

# Managing Google Reviews

## How do I respond to reviews?

As your ward or branch encourages visitors to leave a review after attending sacrament meeting or an activity, you will receive positive and negative reviews.

As you consider responding to negative reviews or reviews that ask questions, remember that any response you give will play a role in others' impression of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and local congregations. This is an opportunity for you to be an example of Christlike love. In all responses, you should:

*Strive to be:*

- a good listener
- patient
- helpful
- loving

*Avoid being:*

- defensive
- dismissive
- argumentative
- sarcastic

It's important to remember that most people who leave negative online reviews are frustrated. Their experience didn't live up to how they believed they should be treated. The best thing you can do is to help reviewers feel listened to and that their concerns were taken seriously. Your response should include messages that:

- Thank them for their feedback.
- Acknowledge something specific in their review.
- Let them know local leaders are taking what they said into account.
- Describe any steps that will be taken to address the issue.

Not all reviews need a response. People have a right to their opinions—if someone thinks the music played at a Church dance was boring, let them express that without launching a defensive rebuttal.

*Priorities for responding to a review are:*

- One-star reviews with or without comments.
- Five-star reviews that include comments.
- Moments when an answer could help someone who is frustrated feel heard in a loving way.
- Moments when an answer corrects misinformation stated in the review.
- Moments when an answer provides helpful information in response to a sincere question.

## Technical How-To

Anyone can leave a review on Google or social media for your ward or branch, including ward members and people who have never visited your church building at all.

*Local leaders can use Podium to easily track and respond to these reviews.*

- Log in to Podium and look for the **Reviews** option on the menu to see all the reviews people have left for your ward.
- Click the **Respond** button next to any review you wish to respond to, and type your response.
- Remember responses are not private messages; everyone will be able to see your response. Read your response several times before submitting it!

## Common Types of Reviews and How to Respond to Them

### *Complaints about contact from missionaries or members*

Sometimes people reach out about being contacted by missionaries or members after already stating they aren't interested. You can't guarantee that no more missionaries will ever knock on their door, but you can listen.

**Example:** *"I am so tired of your missionaries trespassing on my property even though I keep telling them I'm not interested! Last night they showed up at 8:30 at night and woke my kids up when they rang the doorbell!"*

**Appropriate response:** *"Hi, Erica, thanks for letting us know about your experience. Our local leadership will share your feedback with our missionaries and have a conversation about how to improve."*

### *Complaints about a specific experience at church*

Reviews about a bad experience should be approached humbly as an opportunity to focus on improving. In these situations, it's important to help the reviewer know someone has listened to them and genuinely cares about their feelings.

**Example:** *"A friend invited me to a Halloween party, and I was excited to take the kids, but when we got there, the doors were locked. Apparently even though the online invitation they sent me said 6, it didn't start until 7. Then when it finally started, it was very disorganized and there weren't any food options for my daughter, who is lactose intolerant."*

**Appropriate response:** *"Hi, Lori, thanks for sharing your experience. We are so sorry about the miscommunication about the time. After the party, we discussed the importance of double-checking calendar items before publishing them to prevent that from happening again. We will also pass along your feedback about the food so our activity organizers can be more aware of that in the future. We hope to see you again sometime."*

### *Complaints about members*

If someone walks away from church feeling ignored or offended, be loving and kind while acknowledging their feelings, without putting other members down.

**Example:** *"I decided to try out a new church, and when I went to this one, people were not friendly. One lady made a comment about immigrants that I found very offensive. I'm never going back!"*

**Appropriate response:** *"Thank you for your honesty about your experience and for your passion about the importance of being kind. We want church to be a place where everyone is welcome to come and work on being a better follower of Jesus Christ. Sometimes we fall short, and we try to address that when it happens. If you do decide to visit again, feel free to call 555-555-5555 so we can be on the lookout for you and help you feel more welcome."*

### *Criticisms or questions about doctrine*

Sometimes people use Google reviews as an opportunity to share why they believe our church is wrong or to ask doctrinal questions. In those cases, you don't have to be a doctrinal scholar to respond effectively—the goal is to direct them to a good resource, such as the missionaries or an article on ComeuntoChrist.org.

**Example:** *"These people don't even believe in the Bible. They are a cult. Their Book of Mormon is clearly of the devil. The book of Revelation says that if anyone adds to the Bible, God will punish them. Be warned!"*

**Appropriate response:** *"Hi, Aaron, it's a common misconception that we don't believe in the Bible, but in fact we consider it to be the word of God and a sacred volume of scripture. We regularly read and teach from the Bible at Church and in our homes. If you're interested in learning more, you can read a helpful explanation [here](#)."*

### *How to reply to a one-star review*

**Appropriate response:** *"Hello, Cameron! We appreciate you taking the time to review, and we're sorry to see you had a negative experience. We would love to talk more about how to make it better. Please contact us at 555-555-5555."*