

## Mormon Church Fast Facts

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(CNN) Here's a look at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, often referred to as the Mormon Church.

Joseph Smith, Jr., (December 23, 1805-June 27, 1844) founded the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints around 1830. He is seen as a living prophet. "The Book of Mormon" is believed to be the result of Joseph Smith's communion with the divine. It is also the source of the common nickname for the church and its followers, Mormons.

### Beliefs/Practices:

- Joseph Smith claimed to have begun receiving messages at age 14 from God, Jesus Christ and other heavenly messengers.
- Mormons consider themselves to be Christians. They follow the teachings found within the Christian "Bible," "The Book of Mormon," "Doctrine and Covenants" and "Pearls of Great Price."
- "The Book of Mormon" tells the story of Israelites who left Jerusalem around 600 B.C. and traveled to North America after a calling from God. They set up civilizations and centuries later witnessed an appearance by Jesus Christ after his crucifixion and resurrection.
- They believe that God sent many prophets to spread his word after Jesus Christ's death and resurrection.
- The church is led by a prophet who also serves as president of the church. The president serves for life.
- The church organization hierarchy is the all male
- General Authorities: the First Presidency (the president and two counselors), the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, the First Quorum of the Seventy, the Second Quorum of the Seventy and the Presiding Bishopric (the bishop and two counselors); and the General Auxiliaries: the Primary, the all female Relief Society, Sunday School, Young Men and Young Women.
- Children are baptized at age eight. New members are also baptized.
- There are two orders of priesthood. A young man 12 or older can enter into the Aaronic priesthood, seen as an earthly priesthood. Melchizedek priesthood can be obtained when a man turns 18. This entails spiritual and heavenly duties.
- Follow a strict health code that prohibits the consumption of tobacco, alcohol, tea and coffee.
- They are encouraged to tithe - giving 10% of their earnings to the church.
- Many Mormons, between the ages 18 and 25 for males and 19 and 25 for females, become missionaries. Single men serve for two years; single women for 18 months.
- The church is headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah.

### Timeline:

- 1827 - Joseph Smith is purportedly shown by an angel the burial site of engraved golden plates that tell the story of American prophets living in the New World.
- 1830 - He publishes "The Book of Mormon," the translation of the golden plates deciphered through special stones and divine guidance.
- July 17, 1831 - Smith claims to have received the revelation commanding the practice of plural marriage.
- April 14, 1832 - Brigham Young is baptized into the church.

- 1835 - "Doctrine and Covenants" is published as a record of prophecies foretold to Joseph Smith. Smith writes in Section 132 that God has told him he can marry as many women as he wants.
- 1839 - Smith leads his followers to Commerce, Ill., where he becomes mayor and renames the town Nauvoo.
- February 1844 - Smith announces his candidacy for president of the United States.
- February 1844 - Smith along with his brother Hyrum are jailed on charges of treason after using militia to protect Nauvoo from violence instigated by those opposed to Smith's church.
- June 27, 1844 - The jail, in Carthage, Illinois, where Smith and Hyrum are held is attacked, by an anti-Mormon mob and both men are killed. The death of Smith causes the church to splinter into three groups. A large group follows Brigham Young. Others follow Joseph Smith's son James and others follow James Strang.
- 1846-1847 - Brigham Young and his followers leave Illinois, settling in Salt Lake City, Utah. Young becomes president of the church.
- March 4, 1851-March 3, 1859 - Dr. John M. Bernhisel becomes the first Mormon to be elected to the U.S. Congress where he serves as the delegate for the Utah Territory in the House of Representatives.
- April 6-8, 1877 - Dedication for the first operating Mormon Temple in Utah, in St. George. It is the only temple completed during Brigham Young's tenure as president.
- September 24, 1890 - The practice of polygamy is banned by the church. By 1910 members who continue the practice are excommunicated.
- April 6-24, 1893 - The Salt Lake Temple is dedicated in Salt Lake City. It is the largest in square footage and took 40 years to complete.
- 1917-1940 - William H. King (D-UT) is the first Latter-Day Saints member to be a U.S. senator. He also serves in the House from 1897-1900.
- January 4, 2007 - Harry Reid (D-Nev) is elected Senate majority leader, the highest office obtained by a Mormon in U.S. history.
- February 4, 2008 - Thomas S. Monson is chosen as the new president to replace Gordon B. Hinckley after Hinckley's death January 27.
- 2008 and 2011 - Mormon and former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, is a presidential aspirant for the Republican nomination for president of the United States.
- January 27, 2015 - At a press conference, Mormon leaders pledge to support anti-discrimination laws for gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people, as long the laws also protect the rights of religious groups. They also state that this pledge does not change church doctrine -- including its opposition to gay marriage and that it is "unfair" to characterize the church's announcement as a national nondiscrimination campaign.
- November 5, 2015 - The Mormon Church releases a new church ordinance forbidding the "natural or adopted" children of parents in same-sex relationships from receiving a name and a blessing in a ceremony performed by the Mormon priesthood.
- November 13, 2015 - The Church of Latter Day Saints clarify their position on the children of same-sex married couples. It clarifies that a child living with "a same-gender couple has already been baptized and is actively participating in the Church, provisions of Section 16.13 do not require that his or her membership activities or priesthood privileges be curtailed or that further ordinances be withheld."

#### Statistics:

- More than 15 million members worldwide.
- 88,000 Mormon missionaries.
- 144 Mormon temples worldwide.