.”—Constitution.

As may be seen from the above, the work consists of theory and practice—learning and doing. The doing part is encouraged by means of committees, of which there are a number for different kinds of work. There is no way so good for interesting young or old as giving them something to do. These committees being distributed among the members as widely as practicable gives personal charge and responsibility, something to be personally interested in—something to do; and all the while ability is being developed, practiced, and trained for higher service in the church.

The learning part is provided for in our study work. This is to acquaint our young people with the church works—Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Church History.

It will be seen how grand a work it is for our young Saints to obtain a broad and intelligent knowledge of the word of God and the glorious things contained therein; becoming

able to tell the world what they believe and why they believe it, preparing our young to take the places of usefulness and responsibility in the church, and carry on the work that will fall upon their shoulders; thus hastening the development of the future towards Zion's reign.

SUPPLIES.—All that is required to pursue the regular course in the way of supplies, is, each member should have a copy of the Book of Mormon and the *Religio Quarterly* and have access to *Autumn Leaves* and Rules of Order and Debate.

Each society should own one copy of the Book of Mormon map, or map of Ancient America. It would be well, too, for each society to have at least one copy of the Report of the Committee on Archæology, a useful work for all who are pursuing this course.

Provision was made by the General Convention for providing one copy of the *Autumn Leaves* to such societies as can not afford to pay for same, by making application therefor to the Executive Committee.

COURSE OF STUDY.—Three evenings each month are devoted to study, one evening to prayer-meeting and study, and the fifth evening, which occurs once each quarter, to the study of Parliamentary Law.

PRELIMINARY ORGANIZATION.—All things useful and important come into existence because there is a demand for them. The *Religio* is no exception to this rule. This accounts for the General Society organization; and if there are to be locals, it must be

because the demand exists, or may be created. The first step, therefore, in considering the question of organization in a neighborhood is that of demand. It may exist and its existence be apparent by the manifest desire for such upon the part of the young people, in which case there is nothing to do but to proceed to the organization. But if the demand be not apparent, it should be created, if possible, by presenting the society and its work to them so that its utility may be understood. This may be done by any one who feels enough interest in the matter to talk it up. Of course, if by talking it up, an interest can not be aroused, they are not ready for organization yet, and nothing can be effected at this time.

The demand being realized, the next step is to consult your district or stake officers, if in a district or stake and ask for an organization, but if not in a district or stake arrange for a preliminary meeting. This meeting may be called by the one, or ones, beginning the movement, and if in a branch of the church, it should be with the knowledge and consent of the branch officers. Before the meeting is called, however, some one who has taken an active part in starting the movement, should write the General Secretary for a "commission," which will give him authority to effect the organization; this commission to be returned to the Secretary when the organization is completed. This commission is not required of district or stake officers.

When the time has arrived, usually the one

who called the meeting, the one holding the commission, should call it to order by rising and gaining the attention of the house and stating the object of the assembling. He should then state that it would be in order to elect a temporary chairman, or he may himself propose the name of some one for such chairman by motion. If his, or some other, motion be seconded for chairman, he should call a vote upon it, and when carried, call the chairman-elect to the chair and yield to him any further deliberations.

A temporary secretary should then be chosen, after which the names of all persons present who wish to unite with the organization should be obtained, before proceeding to the election of permanent officers.

PERMANENT ORGANIZATION.—The names of members being secured, proceed to elect permanent officers, and to appoint committees. (See Constitution for Local Societies.) The number of committees, as well as the number constituting each, will depend upon the size and needs of the society. All the committees except the first four are optional.

Having effected your permanent organization, prepare separate lists of your members and officers and send same, with a remittance of five cents for each member, and your commission, to the General Secretary, and you will be enrolled as a part of the General Society, and will receive a charter containing names of all charter members, entitling you to all the rights and privileges belonging to members of the General Society.

Arrangement should also be made at this meeting, or as soon as practicable, for the necessary supplies. You should as a society subscribe for at least one copy of the *Autumn Leaves*, one Book of Mormon Map, and all members should subscribe for the *Religio Quarterly*. The *Autumn Leaves* is \$1.00 per year, in advance; published at the Herald Publishing House, Lamoni, Iowa; the map is \$1.50, and can be had from Bro. George F. Weston, Buchanan, Michigan.

Next arrange time and place of meeting. In this, if in a branch of the church, remember that you are a part of it, and consult your branch officers. It is better to hold your meetings in the evenings; however, some societies hold them Sunday afternoons between services with good results, where the members are too widely scattered for evening meetings during the week.

Now comes the question of finances. You are allowed the fullest freedom in this. You can require a slight membership fee of new members, if thought best; if anything is required, it should be but slight; the matter of dues is optional with each local society.

In addition to local expenses, each society is expected to contribute to the support of the general work. For this purpose you will receive from the district or stake treasurer, annually, semi-annually, quarterly, or such times as may be necessary, a statement of your proportion, stating purpose for which needed. To such statements, prompt response should be made so that the general work may

not be hindered, or compelled to do business on credit.

When every thing is in running order, a full report should be made to the branch of the church, when in a branch, at its business meeting, afterwards reporting quarterly.

HOW TO PROCEED AFTER ORGANIZING.—The greater effort is required, not to organize, but to keep running. It is after a few weeks, or months, that interest lags and real effort is required; and a few general suggestions will be helpful.

Membership is not restricted to members of the church, although the work is kept under church auspices. Some of our most successful societies have a large per cent of their membership from outside of the church. Our main work is for the young of the church, but we should seek to attract those without by every legitimate means, not to compromise truth, however, for "He that loveth the truth cometh to the light." An extra copy of the *Quarterly* to hand to visitors is a good way to advertise our work, and one of these leaflets of instruction might serve a similar purpose.

Neither is there any limitation as regards age; all are eligible who desire to avail themselves of the benefits of pursuing our work. The only qualifications are those of desire and reputation, and it is not well to be too rigid upon the latter requirement.

There is no certain number required to organize, but experience and judgment would seem to suggest about six as the least

number that could successfully maintain an organization.

Appoint competent committees. While the aim should be to distribute the committee work as much as practicable, the appointments should be made from the standpoint of fitness. So in the selection of officers, fitness should be the one thing in view, and never favoritism. And in assigning the parts on the program, care should be taken that the part assigned can be performed by the one to whom it is assigned. Do not permit any part to fail by reason of a misunderstanding, or lack of understanding, or by reason of incompetency upon the part of the one asked to prepare. The less qualified, or inexperienced should not be overlooked by any means. They should be given something simple on the start to draw them out and give them practice. Study to bring each member into active part. Every member assigned to any part on the program or to any special duty, should zealously endeavor to do his utmost to make it a success for his own sake, and also for the good of the society. No matter whether there be a half dozen or a half hundred, as much effort should be made upon each exercise as is necessary to make it the best possible under the circumstances.

The most successful results will be reached by following the plans adopted by the General Society. Our association as a society is for mutual help and benefit; and to follow in our several devious ways is only to defeat the

object sought in our organization. Be constantly on the alert for improvement in every direction, but let us, as much as possible, improve together. If you have advanced thought, give all the benefit of it.

Promptness is indispensable to success. Every meeting should begin on time. Perhaps there is no one thing which contributes more liberally to failure than being behind time.

All locals should report regularly each quarter to the district or stake secretary, or if not in a district or stake, to the General Secretary. This is necessary in order that correct records may be kept and correct statistics made. In addition to this, each society should appoint a correspondent to report matters of interest to the editor of the Arena, so that there may be built up a bond of unity and sympathy throughout the whole General Society.

Discouragement is not to be thought of, and scarcely to be mentioned. Of course there will be dark hours, days, and perhaps weeks, but the Religio is established, and its success assured, if we will be humble and faithful. Success is not counted by numbers, nor by the presentation of a single program; but by the constancy of effort and the resulting development, the fullness of which can not be known until the "books are opened."

Should this leaflet fall under the notice of any who would desire more information, or

who would wish to begin a movement towards organization, it would be to their advantage to write either of the undersigned.

ETTA M. HITCHCOCK, Sec.,

2906 Dickson Street, St. Louis, Mo.

J. A. GUNSOLLEY, Pres., Lamoni, Iowa.