



Does your
LWML
Welcome
Young Women?



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Does Your LWML Welcome Young Women?

Familiar phrases heard at LWML gatherings are, “We just can’t get young women involved. We’ve tried everything, but they just won’t come.” If you have said these words or if you would like to see greater involvement, this resource is for you. The purpose of this resource is to:

- create an awareness among current members as to what is important to young women;
- awaken in current members the realization that to gain greater involvement, old ways may need to be relinquished;
- identify areas within your group where intentional efforts need to be made to make your group young women friendly;
- provide direction for transforming your group into a group that welcomes young women; and
- realize that the factors which make a group welcoming to young women make a group friendly to all ages.

You may start the process by asking each woman in your group to complete the survey on the next page, and then total the scores for each survey item. The items with the lowest number of points are the areas needing the most attention and effort.

Decide which areas need the most attention, and work on one area at each event. Suggested exercises corresponding to the survey statements are located on the following pages. The exercises will help your members think about the group and how others see it and may react to the group. Add questions and exercises which are relevant to your situation. Be creative and find what works for your group.

Evaluate the results periodically. Which exercises are having a positive impact on your society? Has your group size and complexion changed? You may want to resurvey your group each year and compare the results, looking for areas of growth and which areas still need attention.

Consider the possibility of the young women forming their own group. Think of ways the established LWML group could help and support the young women. There may be times when the two groups could come together. God has placed young women and more experienced women in your church. Celebrate their differences and similarities. God will bless your efforts.

Does Your LWML Welcome Young Women?

Survey

Read each of the following statements and assign points as follows:

- 4 points – always or most always true
- 3 points – true more than half the time
- 2 points – true less than half the time
- 1 point – never or hardly ever true

- ___ 1. When an LWML event is held, I personally invite women who seldom or never participate in LWML events or activities.
- ___ 2. I make an effort to welcome newcomers to our congregation.
- ___ 3. I understand the vast time demands on today's women and am supportive when they are unable to attend every event.
- ___ 4. I am flexible with times and dates of events.
- ___ 5. Our group provides opportunities for relationship-building among the younger and older members.
- ___ 6. Our group offers meaningful experiences which will help women grow in their faith.
- ___ 7. Our group encourages women to serve the Lord by participating in service projects and mission events.
- ___ 8. Our group educates the women in our congregation about LWML by:
 - ___ a. hosting special activities on LWML Sunday;
 - ___ b. promoting LWML events in the newsletter, website, and Facebook page;
 - ___ c. sharing the *Lutheran Woman's Quarterly* (or eQuarterly) with all the women in our congregation; and
 - ___ d. publicizing mites and mission grant recipient stories.
- ___ 9. I take a personal interest in the women in our congregation and seek to discover their gifts and talents.
- ___ 10. I am willing to think out-of-the-box and try to do things in a new and creative manner.

Does Your LWML Welcome Young Women?

Exercise 1

1. Discuss what a personal invitation looks like. Some answers may include offering the invited person a ride, sharing starting time and usual length of meeting, program topics, expectations of attendees, Bible study opportunities, special program information or upcoming speakers or servant events, refreshments, etc.
2. Ask the women to pair off and practice inviting each other to an event. You might like to consider using the PowerPoint “Just a Cup of Coffee” which is found on the LWML website as a free download. Give the women a 3x5 index card and have them write a woman’s name on it who does not usually attend LWML events—a woman they would feel comfortable inviting.
4. Challenge the women to pray for the woman they named on the index card and then invite her to the next activity.

Exercise 2

1. Discuss what would make a newcomer feel welcome at an event. One idea may be to designate a greeter who would welcome the newcomer and introduce her to at least one other person. Another idea is to make sure someone sits with the newcomer.
2. It is important that all the members regularly welcome newcomers. Have the women pair off and practice giving each other a warm welcome. Perhaps the “greeter” could contact the newcomer and invite her again when it’s time for the next event.

Exercise 3

1. To gain an understanding of how busy the schedule of today’s woman may be, invite a woman who works outside the home, or a mother of young children or teenagers, to share her schedule with your group.
2. Stress to the group that they must be appreciative of the time a newcomer can give and not make her feel guilty for the times she is unable to participate. Pair off and practice saying words that will let someone know she was missed without making that person feel guilty.

Exercise 4

1. Consider alternating morning, afternoon, evening, and weekend events and meetings. Set up carpooling for women who need a ride.
2. Ask the newcomer about topics of interest she would like to explore.
3. Plan an event once or twice a year with a special theme at a different time than usual. Try a Saturday brunch, a Lenten prayer service, a summer evening picnic with a devotion, or a soup/sandwich brunch/lunch after the Sunday morning worship service.
4. Plan events for the entire family so young women can bring their children. This may include a service project and perhaps a simple meal. Consider singing at a nursing home or tying blankets.

Exercise 5

1. Relationship-building happens when people get to know each other and support each other in their joys and sorrows, failures and successes, and their needs and concerns. Ask older women what skills they would like to pass on to the younger women. Give the younger women a choice as to which of these skills interests them and then build a program around that skill.
2. Identify activities where the energy and enthusiasm of young women is obvious. Incorporate some of those activities into your events.
3. Hold a wisdom exchange where women complete thoughts such as “A piece of information I would like to share with you is _____.”

Exercise 6

1. Make Bible study and prayer a priority. Use a variety of program possibilities such as *Quarterly* Bible studies and other LWML resources found at www.lwml.org or from the *LWML Catalog*. Invite special speakers as well as your pastor.
2. Offer women the opportunity to share favorite Bible verses or objects from their homes which are meaningful in their walk with Jesus.
3. Pray for, and with, each other. Establish prayer partners, create a prayer chain, or implement some other way to distribute prayer concerns.

Exercise 7

Young women want to do things that make a difference. Investigate possibilities in your community, such as sorting donated items at a distribution center or assembling and delivering care packages to shut-ins. There are many needs today and, therefore, many forms of serving. A service project will be attractive to women who cannot make long-term commitments. Invite and welcome them all. Consider inviting their friends and families to participate with them.

Exercise 8

1. Consult with your pastor and make him aware of LWML Sunday and the benefits of observing the day. Talk with him about women being involved in LWML Sunday services and activities. Possibilities include making and displaying a banner, presenting a children’s message, serving as ushers, providing special LWML bulletin covers, and distributing handouts. Use the resources found at www.lwml.org.
2. Identify an individual who enjoys writing to be responsible for the publicity for LWML and your events. Provide her with timely information so that she can publicize activities, meetings, and LWML resources. She can give a face to LWML by highlighting a member who can share her story. If your church has a website, ask her to post updates on LWML events or she could send periodic emails regarding the activities of the group.
3. *Quarterlies* can be given to all women in the congregation. Young women may be more interested in reading the online version, the eQuarterly. Highlight one of the stories on a bulletin board or in the weekly worship folder. Offer *Quarterly* Bible studies to all women of the congregation and point out to the young women the special pages in that publication which are written by other young women.

4. Let all congregational members know about the mission mite goal. Provide regular updates in the bulletin or other forms of church communication. Make a large thermometer for a visual. Print and display Mission Grant Power Posters found at www.lwml.org. Celebrate when goals are met.

Exercise 9

Envision yourself in the shoes of the young women in your congregation. Recall the difficulties you faced at that time in your life. Discuss how to be supportive of these women and how to take the time to get to really know them, one woman at a time. Consider using the free PowerPoint presentation *Just a Cup of Coffee* (complete with a script; found on the LWML website) which shows specifics of how to get to know a new woman, discover what she enjoys doing, and the gifts and talents with which the Lord has blessed her. Think of ways to show your new friend that you care.

Exercise 10

Begin by realizing that there is more than one way to do things. Be flexible and give others the opportunity to be innovative. Ask the young women in your congregation what activities would interest them and put at least one idea into action. Know that if the young women are asked for their input, it is important to follow through with their ideas. Ask for help from the young women in planning the activities and be willing to follow their lead. Bathe your efforts in prayer and expect to have a little fun.

**Enjoy getting to know the young women in your congregation!
You will be a mentor to them and they may also become a mentor to you!
The time is *now* to reach out!**

*Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior,
not slanderers or slaves to much wine.
They are to teach what is good,
and so train the young women to love their husbands and children
to be self-controlled, pure, working at home,
kind, and submissive to their own husbands,
that the word of God may not be reviled (Titus 2:3-5).*

*She opens her mouth with wisdom,
and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.
Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised (Proverbs 31:26 & 30).*