

*Walk after the holy order of God (Alma 7:22).*

# WELCOME

## to the Aaronic Priesthood and Young Men



*A special message to boys soon to turn 12.*

**BY CHARLES W. DAHLQUIST II**  
Young Men General President

I'm thrilled to welcome you into the Aaronic Priesthood. What an exciting time in your life! The week before I turned 12 I could hardly wait to be ordained a deacon, and I hope you feel the same way. Let's talk about a few of the things you can look forward to.

### **To Begin With**

Before you turn 12, you will meet with the bishop or branch president to discuss your worthiness and preparation to receive the Aaronic Priesthood. After you turn 12, your name will be presented in sacrament meeting for a sustaining vote. The Aaronic Priesthood will be conferred upon you, and you will be ordained to the office of a deacon. Your family is invited to share this wonderful moment with you.

### **Aaronic Priesthood**

Your experience in the Aaronic Priesthood will include these three things:

brotherhood, instruction, and service. You will work together, learn together, achieve together, and serve together.

Do you feel a little nervous about passing the sacrament for the first time? Please don't worry. Before you are given any assignment, one of your leaders will explain exactly what to do. Someone will be right

there to help you, just as you will help a new deacon in the future.

In priesthood meetings you will learn that the Aaronic Priesthood "holds the keys of the ministering of angels,

and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism . . . for the remission of sins" (D&C 13:1) and that it is the duty of Aaronic Priesthood holders to "invite all to come unto Christ" (D&C 20:59). You will continue learning the principles of the gospel and how to follow the Savior.

The Aaronic Priesthood is a preparatory priesthood. It prepares you for the Melchizedek Priesthood as well as a lifetime of service. You will be involved in serving members of the ward or branch and the





community. Real joy in life comes from serving others. And as you serve, your talents will grow and develop. You might hold positions of leadership. These experiences will help prepare you for missionary service.

#### **Duty to God Award**

The First Presidency has said, “We desire all young men to strive to earn the . . . Duty to God Award.”<sup>1</sup> This program helps you grow through setting and achieving worthy goals. You will work with Aaronic Priesthood leaders, your bishop or branch president,

and your mother and father.

Here are a few of the program’s requirements: during your years as an Aaronic Priesthood holder you will do things like read the scriptures daily, prepare a few meals for your family, wash and iron your clothes for a month, and complete the “My Personal Journal” section of your Duty to God booklet.

When you have earned your deacon, teacher, and priest Duty to God certificates, you will be eligible to receive your Duty to God medallion. This is a great achievement, but the real blessing of the program is

**While earning your Duty to God Award, you will study the scriptures, prepare meals for your family, and do many other things that help prepare you for the Melchizedek Priesthood, the temple endowment, a mission, marriage, and parenthood.**

that it will help prepare you to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood and the temple endowment, serve a full-time mission, marry in the temple, and become a faithful husband and father.



### General Priesthood Session and More

In addition to the weekly Aaronic Priesthood meetings in your ward or branch, each April and October you will join with priesthood holders all around the world in the priesthood session of general conference. There apostles and prophets will teach you how to do your priesthood duties and become a better person. There will also be firesides and other special activities throughout the year. You are in for a spiritual, intellectual, and social feast.

### Mutual

The weekly activity for the Young Men and Young Women organizations is called Mutual. It's an opportunity for the youth of the ward or branch to meet together in a social setting and apply the gospel principles taught in Sunday meetings. As a deacon you'll do things at

Mutual that 12- and 13-year-old boys like to do. How can you be sure? Because you will help choose the activities. As you become a teacher and then a priest, the activities will change to meet your interests. Once a month you will meet with the young women. This will help you learn how to build wholesome relationships with all young women.

### Honoring the Priesthood

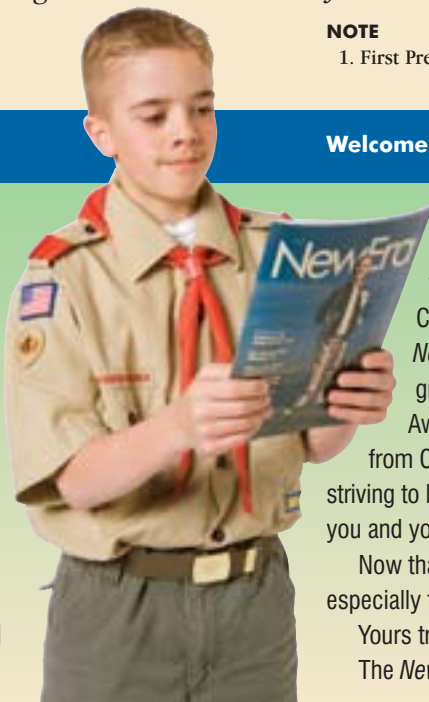
My patriarchal blessing says, "Honor thy father and thy mother, but above all, honor the priesthood, for it will be your salvation." The same will be true for you. I look forward to working with you as we strive together to follow Jesus Christ, whose priesthood you will soon hold. ●

#### NOTE

1. First Presidency Letter, Sept. 28, 2001.

### Scouting

Scouting is the activity program of the Aaronic Priesthood in the United States and Canada. As an 11-year-old Scout you already know that it's a lot of fun, and it only gets better. You'll go on overnight camping trips. You'll go swimming. You'll go hiking. As you get older, the adventures will grow more challenging and more exciting. You'll learn new skills as you work on merit badges. The First Presidency has said, "We desire all young men to strive to earn the Eagle Scout and Duty to God Awards."



### Welcome to the New Era

Turning 12, becoming a deacon, and entering Young Men all bring a new set of responsibilities and opportunities. That's why there's the *New Era* magazine—the Church magazine written for young men just like you. In the *New Era* you'll laugh at the cartoons, love the posters, get great ideas for Scouting and earning your Duty to God Award, and develop your testimony by reading messages from Church leaders and stories about youth around the world striving to live the gospel. The articles and stories talk about issues you and your friends face every day.

Now that you're older, check out what the *New Era* offers especially for you.

Yours truly,  
The *New Era* staff