

HISTORY OF YW NAMES/SYMBOLS

From the General YW Office of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: (a few different sources)

HISTORY OF SYMBOLS

- The beehive symbol was picked because of its' worker bee significance. Industry is part of our heritage as Latter-day Saints.
- Mia maid would have come from MIA or Mutual Improvement association + maid; representing service.
- The Laurel symbol comes from the Greek or Romans' use of laurels and it means excellence.

BEEHIVE, MIAMAID, LAUREL

Some Church members may have visions of beehive hairdos as a requirement for young women ages 12 and 13 who are members of the Beehive class. But perhaps the Church leaders in 1915 had the right idea when they decided to make the beehive the symbol of the "lively" and "busy" girls.

The Beehive Girls program was organized in 1913 as the sister organization to the Boy Scouts for girls ages 14-17. The program began as a summer program of studies, literature, parties and hiking, according to the History of the YWMIA. The young women began studying the life of the bee and its example of service. Soon Church leaders wrote the Spirit of the Hive, which was to have faith, seek knowledge, safeguard health, honor womanhood, understand beauty, value work, love truth, taste the sweetness of service and feel joy. Requirements to achieve three ranks -- Builders in the Hive, Gatherers of the Honey and Keepers of the Bees -- included knowing the vertical line test for correct posture of the body to knowing the proper use of hot and cold baths.

More advanced requirements included a girl learning to float in the Great Salt Lake, propelling herself 50 feet and getting on her feet unassisted. To match its name, the Beehive girls could meet a requirement by caring successfully for a hive of bees for one season and knowing their habits, according to A Century of Sisterhood, published by the Young Women's Mutual Improvement Association. Although the name Beehive has quite a history in the Church, it can be confusing for new members of the Church and non-members as well.

In the early 1970's for example, 19-year-old Rossalynn Hill and her older sister, Sherraden, were investigating the church in Cudahy, California. The missionaries had invited the two young women to attend sacrament meeting, which happened to be a fast and testimony meeting. During the meeting, the young women listened attentively as people rose and expressed their testimonies, and were especially interested in the testimony of one sister in the ward.

The Beehive advisor stood and expressed a deep love for "her Beehives." "I love my Beehives and enjoy being with them, teaching them and taking them places," she said emotionally. "We recently loaded the Beehives in my station wagon and went to the beach where we had a wonderful time. They had so much fun that they didn't want to leave. It was hard to round them up and bring them home, and they were extra noisy during the trip. I'm so thankful for my Beehives. I just love them."

While the sister spoke, Rossalynn leaned over and whispered to a member sitting next to her: "Why would that lady take her beehives to the beach?" "Because," the member responded, "that's where they wanted to go." Rossalynn scooted closer to her sister, wondering what the people at the beach would think of this woman, unloading her "swarming bees." Both young women later had their misconceptions cleared up and subsequently joined the church. Rossalynn Hill Montague now teaches the Mia Maids in the Ogden 27th Ward, Ogden Utah, Mt. Ogden Stake, and has taught the Beehives herself -- but she has never taken them to the beach.

By 1950, the MIA program realigned its age groups into Beehives, 12-13; Mia Maids 14-15; Junior Gleaners, 16-18; and Gleaners 19-29. Each age group developed its own requirements and programs.

A major part of the Mia Maid program was the class symbol of the rose. A requirement to achieve a rose pin in the Mia Joy program even included planting a rose. A special Mia Maid rose was soon developed by a plant breeder from California. The rose, a delicate pink color, was a cross between the Charlotte Armstrong rose and the hardy Signora rose.

But perhaps among the three names, Mia Maid causes the most difficulty today in translation for a worldwide Church, said Jayne B. Malan, former first counselor in the Young Women General Presidency. Young women and their leaders have written to the general Young Women offices asking what Mia Maid stands for so they can translate it or at least understand the translation. A group of members from one country guessed that perhaps the MIA in Mia Maid stood for "many intellectual adults."

The Junior Gleaners name was changed to Laurels in 1959 and was named after the laurel tree with glossy, aromatic leaves. The laurel is a symbol of honor, distinction, and accomplishment, according to the Laurels Manual published in 1971-72 by the Church.

VALUES

FAITH (White) Stands for purity

DIVINE NATURE (Blue) Reminds us of the sky, heaven and where we came from. We are of divine parents.

INDIVIDUAL WORTH (Red) Reminds us of the blood of Christ. The Savior believed that there wasn't any price too high to pay for us. He loved us so much that He willingly paid for us with His blood and His own life. He bled from every pore for us. He paid the infinite price. We are of great worth to the Lord and we should be to ourselves as well.

KNOWLEDGE (Green) Reminds us of spring time when things are starting to grow. We too, should keep growing and learning.

CHOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY (Amber/orange) The caution on a stoplight. We too, have choices to make and we need to pray to make the correct choices. We need to use caution in making choices.

GOOD WORKS (Yellow) Sunshine. When we give service it makes us feel warm all over just as the sun makes us feel warm. We are always blessed by the service we give.

INTEGRITY (Purple) Royal color. The dye was very hard to come by in past ages and was costly to produce so only people of royal birth (Kings and Queens) could afford to wear the cloth of this color. It came to represent royalty. We are of royal birth... daughters of Heavenly Father. Someday, if we live worthily, we will be princesses and Queens. We must have integrity to do that. If we have integrity we have all the other values as well.