Choose the people to interview

Ask the students to imagine that they are completing an oral history project focused on pioneering members of the Church in Brazil. They have chosen 20 oral history candidates and have obtained information about each through phone and email conversations and through questionnaires.

Invite students to form small groups and then spread out all 20 dossiers on a table. Each group should read the information on each dossier and choose six individuals whom they think are the best candidates for an oral history interview. Explain that it is important to prioritize candidates because often there are more good candidates than you have the time or money to interview.

Remind groups to ask the following questions about each candidate as they make their decisions:

- Will the candidate likely contribute unique and significant experiences and information?
- Has the candidate already recorded a history in some form?

This activity can be completed with all 20 dossiers or with fewer, depending on your time constraints. Review the dossiers and share feedback with the students after they have made their final selections. The best possible candidates are identified on the following pages.
1. Miguel Silva is a good candidate because he is a second-generation Church member with extensive leadership experience, and he has not kept a journal or other records.

- He was born in 1933 in São Paulo.
- He is a second-generation Latter-day Saint. His parents were baptized in 1927, making them two of the earliest Church members in Brazil.
- He has always been active in the Church, serving as a branch president, the first president of the first local stake, and a patriarch.
- He has a sharp mind and is in great health.
- He says he has always been too busy to keep a journal or other records.

2. Davi Santos is not an ideal candidate because he has kept complete personal records.

- He was born in 1927 in Rio de Janeiro.
- He was baptized in 1936 in Novo Hamburgo and is among the first generation of Latter-day Saints in Brazil.
- He has always been active in the Church.
- He was one of the first native Brazilians to serve a full-time mission.
- He translated for President Spencer W. Kimball when the prophet visited Brazil in the 1970s.
- He worked as a translator for the Church.
- He served in the first São Paulo Temple presidency.
- He has always kept great personal records (his journal) from the time he was baptized and has written an autobiography.

3. Gabriel Souza is not an ideal candidate. He does not have complete information because he has not been associated with the Church for many years. However, it may be worthwhile to digitize his photos. This could be a means to help reactivate him.

- He was born in 1940 in Manaus and moved to the Mormon enclave in Joinville with his parents in 1943. He was baptized there in 1948.
- Because of persecution, he and his family left the Church in 1949.
- He smokes and drinks alcohol regularly.
- He says he is a Mormon when the missionaries come to his door but goes to the Pentecostal church every other Sunday with his wife.
- He has his family’s photo album and a few books from “the good old days” in Joinville.

4. Arthur Costa is not an ideal candidate because he is not healthy enough to be interviewed. However, his wife and children might be good candidates. It would be worthwhile to gather written records from him and his family, to create a biographical sketch with as much information as he can provide, and to take a photo of him.

- He was born in 1946 in Picada.
- He has German ancestry.
- He was baptized when he was 30 years old in 1976.
- He was one of the first men in Brazil to serve in a temple presidency.
- He had a stroke last year and can hardly talk.
5. Lucas Carvahlo

- He was born in Salvador in 1950 to parents who were baptized in 1948.
- In 1968, he was drafted into the Brazilian army and began a career as a professional soldier. He became an officer and rose quickly through the ranks to become the highest-ranking Latter-day Saint in Brazil.
- He has always been active in the Church. He married in the temple but has had no leadership callings because he moved around so much due to his military career.
- After retiring in 2005, he and his wife were the first Brazilians to serve in Brazil’s bishops’ storehouse and employment resource center.

Lucas Carvahlo is not an ideal candidate because his personal experiences fall outside the project focus; however, he might be a good candidate for a future oral history project. Brother Carvalho and his family should be encouraged to write personal histories and to keep a record of their missionary experiences.

6. Matheus Martins

- He was born in Belo Horizonte in 1960 and was raised as an atheist by communist-leaning parents.
- He was active in antigovernment political activities in the late 1970s and was imprisoned as a result.
- While in prison, he met an LDS inmate who taught him the gospel and gave him a copy of the Book of Mormon. He experienced a miraculous conversion based on what he read.
- After being released from prison and completing his probation, he was baptized, and a year later he was called to serve a mission to Russia, making him the first Brazilian to serve in that country.
- Since completing his mission, he has served faithfully in many callings, including as a bishop and a member of the high council.

Matheus Martins is not an ideal candidate because his experiences do not fit the project focus. However, Brother Martins was a pioneer as the first Brazilian to serve in the former USSR. It would be worthwhile to ask to digitize his missionary journals and to encourage him to write a personal history for the Records Preservation Center.

7. Pedro Rocha

- He was born in 1970 in Belém to a very poor family. His family joined the Church in 1984.
- He fulfilled an honorable mission in 1989 but afterward returned to abject poverty.
- In March 2001, Gordon B. Hinckley announced the Perpetual Education Fund. Pedro was the first person in Brazil to apply for a Perpetual Education Fund loan.
- He learned to be a brick mason, paid back his Perpetual Education Fund loan, and was an apprentice to the best mason in Belém. Pedro taught him the gospel and baptized him and his family.
- Pedro finally began his own business and became very wealthy because of his good work ethic, honesty, and Perpetual Education Fund training.

Pedro Rocha is not an ideal candidate. His story is very compelling but not focused on the project topic. He should be encouraged to write a personal history for the Records Preservation Center.

8. Guilherme Alves

- He was born in 1990 in Natal to LDS parents.
- He is a sixth-generation Mormon; his ancestors joined the Church in Germany and came to Brazil in 1913.
- He has collected family stories his whole life and compiled these into several volumes; however, he has never told his own story or what it means to him to descend from some of the first Latter-day Saints in Brazil.
- Due to a traffic accident, Guilherme is now paralyzed and cannot write or type.

Guilherme Alves is a good candidate. Although he has has collected many stories about the Church in his country, he has never recorded his own personal history.
9. Gustavo Pereira

- Gustavo was born in Nova Iguaçu in 1985 to a very poor family.
- His family joined the Church in 1996.
- Gustavo was very active following his family’s conversion.
- He served a mission in Brazil and was supported by his stake.
- He returned and used the Perpetual Education Fund to become a welder.
- He is married and has a family and serves as the elders quorum president in his ward.

Gustavo Pereira is not an ideal candidate because his experiences do not fit the project focus.

10. Rafael Alves

- He was born in 1994 in Campinas to an active LDS family.
- In 2006, he got mixed up in gang activity and was sent to juvenile detention.
- He was released from juvenile detention in 2009 as a hardened criminal with no interest in the Church. Now a drug dealer, he has tattoos and problems with the Word of Wisdom.
- His family hopes that involvement in Church history will help rescue Rafael. They are putting a lot of pressure on the Church history area adviser to record an interview with him.

Rafael Alves is not an ideal candidate because it might be risky to contact him. Instead, his family should be encouraged to work with their bishop to support and help Rafael. They may be able to record Rafael’s personal history and submit it for him.

11. Júlia Gonçalves

- She was born in 1927 in Hamburg Velho.
- Her family hosted the first missionaries to serve in the state of Rio Grande do Sul in 1928.
- Her family was converted shortly after the missionaries arrived, and she has always been active in the Church.
- Her family records were destroyed in a tragic house fire in 2007.
- She lives in a convalescent home and is in a wheelchair, but her mind is sound and she is articulate.

Júlia Gonçalves is a good candidate. Because her family joined the Church in 1928, she certainly qualifies as a pioneering member of the Church in Brazil. In addition, her records were destroyed in a house fire.

12. Sophia Castro

- She was born in São José dos Campos in 1935. She became an orphan at age 4 and was placed in a Catholic orphanage until age 18.
- At age 18, she became a nun and was assigned to a remote outpost in the Amazon jungle, where she worked with indigenous people for the next 50 years.
- In 2003, she left the jungle and returned to Rio de Janeiro, where she had a crisis of faith and left the Catholic church.
- In 2009, she was taught by two sister missionaries and was baptized after only three weeks.
- She read President Henry B. Eyring’s talk titled “O Remember, Remember” and was inspired to write her life’s story, which included her conversion experience.

Sophia Castro is not an ideal candidate because her personal history has already been written. A copy of her history should be acquired for the Records Preservation Center.
13. Isabella Costa

- She was born in 1948 to a family that has African ancestry.
- She was baptized with her husband in 1976, two years before the revelation on the priesthood.
- Isabella has always been active and was the first African-Brazilian Relief Society president in the Porto Alegre 22nd Ward.
- She is healthy and has a good mind and memory.
- She has never kept records in her life, other than a photo from the day she was baptized.

Isabella Costa is a good candidate. Although she was not baptized until 1976, she is a pioneering member because of her experiences with the 1978 revelation on the priesthood, which allowed her husband to be ordained. She has never kept personal records.

14. Maria Eduarda

- She was born in Recife in 1953.
- Her family was baptized in 1963.
- She served as one of the first Brazilian sister missionaries from 1974 to 1975 and helped to open Portugal to missionary work.
- She married in 1977 and had 7 children.
- She has always been active in the Church.
- In 2007, her husband was called to serve as a mission president in Portugal.
- She says she has always been too busy to keep personal records.

Maria Eduarda is a good candidate. Her experiences relate well to the project focus, and she has not kept personal records.

15. Manuela Martins

- She was born in Brasilia on 22 April 1960, the day Brasilia was officially made the nation’s capital.
- Her father was the first branch president in Brasilia, having been converted to the Church in 1954.
- Her mother was the minister of culture and education in the national government from 1962 to 1968.
- She married in 1981 and has served faithfully in Young Women, Primary, and Relief Society.
- In 2013, she was diagnosed with incurable cancer and was given six months to live.

Manuela Martins is not an ideal candidate because her experiences do not fit the project focus. However, her parents’ experience does, so it would be worthwhile to contact them for an oral history interview.

16. Giovanna Fernandes

- She was born in Curitiba in 1972 into a family with African heritage and living in dire poverty.
- Her family joined the Church in 1978.
- Giovanna is brilliant. Her teacher noticed her intelligence and helped her get a scholarship at a prestigious university in Brazil.
- She earned her PhD in 1999, but because of school and lifestyle choices, she has strayed from the Church and is embarrassed to mention her membership, thinking it is a liability to her career.
- Her family is heartbroken and hopes that the Church history workers can help rescue their daughter.

Giovanna Fernandes is not an ideal candidate. Her experiences do not fit the project focus.
17. Alice Gomes

- Alice was born in 1971 into an active LDS family living in Porto Alegre.
- She is very beautiful and has entered and won beauty pageants.
- In 1988, she was crowned Miss Brazil, making her the only LDS woman to ever achieve that status.
- She became an advocate for environmental issues and traditional family values, focusing on complete chastity before marriage.
- She became the target of scorn in the Brazilian media for her “old-fashioned” ideas, but she never relented.
- She married in the temple and raised a large family.

Alice Gomes is not an ideal candidate. Her experiences do not fit the project focus.

18. Laura Lima

- She was born in 1987 in São Luís.
- She and her family were active in the Pentecostal faith.
- She joined the Church at age 17 in 2004 and was ostracized by her family, so she had to live with members of the Church across town.
- She served a mission, where she found and taught Sophia Castro, a former nun who lived in the jungle for 50 years.
- After her mission, she used the Perpetual Education Fund to become a nurse and successfully paid back her loan.
- She married in the temple and is active in the Church.

Laura Lima is not an ideal candidate because her experiences do not fit the project focus. However, a copy of her missionary records should be acquired for the Records Preservation Center.

19. Luiza Pinto

- She was born in 1990 in São João de Meriti.
- She is a fourth-generation Latter-day Saint and has always been active in the Church.
- She graduated from college before being called to serve as the first sister missionary in Angola, just after the country opened up for missionary work.
- Her missionary journal was stolen on her flight home, but she still has some photographs of her mission in her camera.

Luiza Pinto is a good candidate. Although she is young, she was one of the first sister missionaries to serve in Angola, and her missionary journal was stolen.

20. Beatriz Barbosa

- She was born in 1994 in Ribeirão Preto into an active LDS family.
- She attended Primary, Young Women, and seminary and has been active in the Church for her whole life.
- She was the first young woman in her stake to apply to be a missionary after President Monson announced the lowered missionary age.
- She was called to serve in Mozambique.

Beatriz Barbosa is not an ideal candidate because her experiences do not fit the project focus. However, a copy of her missionary records should be acquired for the Records Preservation Center.