

# How to Contribute to the *Ensign*

Editorial Office: Phone: 800.453.3860, ext. 25254 or 801.240.5254

Subscriptions: Phone: 800.537.5971 or 801.240.3800 • [store.lds.org](http://store.lds.org)

*Note: The Ensign is not currently accepting unsolicited material as we have a very large backlog of articles.*

---

The *Ensign* is published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for adults in English-speaking areas of North America, Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand, and for other interested adults worldwide.

## Thank You

Thank you for your desire to share your talents and experiences with other readers. The *Ensign* could not fulfill its purpose without the help of contributors like you.

## What We Need

The *Ensign* accepts for review unsolicited manuscripts, but due to staff constraints, we cannot respond to article queries; it's best if you simply submit the article you have in mind.

Please note that all submissions are made on speculation; we cannot guarantee publication. Please also be aware that it takes many months, generally years, before we can respond to authors whose articles we are able to consider for publication.

Our general, ongoing needs are as follows:

- **Family Home Evening Ideas:** What was your most memorable family home evening? In 400 words or less, share what you did and the positive results it had for your family.
- **Gospel-in-Action Stories:** We publish articles in which members share testimony and describe blessings that come from obedience to gospel principles and covenants. Some may be dramatic stories of action and physical crisis while others may deal with challenges overcome in the quiet chambers of the heart and mind—conversion, reactivation, resolution of lifestyle problems—but all illustrate the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ in changing and blessing lives.
- **Latter-day Saint Voices:** We publish short first-person articles focusing on an individual spiritual experience and insight that teaches a gospel principle. These brief narratives might be like a journal entry. Manuscript length: no more than 750 words.
- **Marriage and Parenthood:** Articles in this department are written by spouses and parents as well as by General Authorities, professional counselors, and teachers. To ensure a warm, personal feel, please include real-life experiences, stories, and examples. Helpful how-to's will encourage readers to put the principles into practice.
- **News:** We seek to publish news items that are of interest to members of the entire Church. Notify us of upcoming events as far in advance as possible, or send your report immediately after the event. *Please send these directly to [cur-news@ldschurch.org](mailto:cur-news@ldschurch.org).*
- **Poetry:** Poems are published only occasionally in the *Ensign*. They generally provide insights into gospel principles and gospel culture in a way that is accessible to most readers but contains elements of poetic skill and sophistication.
- **Provident Living:** This section contains practical ideas and motivation for being self-reliant and being prepared for to cope with financial, physical, and emotional stresses.
- **Serving in the Church:** Share experiences you have had or insights you have gleaned that have made you more effective as a leader, teacher, or learner in the Church.

- **Singles:** We publish articles on topics of interest to unmarried Latter-day Saints (never-married, widowed, divorced), particularly articles written by single members. Articles should share helpful insights and positive approaches to challenges faced by LDS singles of any age.
- **Reflections:** This department features personal essays and reflection on gospel topics and may or may not be experience-based. Please limit submissions to 500 words.
- **We Talk of Christ:** We welcome accounts of your gospel experiences relating to the Savior’s ministry and mission as well as insights about Him. Possible topics might include the Atonement, grace, healing, hope, or repentance. Please limit submissions to 500 words.

Please label your submissions with one of these category names. *Manuscripts should be no longer than 2,000 words, and, where noted, may need to be shorter.*

## Other Tips

Here are a few other things you might consider as you prepare your manuscript:

- **Base your writing on your personal experiences.** This is perhaps the best tip we can share. To get an accurate feel for what the *Ensign* publishes, we recommend reading a number of recent issues. You can find the *Ensign* online at [ensign.lds.org](http://ensign.lds.org).
- **Be doctrinally sound.** Include statements from living prophets and apostles in your work, and quote from the scriptures.
- **Keep your tone personal but not preachy.** Teach the principle but not the application. Let readers draw their own conclusions from the experience you share.
- **Submit your best efforts.** The editorial staff is happy to work with authors whose work is accepted to make the article the best that it can be, but please send us your best work. Take the time to spell check and make other simple improvements.
- **Please submit only one copy of your work.** This will help our staff handle manuscripts effectively and efficiently. When you click on the Submit button, you will get a verification screen (wait just a minute or two).

## What We Cannot Use

Unfortunately, there are some materials that we cannot use. Please do not send any of the following to the *Ensign*:

- **Manuscripts of which you are not the original author, including those written by deceased family members. These are better kept in your personal family histories.**
- **Manuscripts sent anonymously or under a pen name.** (We do print articles under a “name withheld” byline occasionally, but we must have the author’s actual name and contact information to be able to obtain rights to the article. Our staff will keep this information confidential, but we cannot work with text where there is no contact information given.)
- **Manuscripts shorter than 400 words or longer than 2,000 words.** Occasionally we can accept shorter pieces (such as in the case of “Questions and Answers,” but these allowances will be noted in specific calls for articles in the magazine and online. Space constraints do not permit us to accept work longer than 2,000 words.
- **Manuscripts by or for children or teenagers.** Please send these to the *Friend* ([friend.lds.org](http://friend.lds.org)) or the *New Era* ([newera.lds.org](http://newera.lds.org)) magazines.
- **Near-death experiences or other exceptionally personal or sensitive material.**
- **Fiction, plays, self-promotion, or travelogues.** (Again, it helps to review a recent copy of the *Ensign* to get a feel for what we do—and do not—publish.)
- **Sacrament meeting talks, lessons, or other addresses you’ve given.** (Often these have great content, but please take the time to turn them into an article before you send them to us. It’s particularly helpful if you focus on personal experiences that were in the original address.)

- **Advertising or promotion of commercial products**, even those created for an LDS audience.
- **Unsolicited, standalone photography or artwork.** If you have a picture to go with an article you're submitting—one that might be a helpful reference point for an illustrator—we can accept that. Most artwork and photographs appearing in the magazines are commissioned; however, you can submit photos, videos, and music to the Church by going to Helping in the Vineyard site, [vineyard.lds.org/home/activity/5](http://vineyard.lds.org/home/activity/5), using the Contribute Photos Activity or simply to [create.lds.org](http://create.lds.org).
- **Queries for “I Have a Question.”** This department has been discontinued. Instead of writing to the magazine staff with your doctrinal or personal questions, please counsel with your local priesthood leader.
- **Photographs not accompanying manuscripts.** These should be submitted at [create.lds.org](http://create.lds.org).

## Preparing Your Manuscript

- Please double-space everything—body copy, endnotes, quotations, titles, and headings.
- Include your name, address, email address, phone number(s), and ward and stake or branch and district on the manuscript itself, not just in the online submission form.
- Submit your manuscript online at [ensign.lds.org](http://ensign.lds.org). If you do not have computer access please ask a family member or home teachers to assist you in submitting your article.
- Authors whose submissions are accepted will be notified. Since the magazine works so far in advance it will be a minimum of a year and likely much longer before this happens.

## Remuneration, Copyrights, and Publication

- We accept donated submissions only.
- Once a manuscript is accepted and scheduled for publication, a staff member will contact the author with any questions or editing suggestions he or she may have. Because editorial planning begins at least a year in advance, an article you donate to the magazines will generally not be published for years.

## Thanks Again

We appreciate your interest in the *Ensign* and hope that this information will be helpful to you as you consider sharing your insights and experiences with other members of the Church.

## Church Magazines Image Guidelines

For Illustrators and Photographers

### ILLUSTRATIONS

Please submit these through the Helping in the Vineyard site, [vineyard.lds.org/home/activity/5](http://vineyard.lds.org/home/activity/5), using the Contribute Photos Activity or at [create.lds.org](http://create.lds.org).

### PHOTOS

Please make us aware of available photographs of individuals, activities, or places described in upcoming articles. We also occasionally purchase artistic photos (submit as above for illustrations).

**Permission:** All identifiable people in photos need to sign a statement agreeing to Church use of their image. Those under age 18 need a statement signed by their parent or guardian. Keep all your permission statements. A Participant Release form for this purpose is available [here](#).

**Captions:** Please provide the name of the photographer and the full name of each person in the photo. Use terms such as “from left” and “standing” to clearly identify each person.

**Digital photography:** Please use the highest resolution possible, five megapixels and 300 dots per inch or higher, and send the photos on CD or DVD. Low-resolution images may be accepted for preliminary review. Before sending high-resolution photos by e-mail, please contact us.

**Church standards:** All people in photos should observe Church standards of dress, grooming, behavior, and respect for property.

## **GENERAL CONFERENCE PHOTOS**

We want to represent the worldwide Church membership in the general conference issues of the magazines, so we welcome your photos of conference attendance in your area. Please remember, however, that we cannot guarantee that your photos will be published.

Submit up to five of your best photographs of people who through their lives and their modest and conservative clothing, jewelry, hairstyles, and makeup represent Church standards. Your photos should show joy and dedication in the faces of the members. Please review recent general conference issues to see what types of photographs we use.

For all your submitted photos, you need to have written permission. Please refer to *Permission* instructions above.

### **Conference photography requirements:**

1. Submit *high-resolution color* digital images (1–5 megabytes is sufficient). Files below 1 megabyte in size will probably be too small to be considered for publication.
2. **Submissions deadline: All photos must arrive via LDS.org no later than 10:00 a.m., Salt Lake City time, on the Tuesday after general conference.**
3. If your photos are not available until after the deadline, submit them when they are ready, and we will consider publishing them in the subsequent general conference issue.

### **Conference photos we regularly publish:**

1. People in modest Church attire approaching the meetinghouse.
2. People in modest Church attire watching a broadcast of conference while sitting in the chapel or other meetinghouse room.

3. People in front of their television or computer monitor at home watching the general conference broadcast if this is how people typically view conference in your area. People shown participating in their homes can be dressed in modest, comfortable, and casual attire but NOT in pajamas or sleepwear.
4. Women and young women traveling to or attending the Young Women broadcast.
5. Women traveling to or attending the Relief Society broadcast.
6. Youth traveling to or attending any of the general conference broadcasts.
7. Men and boys traveling to or attending the priesthood session.
8. People traveling to general conference via subway, bus, car, bike, boat, or other means.
9. Missionaries attending general conference, especially with investigators. **Please do not submit photos with missionaries making hand gestures, funny faces, or engaging in goofy behavior.**
10. Families attending the various general conference broadcasts.

**Things to avoid:**

- Do not submit blurry or out-of-focus photos.
- Do not submit photos of men's or boys' neckties loosened or with untucked shirttails.
- Do not submit photos with people making hand gestures, funny faces, or engaging in goofy behavior.
- Do not submit photos of women and girls with low or revealing necklines, gaping blouses, tight clothing (including tight clothing worn over other tight clothing), sleeveless or spaghetti-strap tops without a modest shirt worn underneath, clothing containing see-through fabrics, or any other distracting element that draws attention to the body.
- Women's dresses should cover the knees when sitting.
- Do not submit photos that show clothing with logos, text, or copyrighted images. Photos of people wearing clothing with distracting patterned prints will probably not be published.
- Avoid using a flash indoors because the people tend to be harshly lit, with bright highlights, dark shadow areas, and red pupils.
- In general, avoid any element that would distract from the reverence of general conference.

We are grateful for your interest in the Church magazines. Thanks again!