

**SUGGESTED GUIDELINES
FOR
ASSOCIATIONS**

BOARD OF EDUCATION
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From *The Manual of The Mother Church*:

Article XXVI **Care of Pupils.** Sect. 2 “. . . A teacher shall not assume personal control of, or attempt to dominate his pupils, but he shall hold himself morally obligated to promote their progress in the understanding of divine Principle, not only during the class term but after it, and to watch well that they prove sound in sentiment and practical in Christian Science. He shall persistently and patiently counsel his pupils in conformity with the unerring laws of God, and shall enjoin them habitually to study the Scriptures and SCIENCE AND HEALTH WITH KEY TO THE SCRIPTURES as a help thereto.” (p. 83:11)

Article XXVI **Associations.** Sect. 6. “The associations of the pupils of loyal teachers shall convene annually. . . .” (p. 84:16-18)

Article XXVII **Without Teachers.** Sect. 2. “Those beloved brethren whose teacher has left them, can elect an experienced Christian Scientist, who is not in charge of an association of students and who is ready for this high calling, to conduct the meetings of their association.” (p. 86:9)

Article XXX **Healing Better than Teaching.** Sect. 7. “Healing the sick and the sinner with Truth demonstrates what we affirm of Christian Science, and nothing can substitute this demonstration. I recommend that each member of this Church shall strive to demonstrate by his or her practice, that Christian Science heals the sick quickly and wholly, thus proving this Science to be all that we claim for it. . . .” (p. 92:3-11)

We’re confident that your association, even without your well-loved teacher, must continue to progress as a crucial part of Mary Baker Eddy’s design for her Church and its mission of healing and saving the world. And what an opportunity for spiritual growth the members of your association now have--of comforting each other and rising “in the strength of Spirit” to fulfill the role Mrs. Eddy envisioned for each association as a mighty force for good in the world! (*Science and Health*, p. 393:12-13) Individually and collectively, you will all work and pray, perhaps as never before, to *live* the precious Science of Christ your dear teacher taught and demonstrated so selflessly. Your class teaching has prepared you. The great Shepherd is at your side. And as Mary Baker Eddy wrote in a “Message to The Mother Church,” “Your dual and impersonal pastor, the Bible and ‘Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures,’ is with you; and the Life

these give, the Truth they illustrate, the Love they demonstrate, is the great Shepherd that feedeth my flock, and leadeth them ‘beside the still waters.’” (*Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 322:10-15)
The Board of Education is eager to embrace and assist associations without teachers in any way we can! In order to do this, it’s important to stay in touch. So please do keep us informed of the name, address, phone number and email of the current Secretary, and let us know promptly when changes occur in any of these, so we can be sure that all communications reach you promptly.

If your association has bylaws, or if your teacher has provided specific instructions for you to follow, these will be most helpful to you. And of course, your prayer and spiritual intuition will be an ongoing guide as you move forward step by step, as active healers serving the Cause of Christian Science. Feel free, however, to be in touch with the Board of Education office at any point if you have questions.

We have included in these guidelines information that we hope you’ll find useful. But please know that these points are suggestions only--and should not supersede the association bylaws or directives from your teacher.

OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

When the teacher is no longer present, and the executive committee (made up of members of the association normally serving without compensation) is carrying forward the association’s activities, it’s important that the association be democratic enough to get the full benefit of its members’ ideas, inspiration and prayer.

The experiences of associations without teachers show the wisdom of having officers and members of the executive committee elected by the membership as a whole for the purpose of deciding important questions. And it’s usually helpful to learn the wishes of the membership by mail or an online ballot, rather than by extensive debate and balloting at the association meeting. If at any time your association discusses disbanding, we recommend writing the Board of Education for Guidelines on this subject.

Each association is, of course, free to establish its own procedures, but many find it useful to establish a three-year term of office for executive committee members. Sometimes the Secretary and Treasurer serve as members of the executive committee; sometimes they do not. But in either case their terms are not necessarily governed by a three-year rotation-in-office rule. Associations have generally found it important, however, to take care that no individual begins to feel that he or she is “in charge” of the association or assumes the role of a teacher. While it is helpful to have a Secretary and Treasurer (often the same individual) who are experienced in the work, these positions are not usually considered perpetual. Both the Secretary and Treasurer report to the executive committee, and it’s important to have it clearly understood that the executive committee has ultimate responsibility for conducting the affairs of the association.

Usually executive committees elect from among their members each year someone to serve a Chair and Vice-Chair.

BYLAWS

In cases where neither bylaws nor directives have been provided by the teacher, association executive committees are encouraged to draw up a set of bylaws as soon as possible for consideration and ratification by the association membership as a whole.

In preparing bylaws, associations generally follow parliamentary procedures, insofar as these support the purpose and activities of the association.

A sample set of bylaws follows, which your association may wish to adopt, adapt, or use as a model if you are writing your own bylaws.

If your teacher provided a set of bylaws you may wish to reconsider them, from time to time, making changes as needed.

Sample

BYLAWS

The Christian Science Association of the Pupils of John Doe, C.S.B.

I. **Authority for Organization.** This association, The Christian Science Association of the Pupils of John Doe, C.S.B., is organized under the authority of Article XXVI, Section 6, of the *Manual of The Mother Church*, by Mary Baker Eddy.

II. **Purpose.** The purpose of this association is to further the teachings of Christian Science as set forth in the writings of Mary Baker Eddy and specifically in the *Church Manual*. Its purpose is not the exercise of parliamentary democracy, but rather is completely religious in character. For this reason the business of the association will be conducted as far as possible by its Chairman and its Executive Committee so that the business sessions of the association may be as brief as possible.

III. **Officers.**

A. **Executive Committee**

1. The Executive Committee shall be considered the officers of the association.
2. The Executive Committee shall consist of not more than six members of the association elected from year to year by the association.
3. At the first election, two members shall be elected for one year, two for two years, and two for three years. Thereafter two members shall be elected annually to fulfill three-year terms. Midterm vacancies shall be filled by the remaining members of the Executive Committee.
4. In elections, nominees shall be chosen by the Executive Committee and presented in a mailing to the membership of the association, allowing ample time in

advance of the next meeting of the association. Any member of the association has the privilege of adding a write-in candidate on the ballot.

5. The Executive Committee shall conduct the business of the association.

- B. **Chair of the Executive Committee.** The Executive Committee shall elect a Chair from among its members.
 - C. **Vice-Chair of the Executive Committee.** The Executive Committee shall elect a Vice-Chair from among its members to serve in the absence of the Chair, in his/her inability to act, or in the event of his/her decision not to exercise his/her power of appointment.
 - D. **Secretary-Treasurer.** The Executive Committee shall elect a Secretary-Treasurer (or a Secretary and a Treasurer) either from among its members or from outside the Executive Committee. If this officer(s) is elected from outside the Executive Committee he/she will be a non-voting member of the Executive Committee. The Secretary-Treasurer shall keep the records of the association and have charge of its funds. If the office is divided between a Secretary and a Treasurer, the Executive Committee will determine their respective duties.
- IV. **Membership.** The membership of the association shall consist of those who have received Primary class instruction in Christian Science from John Doe, C.S.B. A member unable to receive mail, or from whom there has been no communication for several years, may be placed on “inactive status” by the Executive Committee. A member wishing to withdraw from the association should have his name removed from current membership records. The association historical records will always show that the individual was class taught by the teacher, and therefore is not eligible to be taught by another Christian Science teacher.
- V. **Funds.** The annual dues shall be a minimum of \$_____ for each member. These should be mailed to the Secretary-Treasurer at the beginning of each calendar year. Contributions to the association and to its various funds may be made at any time. [Possible language: “As a general rule, the association should make a gift to The Mother Church each year.”] At such time that the majority of the membership deems it appropriate to disband the association, all of the funds and property of the association shall be distributed to [Possible language: “the General Fund of The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Massachusetts, for the promotion and extension of Christian Science as taught by Mary Baker Eddy.”] It is the association’s intent for funds or other property given to the association after the association has disbanded and dissolved (e.g., a later estate gift) to be distributed to this same recipient for the same purpose.
- VI. **Meetings.** The association shall meet once each year for not more than one day. The date and place of the meeting and the invitation of visitors shall be determined by the Executive Committee from year to year.
- VII. **Addresser.** The Addresser(s) shall be the speaker(s) approved by the Executive Committee.
- VIII. **Amendment to Bylaws.** The bylaws of the association may be amended by vote of the association with a minimum of 45 days written notice and an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members of the association voting thereon, by mail prior to such annual meeting, or by vote at the business session of the annual meeting. Copies of any adopted amendment shall be furnished to members promptly.

Adopted (date)

Amended (date)

Amended (date)

ASSOCIATION MEETINGS and GUEST SPEAKERS

CHURCH MANUAL BYLAW

Article XXVII “Without Teachers. Sect. 2. Those beloved brethren, whose teacher has left them, can elect an experienced Christian Scientist, who is not in charge of an association of students and who is ready for this high calling, to conduct the meetings of their association.” (page 86:9).

An association is so much more than an inspiring day-long talk by an experienced Christian Scientist, however important and wonderfully enriching that meeting may be.

An association is a unique family of students of Christian Science taught by a specific teacher. Fellow association members normally work together on year-long healing goals, often inspired by a study assignment given by the guest speaker, or association executive committee. And they look forward joyfully to sharing with each other at their annual meeting the healing fruits of their association’s special metaphysical goals.

Association day provides a place of fellowship to gather the rich harvest of healings and spiritual progress by fellow Christian Scientists. It is also a time of encouragement for each other in their spiritual journeys as they heal current challenges and set new spiritual goals for the future. In this way students in the association extend to each other the kind of shepherding “care of pupils” their teacher always provided for them (See Article XXVI, “Care of Pupils.” Sect. 2, p. 83).

So one can certainly understand why Mary Baker Eddy felt such a gathering should meet just once each year--and why members would participate in only one such family gather yearly. Each association around the world makes its own vital unique contribution toward fulfilling the mission Mrs. Eddy envisioned for the Cause of Christian Science in this age.

SELECTING A GUEST SPEAKER

Responsibility of executive committee and membership

It’s the demonstration of each association without a teacher to prayerfully choose and invite a speaker to conduct their annual association meeting in accordance with the *Manual*, Article XXVII, Section 2.

Only pupils of loyal teachers may address an association. A speaker does not hold any permanent standing in the association, although the same person may be invited to address an association more than once.

Selecting the speaker to address the annual association meeting in any particular year is not solely the responsibility of the executive committee. The whole association can be invited, year by year, to prayerfully support this selection process. It then clearly becomes the demonstration of the entire association, reflecting their joy and commitment to the Cause of Christian Science.

Questions you may want to consider in the selection process:

--What is the purpose of our association meeting?

--What qualities and qualifications do we feel are most needed in the association speaker?

At the top of many such lists of qualities are spirituality, an inspired understanding of Christian Science, the proven ability to demonstrate Christian Science as a healer, and the ability to effectively communicate Christian Science.

You might also ask if the person has:

--An effective public healing practice;

--A strong record of branch church activity;

--Articles published in the Christian Science periodicals;

--Effective work as a lecturer, Committee on Publication, or in some other activity of The Mother Church.

As you begin to see what is important to you as an association, the question then becomes: What person, whether well-known or not, will best meet the need of our association on that special day?

Initially contacting the prospective speaker

You may want to send a simple questionnaire to the prospective speaker to find out details that your executive committee deems helpful. (See attached sample)

As you get to know the person you're considering as an association speaker, you may find it helpful to discuss questions like the following:

--Are they class taught by a loyal teacher of Christian Science?

--Is the prospective speaker free of private theories and interpretations of Mrs. Eddy's writings?

--Do they support all provisions in the *Manual of The Mother Church*?

--Do they express themselves clearly?

Each association will find its own way of selecting a speaker. Sometimes a committee will search for a speaker first from within their own association membership. Some associations require that, if possible, at least one member of the committee has firsthand knowledge about a speaker. Association members may suggest names of prospective speakers, but the executive committee usually accepts responsibility for obtaining pertinent information about possible speakers and makes the final decision. Often a committee will interview a prospective speaker by phone, or in person.

The Mother Church does not maintain a list of names, nor does it recommend prospective speakers. The Board of Education may, however, be able to help an association gather information about a speaker they are considering.

Inviting the speaker

Normally associations invite a speaker more than a year in advance of the date of the meeting in order to give them a full year for preparation of the address and for mentoring association members individually in their healing practice.

When inviting a speaker, the committee will want to share some information about the association. That will help that individual know whether or not it feels right to accept. Addressing the association should be a demonstration for both speaker and association.

The speaker will also need to be briefed on the agenda for the association day--what time will be available for the address, the length of the business meeting, the time allowed for lunch, the opportunity for interactive discussion among the members, testimonies from members, and so on.

It's also thoughtful to share what fee is usually provided, as well as what hotel and travel expenses are paid by the association.

It might also be worthwhile to mention to the speaker that the Board of Education can provide them with helpful guidelines and other information for people addressing associations.

Speakers address one association annually

Article XXVII, Section 2, of the *Church Manual* provides for an experienced Christian Scientist to conduct the meetings of an association whose teacher has left them.

Speakers may address only one association per year. An association meeting involves much more than a one-day event. For both teacher and students, the annual meeting is the culmination of a year of study and spiritual growth. It represents the tender, day-by-day, year-by-year "care of pupils" by a teacher, and the ongoing response to that care by the pupils. When the teacher is

no longer present, there is the *Manual* provision for electing “. . . an experienced Christian Scientist, who is not in charge of an association of students and who is ready for this high calling, to conduct the meetings of their association.” The members of the association can expect that the individual they elect is devoting a full measure of love, prayer, research and preparation to addressing their specific needs and supporting their spiritual growth for that year. Having made this commitment to an association of pupils for a given year, a speaker would not want to divert his/her shepherding and mentoring attention to caring for other associations as well. (See *Manual*, Article XXVI, Sections 2 and 6, and Article XXVII, Section 2). Therefore if a speaker is already in charge of one association, he or she is not eligible to accept another invitation.

THE ASSOCIATION ADDRESS

Purpose of the address

“**Associations. Sect. 6.** The associations of the pupils of a loyal teacher shall convene annually. The pupils shall be guided by the BIBLE, and SCIENCE AND HEALTH, not by their teachers’ personal views. Teachers shall not call their pupils together, or assemble a selected number of them, for more frequent meetings” (*Church Manual*, p. 84).

After their teacher has left them, associations continue the practice of calling their membership together for an annual gathering by inviting a guest speaker to conduct their association meeting. Or sometimes the guest speaker duties may be shared among the association members themselves. But whatever the format, in an address prepared for the specific occasion and association audience, the speaker turns the students to the guidance of the Bible and *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, as the teacher always did. The address explores clearly and convincingly how the fundamental truths of Christian Science apply to today’s needs--for the individual, our Church, and humanity.

This metaphysical address is the main reason for bringing the members of the association together each year, and it should occupy the major portion of the day. Speakers and association members may find, however, that some interactive approaches (occasional small discussion groups, question-and-answer periods, or testimonies of healing given by members) will enrich and help illustrate the major points in the speaker’s address. It will also provide an opportunity for the mutual support and tender shepherding association members provide for each other. Progress and healing is the norm for all association day gatherings.

The executive committee’s responsibility

When the teacher is no longer conducting the association, it becomes the executive committee’s responsibility to maintain a standard for the one who addresses the association as guest speaker. This standard is of course put forward by Mrs. Eddy in the above quoted bylaw. The committee takes the initiative to specify the number of hours reserved for the address, and to help the guest speaker understand that the association attendees look forward to a message that inspires and

nurtures the spiritual growth of each member, and is free of “personal views.” The committee will want to give the speaker keen and appreciative support, assuring him or her that they are prayerfully supporting a harmonious and receptive atmosphere as the address unfolds on the association meeting day.

ASSOCIATION ADDRESS GUIDELINES

Mary Baker Eddy’s *Manual* bylaw “Healing Better than Teaching” (Article XXX, Sect. 7, page 92) sets the tone and goal for each association address.

“Healing the sick and the sinner with Truth demonstrates what we affirm of Christian Science, and nothing can substitute this demonstration. I recommend that each member of this Church shall strive to demonstrate by his or her practice that Christian Science heals the sick quickly and wholly, thus proving this Science to be all that we claim for it.”

Our individual efforts to make the theology of Christian Science practical--striving for quicker and more clear-cut healing--not only establish the health of our Church but help answer humanity’s urgent cry for hope and help. So the association speaker has the special opportunity and privilege to both minister to the individual spiritual needs of each member and guest, and at the same time to inspire in them a desire to help meet *humanity’s* needs through the public practice of Christian Science.

Here are some basic characteristics that are usually common to the most helpful association addresses:

1. Basic Christian Science metaphysics

The address will naturally inspire and challenge students to grow in their understanding of God, man, Christ, and divine Science. Of course, each address will look at these subjects from a different perspective, usually developing a central theme that ties them all together. But this theme is always subsidiary to the fundamental metaphysical laws of God it illustrates.

Mary Baker Eddy writes in *Science and Health*, “We know no more of man as the true divine image and likeness, than we know of God ” (page 258:16).

In a sense, therefore, the primary subject of an association address will center around God--as our divine Father-Mother is experienced day by day in ways that bring healing and regeneration to humanity. This will naturally include a sense of newness, fresh views and inspiring discoveries about the synonyms for God, God’s creation, God’s universe, God’s man--all of which will be supported by passages drawn from the Pastor. And it will convey the joy of seeing eternal Truth ever unfolding and stirring thought to see the fundamental truths of Christian Science in new applications and fresh perspectives.

The speaker will also want to offer a vivid sense of the Christ and its healing activity, as well as a deep appreciation of Christ Jesus, the great Exemplar for Christian healers.

2. Practice, healing and treatment

Each association meeting provides an opportunity to review the basic elements of Christian Science treatment, including the application of the truths of God, man and the universe to specific human needs. Since the healing practice is the ultimate goal of class teaching, every association address will seek to nurture the Christliness of each listener as the best preparation for public practice. And of course, the speaker, as well as testimonies contributed by attendees, will shed light on a number of practical questions concerning the practice.

3. Handling animal magnetism

The claims of animal magnetism, especially those that seem to be active within society today, need to be exposed and vigorously handled, from the standpoint of God's allness and omnipotence. The address will encourage students to nurture the purity of thought that overcomes erroneous patterns of thought claiming to be part of human nature. All of this is consistent with our Leader's statement that "the higher mission of the Christ-power. . . [is] to take away the sins of the world" (*Science and Health*, page 150).

4. Daily prayer for oneself

The address provides an opportunity to remind students of the need for regular daily prayer for themselves, as well as their home and family. This includes setting aside quiet time for daily study of the Pastor (the Bible and *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*), combined with prayer for one's own spiritual growth, all of which prepares the student to contribute actively to the healing mission of our Church.

5. Love for Church

The address can foster a fresh, vibrant sense of Church with all its possibilities for progress and growth, promoting prayerful and practical support of both branch church activities and The Mother Church. It might also touch on the latest steps being taken by branch churches, as well as The Mother Church, to "reinstat primitive Christianity and its lost element of healing" (*Manual*, p. 17). This discussion might highlight, for instance, the online presence of The Mother Church and its periodicals, and be tied in with the provisions in the *Church Manual*, showing how these are adequate to take care of all present and future needs of our Church.

6. Prayer for the world

Speakers will also want to touch on community, national, and world challenges, as well as the opportunity and selfless responsibility of Christian Scientists to pray for resolution of them. This discussion can perhaps provide a wonderful opportunity to focus on the healing purpose of *The Christian Science Monitor* and its mission "to injure no man, but to bless all mankind" (*First Church and Miscellany*, page 353).

7. Mary Baker Eddy

“To misunderstand Paul, was to be ignorant of the divine idea he taught,” Mrs. Eddy writes. “Ignorance of the divine idea betrays at once a greater ignorance of the divine Principle of the idea--ignorance of Truth and Love” (*Science and Health*, page 560-561).

Specific and meaningful references to our Leader in the address will help rekindle the members’ appreciation of Mary Baker Eddy, and shelter them from “ignorance of the divine Principle.” Inspiring new reference material can be found in the many biographies and extended reminiscences of our Leader now available in Reading Rooms around the world. The address also offers an avenue for helping students grasp Mrs. Eddy’s role in revealing the Comforter Jesus promised he would send--and for understanding her work as Discoverer, Founder, Leader and “a scribe under orders” (*Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 311:26).

8. Research on Mary Baker Eddy

The speaker will want to take care in sharing quotations by or about our Leader. Occasionally, statements and manuscripts incorrectly attributed to Mrs. Eddy are circulated, and some of these are said to have come from association addresses or meetings. We suggest that quotations and anecdotes related to our Leader be authenticated by the Research staff of The Mary Baker Eddy Library. The staff may be reached at 617-450-7218 or research@mbelibrary.org. They are also happy to assist with historical questions related to Mrs. Eddy or the Christian Science Church.

SPEAKER FEES

Speakers are generally reimbursed for the cost of the travel and accommodation expenses incurred in addressing an association. *In addition* a fee is given to the speaker as a token of appreciation for preparing and giving the address itself.

Because of the confidentiality between speakers and associations, as well as the variety of surrounding circumstances, there is no accurate way of assessing an appropriate average, or minimum fee. Prayerful consideration on the part of both the association and the speaker, will lead to an agreed-upon figure.

The following are some points to consider:

- Appreciation of the time, effort and dedication of the speaker;
- Commitment of the speaker to one association annually;
- Inflation from year to year;
- Financial assets of the association.

In some countries, specifically the United States, the fee is considered taxable income, and appropriate tax forms need to be given to the speaker and filed with the Internal Revenue Service.

Sample Questionnaire for Prospective Speakers

1. Name: _____ Date: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

2. With whom did you have Primary class instruction? _____
What year? _____

3. Do you consider yourself “an experienced Christian Scientist” as described in the *Church Manual*, Article XXVII, Sect.2. “Without Teachers”? _____

4. Please list the year(s) you would be available to address our association.

Please respond to the following questions on a separate sheet of paper:

5. Please include a brief statement as to what led you into the practice of Christian Science.
6. Please share some recent healings that have come through your healing practice.
7. Please share your understanding of Mary Baker Eddy's contribution to humanity as Leader, as well as Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science.
8. Have you written any articles that have been published in the Christian Science periodicals? If so, please include a separate sheet with their titles, periodical name, and date published.
9. Of what branch church are you currently a member? Please list the key church activities in which you have participated and any other contributions you have made to the Cause of Christian Science.
10. If you have addressed other associations, would you please include the name(s) of the last two association(s) where you have been the speaker, and the year(s) in which you addressed it (them)?
11. Would you be available to work with our association family from time to time during the year, responding metaphysically—and in your address--to particular needs the association might have?

12. Are you aware that our association requests its speakers not to include personal opinions relating to any subject, including politics, but instead to focus on the development of spiritual ideas?
13. Are you aware that a speaker can give only one association address per year?
14. Please include a brief biography of yourself.