

Announcements and Reminders

July 2020

FOR ELDERS

1. **Arrangements for Viewing the 2020 Convention:** This is to clarify that the midweek meetings should be held as normal during the weeks in July and August that the 2020 convention sessions are viewed.

2. **Circuit Assemblies During September Through November 2020:** As indicated in the announcement for affected congregations, live circuit assemblies during the months of September through November 2020 are canceled. If your congregation was assigned to attend a circuit assembly during these months, please organize the viewing of the assembly as follows:

- (1) A 30-minute *Watchtower* Study, with no reading of the paragraphs, should be considered by the congregation *before* the circuit assembly is viewed. If a videoconferencing tool, such as *Zoom*, is being used for congregation meetings, this tool should be used for the abbreviated *Watchtower* Study. Although the attendance count should be taken for the *Watchtower* Study, no count of those viewing the assembly is needed.
- (2) At the end of the *Watchtower* Study, announce that all who are able to do so should now view the circuit assembly using the JW Stream link provided by the elders. (See *Access to Programs on JW Stream by Elders and Ministerial Servants* [S-142].) The elders may send the link to a disfellowshipped or disassociated person if he has regularly been attending congregation meetings. Announce that at the conclusion of the assembly, someone in the home can offer a prayer of thanksgiving.
- (3) After the announcement, sing the second song specified for the *Watchtower* Study and conclude with a prayer, acknowledging the circuit assembly to follow. The publishers can be encouraged to discuss with one another throughout the following week points that they enjoyed from the program. Or, the body of elders can decide if they would like to designate a time for those who want to discuss the benefits of the program to meet in smaller groups by means of videoconference, such as *Zoom* breakout rooms.

Additional Considerations:

- (1) If some publishers are unable to access JW Stream, the elders may transmit the recorded assembly program to such ones by means of a videoconferencing tool, such as *Zoom*. After the *Watchtower* Study, these individuals would stay connected to enjoy the program. The program should be downloaded in advance to the host's computer.
- (2) Be reasonable and flexible. Due to family circumstances or other reasons, some publishers or families may choose to view the program at other times.
- (3) In view of the current pandemic, each *individual or family head* must decide the wisest course when it comes to meeting together as a family or to inviting a few others, such as Bible students, to view the program together. (Gal. 6:5) It would be good to remind the congregation of the need to continue applying the basic principles of health and safety, such as frequent handwashing, physical distancing, wearing a face covering, and limiting physical contact with older and high-risk persons.

- (4) Please make appropriate arrangements for any candidate(s) in your congregation who has been approved for baptism to be immersed locally. This should happen after the morning session is viewed, in accord with local circumstances. At the baptism, a local elder should ask the baptism candidate(s) the two questions appearing on page 206 of the *Organized* book and give him an opportunity to answer in the affirmative. The elder will then offer a prayer. Thereafter, the candidate(s) should be immersed. (*sff* chap. 11 pars. 16-17) Those performing baptisms should take necessary precautions in accord with guidelines provided by the secular authorities to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Please remember to report the number baptized to your circuit overseer. He will compile the number of baptisms in the circuit and send his report to the branch office.

FOR COORDINATORS OF THE BODIES OF ELDERS

1. **Announcements for Congregations:** Ensure that the announcements for congregations are read at the next midweek meeting.
2. **Midweek Meeting Part on the Use of Messaging Apps:** Assign a qualified elder to deliver the talk "Make Wise Use of Messaging Apps" the week of August 17, 2020, in place of the 15-minute local needs part. The outline for this talk is attached.

Make Wise Use of Messaging Apps

PLEASE NOTE: This talk is to be delivered by a qualified elder the week of August 17, 2020, in place of the local needs part. Help the congregation to recognize that while messaging apps have some value, they can also be a snare. Encourage all to apply Bible principles in their use of messaging apps

MESSAGING APPS CAN BE USEFUL (1 min.)

Messaging apps such as *WhatsApp*, *Facebook Messenger*, *WeChat*, *QQ Mobile*, *Snapchat*, *Viber*, *Discord*, and *Telegram* are commonly used around the world to connect with other people

Many of Jehovah's people use messaging apps to strengthen the bonds of love with their Christian brothers and sisters

Circuit overseers, elders, and publishers often use message groups to convey helpful information, to encourage one another, or simply to keep in touch (1Th 5:11)

RECOGNIZE THE DANGERS (6 min.)

Some have formed message groups of hundreds or thousands to organize large social gatherings or for other reasons

With such large groups, it is difficult to determine the spiritual standing of those in the group

Disfellowshipped persons and apostates may even gain or maintain access (2Jo 9-11)

The originator of a message group should manage access to the group and personally know the individuals who are part of the group (*od* 13:19-20)

Bible principles: Psalm 26:4; Proverbs 14:15, 16; 27:12; 2 Timothy 2:20, 21

Some have used messaging apps to offer employment, products, or services to fellow believers

Christians should not target theocratic contacts to advance business interests (*km* 7/00 1 ¶12)

Bible principles: 1 Corinthians 10:23, 24; Hebrews 13:5

FOLLOW ORGANIZATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS (4 min.)

Some with good intentions have used messaging apps to solicit funds for brothers in need

However, there are arrangements already in place to help such ones

What is the organizational arrangement to assist fellow believers financially? (1Co 14:40; *od* 12:12-15)

Bible principles: 1 Timothy 5:3, 4, 9, 10, 16; James 1:27

“DO ALL THINGS FOR GOD’S GLORY” (4 min.)

Our actions affect our friendship with God **[Read Psalm 15:1-4]**

The principles in Psalm 15 also apply to our use of messaging apps

We should share only stories that have been verified (vs 2)

We should make comments that enhance the reputation of others (vs 3)

We should cultivate friendship only with those who love and fear Jehovah (vs 4)

May we always strive to glorify Jehovah in whatever we do **[Read 1 Corinthians 10:31]**

TO BE COVERED IN 15 MINUTES

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FOR CONGREGATIONS

1. **2021 Special Conventions:** The current COVID-19 pandemic has created uncertainties about being able to safely enjoy the large international gatherings of special conventions planned for 2021. In view of this, we have decided to postpone these events until 2022, if circumstances permit.

2. ***Bible Study Video Reference Guide:*** We are pleased to inform you of the release of a new digital-only publication entitled *Bible Study Video Reference Guide*. This publication will assist publishers in making more effective use of our videos on jw.org when conducting Bible studies in the books *What Can the Bible Teach Us?* and *How to Remain in God's Love*. This new publication will be available on jw.org, *JW Library*, the *Watchtower Library*, and the *Watchtower ONLINE LIBRARY*.

3. The *Video Reference Guide* has links to videos that cover key Bible principles in our primary Bible study publications. The publisher conducting the study can determine how best to use the videos based on the circumstances and needs of the student. Some publishers may decide to view and discuss the videos during the study, while others may decide to encourage the student to view the videos as he prepares for the study.

4. You may want to add the *Video Reference Guide* to your Favorites in *JW Library* so that you can access it quickly. Go to PUBLICATIONS > BOOKS and find the *Video Reference Guide* in the list. Select the “More” button in the top-right corner of the publication, then select “Add to Favorites.”

5. By making good use of the videos featured in the *Video Reference Guide* and on jw.org, we can enhance the practical application of Bible principles in the everyday lives of Bible students and help them develop a solid foundation in the faith.—Col. 2:6, 7.

[Note: Only read the following announcement if your congregation was assigned to attend a circuit assembly during the months of September through November 2020.]

6. **Circuit Assemblies During September Through November 2020:** All live circuit assemblies scheduled for September through November 2020 are canceled. Therefore, the congregation will view the entire prerecorded assembly via JW Stream on the same weekend that the live program was scheduled. The elders will provide publishers and interested persons with a link to the video along with further direction as needed. As is the case with live circuit assemblies, no midweek meeting will be held and no local public talk will be presented that week. However, the congregation will hold an abbreviated *Watchtower Study* on the weekend. There will be no special meeting with regular pioneers, special pioneers, and field missionaries in conjunction with this assembly.