

INSTRUCTIONS FOR OUR CHRISTIAN LIFE AND MINISTRY MEETING

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1. The Life and Ministry Meeting will proceed as outlined in the *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook* and according to the instructions that follow. All publishers should be invited to make themselves available to present student assignments. Others who are actively associating with the congregation may participate if they agree with the teachings of the Bible and their life is in harmony with Christian principles.—*be* p. 282.

2. **Opening Comments:** 3 minutes or less. Each week, after an opening song and prayer, the Life and Ministry Meeting chairman will generate anticipation for the program to follow, including highlighting one of the questions to be considered during the Treasures From God’s Word section of the meeting.

3. **Treasures From God’s Word:**

- **Talk:** 10 minutes. The theme and an outline of two or three main points are provided in the *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*. This talk is to be assigned to an elder or a qualified ministerial servant. When a new Bible book is scheduled in the weekly Bible reading, a video will be played to introduce it. The speaker may draw parallels from the video to the theme. However, he should be certain to cover the outline points noted in the workbook. Also, he should fully utilize the artwork in the workbook, which is designed to complement the material to be covered.
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** 8 minutes. This is a question-and-answer part without an introduction or a conclusion. It is to be handled by an elder or a qualified ministerial servant. He may apportion the timing of the four points according to their application to the local congregation. However, he should ask the audience all the questions. If few comments are forthcoming on the final question and sufficient time remains, the audience may be encouraged to comment on other gems they found in their research. Those called on should offer comments of 30 seconds or less.
- **Bible Reading:** 4 minutes or less. This part will be assigned to a brother. The student should read the assigned material without giving an introduction or a conclusion. The meeting chairman will be especially interested in helping students to read with accuracy, understanding, fluency, proper sense stress, modulation, appropriate pausing, and naturalness.

4. **Apply Yourself to the Field Ministry:** This section of the meeting is designed to give all the opportunity to practice for the ministry and to improve in their ability to preach and teach. During the first week of every month, the Prepare This Month's Presentations part will be presented in place of the three student assignments. At times, the *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook* may provide specific settings and instructions for the student presentations. Students do not need to add additional information simply to use all of the allotted time. Some well-prepared demonstrations may conclude a minute or more early.

- **Prepare This Month's Presentations:** 15 minutes. Videos of model presentations will be shown and discussed to prepare the congregation to offer a magazine or other featured publication or to teach a Bible truth. This part will be assigned to an elder or a qualified ministerial servant.
- **Initial Call:** 2 minutes or less. This student presentation may be assigned to a brother or a sister. The assistant should be of the same sex or should be a family member. The student should choose a greeting appropriate for the area.
- **Return Visit:** 4 minutes or less. This student presentation may be assigned to a brother or a sister. The assistant should not be someone of the opposite sex. (*km 5/97 p. 2*) The student and assistant may be seated at a table or be standing. The student should demonstrate what to say when returning to visit someone who previously accepted the source material rather than demonstrating how to place the source material. The source material may be considered further or be used as a bridge to introduce a study publication.
- **Bible Study:** 6 minutes or less. This student presentation may be assigned to a brother or a sister. The assistant should not be someone of the opposite sex. (*km 5/97 p. 2*) The student and assistant may be seated at a table or be standing. From time to time, elders may receive this assignment. This part should demonstrate a segment of a Bible study *already in progress*. There is no need for an introduction or a conclusion unless the student is specifically working on one of these counsel points. It is not necessary to have all of the assigned material read aloud during the presentation, although this may be done. Good teaching skills should be highlighted. On occasion, the schedule will call for a talk, rather than a Bible study demonstration. In that case, a brother should be assigned to give the talk to the congregation.

5. **Living as Christians:** After an opening song, the next 15 minutes of this section will consist of one or two parts designed to help the audience to apply God's Word. Unless otherwise indicated, these parts may be assigned to elders or qualified ministerial servants, with the exception of local needs parts, which should be handled by elders.

- **Congregation Bible Study:** 30 minutes. This should be assigned to a qualified elder. (Congregations where the number of elders is limited may use qualified ministerial servants as needed.) The body of elders should determine who is qualified to conduct the Congregation Bible Study. Those approved should be able to preside in a meaningful way so as to keep the study on time, emphasize the key scriptures, and assist everyone to appreciate the practical value of the points covered. They will find helpful principles by reviewing published direction regarding how to conduct the *Watchtower Study*. Where possible, different conductors and readers should be used each week. If the Life and Ministry Meeting chairman directs that the study be abbreviated, then the conductor will have to decide how to abbreviate the study. He may choose to have the reading of some paragraphs omitted.

6. **Concluding Comments:** 3 minutes or less. The Life and Ministry Meeting chairman will review particularly helpful points from the meeting and will preview material to be considered the following week. He should mention the point from the *Life and Ministry Meeting Answer Sheet*

(*lma*). He might mention a question that will be posed at the next week's meeting, giving the brothers something to think about and watch for. He might indicate, by way of a reminder, the names of the students who are assigned to give parts the next week, provided there is time for this. Unless otherwise indicated, any necessary announcements should be made and any necessary letters should be read to the congregation by the chairman during his concluding comments. Routine information, such as normal field service arrangements and cleaning schedules, should not be announced from the platform but should be posted on the information board. If any announcements cannot be made or letters read in the time allotted for the concluding comments, the chairman should conserve time in other ways or ask the brothers handling parts on the Living as Christians section of the meeting to abbreviate their parts as necessary. (See paragraphs 5 and 8.) The meeting will conclude with song and prayer.

7. **Counsel:** Following each of the four student assignments, the Life and Ministry Meeting chairman has approximately one minute to provide commendation and counsel based on the *Ministry School* book. When the chairman introduces a student's assignment, he will not announce the point of counsel that the student is working on. However, when the student's presentation is finished, and after some appropriate words of commendation, the chairman may announce the point that the student is working on and state why the student did well on that point or kindly explain why it would be beneficial for the student to give that particular point further attention. According to the need of each student, additional constructive counsel based on the *Ministry School* book may be given privately after the meeting or at another time, either on the assigned speech quality or on another aspect of the presentation. The chairman should update the counsel form in the student's *Ministry School* book, assign the next counsel point, and advise the Life and Ministry Meeting overseer accordingly.—See paragraphs 12 and 15 for more information regarding the role of the Life and Ministry Meeting overseer and the role of the auxiliary counselor.

8. **Timing:** No part should go overtime, nor should the remarks of the Life and Ministry Meeting chairman. The student assignments should tactfully be stopped when the time is up. If other parts on the meeting go overtime, private counsel should be given by the auxiliary counselor. The entire meeting, including songs and prayers, should last 1 hour and 45 minutes.

9. **Visit of Circuit Overseer:** When the congregation has the visit of the circuit overseer, the program should proceed as described in the *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook* with the following exceptions: The Congregation Bible Study portion of the Living as Christians section will be replaced with a 30-minute service talk given by the circuit overseer. Prior to the service talk, the Life and Ministry Meeting chairman will review the program just held, preview the following week's program, make any necessary announcements and read any necessary letters, and then introduce the circuit overseer. After the service talk, the circuit overseer will conclude the meeting with a song of his choice. No auxiliary classes in the language of the congregation should be held during the visit of the circuit overseer. A foreign-language group may hold its meetings even when the circuit overseer is visiting the host congregation. However, the group should rejoin the host congregation for the circuit overseer's service talk.

10. **Week of Assembly or Convention:** During the week of an assembly or convention, no congregation meetings are held. The material scheduled for meetings during such weeks should be considered individually or as a family. A month or two following the assembly or convention, a local needs part may be used to review specific points that the publishers have found to be helpful, particularly those pertaining to the ministry.

11. **Week of Memorial:** No meetings other than those for field service should be held on the day of the Memorial. Therefore, if the Memorial falls on the same day as the Life and Ministry Meeting, then the Life and Ministry Meeting should be scheduled for another day during the week

if the Kingdom Hall is available. If the midweek meeting must be canceled, then the material scheduled for the meeting that week should be considered individually or as a family.

12. Life and Ministry Meeting Overseer: An elder selected by the body of elders will serve as the Life and Ministry Meeting overseer. He will be responsible for ensuring that this meeting is well-organized and handled according to these instructions. He should maintain good communication with the auxiliary counselor. As soon as the *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook* for a given month becomes available, the Life and Ministry Meeting overseer will make the student assignments for that month. The student assignments include the Bible Reading assignment during the Treasures From God's Word section and the Initial Call, Return Visit, and Bible Study assignments during the Apply Yourself to the Field Ministry section. (See paragraph 4.) Each of the student assignments, including the counsel point the student is working on, should be distributed *at least three weeks prior* to the date of the assignment by means of the *Our Christian Life and Ministry Meeting Assignment* (S-89) form. (Please note that some of the points of counsel on pages 79-81 of the *Ministry School* book will not apply to the Bible Reading assignment or to demonstrations.) Information regarding student assignments for the month should also be conveyed to the appropriate Life and Ministry Meeting chairmen and, if applicable, to the appropriate counselor for an auxiliary class.

13. Life and Ministry Meeting Chairman: Each week, one elder will serve as the chairman for the duration of the Life and Ministry Meeting. (Where the number of elders is limited, qualified ministerial servants may be assigned, as needed.) He will be responsible for preparing the introductory and concluding comments. He will also introduce all of the parts and, depending on the size of the body of elders, he may be responsible for handling certain parts on the meeting as well. Comments between parts should be very brief. The body of elders will determine which elders are qualified to fill this role. The qualified elders would normally be assigned as chairmen periodically. Depending on local circumstances, the Life and Ministry Meeting overseer may be used as chairman more frequently than the other qualified elders. If an elder is qualified to conduct the Congregation Bible Study, likely he is also qualified to serve as the meeting chairman. Please keep in mind, however, that the elder who serves as chairman will be required to offer loving and helpful commendation and counsel to those who have student assignments. The chairman is also responsible for ensuring that the meeting concludes on time. (See paragraphs 6 and 8.) If the chairman wishes and if there is adequate space, a standing microphone may be positioned on the platform so that he may introduce each ensuing part while the brother giving the part is taking his position at the speaker stand. Likewise, the chairman may wish to sit at a table on the platform when introducing the student assignments and offering counsel. This may conserve time.

14. Coordinator of the Body of Elders: The coordinator of the body of elders will make assignments of all meeting parts other than the student assignments. This includes the assignment of the meeting chairman for each week from among those approved by the body of elders. In cooperation with the Life and Ministry Meeting overseer, the coordinator of the body of elders should ensure that a copy of the assignment schedule for the entire meeting is posted on the information board.

15. Auxiliary Counselor: Whenever possible, it is good to use an elder who is an experienced speaker to fill this role. The auxiliary counselor's responsibility will be to give private counsel, if needed, to elders and ministerial servants regarding any speaking assignments they may handle, including parts on the Life and Ministry Meeting, public talks, and conducting or reading at the *Watchtower* Study or Congregation Bible Study. (See paragraph 8.) If there are a number of elders in the congregation who are capable speakers and teachers, then a different qualified elder may serve as the auxiliary counselor each year. It is not necessary for the auxiliary counselor to offer counsel after each assignment.

16. **Auxiliary Classes:** Depending on the number of students, congregations may hold auxiliary classes for the student assignments. Each auxiliary class should have a qualified counselor, preferably an elder. Where necessary, a well-qualified ministerial servant may be assigned. The body of elders should decide who may serve in this capacity and whether or not the assignment should rotate. The counselor should follow the procedure described in paragraph 7. If auxiliary classes are held, students should be asked to go to the auxiliary classrooms following the Digging for Spiritual Gems portion of the Treasures From God's Word section of the meeting. They should rejoin the rest of the congregation following the Apply Yourself to the Field Ministry section of the meeting. Since videos of sample presentations are considered during the first meeting of the month, no auxiliary classes will be held then, except for foreign-language groups.

17. **Videos:** Selected videos will be used in connection with this meeting. The videos for the midweek meeting will be available via the *JW Library* application and accessible using a variety of devices. On occasion, videos such as those demonstrating sample presentations may be played at meetings for field service after they have been shown at the Life and Ministry Meeting.