

Presbytery Women's Ministry Handbook



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Dear Presbytery Women's Leaders,

Connectional (adj.)—the state of being connected.

From the inception of the Presbyterian Church in America, our denomination was founded upon the ideal of connectionalism. It was easy at first when the denomination was small because of geography. Now all these years later through the efforts of church planting, the PCA spreads throughout North America and around the globe. During my years of serving in women's ministry, I have taken great joy as I have benefitted from the women of our denomination exercising their life-giving design in such a way that being connectional was more than mere words, it was a vibrant reality. Presbytery Women's Ministry has served strategically as a catalyst for meaningful connections. Through equipping and encouraging women to fulfill their God-given design, their lives, homes, churches, and communities have been transformed to reflect the splendor of the gospel. Have you ever wondered what is at stake when we choose isolation over connectionalism? The women in the world and inside the walls of our churches are watching to see whether or not the claims of the gospel are actually true. So, your calling to be the hands and feet of Jesus reaching across the presbyteries of our denomination makes a profound and eternal difference.

“Our hearts are God's Tabernacle. We live face to face with God and then reflect His glory to one another. Individuals and families are to live in community with those in their local church in such a way that our unity shouts to the world that GOD SENT JESUS AND GOD LOVES US! Community life will either validate or negate the claims of the gospel.”

Legacy of Biblical Womanhood, Susan Hunt & Barbara Thompson

So, shout it out, sisters...God sent Jesus and God loves us!

Joyfully Pursuing Heaven's Treasure,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen". The signature is written in black ink on a light gray rectangular background.

Karen Hodge

Presbytery Women’s Ministry Handbook

We are excited to share this resource that has been developed to encourage, support, and assist you in the development and/or leading of a Presbytery Women’s Ministry (PWM). The PCA Women’s Ministry Team for the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) functions under the Committee on Discipleship Ministries (CDM). Members of our team have developed this handbook with the intent of hopefully answering your questions about how to start, developing a strong team, staying focused on doctrinal and theological foundations, encouraging participation, and handling challenges. These guiding principles are based on our covenantal values and have been used by other women who have found them to be helpful and encouraging. However, it is a guide that can and should be used with flexibility depending on the stage of development of your PWM. The most important factor in the information in this handbook is the availability of other sisters in Christ to walk alongside of you as you navigate this journey of service. The PCA Women’s Ministry Team prays for you and desires to assist in any way needed. Please connect with us if we can clarify the information found in this handbook, or help you in any way.

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I. WHAT IS PWM?

The PCA is a connectional church, which is a historic characteristic of Presbyterian churches. This means that not only do we see the benefit of connecting individuals within the local church, we also recognize the benefits of connections with members of other churches within the denomination as a whole. Connection on this level can be challenging. To help facilitate this connection, the PCA is organized into levels of local churches, Presbyteries, and General Assembly. The main denominational website is: www.pcanet.org.

Local Church: A group of professing Christians gathered together for worship and godly living. A particular church is led by a Session, whose members are elected by the congregation. Currently, there are over 1800 local churches in the PCA.

Presbytery: A regional body that oversees the work of ministers and churches in an area. There are currently 84 Presbyteries.

General Assembly: The body that oversees the work of all ministers and churches in the denomination. Currently, there are over 4,500 ministers and over 350,000 members in the PCA. The work of the General Assembly is accomplished through the following agencies and committees:

- Administrative Committee
- Discipleship Ministries
- Mission to the World
- Mission to North America
- Reformed University Ministries
- Covenant Seminary
- Covenant College
- PCA Foundation
- PCA Retirement & Benefits, Inc.
- Ridge Haven Conference & Retreat Center

How does Women's Ministry fit within the structure of the PCA?

PCA Women's Ministry functions under the authority of the Committee on Discipleship Ministries (CDM). Stephen Estock is currently the Coordinator of this Committee. Karen Hodge serves as the Women's Ministry Coordinator. The PCA Women's Ministry Team (which includes eight Regional Advisors, two Advisors At Large, and eight Women's Ministry Trainers) works with Karen Hodge, to provide leadership and support to Women's Ministry on both the presbytery and local levels.

Presbytery Women's Ministry provides leadership on the presbytery level, seeking to connect, encourage, and equip the local churches within that presbytery.

What principles govern PWM?

Our core commitments to the Triune God who is revealed in the Bible, and to the Bible as the “only rule of faith and life” are the foundation for any ministry we undertake. In addition, we are also united to other churches in our denomination by the fact that our churches are confessional (our basic beliefs are reflected in those doctrines set forth in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, and the *Larger* and *Shorter Catechisms*), organized with a Presbyterian form of government, committed to the Reformed tradition, and committed to the great commission of our Lord.

Our Reformed theology makes a difference in how we do ministry. It is the basis for what we do and how we do it. In Chapter 11 of *The Legacy of Biblical Womanhood*, Susan Hunt and Barbara Thompson lay out an explanation of a covenantal philosophy for Women's Ministry. When our Women's Ministries flow out of this biblical foundation, we will keep core covenantal values such as these ever before us as we develop our ministry:

- **Glorifying God:** The great purpose and privilege that we have as believers is to glorify God in *all* areas of life.
- **God's Word:** As our only authority for faith and life, The transforming power of God's Word is the one true foundation of all our ministry.
- **Church:** The church is God's covenant family, and so we emphasize the importance of active membership in the local church.
- **Intentional Integration:** We seek ways to intentionally support the doctrine and ministry of the church as a whole and encourage women to use their gifts to enhance all ministries in the church rather than duplicate efforts or compete with them.
- **Community:** Cultivating life-giving relationships across generational lines and passing on the legacy of biblical womanhood will have a positive impact on our homes, our church, our community, and the world.
- **Compassion:** We encourage opportunities for women to extend practical compassion both within the church and beyond its borders.
- **Kingdom Building:** We remain outward-focused, always seeking to extend the boundaries of the covenant to enfold more women within and outside the church.
- **Elder Oversight:** In our denominational structure, the local Women's Ministry serves under the authority and protection of the local church Session. Presbytery Women's Ministry serves under the authority and protection of the presbytery Christian Education (CE) Committee, or another committee as determined by the presbytery. We seek to demonstrate the beauty of God's design by doing this well.

While we share some of these commitments with many believers across denominational lines, and we see the beauty and importance of a unified Body of Christ, there is a unique benefit from intentionally building connections with the churches within our denomination because of our shared distinctives. Building our connections between women in other churches within the denomination encourages us in staying true to our core distinctives while at the same time it increases our appreciation for the diversity that exists beyond our particular local church.

II. WHY IS PWM IMPORTANT?

PWM is vital to PCA Women's Ministry as it serves to:

Connect

- PWM serves as a connector between *PCA Women's Ministry and the local churches*, keeping local churches informed and engaged with PCA resources.
- PWM connects *local churches to one another* within that presbytery. Each presbytery is defined by unique cultural and ministry dynamics. PWM serves to facilitate and contextualize PCA resources to effectively minister to the women in that presbytery.
- PWM provides *prayer connection and support*. As connections are made between the local Women's Ministries within the presbytery, requests can be shared, and women are encouraged to pray for one another and upcoming events. PWM can encourage and unite women throughout the presbytery to pray for and support the specific PCA committee or agency assigned to their region each year at Leadership Training (LT).

Encourage

- PWM serves as a reminder that *we are a part of something bigger than ourselves*. It's easy to become "myopic" or isolated in local ministry. PWM reminds us that we are connected, share a common struggle, and that denominational support and resources are accessible and available.
- PWM provides opportunities for *local churches to learn from and encourage one another*. As churches in that presbytery share ideas and resources, women are spurred on in ministry, and discover new ideas to utilize in their local women's ministries.

Equip

- PWM provides the opportunity for *shared conferences* with teaching and training that might not be accessible through an individual church.
- PWM is a platform for *local women to utilize their gifts* of teaching and training women.
- PWM *mentors local ministries* by modeling servant leadership and caring for the covenant community.

Serving on a Presbytery Women's Ministry Team is an incredible opportunity to gain an appreciation for the story and characteristics that make up each local church. Rotating events around to different geographic locations, to churches of different sizes, and to churches with longer and shorter histories, can help those who attend gain an appreciation for the other churches in the presbytery. These connectional interactions encourage and equip us to be more effective members within our own local church body.

III. WHAT DOES PWM DO?

Women are already busy, and often struggle to find time for involvement in the ministries of their own local church. Any PWM that exists should make it a priority to strengthen the local churches and their ministries rather than build a competing organization. With that in mind, there are several functions that can best be performed on the broader presbytery level. While this will vary from one presbytery to another, some possible functions might be:

- To provide leadership training: possibly bringing in a Women's Ministry Trainer for a larger audience, making it affordable for women from smaller churches, or providing a platform for women who have attended LT to pass on some of what they learned there
- To offer assistance to churches in developing their structure and yearly schedule
- To provide opportunities to develop relationships with women in other churches who have similar situations and to facilitate sharing ideas among churches
- To connect women with the ministry resources available through CDM
- To introduce women to the scope of influence of the PCA by acquainting them with the denominational ministry structure
- To encourage work through sister churches in this country and around the world
- To be a communication bridge between the local churches for information about Women's Ministries on our local, presbytery, and denominational level
- To help women understand the benefits and opportunities that are available by being a part of the PCA
- To offer opportunities for the local Women's Ministries to connect with PCA-wide Women's Ministry activities

Because the presbytery CE Chairman (or other elder as designated by the presbytery) is responsible for oversight and protection for any PWM organization, you should seek out his advice and keep him informed of your activities. The CE Chairman can serve as a valuable resource for oversight and guidance as needed for PWM Ministry concerns or questions that may arise.

The biblical foundation for each Presbytery Women's Ministry is the same as it is for Women's Ministries in local churches, but how that foundation is implemented may vary because of the emphasis or needs in your geographical region. It is important that the Women's Ministry for each presbytery establish a purpose statement to guide your work and keep you on track. You also need to be able to communicate that purpose clearly, concisely, and often. Be sure the presbytery CE Committee stays involved and informed in the process.

The purpose statement from the CDM [website for Women's Ministries](#) in the Church may give you a starting place as you develop a purpose statement for your presbytery:

***Women's Ministries in the Church, a ministry of the Presbyterian Church in America
and under the authority of Committee on Discipleship Ministries (CDM)
seeks to equip, connect, and encourage women in the church to know Christ personally and be
committed to extending His kingdom in her life, home, church, community, and throughout the world.***

IV. HOW SHOULD PWM BE STRUCTURED?

To have an effective ministry at the presbytery level, it is necessary to gather a diverse team of women who will be able to plan and put into action the ministry. Because there are no perfect people, there is no one person who possesses strength in every area needed to lead a presbytery-wide ministry such as this. Even Jesus gathered twelve around him to build and carry on his ministry after he was gone. The team should not be so large as to be unwieldy, and not so small as to be ineffective.

A strong team will be a group of women who have a consistent biblical/theological grounding, but who also have diverse abilities. They need to reflect an understanding of the diversity of the people to which you are seeking to minister. Assembling a broad group of voices will make the job of ministry much easier. Your greatest weaknesses will be the voices you are not hearing. The makeup of the team will speak volumes in credibility to the women you are trying to reach.

There is a great deal of diversity in many areas (age, stage of life, race, ethnic background, marital status, economic status, rural vs. urban, work status, caregiver responsibilities, etc.) even in the churches within a single presbytery. Hopefully over time, we should be seeking to extend the kingdom by reaching the unreached through expanding the boundaries of our local churches and helping to plant new ones. Any effective Presbytery Women's Ministry should seek to build a leadership team that can effectively minister to many people who are "not like me" with a spirit and attitude of appreciation for the different perspectives and experiences they bring. Seek to build a team that constantly seeks out and includes women who are falling through any gaps.

Team makeup does not have to look a certain way, or include certain positions. Tailor your team to the size and dynamic of your presbytery. Suggestions for team positions and potential job descriptions can be found in the Ministry Toolbox on the [website](#). You should always feel the freedom to combine responsibilities into fewer positions, or even have some additional team members filling unique gaps for your presbytery that you discover. If your presbytery covers a larger geographic area, you may need to find creative ways to meet and connect as a team. Ideas for recruiting team members can be found in **Appendix A: Building Your Team**.

One of the roles of the Regional and At Large Advisors is to assist Presbytery Women's Ministry Teams with the process of forming a strong team. (See **Section VI. What resources are available?**) The PCA Women's Ministry Team can provide assistance with finding potential team members, ideas for reaching out to local churches for leadership, and how to intentionally approach women who serve in churches that have a unique cultural context and church plants. They can often help connect you with women that they have come to know who share our covenantal values of reaching the unreached, and providing fellowship and discipleship to every woman in the denomination and beyond.

Women who will be a part of this team should:

- Share the covenantal values outlined in **Section I. What is PWM?**
- Have demonstrated their ability to lead in some particular area of ministry

- Be acknowledged for serving in such a role by the Session of their own church where they are a member
- Demonstrate teachability (because there is no perfect person available for these jobs, we all have growing to do)

Once there is a team in place, there should be some sort of rotating membership, and a nominating procedure in place to find and nominate future team members ahead of time so that they are ready to step in as team members roll off. If you are asking team members to make a two-year commitment, then half should rotate off each year; if a three-year commitment, then a third. The point is that you should always be looking for new members that will expand the circles of influence of your team in the most critical areas.

The coordinator for this team should be a person who is able to:

- Nurture the members of the team, and lead them in nurturing the local church Women's Ministry leaders (Directors of Women's Ministry, volunteer Women's Ministry leaders, CE directors, pastors' wives, other female ministry staff, etc.).
- Facilitate collaboration with and between both older and younger women, helping them work together to demonstrate cross-generational ministry. The coordinator and team should intentionally seek to enfold younger generations into leadership; welcoming the wealth of knowledge they offer, hearing their viewpoint and understanding of current culture and church dynamic, training and equipping them for future and continued leadership, while comprehensively valuing the foundation laid by earlier generations.
- Attend the PCA Women's Leadership Training Conference each year if possible, bringing as many team members as they can. Often, a presbytery is willing to financially assist one or two women from the team to attend. The LT Conference provides a great opportunity for PWM leaders to connect with one another to share PWM ideas and resources for events and connection tools. The PWM leadership team can then work to pass on what is shared from LT to the leaders in local churches who were not able to attend.
- understand the Biblical Foundations for serving women in the covenant community. CDM provides a variety of training and resources to help with this.
- Answer questions (or refer the questioner to where they can find the answers to the questions) from local church leaders related to their ministry.
- Maintain a communication forum with women leaders from as many churches within the presbytery as possible, with the goal of having contact with women in every church who are effective at passing on appropriate information to others in their church.
- Connect with the PCA Women's Ministry Team for suggestions on women to contact in churches with whom you are less familiar. Regional and At Large Advisors often have had opportunities to make connections and could assist you with making contact.
- Communicate with the presbytery CE Chairman.
- Communicate to the denominational Women's Ministry office any changes of names and addresses of the local Women's Ministry president and/or contacts and pastor's wives.
- Plan presbytery-wide events as needed for leadership training, spiritual growth, and building relationships within the Women's Ministries of the presbytery. See the Helpful Tips and Support section for ideas.

V. HOW CAN WE PLAN AND PROMOTE PWM?

Events are one of the main ways you will carry out your ministry within the presbytery. However, if you are not careful, events can take on a life of their own and begin to drive the ministry. While you will want to carefully plan events that will help fulfill your purpose, you will want to be certain that you are not planning so many events that you are interfering with the ministries of the local churches. You should always plan them far enough in advance so that local churches know what is available to incorporate into their church's calendar of events in order to avoid scheduling conflicts whenever possible. Each of your events should seek to include women from as many churches in the presbytery as possible not just as attendees, but also in the planning and implementation of the event.

Building an effective communication structure is one of the most important responsibilities you will have. At a minimum, you will want to make it a priority to determine one key contact person at each church in the presbytery who will effectively pass on information to other women in the church. Seek to build a two-way relationship with her so that you can understand the characteristics and needs of that church, being mindful of this information when planning presbytery events. You may want to designate one team member to serve as "Communication Coordinator" to help facilitate church contacts and PWM communication.

Once you have identified these key women in each church, it will make everything else you do much easier. Knowing what forms of communication are best for reaching this target audience is not an easy task, and will change over time. Nothing can ever replace face to face conversations, but determining the best mix of phone calls, email, social media, online meetings and other tools will take some flexibility and willingness to try new things for some people. In the internet age, there are always new tools being developed to help in this area. If this is not a strength for you, do not hesitate to seek out team members who do have strengths in this area.

VI. WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE?

The PCA has been developing resources for Women's Ministry for over 25 years, so there is no need to completely reinvent the wheel. You should be able to find many of the right wheels you need to use to move your particular ministry down the road within the materials that are already developed. There is a current list of resources in *Titus 2 Tools*, pp. 32–35. Two books that are directed to Women's Ministry leaders are: *Leadership for Women in the Church*, and *Women's Ministry in the Local Church*. Choosing one of these books to read through and discuss with your leadership team is one way to help clarify what you need to do by understanding the “whys”.

The **Women's Ministry section of the CDM website:** <http://www.pcacdm.org/womens-ministry/> has links to a number of resources you will find helpful.

- **Ministry Toolbox** has a section for Presbytery Women's Ministry. Here you will find sample purpose statements, structure options, and job descriptions that can be a starting place as you develop your ministry.
- **Events** section will list upcoming conferences and details for our annual Women's Ministry **Leadership Training Conference (often called LT)** held in Atlanta, usually in February. This is an incredible opportunity for connecting with other women leaders from around the country, for renewing your focus, and for education on many helpful topics. It is well worth the cost, and a great investment in your ministry.
- **Your Ministry Team**, will give you contact information for the **Regional Advisor (often called RA)** for your region of the country. This woman will be your “go to” resource as you seek to minister to the women in your presbytery. She will be able to help you find the answers to your specific questions. Your RA will also be able to put you in contact with the **At Large Advisors** and **Trainers**.
- **At Large Advisors** are available to assist with advice and resources that create and encourage awareness of cultural and diversity context related to the current make-up of the women your team will serve.
- A **Women's Ministry Trainer** can be brought in to present Women's Ministry training developed by CDM. They are skilled in giving your women foundational principles that will help your women to think biblically and live covenantally in all aspects of Women's Ministry. **See Appendix G. Women's Ministry Training FAQs.** If you are interested in bringing in a Trainer for your area, contact Karen Hodge. She will help connect you with the Trainer that will best meet your needs.

Connect with us:

- **CDM:** 1700 North Brown Road, Suite 102 | Lawrenceville, GA 30043 | 1.800.283.1357
www.pcacdm.org | **Twitter:** @pcacdm
- **PCA Women's Ministries:** **Twitter:** @encourage_blog | **Blog:** encourage.pcacdm.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/connect.pca.women
- ⚙ **Karen Hodge:** *Women's Ministry Coordinator* 678.825.1146 | khodge@pcanet.org
- ⚙ **Kathy Wargo:** *Event Coordinator and Assistant to Women's Ministry Coordinator*
678.825.1132 | kwargo@pcanet.org

VII. HELPFUL TIPS AND SUPPORT

Appendix A. Building Your Team

- Pray. Pray. Pray. As you are deciding who should fill positions, ask the Lord to show you and help you think about who you are not considering. We can all get into the habit of reaching out to those we are comfortable with or already know. When you are confident you have prayerfully made the choice, you can confidently approach a woman and let her know that God led you to speak to her about this particular position. Ask her to pray about it, and say yes or no to God before she lets you know her answer.
- Use written job descriptions when asking someone to serve. Having expectations in writing and discussing them up front will avoid a lot of misunderstandings down the road. See the [website](#) for sample job descriptions. These can be used as a starting point for your team. Update and adapt them to suit your presbytery's needs and dynamic.
- Show an interest in each person. Find out about her. People like to work with women who are interested in them. Let her know she is unique and would add to the ministry.
- Be enthusiastic. Even if you don't know what you're doing, you can be excited about what God is going to do!
- Always stress the importance of serving the Body of Christ. Strengths and weaknesses aside, God uses the available. Love for people is the most important ingredient.
- Always present leadership as a privilege, not a duty. Let them know we are serving God, not people; it's His ministry.
- Don't lower the expectations of the particular ministry by saying, "You don't have to do much." People are looking for and need meaningful and valuable ways to use their time, and challenging ministries will encourage them to serve.
- Realize that you can't please everybody all the time. Criticism will come. (The one who doesn't "step on toes" isn't moving!) But do what the Lord would have you do. If you sincerely and prayerfully do your job as unto the Lord, usually it will work out.
- Recognizing that we all have strengths and weaknesses, don't be drawn into criticizing others who have done a job in the past. Don't agree with others who are critical. You don't have to blow out the other person's candle to make your own burn brighter. A critical attitude is not attractive. It will keep people from serving because they will know you will criticize them if they don't please you.
- Don't try to rob the Holy Spirit of His ministry. You can't do that anyway. Let other people create, change, imagine. Be flexible and open minded with other's ideas.
- Involve as many people as possible in a ministry. Give every woman or someone from every church something to do. It will give ownership of the ministry. Involvement breeds commitment.
- Recognize we all work on different cylinders. Some are able to go a mile a minute—others run at a slower pace. Be sure your expectations take into account and allow for people to flourish no matter what their individual style of serving.
- If you are fortunate enough to have a diverse team, there will always be conflicting ideas, but that is not a bad thing in and of itself. Working through conflict well builds a strong team. Check out Peacemaker's material. Praise the good—pray the bad!

Appendix B. Preparing a Women's Ministry Presentation for Presbytery

After interviewing four pastors from two different Presbyteries, the following list of important elements for a Presbytery Women's Ministry report at Presbytery was developed:

- Brevity—the report should be no longer than 10 minutes. (That means practice it aloud several times in advance; it should be no longer than 7 minutes when you are saying it ahead of time!)
- Use some type of visual aids—Don't just talk; you need to be holding up something that reinforces what you are saying. Humor can be a positive if you can do it well. However, know your personality and what would work best for you. Don't give them another piece of paper the day of Presbytery. For example: If you want to push a retreat, give them a mint with a little 2"x2" note attached giving them the title of the retreat and the dates. They are more likely to take that home than a piece of paper.
- Be enthusiastic! Pastors don't need a lot of details (the date your meeting was held, how many women attended, what you served for lunch, what favors you gave). They are very busy and will have a hard time remembering what you spoke about. But they are more likely to remember what you say if you are enthusiastic.
- Is there an action item for them? Be sure to stress that in your closing. Be sure to thank them for their support and give specific examples of how the presbytery has benefited the Presbytery Women's Ministry. (Maybe it's your trip to the Leadership Training.)
- Follow up your talk with a letter to the Clerk of Session of each church (rather than, or in addition to, one being addressed to the pastor). It is the Clerk's responsibility to bring items before Session; otherwise, the information may or may not get passed on. Often Pastors receive so many pieces of paper at Presbytery that they tend to get filed away.
- Hopefully you have an opportunity to meet with the CE Committee prior to the Presbytery meeting. You should be well prepared! Be sure to update them on your budget needs and expenses. Keep good records.
- Have several people praying for you as you prepare for and as you make your presentation.

Appendix C. Presbytery Women's Ministry Events

*My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love,
so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding,
in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely,
Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

Colossians 2:2-3

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

Colossians 4:2

Have an objective

- Spend much time in prayer with your leadership team to seek God's purpose for your event/ministry.
- Consider the Women's Ministry vision, philosophy, strategy (helper design, community/compassion, Titus 2, accent areas) in determining your objective.
- Utilize local Women's Ministry leaders in determining objective. They know local situations, so they should be involved in your planning. Also, they must own it to promote it. This presupposes developing relationships with these women.

Questions to ask as you plan event/ministry

- Will the program be consistent with our PCA theological distinctives?
- Are there presbytery issues/concerns/projects that they would like incorporated into the program? This presupposes communication with presbytery leadership.
- Will it challenge women in their personal relationship with the Lord?
- Will it cultivate community among the women who participate?
- Will it reflect the common union in Christ and an appreciation for the diversity of cultures, gifts, and experiences of the women in attendance?
- Will it equip women to develop stronger Women's ministries in the local church?
- Will women have a greater sense of being a part of your presbytery and of the PCA?
- Will women leave knowing specific ways to pray for one another, for the presbytery and for the denomination?

Planning ideas

- Involve as many churches as possible in planning and implementing the program by delegating responsibilities for things such as name tags, table decorations, special music, door prizes, refreshments, skit, etc.
- Always have greeters. It is essential that women feel welcome from the time they enter the front door. Place hostesses strategically at additional locations.
- Plan creative ways for women to meet women from other churches (small prayer groups, table assignments for lunch, etc.). This can be done with number or color on name tag, everyone with June birthdays, etc. Another idea is to have "table topics" at lunch such as

widowhood, parenting teens, women in the marketplace, pastors' wives, ruling elders' wives, mothers of mentally or physically challenged children, single mothers, etc. Have a facilitator at each table to guide the discussion and then prayer time.

- Be conscious of cultural considerations when developing ice breakers, music selections, and terminology. Never assume familiarity.
- Think through dates, locations (accessibility for persons with disabilities), child care options, options for nursing mothers, start/end times for families/work schedules, and transportation for seniors, persons with disabilities, or others without a personal vehicle. (This does not mean these are all things the WM needs to provide but thoughtful understanding and clear communication of what is and what is not provided and what is the responsibility of the attendee.)

Have a realistic program plan

- Be sure everyone on the program knows exactly how much time they have. Have a timekeeper if necessary.
- Be sure song leaders, testimonies, etc. are prepared.
- Think through where everyone on the program will sit. Do not waste time waiting for someone to come from the back of the room.

Speakers

- You do not always need a speaker. Panels, testimonies, ministry opportunities, prayer groups, "Women's Ministry Stories" (have each local Women's Ministries give creative presentations to tell about programs, ministries, etc.) may be a better way to accomplish your objective.
- If you have a speaker, be sure she can help you accomplish your objective. We encourage you to have someone who is involved in the Women's ministry unless there is a good reason to go outside.
- Be sure the speaker knows your objective, how many times you want her to speak and exactly how much time she has—then be sure this does not change after she arrives.
- Regardless of if there is a speaker or various women from the ministry are presenting, help shepherd their awareness and consciousness of the attendees, specifically examples or illustrations that consider youth, young adults, culture, and being new to the PCA. Remind them not to assume that everyone will be familiar with "lingo".
- Talk with your presbytery CE chairman to find out if you should submit your objective and the name of the speaker you want to invite for presbytery approval. Even if this is not necessary, it is important to maintain close communication by submitting your plans to him.

Appendix D. Speaker Etiquette—A Helpful Checklist

Invitations

- Appoint one person for communication with prospective speakers.
- Communication may be in writing, by phone, or by e-mail.
- Communication should clearly indicate if this is an invitation or exploration of several speakers.
- Be certain that your designated elders are given opportunity for oversight of speaker and topic for local church and presbytery events. Consider the speaker's theological viewpoint. Have committee and elder listen to tape or preview speaker's outline. Give elders opportunity to call speaker and interview her.
- Discuss the goals of the event; topic of messages, number of messages. Communicate these goals to the speaker.
- Inform speaker regarding the women who usually attend—number, average age/stage in life or the fact that it will be a wide range, if there will be youth/teens/college students, cultural make-up, and your general goals; who spoke at the last event and what was the topic; what studies and activities have been done in the last year.
- Agree with prospective speaker what next step will be after first contact—are you to call her to confirm date and topic, is she holding a date for your elders' and committee approval, etc.
- Discuss travel arrangements—if airfare is involved you may want to get an idea regarding the fares prior to calling speakers. Will speaker make her own travel plans? If so, be sure she is aware of method for prompt reimbursement of airfare. Is there a limit to the airfare or travel expenses which your group can reimburse? If so, communicate this to speaker.
- Carefully confirm date, topic and other agreements in writing. It is helpful to send an agenda or retreat booklet used in the past.

Honoraria or Fees

- Consider with event committee and elder what is a reasonable honorarium for the commitment. (Perhaps look at what other fees are paid to guest speakers. Note: It is not uncommon for a speaker to have \$1,500 as a fee.)
- Some things to remember when setting an honorarium: time requested (messages, one-to-one appointments, small groups, etc.) preparation time; travel time; arrangements at home (child care, meals for family, laundry bills, etc.)
- Speakers are very appreciative of gifts and special mementos but these should not replace an honorarium unless speaker has refused honorarium.
- At first contact, ask speaker if she has a set fee. If you cannot afford this fee discuss this with her.

Scheduling and Agenda

- Have one person responsible for all communication with the speaker. It can be very confusing and time consuming to have multiple people contacting her with comments and questions.
- Decide with event committee and elder what topics are appropriate—communicate clearly to the speaker what topics are of interest to your group.
- Decide the number of messages and the exact time to be allowed for speaking—communicate this to the speaker at the first contact. Do not deviate from the schedule given to the speaker since she will have prepared for that amount of time.
- At initial contact tell speaker of any other persons on the agenda (preferably arrange for contact between speakers, musicians, those who will give testimonies).
- Send speaker all event publicity and handouts.

Hospitality

- Assign one or two women to assist the speaker. Give her their names and room numbers so she can contact them during the event.
- Arrange for transportation from airport, or send directions for driving. Communicate with speaker during 7–10 days prior to event regarding who will meet her, address and phone number for where she will be staying, etc. Ask her if she has any special dietary or sleeping needs.
- Consider the time that your speaker has spent getting to your location and possible fatigue factors, time zone changes, meals, etc. Ask her what her physical needs are.
- Gifts, fruit, notes of encouragement all help the speaker to feel welcome.
- Check with speaker regarding sound systems, podiums, room arrangement, water at podium. Does she permit taping?
- If speaker is to be staying in the room with women whom she does not know, prepare them for showing her hospitality and privacy. Always offer the speaker the option of a room to herself.
- Be mindful of attire of greeters. There can be unintended consequences of assumed familiarity. Things like flags, hats, badges, should be well thought out with awareness about the attendees before including.

Prayer

- The most helpful part of speaker etiquette is prayer!
- Ask speaker for prayer requests.
- Assign specific prayer partners and times—write her notes to let her know of prayer prior to event.
- Have prayer partners pray with speaker prior to and during the event.

Appendix E. Creative Meetings

What hinders creativity?

- Not asking God, the Creator, for ideas and help.
- Stereotyping—expecting women to react the same way always. Being in a rut.
- Not understanding the problems. Is distance a factor? Boredom? Worth the time and effort?
- Setting wrong priorities. Not knowing the needs of women. No goals or purpose. Not asking the questions: “Why are we doing this?” and “Is there a better way?”
- Not willing to take risks. Sometimes we may fail in an attempt to be creative, but it’s worth the risk. Forcing women to get out of their comfort zone is risky, but often necessary. Too often we listen to those who say, “We’ve never done it this way before.” Your reply should be, “Good, that was our intention!” Creativity sometimes means not doing the same thing in the same way.

Some creative ways for women to connect:

- Name tag matches the table where they sit.
- Find a common denominator: a season of life, birthday months, family status (married, single, widowed, etc.) hobbies, etc.
- Go around the group and have each woman tell about something they have done that they believe no one else in the group has done.
- Neighbor nudging (pray with person next to you, give each other an idea of successful meeting/party/game, share your favorite inexpensive place to eat, tell about a good book you’ve recently read).
- Give out slips of paper with questions on them, one for each person, and have them answer the question to the group.
- Share with the whole group or table a bit of information about a person that you just met.
- During your meeting have small groups of women discuss particular parts of the topic.
- Creatively match women to pray for one another.
- Give prizes to those who remembered and prayed for prayer partner, or those who brought a guest or the driver of a car pool, or the one who came the farthest, etc. Women do love door prizes.

Use Creative Titles

Instead of meetings, call them something else. People don’t like “meetings.” They are more likely to come to a party, or a tea, or a coffee, or a dessert or a get together. The programs can be the same, only the name is changed.

- Play-plan-pray party: You do just what it says
- Get acquainted time: Have each woman tell about what is going on in her life. This often reveals much to laugh about, cry about, pray about.

- Connect-a-thon: How to connect with husbands, children, neighbors, co-workers, church people. Sounds better than a parenting seminar.
- Show and Tell: Have women bring an object which represents something about them or something important to them and talk about it.
- Prayer Walk: Don't sit in chairs for a prayer meeting, instead walk around the church. As you go into each room pray for: pastor, nursery workers, and children, Sunday school workers and kids, parking lot and visitors, kitchen for God's provision, bathroom for cleansing confession, etc.
- Bookend Bash: Each woman brings a book she will lend and tell why and how it affected her life. (Be sure to keep records of who borrowed each book)
- A Covenantal Approach to Women's Ministry
- Pick-A-Party: Have a selection of different get-togethers during the month for the women to choose (one or more). These are at different times to accommodate the different schedules women have from bowling, cooking class, craft evening, evening dessert, Saturday brunch, afternoon tea, morning coffee, book discussion, etc.
- Summer Salad Supper: Each woman brings a favorite salad recipe.
- Helps and hindrances for Homeowners (or Housewives or Parents, etc.). These are practical tips on managing money, warning of scams (especially for older people) tips on local bargains, etc. Part of the Titus 2 charge to manage the home.
- Cookie Exchange: Bring a batch of Christmas cookies and an empty container. Go home with a selection of every cookie.
- Other titles: Spring Fling, First Tuesday Lunch Bunch, Fall Kick-off Festival, Rally, Ice Cream Social, Panel Discussion, Celebration, Sisters Serving, Fellowship, Retreat, a Happening, etc.

Tips for Leadership on Creative Meetings

- You will be more inclined to be creative about what's important to you. Find out who has a heart for the project and have her lead the team.
- It is easier to be creative in the areas that God has gifted or equipped you.
- Walking in the Holy Spirit frees us to be creative. Pray for creativity.
- Get the routines done so you can be free to be creative. Last minute rushing stifles creativity.
- Getting burned out? Think others don't do it as well? Take an attitude check. Allow others to do it.
- Consider the characteristics of a successful event. See how they do it. Follow their example. Start on time, have good food, fellowship accommodations, creativity. Strive for excellence in all details.
- Don't be afraid to let a ministry die—or kill it! Often this is better.
- Always brainstorm. Let every idea be considered—nothing is too outrageous to be put on the blackboard. One person's crazy idea often leads to other ideas that are really good.
- Get on the church mailing lists for their Women's Ministry newsletters. Many of these are now electronic, so there is no added cost for the church. You'll get lots of ideas. Make calls to other Women's Ministry groups and ask them what they do for particular events.

- Attend Presbytery Women's Ministry meetings and ask the Presbytery Women's Ministry Team to include church event ideas as part of the program.
- If you have a particular problem in your Women's Ministry, throw it out to the team for discussion and let others discuss solutions (these are not to be personality problems, but logistical, programs, etc.) Often solutions become concepts for wonderful programs.
- Make some commitments:
 - ⊗ Be culturally relevant. Make sure you are dealing with issues that will help women deal with the culture they live in every day.
 - ⊗ Not to do it the same way all the time but to have variety.
 - ⊗ Meet needs, making sure the time spent is worthwhile for those attending.
 - ⊗ Not to do it alone, but work as a team, having each group do something involving more people and having them own it.
 - ⊗ Know your women. Be creative. Some groups enjoy skits, songs, poems, cartoons, etc. Others need just the facts. Do what communicates.
 - ⊗ Allow failure. Attempting and failing is so much better than never trying anything new. Proverbs 24:16 says, "A faithful man falls seven times and rises again."

Appendix F. Making the Most of LT

What are some ideas for recruiting women in my presbytery to attend LT?

- Always be mindful of the early and final deadlines.
- Presbytery women's leadership send an email to the presidents/contacts for each church with the info about LT.
- Use the video made in 2016:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AVGEMFkQkfA&feature=youtu.be>
- Start with the Women's Ministry leadership team and all women's Bible study leaders.
- Consider women in other leading roles. Ask a few key people in your church who they might recommend. Invite women who regularly mentor or disciple others, TE and RE wives, other ministries—music, Christian education, missions, etc. or any woman just needing the encouragement of fellowship with sisters in Christ. There may be opportunities down the road for direct WM roles.
- Reach out to PCA contacts you have through social media sources. Sharing the video, above, can be an easy way to do this.
- Presbytery women's leadership go to Presbytery meeting to tell about LT and encourage pastors to send women in leadership from their churches and for the churches to help with the expenses. Emphasize how this will help the local church.
- If the Presbytery Women's Ministry has meetings, announce LT and have women who have gone before share what they received from it.

What are some ways to pay for getting to LT?

- If possible, register before the early deadline for the best price.
- If church can afford, put line item into your Women's Ministry budget to send one or two ladies each year, or at least to scholarship partially.
- Presbytery Women's Ministry, provide a line item in their budget to help pay the cost of LT for one or two ladies. You might consider asking the Christian Education Committee of presbytery if they would budget money to send two representatives from the Presbytery Women's Ministry Team.
- If you are within driving distance, look for ways to match ladies in the presbytery for carpooling to split the cost.
- Multiple local churches share costs of bus or van charter.
- Request use of year end funds that will be unspent from ministry areas outside of WM. (One RA tries each year to use unspent funds from a mentoring ministry to offer all or part of registration for one of the mentors in that ministry)
- On flip side, if the women you invite are part of other ministry areas, request to share costs between ministries.
- Some churches have held fund raisers, or asked women to contribute to a scholarship fund to help send representatives.
- There are some scholarships available through CDM and you can apply for one by contacting Kathy Wargo (kwargo@pcanet.org).

Appendix G. Women's Ministry Training FAQs

1. Who Needs a Training?

Any church, presbytery women's ministry or group of PCA churches wanting to equip women for ministry leadership in their church. This includes all women in your church(es)/presbytery not only those who serve in women's ministries but any woman wanting to be equipped for ministry in her church. A common comment we get after the event is that women wish they had invited/encouraged more women they knew to attend.

2. What is included in a training?

- At least 5 in-depth talks. The talks are tailored to your group's need.
- A 100+ page training workbook in PDF format for your group to photocopy for each attendee.
- Pre-training conference calls with your trainer to determine your needs and to determine the event schedule.
- A call with your trainer after the event to discuss your follow-up plans and to collect feedback.

One purpose of a training event is to help you connect with your Regional Advisor and additional denominational resources to assist you in follow-up.

3. What content is covered in a training?

Women's Ministry trainings are designed to give the women of your church and/or presbytery a framework to think biblically about who God is and who He is calling women to be in the context of the home, church, workplace, and ministry. This valuable equipping resource is a series of in-depth seminars that provide a biblical framework for women in ministry as well as practical tools. It has been used to establish and reinvigorate women's ministries across the country. Some of the in-depth topics covered include Christian worldview, the Covenant, Church, Womanhood, Kingdom Discipleship and many nuts and bolts of Women's Ministry.

4. How long is a training?

Typically, a training is a Friday evening and a Saturday morning through mid-afternoon. Trainings can be done in one day; however, it's a very intensive day. All of this time is needed to cover the material presented, and you should typically not plan to add additional activities into the schedule.

5. What about discussion time?

Trainings typically include several discussion breakout times. Ideally the schedule should include 5-6 messages with discussion time after most or all of them. Many groups even schedule a discussion to take place over lunch.

6. How Do I Set Up a Training?

All trainings are requested through the CDM office (not through a trainer). Please contact Karen Hodge, PCA *Women's Ministry Coordinator*, 678.825.1146, khodge@pcanet.org.

7. How is a Trainer assigned to my event?

Karen Hodge works with you to match the best trainer for your needs. The material is the same but each trainer has a different background and a unique style so Karen helps you to think through the best approach for the women attending.

8. Is there a cost for a training?

Trainings are intensive 5-6 session seminars. The cost is \$700 (which covers the trainer's honorarium and a fee to CDM for overhead costs) plus travel, meals, and lodging expenses for the trainer. Typically trainings are multi-church events with a nominal charge to the attendee, which covers the cost of the workbook and may include one or two meals.

9. Why is the training workbook 100+ pages?

The workbook contains much more than the structured notes for the five to six messages. There are many follow-up discussion activities, many case studies, thought provoking articles answering many FAQs we have had over the years, an annotated bibliography, and a Titus 2 Discipleship appendix. There is no way to cover all of this in a single event. But the additional material can be used for discussion activities after the event.

10. Some of our women cannot attend the training are we allowed to print extra copies of the workbook to give out?

The training workbooks are copyrighted (similar to a book). Unfortunately, copies of the workbook are only for attendees. They may not be distributed to women who did not attend the training. If you use additional material for discussions later, additional copies of short portions may be made by your group for this purpose.

Appendix H. Q&A

This section contains some edited Q&A with CDM's Women's Ministries Trainers and CDM Director, Stephen Estock with questions posed after Training sessions at Transformed conferences in 2016.

1. QUESTION

There don't seem to be a lot of examples in the OT or NT of women being called to community with God separately from men. Should this cause us to be careful to not make too much of "Women's Ministry," which would lead to too much separation within the congregation or community of believers?

ANSWER

Throughout Scripture, we see God calling individuals to himself and placing them into the covenant community (e.g., marriage, families, Israel, and the Church). Mankind's sin nature is prone to work in ways that hinder or destroy community life (1 Corinthians addresses this issue in a number of ways); consequently, we must be watchful for philosophies and practices that detract from nurturing community.

At the same time, we see examples of women working together as a group in ways that bless and build community and ministry. In Exodus 15:20, Miriam led "all the women" in a celebratory song about God's deliverance. In Exodus 38:8, there is a reference to women who ministered in the entrance of the tent of meeting. In Luke 8:1-3, the evangelist mentions the group of women who traveled with Jesus and supported the ministry (the implication was they worked together). One explanation why it took a day for Joseph and Mary to realize Jesus was not with them after the Passover was that the men and women traveled in gender-specific groups (The text is silent, so such a conclusion is tentative at best). In Acts 9:39-41, there is a reference to "widows," who apparently were gathered as a group within the community of the church.

A Women's Ministry within a congregation is one of the circumstances of the life of a church which is "common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature, and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word" (WCF 1.6). In the PCA, a healthy Women's Ministry is one that contributes to the overall health of the covenant community, rather than existing as an entity unto itself. ~Stephen Estock

2. QUESTION

"Culture did not design women" How are we in the church letting culture design women? e.g. "Showers are for women" "women serve others by making meals" "women take care of children's ministry/nursery"

ANSWER

God designed woman to be a helper fit for the man (Genesis 2:21–22). Consequently, God established the husband as the head of his wife (1 Corinthians 11:3), and men as the authoritative leaders in the church (1 Timothy 2:12). The specifics of how men and women live out these roles in the local church varies according to culture. For example, Paul commanded the women of the church in Corinth to wear head coverings as “a symbol of authority” (1 Corinthians 11:10). Yet, most Christians today, even those who embrace the Bible as the inerrant and infallible Word of God, believe head coverings no longer communicate the same thing in modern cultures, and women are not required to wear them. Consequently, faithful Christians must exercise discernment as they apply the transcendent truth of Scripture to the specifics of the culture in which the church exists.

Mankind's sin nature will often lead to a failure in accurately applying scriptural truth. The circumstances and pressures of a culture can lead either to 1) practices that disregard God's Word (a.k.a. “too liberal”) or 2) practices that are more restrictive than God's Word (a.k.a. “too conservative”). Church leaders are accountable to God for ensuring church practice aligns with Scripture and resists the cultural pressures to stray from the truth. The temptation to allow culture to shape practice more than the Word of God is constant, and the struggle is great. Only through continual prayer will leaders be able to discern “the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture” (WCF 1.10) and understand how to live in obedience.
~Stephen Estock

3. QUESTION

How is the woman's role of “life-giver” different than man's role?

ANSWER

At the most obvious level, only a woman can give birth, and the offspring of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent. Salvation comes through woman as the Messiah is born of a virgin (i.e., apart from the work of man). Yet, Adam exercised authoritative headship in naming his wife “Eve,” as she was mother of all living. In naming his wife, man remains the leader in the covenant community. Woman plays a necessary life-giving role in overcoming the Fall, a role unique to the way God created her.

This unique role, ultimately fulfilled by Mary when she gave birth to Jesus, is a picture of the many ways women give life to the covenant community. In Joshua 2, Rahab was the instrument through whom God spared the spies at Jericho. 1 Samuel 25 records how Abigail spared the life of Nabal and preserved the integrity of David's reign. Luke 8 records a list of women through whom God provided for the preaching ministry of the Messiah. In the greetings of Romans 16, Paul mentions a number of women who were instrumental in his ministry to the Gentiles. The life-giving roles of women in the covenant community are varied, as they seek to fulfill

faithfully the God-given design of complementary helper to the man. ~Stephen Estock

4. QUESTION:

One issue we have is a broad diversity of women in our church who range in age from early 20's through the 80's, who work out of the home, in the home, or are homemakers, who send their children to school, homeschool their children, or are in stages of childlessness due to infertility to the empty nest. We have women who have never married, who are divorced and who are widowed. We have women who are incredibly healthy and many who suffer from chronic health issues. I know that it is not my job to reach every one of these women personally, and yet I have a deep desire to offer opportunities for them to build relationships within the church, to find joy in activities that are planned and to find connect with others as we find ways to serve God through serving others. (This comment prefaced Questions 4-7)

How do I build a leadership team for our new Women's Ministry? (we are a newer church)

ANSWER:

I love that you began your questions with a description of the diversity of the women in your church. Every group of women has some common characteristics, but because we are human, there will also always be characteristics that diversify the group. It is good to be mindful of both! Sometimes they are obvious, and sometimes they are hidden very deep. We tend to plan based on our own needs/likes, and it is very important to always be mindful of expanding our borders.

When you form a leadership team, be sure to work with your Session leadership. Have them help you determine what this group will work toward accomplishing, and when and how decisions and plans should be approved, and how to be sure the Women's Ministry supports the overall work of the church as a whole. In choosing women for your leadership team, look for women who have demonstrated leadership already, and who reflect the diversity of your church congregation. Think: who are the women who are falling through the cracks of current ministries? Are there women who have demonstrated leadership already who can help you include those women?

You could begin by praying for a small group of women that would see the need to think intentionally about what you should do in Women's Ministry. Depending on the size of your church, it might be that it is just you and one other woman, or it might be a little larger group. Think in terms of the diversity you mentioned. Who are women who share some of those different characteristics? Think about which women you share characteristics with, and then pray that God would lead you to women who understand/share others. Ask these women if they would be interested in meeting together with this group and go through one of the books

listed in the next answer, and pray together for direction for this new ministry. Be clear that you are not asking them to serve on a leadership team, only to meet together to think and pray about what your church needs in this area. Discussing one of those books will help reveal women with a heart for this ministry.

If you decide to go ahead and form a leadership team, you still could use part of your meeting time to discuss one of those books to help make sure everyone is on the same page.

5. QUESTION:

I don't always feel very equipped to lead Women's Ministry, but that is currently the role I have. How do I get to a place where I feel more equipped?

ANSWER:

There are a lot of tools that you can use to begin to equip yourselves to lead a Women's Ministry. Two books that are directed to Women's Ministry leaders are: *Leadership for Women in the Church*, and *Women's Ministry in the Local Church*. Discussing this material will help you begin to determine what you need to do by understanding the "whys".

Additionally, look at the resources listed in **Section VI. What resources are available?** in the main part of this handbook.

6. QUESTION:

How do we encourage women to talk about more than just how their kids are doing? And how do we get women with small kids to intermingle with women that work and don't have kids?

ANSWER:

Women who attend your events have diverse real needs, and diverse felt needs. Everyone has that topic that is almost always at the front of her mind, and for mothers, that is usually their children. But they also have many other needs that Women's Ministry should address. These real needs are shared by women across very diverse demographic backgrounds. Women do have a need to have some chat time, but being intentional about generating discussion on topics outside of the first thing on your mind can lead to connections with women that we would not naturally gravitate toward. Being intentional about finding an ice breaker activity, or crafting one or a few "get to know you" type of questions can be a great way to gently guide the chat time at an event. There are always some women who can too easily dominate the conversation, and some who will be reluctant to share, so you might give everyone a goal to find out at least three (or some other number) other people's answers to the question(s).

7. QUESTION:

How do we design/lead a Women's Ministry that includes unsaved or unchurched women?

ANSWER:

While you always want events to be welcoming to new people, remember that there are some activities/events that are more appropriate to the unsaved/unchurched than others. There is a wide continuum of spiritual knowledge/background among the unchurched, and it might be appropriate to invite some of these women to some of our activities. But Jesus intentionally took time to have conversations with his disciples away from the crowds, and they discussed topics that He did not go into with a broader audience. Some topics were only discussed with an even smaller group of Peter, James, and John. Although you always want to be sensitive to an unplanned opportunity to reach out to someone, be careful not to sacrifice teaching time that needs to be done with more mature women to attempt to make every activity appropriate for unbelievers.

Your Women's Ministry should have a very clear overall purpose statement as to what you are working to accomplish, and you should from time to time evaluate where you are doing a good job and where you need to be more intentional about filling gaps in the ministry.

The goal is to have a variety of activities/events all or almost all of which are inviting to women outside your local church body, and some of which are, by design, welcoming to women who are unbelievers. We always need to be intentional about reaching out to women (sometimes within our own church) who very often find it easier to isolate themselves rather than become part of a community.

There should be some events with an intentional focus on inviting women who are unbelievers, and/or women you are unsure of their faith. Choosing the topics for these requires creativity and knowledge of your intended audience. Sometimes it means having some activities that require you to leave your building and go to where some of these women are. Sometimes it might mean having gatherings around food, hobbies, books, parenthood, singles' issues, grief, or other areas of life where you can find areas of common interest with unbelievers or unchurched women. Look for ideas that will be non-threatening, broad interest fellowship themes. You might include a 5-10 minute VERY basic devotion.

Example—one church had a home herb planting fellowship highly attended by friends and neighbors of church members. It was an outdoor, spring activity, with all items provided (little flower pots, soil, herbs to plant, trowels, etc.). The devotion was on Jesus being the vine we are attached to, how the vine is where a plant gets what it needs, and how this is a metaphor to seeing Jesus as our source of needed nourishment. Very low key gospel presentation. This drew a few unsaved

ladies to attend future fellowships on different themes. The important thing is to make sure your church is a safe and inviting place for them, no matter what they reveal about themselves.

8. QUESTION:

What should the interface look like between Women's Ministry in local churches and their Sessions. Specifically, does the Women's Ministry get their marching orders from the men's leadership particular to their church? Or are the women meant to be under the rule of the Session in a general way, but it's left up to the women to decide "what they want to do."

ANSWER:

Since every church's 'personality' is different, the practical/visible application of Session oversight looks different from church to church. Basically, your church Session is your guide and protection. But no matter how this oversight looks, the Women's Ministry role in this relationship is to be life-giving helpers. Some life-giving things you can practically do to facilitate this:

- Have a mission or purpose statement for your Women's Ministry that reflects the goals and mission of your Session for the church (and let the Session know what it is.) Check out www.pcacdm.org under the Women's Ministry Tool Box for help with this.
- Even if the Session is not specifically tasking the Women's Ministry team, make sure that in some way, they know your plans, events, and Bible Studies and teachers before you execute your plans. Also, be sure to encourage them with any specific ways you have seen God's blessing and work through these efforts.

9. QUESTION:

I'm sensitive to the idea that the WM might take on something of a para-church role if the women decide they want to do other things: helping abused women, giving canning lessons, working at Habitat for Humanity. Would that be ministering outside the body and not so much WM role as a church wide responsibility?

ANSWER:

This question boils down to 'What is our Women's Ministry supposed to look like in contrast to other ministries in church where women serve?'

The over-arching goal of an organized Women's Ministry should be to encourage and equip women to: **Reflect the character of God** (Creation/Covenant) **in all arenas of life** (Kingdom Discipleship), **including the church** (Church).

I put in brackets around topics from our Women's Ministry Training that inform this statement. So with the training in mind, here are some questions to ask:

- How does the Women's Ministry Team provide ways to equip and encourage the women on the Shepherding team, or any other church ministry where women serve, to reflect God in their ministry? (Could be through Bible studies, discipleship class, prayer times...)
- How does the Women's Ministry team equip and encourage women to come along side other ministries of the church? (Ideas: help as a women's group with special projects in church. Integrate in some way with other church ministries, like Bible studies with older women and teens. Plan an event that highlights other ministries.)
- How does the Women's Ministry team equip and encourage the women of the church to reflect God's character in all arenas of life? Yes, we don't want a Women's Ministry that is running on a separate orbit from the church. So, again, go back to mission/purpose statement to keep on track of supporting the church. As a Women's Ministry Team, your goal is to encourage your women to support their church, so as you plan that is your focus.

But that does not mean that individuals in the church won't have 'outside' ministries as well. Plus, they have a role in all of life that is not directly related to that church 'building' but is ministering in God's Kingdom. Therefore, Kingdom Discipleship will encompass equipping and encouraging in these areas also. (Ideas: give opportunities to share with each other how their jobs, hobbies, or passions reflect God's character. Integrate groups with different ages, stages, professions and interests to avoid one track focus...)

Making application will take time and much prayer. And prayer is where you begin with all of this!

10. QUESTION:

How do we engage moms with young children at home?

–How do we know where the problem is? Is it the husbands—are they really that selfish and refusing to help? Is it the women—are they afraid to leave their kids/trust their husband? Is it hard to leave because there will be more mess when they get home? (but is that a good enough excuse not to come?)

–Is being a young mom really only about survival, and is Women's Ministry just not an option for that life phase—are we expecting too much? Is a day time study that comes with free child-care really the only option? (from what I've heard some moms can't/won't even do that as it interferes with naps...) How can we help convince these moms of the great value Women's Ministry/Bible study can add to their home life if they never give it a chance?

ANSWER:

Moms with young children are probably one of the loneliest segments of the Body. In the midst of all the activity of their households—namely the young children—they can and do feel quite isolated. Many go into parenting with the idea of sweetness and light being the rhythm of their days with these precious kids. The reality of smelly messes and constant interruption of thought and activity is jarring and frequently leaves them thinking the chaos is connected to personal inadequacies or their kids' inadequacies. And that place is lonely. The idea of engaging with others is so attractive, but the reality of everything it will take to be able to engage with others often leaves them giving up before actually trying.

To engage with young moms means truly walking where they walk as they walk it. And that looks a lot of different ways. Maybe it's showing up at her house in your own holey yoga pants and stained t-shirt to sit in her kitchen and feed the baby while she wrangles the toddler. Or going to her son's preschool teddy bear parade to take pictures for her. Or meeting her at the mom's restaurant (Chick-Fil-A) to have constantly interrupted conversations around chicken nuggets and apple slices on the floor.

The point is, the reality of engaging with a mom of young children at home more often means entering into where she is rather than expecting her to do “all the things” that will get her out of the house to engage with you.

That doesn't mean we don't organize get together opportunities that are out of the house, but are we willing to have those times be a little messy for the sake of the moms? For example, have a Bible study at a playground where everyone pitches in to watch the kids. Or childproof a couple of rooms in your house and invite the moms with the kids over to the house. Have the kid friendly snacks and drinks. Maybe invite a homeschooled teen over to be a mother's helper during that time. Expect the interruptions and don't let them deter you from the point of connecting with these moms.

A great resource you can recommend to young mothers is the Engaging Motherhood website: <http://www.engagingmotherhood.com/>.

—How do we know where the problem is? The problem is never just one thing. The examples given of “is it the husbands” or “is it the moms”—the answer is a complicated yes and no. For the husbands who are overwhelmed, selfish, weary from work, and so on that for him the idea of his wife going out at night while he wrangles bath time and bedtime can elicit a less than gracious response when his wife communicates her desire to attend a study.

For the mom, who is overwhelmed, selfish, weary from work at home and fearful, the idea of everything that has to be done to set up the “perfect” scenario to make it “easy” to leave can make all the work seem not worth it.

I suspect if your Women's Ministry is getting the answer "there's more mess when I get home" then potentially that is a deflecting excuse from the real reason. Getting to the real reason requires some transparent evaluation of what Women's Ministry is offering them. Humans love the default. And the default in this case is not going to the effort to get to an evening event. However, everyone knows we will each move heaven and earth to get the sitter, arrange the bed time, design the "perfect" scenario for our husbands to handle the kids if, IF, we truly want to go out somewhere in the evening.

So the answer, the reason, has to back up to what are we offering them? To ask that question is not to suggest a dog and pony show or trivial entertainment or diluted contextualization of our studies. It is to make sure that our Women's Ministry is not personality driven, program driven, or market driven, but instead gospel driven. And gospel driven is harder because it requires laying down our lives for others and being willing to enter into their messes, their less than easy scenarios, and accepting even with all of that sacrifice that some women will still choose not to participate.

—How can we help convince these moms of the great value Women's Ministry/Bible study can add to their home life if they never give it a chance? A conviction/sense of responsibility to church occurs when truth content regarding the church is taught in the context of relationships AND the Holy Spirit impresses the hearts of these parents with that conviction/sense of responsibility. Remember the conflict reflects the tension between this world and God's kingdom—a spiritual warfare of two kingdoms and world views. The responsibility of the Church, pastor, or Women's Ministry is to offer solid truth with persistence and trust in God's work among His people.

The responsibility of Women's Ministries is not to do the convincing. Convincing or heart change is always the work of the Holy Spirit. The responsibility is to have God as our reference point for our interactions, have God's Word as our authority for our teaching—being the content of our teaching—and exercise covenantal community to one another in expressions of compassion, nurturing, supporting, delivering, and so on—the fullness of helping as God is our helper.

The work of reaching out to others is a consistent work of obedience and sacrifice with a long-term view. Keep before you that your work is done unto the Lord and not for attendance numbers or results. Be encouraged that your impact/influence on one life is more than significant in God's economy. Trust that as God works in you for the equipping to serve this demographic, He is also working in those whom you serve.

11. QUESTION:

How can we get women in their 20's and 30's to participate in women's Bible studies and Fellowship events? We've met with several of them individually to hear their ideas, implemented some suggestions and they still won't come.

ANSWER:

They need a personal invitation, most likely. Not an announcement, not a handout, not a sign-up sheet! But a "come with me and see what you think! I can pick you up!" At that age, is childcare an issue? Is Women's Ministry providing it? Are they career gals who need an evening study or a Saturday time? Also, are there any late teens or college gals, etc. on the WM leadership team? But mostly, a face to face invitation works best for all ages!

12. QUESTION:

Our church is a small church. We have a lot of women that work (including the women that would lead the Women's Ministry) plus we have a growing body of young moms who don't tend to get involved in Women's Ministry. This seems to be true in our presbytery also. We have trouble getting new people involved in leadership.

Some issues are ideas on how to get women involved in ministry in the church (all ages), considering working moms (time issues), moms with babies and young children, and the problem of getting "new blood" into leadership... In addition to prayer, is there anything that we as a Women's Ministry Team can do to inspire and cultivate a culture where women would love to get involved and volunteer to help in ministering, specifically regarding ministries to women?

ANSWER:

Here are a few practical ideas. Make sure you are offering things at different times, on different days, and even different frequencies. We have morning and evening studies, some that meet weekly, some every other week, and some just monthly. I think providing childcare, especially during the day, is a huge pull for these young moms.

I would have conversations about what their needs are as women and how you could potentially provide opportunities for their needs to be met. Their felt needs should not dictate what we do but as we hear their heart we understand them better and begin building relationships for discipleship ministry. Perhaps if they have formed some kind of opinion or view about what Women's Ministry is, instead of sprinkling their ideas into already existing ministry, create something new. Another thing that worked for me was inviting women to be in charge of one of our major women's gatherings during the year. They took ownership of that, got excited about it, and even began to get excited about Women's Ministry in general. I also have representation from every generation on my ministry team. They communicate better with their peers and are better able to encourage them to be

involved. Make sure that you always communicate why you are doing what you are doing—they must feel like it is valuable.

Events, studies, etc. will not draw them out but real, authentic relationships will. It is not easy. You are probably saying if they don't come, how can I be in a relationship with them? How are you and the other ladies that long for them to be a part of the ministry stepping into their lives? Invest in them—invite them to lunch, offer to keep their children, write them notes, ask them how you can pray for them. I would encourage you to not wait for them to come but to move towards them in very practical, tangible, and relational ways. Remember our goal cannot simply be to have all women attend but rather how can we encourage and equip all women. I know it is easier said than done. Know that I am in the trenches with you.

13. QUESTION:

At my church, my goal is to encourage and train the ladies who lead the women's Bible studies and outreach Bible studies. Any guidance, wisdom, and best practices you could share would be wonderful! How is this done at other churches? How do other ladies do this?

ANSWER:

It sounds like you are referring to women who are already teaching/leading, not training new leaders. I think it is wonderful that you desire to come alongside them. I actually meet with my small group leaders once a week. At times, I have felt like one more meeting was too much but really have continued at their request. We pray, they ask me questions regarding lessons, and we talk through any specific concerns they have about their individual groups.

I have also found that simple things like emails, texts, calls, and notes that simply let them know I am praying for them and am available if needed, go a long way. My women respond very well to these simple gestures. In the same way that our Women's Ministry need to have content in the context of relationships so does our leadership training. Knowing that you are for them and available helps encourage and equip them to continue to use their gifts for the building up of the body. Also, asking where your leaders sense that they need additional training might be valuable. This will provide direction for your time together.

There are lots of valuable resources that can be used for training and equipping leaders available. CDM is committed to connecting people to people and people to resources.

- There are two-minute training videos on the PCA website, www.pcacdm.org with discussion questions.

- You might consider reading and working through a book like *Women's Ministry in the Local Church* or *Women of the Word*.
- The Women's Ministry Resource Notebook and also Titus 2 Tools are great resources for training
- The Toolbox on the [website](#) offers ideas for small groups, relationship building questions, icebreakers, etc.
- Women's Ministry Trainers bring training to your local churches and presbyteries.
- Leadership Training annually during the month of February in Atlanta.

This is certainly not an exhaustive list but gives you an idea about some of the resources available to you.

14. QUESTION:

My concern is making sure the next generation is active in the Women's Ministry. How to include and transition leadership to next generation. Defining Women's Ministry as more than a Bible study and/or events. Making it not about programs but about life where we live including silver hairs, middle-age menopausal, child raisers, newly married, and singles. All this with outreach to the community! The question is how to be relevant in our church and community?

ANSWER:

This is also addressed in the previous answer.

As we create ministries that have a tension of rich, biblical content in the context of gospel relationships, I think we will begin to see transformation in the lives of our women and also others drawn in. We must teach the foundational truths of the covenant, church, and biblical womanhood as we provide safe places for women to learn, grow, struggle, and use their gifts for the good of the body and the furtherance of God's kingdom. Life-on-life discipleship will help to pass the baton and will value the wisdom and experience of all stages of life. As women are encouraged and equipped within the walls of our churches, it will impact our communities. Their spheres of influence will be impacted by the transformation of their own lives.

15. QUESTION:

How do you get mentoring started?

ANSWER:

The best place to start is with two resources available to you through CDM. One is the book *Spiritual Mothering* by Susan Hunt and the other is called *Titus 2 Tools* also by Susan Hunt. I would suggest your women's leadership team going through them and then inviting other women to also study these tools. Once you have a core group of women who are well versed on the ins and outs of mentoring, this model should continue to grow as more women will be encouraged to learn how they can become spiritual mothers to others in your body.

16. QUESTION:

How can we approach *Spiritual Mothering* when it's something that younger women are clearly not interested in (just mentioning it yields an eye-roll)?

ANSWER:

Sometimes following our Titus 2 mandate is first and foremost a mindset. Using a church-wide fellowship with the theme of Gospel Friendships can be a great "back door entry" into this arena. God gives women these Titus 2 directives regardless of whether or not our church has an organized structure for older women teaching younger women. Within the PCA we have lots of wonderful studies, resources and training available on how to create a formal ministry that uses Titus 2 principles. But discipleship should still happen on the way to a more formal program. Look at Titus 2:1 again. "But as for you, once your Women's Ministry program has at least 26 women participating and 4 annual events, then teach what accords with sound doctrine." NOT! Even when our church or Women's Ministry DOES have a formal Titus 2 program, we can completely miss out on the awareness that every friendship we have as a redeemed woman is a Gospel friendship that can fulfill God's call given to us here. We don't want to miss real-life situations and discipleship opportunities that arise naturally out of these Gospel friendships. If you are a redeemed woman who is part of God's church and has a friend or wants a friend, then you already have God's calling to glorify God in this way.

Teaching and learning should happen in any Gospel friendship, no matter how it begins. Women mentoring women, women discipling women should transform us to THINK BIBLICALLY! LIVE COVENANTALLY!

Sometimes the content is about becoming/ being a disciple, what to believe (doctrine). We are learning how to THINK BIBLICALLY. Other times, the content is all about how to live, what to do, the **application** of a Biblical world and life view. We are becoming "new creatures" together; we are "iron sharpening iron." We are learning how to LIVE COVENANTALLY.

17. QUESTION:

When we evaluate the current situation for Women's Ministry in our church, there are many things that we see that we need to change. How do I lead the women with so many changes needed? We feel we are event driven and really need to be in the Word more and lifting each other up in prayer more. We are starting a discipleship training opportunity through our associate pastor hoping to train women so they will grow and come along side of other women. But, I think something is definitely missing in our Women's Ministry and believe that many other women feel the same way.

ANSWER:

You say you feel the Women's Ministry is event driven because the focus has become the events themselves: having an event for the purpose of having an event. Events can be great tools for accomplishing bigger goals, but if the event is not designed with the overarching goal in mind, it will have little long-term results. Starting with a purpose statement for your Women's Ministry that dovetails with the Session's mission and goals for the church is a good beginning. It keeps 'great idea events' in check. Also, to help evaluate a specific event as you plan, there is a downloadable Women's Ministry Diagnostic tool on the CDM Women's Ministry website. www.pcacdm.org in the Women's Ministry Tool Box where there are many helpful resources.

However, no matter how good the event is, it does not replace consistent discipleship. There are many ways to do "women discipling women," but having a Kingdom Discipleship focus, where discipling is the application of God's rule and Word to all arenas of life, is life equipping. It is the picture of Titus 2 where we are told to take doctrine (that the pastor teaches) and apply it to all arenas of life for the next generation. This may possibly look different than the typical teacher/student Bible study, or prayer group, or same-interest group.

This is where prayer and creative thinking come together. I know, I know, I didn't give you a 3-step plan! However, I am enclosing a chart that was shared at a Women's Leadership Training conference in 2014 that was devised for the women's discipleship class at my church. It is not intended for concrete answers, but rather to help start creative thought. I hope it gives you a framework you can use as you define your own goals, determine your obstacles, your plan, and your anticipated results as you pray for guidance, wisdom, and creativity!

See Table on Next Pages

Bible Study Conversations

Kingdom Discipleship Example

Purpose: Discipleship class that models Biblical teaching that transforms all areas of life

Goal	Obstacles	Plan	Result
Keeping Scripture in heart and mind	Time and commitment	Choose Scripture passages that correspond to the lessons. Learn together over a period of time	Learning together helps those who haven't practiced at home or are uncomfortable reciting. Spending time together allows for thinking through meaning of passage
Teaching and Learning the Word	Teacher burnout, avoid disciples of a personality	Use more than 1 teacher, older and younger teachers, use a lesson book,	Relieves pressure for a teacher to prepare every week, have many personalities to hear from, study book allows many to be able to teach, cross generational in using teaching gifts
Biblical Worldview—how do we reflect God's character in everything we do	How are we going to design that!	Each person talk about something they do—job, hobby, passion, etc. and communicate how this is reflecting God's character	Helps all see how everything is God's kingdom, everyone learns something new, we all learn more about the person presenting, making personal connections

PRESBYTERY WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Goal	Obstacles (present and to avoid)	Plan	Result
Supporters of the Church	Bible study not become a ministry of its own nor be the producer of ministry outside the church— (not a separate orbit from church)	Not structurally, but organically come along side others in the church and church's ministries	Builds community with others in church while serving. Examples: visiting health institutions where church has ministries, make centerpieces for evangelistic lunch, send exam goodie boxes to Covenant children in college
Enter each other's lives—Community	Regional church—live far from each other, cross generational class— (normally good thing :>)), prayer times too short and static	Organically notice needs of others and come along side by being flexible to drop our "study" plans for others' needs. Prayer— concentrate on long term prayer requests. Praying for same request all year.	Opportunities to love on each other, Examples: moving help, helping after a robbery, celebrating and sorrowing together Prayer: entering into hearts together and at end of year seeing God work
Incorporate it all!	TIME!	Time: Go to an every-other-week format for teaching and applying. One week being teaching and learning Word through lesson and scripture memory. Other week devoted to presentation, serving church ministries, serving church, serving or celebrating each other. Be flexible to change "plans" to apply God's Word to real needs.	Valuable time spent in learning God's Word, building community, brotherly love, devotion, and love for the church!

18. QUESTION

Where can we seek guidance (any contacts) for Women's Ministry related questions?

ANSWER

This is an encouraging question! Thanks to CDM (our PCA Committee on Discipleship Ministries), none of us needs to feel that we are in this alone. The motto of our **PCA Women's Ministry Coordinator, Karen Hodge**, is "here to serve." A good place to start seeking guidance is the **CDM website (pcacdm.org)**, which offers a plethora of resources from Bible Study suggestions to icebreakers. I highly recommend the two-minute videos on many different topics under the "**Connection Series.**"

Also on the website, you can check out the rest of "**Your Ministry Team**" that is here to serve you. Karen Hodge can connect you to a **Women's Ministry Trainer** who will come to your church or presbytery to present a training conference and consult with you about your specific situation. In addition, you can find and contact your **Regional Advisor** (<http://www.pcacdm.org/women-regional-advisors/>). They are here to help as well. Feel free to email her about your needs or to set up a phone conversation. She will be able to connect you with others and support you in prayer. Be sure to tap into the resources God provides through our broader covenant community as you engage in kingdom building where you are!

Appendix I. Women's Ministry Acronyms

CDM	Committee on Discipleship Ministries, the PCA committee that is responsible for Women's Ministries.
CE	Christian Education, the presbytery committee that is most often responsible for Women's Ministries.
DOWM	Director of Women's Ministries, a woman in a paid staff position, part-time or full-time who leads a local church Women's Ministries.
LT	Leadership Training, a conference for women in ministry leadership in presbyteries or local churches, usually held each February in Atlanta.
PCA	Presbyterian Church in America, the name of our denomination.
PWM	Presbytery Women's Ministry, a Women's Ministry organization at the presbytery level for all women in local PCA churches who are a part of the presbytery.
RA	Regional Advisor, the member of the PCA Women's Ministry Team that is the main contact person for all women in your region of the country.
WM	Women's Ministry, usually this is used to denote a local church's Women's Ministry.



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