

Quiz:
Succession
in the
Presidency

#1

How is a new president of the Church chosen?

- a. The apostles meet and **vote** for the new president.
- b. The **first counselor** in the First Presidency automatically becomes it.
- c. The **President of the Quorum** of the Twelve Apostles automatically becomes it.
- d. The **oldest apostle** automatically becomes it.

#2

TRUE or FALSE

When the president passes away, the **first counselor** in the First Presidency then becomes the **temporary leader** of the Church until a new President is chosen.

#3

TRUE or FALSE

The First Presidency **always consists of three people** – the President and his two counselors – except of course when one of them has recently passed away.

#4

TRUE or FALSE

The members of the First Presidency must always have **already been an apostle** or at least recently ordained to it.

#5

How is the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles chosen?

1. Whoever is the **most senior** apostle automatically becomes it.
2. By **vote** from the apostles. Majority wins.
3. By his **age** (whoever is the oldest).
4. By his **skills** in whatever assignments he has filled.

#6

When it comes to the apostles, what does "seniority" mean?

1. **Age** (the older the person is, the more senior).
2. **Experience** with running the various programs of the Church.
3. **Total time** at being an apostle (the more time, the higher the seniority).
4. **Total continuous time** at being an apostle.

#7

TRUE or FALSE

If two apostles are ordained on the same day, they are **equal in seniority**, regardless of technically who gets ordained first.

#8

TRUE or FALSE

Each of the apostles, not just the President of the Church, holds all the keys and authorities.

For all of the apostles except the President of the Church, the keys relating to being president are just dormant.

#1

**How is a new president
of the Church chosen?**

- c. The **President of the Quorum** of the Twelve Apostles automatically becomes it.

#1

Boyd K. Packer – Shortly after the death of President Gordon B. Hinckley, the 14 men, Apostles, who had had conferred upon them the keys of the kingdom, gathered together in the upper room of the temple in order to reorganize the First Presidency of the Church.

There was no question about what would be done, no hesitancy. We knew that the senior Apostle was the President of the Church. *(Conference Report, Apr. 2008, p. 81.)*

Gordon B. Hinckley – No “running” for position, no electioneering, no stump speeches. What a divine plan! How wise our Lord, to organize so perfectly beyond the weakness of frail, grasping humans.”

(Conference Report, Apr. 1970, 118.)

#1

**But this method does
not involve revelation, does it?**

1. Each apostle is chosen by revelation.
2. The *timing* of his call to the Quorum of the Twelve is done by revelation.
3. The timing of when each one pass away is controlled by God.

#2

FALSE

When the president passes away, the **first counselor** in the First Presidency then becomes the **temporary leader** of the Church until a new President is chosen.

#2

Joseph Smith – Where the president is not, there is no First Presidency. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 106.)

An example is when President Harold B. Lee passed away.

1.	Harold B. Lee	President of the Church
2.	N. Eldon Tanner	1 st Counselor
3.	Marion G. Romney	2 nd Counselor
4.	Spencer W. Kimball	President of the Quorum of the Twelve

President Romney had been called to the hospital and as they talked, President Lee, realizing that he might be incapacitated for some time, said to President Romney: “President Tanner is away, and I want you to take over and carry on the affairs of the Church.”

President Kimball, who came in later, offered his services to President Romney.

However, immediately upon the announcement of President Lee’s passing, President Romney turned to President Kimball and said: “You, as the president of the Quorum of the Twelve, are now in charge. I am at your disposal and prepared to do anything I can to help.”

<https://www.lds.org/manual/teachings-of-the-living-prophets-student-manual/chapter-3-succession-in-the-presidency?lang=eng>

#3

FALSE

The First Presidency **always consists of three people** – the President and his two counselors – except of course when one of them has recently passed away.

#3

Wikipedia – [The First Presidency] usually consists of the President of the Church and two counselors, although up to eight counselors have on occasion been included in the presidency at the same time. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Presidency.)

Wikipedia – [President] McKay regularly traveled until his 90s. His deteriorating health in the mid-1960s ultimately led to the appointment of **three additional counselors** in the First Presidency, as existing members were increasingly infirm and often unable to preside at meetings.

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_O._McKay.)

(More from the article: "By 1968, the First Presidency was composed of six members, larger than it had been at the death of Brigham Young in 1877. McKay's counselors in the First Presidency were Stephen L Richards (First Counselor, 1951–59); J. Reuben Clark, Jr. (Second Counselor 1951–59, First Counselor 1959–61); Henry D. Moyle (Second Counselor 1959–61, First Counselor 1961–63); Hugh B. Brown (Third Counselor 1961, Second Counselor 1961–63, First Counselor 1963–70); N. Eldon Tanner (Second Counselor, 1963–70); Thorpe B. Isaacson (Counselor, 1965–70); Joseph Fielding Smith (Counselor, 1965–70); Alvin R. Dyer (Counselor, 1968–70). David O. McKay had five during the final years of his presidency and at one point **Brigham Young had eight**.)

Ensign – On July 23, 1981, [**Gordon B. Hinckley**] was set apart as a **third counselor** to an ailing President Kimball, whose counselors, Marion G. Romney and N. Eldon Tanner, also experienced ill health. (<https://www.lds.org/ensign/2008/03-ee/president-gordon-b-hinckley?lang=eng>)

#4

FALSE

The members of the First Presidency must always have **already been an apostle** or at least recently ordained to it.

#4

- **Sidney Rigdon** (1832) and **Frederick G. Williams** (1833) were in the First Presidency without yet being apostles.
- **Charles W. Nibley** was a counselor to Heber J. Grant from 1925-1931 and without ever being ordained as an apostle.
(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Presidency)
- **J. Reuben Clark, Jr.** was another counselor to President Heber J. Grant, for 18 months from 1933-1934, before being ordained an apostle. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._Reuben_Clark)
- **Thorpe B. Isaacson** was a counselor to President David O. McKay from 1965-1970, but was an assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve.
(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thorpe_B._Isaacson)
- **Alvin R. Dyer**, another counselor to President McKay, was an apostle but not a member of the Quorum of the Twelve.
(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alvin_R._Dyer)

#5

How is the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles chosen?

1. Whoever is the **most senior** apostle automatically becomes it.

#5

Wikipedia – In general, the President of the Quorum of the Twelve is the most senior apostle in the church, aside from the President of the Church.

... If the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles is asked to become a **counselor in the First Presidency**, the President of the Quorum retains that title but is not numbered among the Twelve, and the most senior apostle who is not in the First Presidency is named **Acting President** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_of_the_Quorum_of_the_Twelve_Apostles_\(LDS_Church\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_of_the_Quorum_of_the_Twelve_Apostles_(LDS_Church))

#6

**When it comes to the apostles,
what does "seniority" mean?**

- 4. Total continuous time at being an apostle.**

#6

An apostle can be released and then reinstated, but he starts over in seniority.

Howard H. Barron – At a meeting of the Twelve Apostles held in 1875, Brigham Young made a decision affecting [Orson] Hyde's standing as the senior member of the Quorum.

It was ruled that since he and Orson Pratt had briefly separated themselves from the Quorum in 1838 and 1842, respectively, they should **lose their seniority** to Elders John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, and George A. Smith, who had been ordained during their time.

Because of that decision, John Taylor rather than Orson Hyde succeeded Brigham Young as President of the Church.

(Encyclopedia of Mormonism, p. 666.)

#7

FALSE

If two apostles are ordained on the same day, they are **equal in seniority**, regardless of technically who gets ordained first.

#7

Spencer W. Kimball and Ezra Taft Benson were both ordained Apostles on October 7, 1943, with Spencer W. Kimball being ordained first.

Because of this, President Kimball became President of the Church in 1973 when Harold B. Lee died.

<https://www.lds.org/manual/teachings-of-the-living-prophets-student-manual/chapter-3-succession-in-the-presidency?lang=eng>

#8

TRUE

Each of the apostles, not just the President of the Church, holds all the keys and authorities.

For all of the apostles except the President of the Church, the keys relating to being president are just dormant.

#8

Joseph Fielding Smith – Each of the apostles when he is ordained has conferred upon him **all the keys and authorities** which were given by Joseph Smith to the apostles before his death.

These brethren, however, cannot exercise these authorities except when the occasion arises that they come to the presidency.

Before that time the powers **lie dormant**.

This is one reason why they are sustained as prophets, seers and revelators in the Church ...

(Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:389, quoted in TLP, 6-4.)