

General Standards for Preparing & Submitting Names to the Temple

The Temple Endowment explains the purpose of life and Heavenly Father's plan for the exaltation of His children. When you obey covenants made in the endowment, your understanding of God's eternal purposes increases and your life is filled with a greater abundance of the Spirit. You have a greater capacity to love others and meet the challenges of daily life. Church members usually receive the endowment when they are preparing to serve full-time missions or are married or sealed in the temple.

Vicarious temple work is wholly dependent upon intelligent, constant genealogical research. Genealogical research is a responsibility of every family. When conscientiously performed, it contributes to unity in the home and permits us to catch the vision of our divine nature. Therefore, let us as a Church and as a people labor with all our might to qualify as Saviours on Mt. Zion. (David O. McKay)

"MEMBERS SHOULD BE DILIGENT IN ASSURING THE ACCURACY OF ALL NAMES SUBMITTED TO THE CHURCH [FOR ORDINANCE WORK]". (Letter signed by The First Presidency dated 16 Jun 1995 for all Church members)

Members of the Church are responsible for the accuracy of information they submit for temple work. Staff in the Family History Center and Ward family history consultants are to assist them.

The following instructions are from *Guidelines for submitting names to the Ordinance Index using TempleReady* from "I Have a Question" (ENSIGN, Jul 1999, 65) response by Paul E. Koelliker, managing director of the Temple Department, "A Member's Guide to Temple and Family History Work" (1993) and "TempleReady for Windows" help file (2001).

The **minimum** information needed to identify an individual and perform their ordinances is:

Baptism and Endowment: Name, Sex, Event date (at least the year), Event Place (at least the state).

The individual must have been eight years of age or older at time of death and dead at least one year.

Sealing to Parents: the first or last name of the father must be listed and both parents have been dead at least one year.

Sealing to Spouse: Name of husband, Marriage Date, Marriage Place.

1. Try to provide as much information about an ancestor as possible. **More complete information** identifies your ancestor uniquely so that he or she cannot be confused with another person. Less complete information may cause ordinances to be done more than once for a person. **Do not use estimated dates and places if exact dates and places can be obtained with reasonable effort.** Imprecision produces inaccurate records on the IGI and Ordinance Index. You may wish to delay having ordinances performed when research is still in progress or when you have not received permission from the immediate family members.

2. Do not "invent" ancestors by adding *Mr.* and *Mrs.* to the surname of a person. This practice produces ordinance work and associated records for persons who are not uniquely identified and usually results in duplication of ordinances. Use a woman's given and maiden name. When only her given name is known use it alone. Do NOT list her by her married name except in the instance where the identity of a woman is derived only from the name of her husband, then the use of *Mrs.* is an exception, for example, "Mrs. William Arthur Smith."

3. Make sure descriptions and titles are not included with names submitted for ordinance work. For example, descriptions and titles *widow*, *Miss*, *Mr.*, *Jr.*, *Dr.*, *Judge*, *Reverend [Rev.]*, *Colonel [Col.]*, *General [Gen.]*, should NOT be included in the fields with names or submitted as if they were names.

4. When the child's given name is unknown, do NOT use *boy*, *girl*, *child*, *daughter*, or *son*, just record the child's sex and the father's surname.

5. Research notations or explanations, such as "*infant*," "*twin*," "*no name*," "*unknown*," "*died young*," "*unmarried*," or "*wife*," should not be included in the name space, even if the name is unknown. When a name is unknown it is best to leave the name space blank, because anything entered there will be treated like a name.

6. Temple ordinances are NOT necessary for children who are **stillborn**. However, if there is any possibility that a child lived after birth, he or she should be sealed to the parents unless the child was born in the covenant. They can be placed on the family group sheet with the term "stillborn" placed in the ordinance date fields. Note: In some countries, children who died shortly after birth were listed in vital records as stillborn. Countries that have sometimes listed live births as stillborn include Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, German states (Baden, Bavaria, Germany, Hesse-Darmstadt, Prussia, Saxony, Thuringia, Wurttemberg), Denmark, Finland, France, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, and Switzerland. Children listed as stillborn on records from these countries may be sealed to their parents.

7. Instead of putting **nicknames or aliases** in parentheses or quotation marks, use the word *or*. For example, write *William* or *Bill* rather than *William (Bill)*. This will help avoid confusion of names at the temples as well as on the International Genealogical Index (IGI) and the Ordinance Index.

8. **For ordinances to be performed you must list at least an approximate year and place.**

Records, in order of preference, that can be used to identify people are:

- birth or christening (not the LDS blessing),
- marriage,
- census, will or probate,
- death or burial records.

Write **dates** as day, month, year such as 7 Oct 2001. If you have more than one date for the same event, separate the dates with a slash (/) such as 7 Oct 2000/2001. Dates can be **calculated** from other information. For example if you find the 1900 census shows a person as 30 years of age you can calculate he was born in 1870 (cal 1870). Some dates can be approximated. From a marriage date, you can estimate (est) a man was married at age twenty-five and a woman at age twenty-two. You can also **estimate** (est) that a first child was born one year after the parent's marriage and that subsequent children were born every two years after that. Again, do not use estimated dates and places if exact dates and places can be obtained with reasonable effort. For ordinances to be performed, you need to list at least an approximate year.

The **names of places** should be as complete as possible listing from the **smallest to the largest geographical division**, separating the divisions with commas. Generally **avoid using the two-letter postal abbreviations** which are often misinterpreted. Use an extra comma to indicate a part of the place name that is missing, such as a county. Example - Henderson, , North Carolina, USA. List the name of the geographical area that was used at the time of the event. Do not use the abbreviation "Co." or the term county.

Assumed places may be based on a place where one member of a family was born or died or lived at some time or where a marriage occurred. To show that a place may not be the actual location, it can be preceded with the word "of," for example, "of Hendersonville, Henderson, North Carolina, USA."

9. Ordinances should not be performed for a person **born within the last 110 years**. If you are certain that a person is deceased but you have no death date and cannot obtain one with reasonable effort, you can enter "Dead" in the date field.

- A **waiting period of at least one full year after death is required** before temple ordinances may be performed for those who died without receiving their ordinances. This one-year waiting period does not apply to worthy members who died when under twenty-one years of age or who were unable to go to a temple in their lifetime for reasons beyond their control.
- If the person was born within the last ninety-five years, **obtain permission** for the ordinances from the person's closest living relative. This relative often wishes to receive the ordinances in behalf of the deceased or designate someone to receive them. In some instances, the relative may wish to postpone the performance of the ordinances. Also, be aware that acting in conflict with the wishes of the closest living relative can result in bad feelings toward you and the Church.

10. When a husband and wife are sealed in the temple before their children are born, their children are **born in the covenant** of their parent's sealing and do not need to be sealed to their parents. These children automatically become part of an eternal family and are "children of the covenant" even if their parents divorce.

- **Children who died before age eight** and were not born in the covenant need only to be sealed to their parents. They do not need any other ordinances.

11. Carefully **proofread** records before you submit them. It is much easier to make needed corrections before a name is submitted than it is afterwards.

12. It is a good idea to **consult with relatives** before you submit names. If you have relatives in the Church, they may already have ordinance dates or know where those dates can be obtained.

13. If you find an ancestor listed in the International Genealogical Index with his or her name spelled differently or with a different event date or place given, the **ordinances for that person are valid**. You do not need to submit the person's name for temple ordinances again. To share the corrected information, submit your work to the Pedigree Resource File.

14. **Records** of people for whom ordinances have already been completed **should not be resubmitted** in an attempt to get their ordinance dates. "TempleReady for Windows" released in 2001 has an option enabling patrons to easily update their Personal Ancestral File (PAF) database from the Church Ordinance database.

15. Keep a record of the names you submit for temple work so that you do not submit them again. Most ordinance **duplication** is caused when members submit the same records more than once.

16. **Compare the names you are submitting with the "Ordinance Index"**, including names found in "Ancestral File". The Ordinance Index is the only official record of ordinance work already performed for deceased persons.

17. Please be **considerate of the feelings of close family members** when submitting names of recently deceased relatives. It is a good practice to **seek consent** before you proceed. Close relatives who are members of the Church may wish to do the ordinances themselves, and close non-Latter-day Saint relatives may be offended when temple work is done for their family members.

18. **Concentrate on** getting the **temple ordinances** completed **for your own ancestors and their families**. Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, "The Spirit of Elijah will inspire individual members of the Church to link their generations rather than submit lists of people or popular personalities to whom they are unrelated" ("The Spirit of Elijah," ENSIGN, Nov. 1994, 86). Doing work for those who are not our own progenitors may needlessly duplicate efforts and ordinances or distract us from the work we should be doing for our own ancestors.

19. Please do not submit the names of **deceased celebrities and historical personalities, including those of royal or noble lineage or early LDS Church leaders** and their families, or of persons born in European countries prior to A.D. 1500, regardless of your relationship to them. Though the names may not yet appear on the Ordinance Index, temple work for most of the people in these categories has already been done. Sometimes when we study about such people, we feel a spiritual affinity to them, but we should not submit their names for temple work. If names are sent in counter to this policy, they must be cleared by the Temple Department. The Medieval Family Unit (1-800-346-6044) can help you avoid duplicating ordinances for those born before A.D. 1500.

20. The **number of family names you submit at one time should normally be limited** to as many as you can easily manage or as many as you, your family, and your friends can complete within a reasonable time. Names of those not in your direct ancestral families should usually be placed in the temple file rather than cleared as family names (see letter from First Presidency to all members of the Church, 16 June 1995).

21. If you desire to do family history work but have no work to do on your own family lines or if you feel you lack qualifications to do further research on your own family lines, ask your priesthood leaders or your ward extraction director about **volunteering to serve in Family Record Extraction**. But please do not undertake your own extraction project.

Our ancestors who have passed on are entitled to the same blessings we enjoy (see David B. Haight, "Linking the Family of Man," ENSIGN, May 1991, 75). As Saviours on Mount Zion (see Obad. 1:21), we have the great privilege of making those blessings available to them. "For their salvation is necessary and essential to our salvation, as Paul says concerning the fathers - that they without us cannot be made perfect - neither can we without our dead be made perfect" (D&C 128:15).

Unusual Circumstances you may discover as you prepare your ancestors' names for ordinances:

- **Unmarried couples:** A deceased couple may be sealed to each other if they lived together as husband and wife or had children, even if no marriage can be documented. If either one is still living, special approval is required. For approvals, send the details to Special Services, Temple Department, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84150.
- **Women married more than once:** A deceased woman may be sealed to all her husbands if the family desires. If she was sealed in life, all the husbands must also be deceased before any additional sealings may be performed. No special approvals are required.
- **Sealing of deceased children:** A deceased child is usually sealed to his or her natural parents. However, where there is justification, a deceased child may also be sealed to adoptive parents, step-parents, foster parents, or grandparents. No special approvals are required. (To have living children sealed, see the bishop.)
- **Persons with mental disabilities:** If a deceased person had a mental disability, do not consider his or her mental age when you prepare the name for temple ordinances. Consider only their physical age at the time of death and perform all ordinances for them.
- **Persons presumed dead:** You may provide ordinances for someone presumed dead after ten years have passed since the time of the disappearance. This policy applies to those missing in action, lost at sea, or legally dead, or those who disappeared under circumstances where death is apparent but no body has been recovered. In all other cases of missing persons, you must wait 110 years from their birth before providing ordinances.
- **Excommunication:** Ordinance work for deceased persons who were excommunicated at the time of their death requires First Presidency approval. For more information, contact Special Services, Temple Department, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84150.
- **Questions of worthiness:** Temple ordinances may be performed for deceased persons one year or more after the date of death without regard to worthiness or cause of death. This includes those who may have taken their own lives or the lives of others.

As you provide ordinances for your ancestors, **do not try to determine their worthiness**, whether they will accept the ordinances, or the feelings of other deceased persons affected by the ordinances. In order for these ordinances to be binding in eternity, they must be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, and the people involved must merit them by their individual worthiness and accept them. These determinations must be made beyond the veil.