



PRESBYTERIAN
WOMEN

Resources for Developing a Presbyterian Women's Group

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Developed by the Leader Enhancement Committee of the Churchwide Coordinating Team of Presbyterian Women, January 2008. Revised April 2008.

Developing a Presbyterian Women's Group

Presbyterian Women (PW), the women's organization of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), was developed to offer opportunities for women to grow spiritually, to engage in faithful action for mission, justice and peace, and to be part of a group of women of faith who support the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). As you work to establish PW in your church, remember to take the time to dream about what you want PW to be, pray for guidance, and find out what the women in your church need and want in an organization.

At different ages or stages of women's lives, we have different interests and needs. Find out the interests and needs of women interested in starting a PW group, then plan for ways to meet those interests and needs. Some will be interested in mission, others in community service, while others desire to develop leadership skills. Some will want to grow spiritually through group Bible study and prayer. Others will want to learn ways to work for justice through antiracism training or racial ethnic dialogue. Remember thinking everyone will want to participate in all activities and events is unrealistic. Provide something for everyone if you want a successful PW group. Relevance is the key.

Organizing a Presbyterian Women Group: Suggested Steps

Determine the interest level in starting a PW group through

- Surveys
- Group discussions
- Interest inventory

Order the PW Manual from Presbyterian Distribution Service (call 800/524-2612 and order by title "PW Manual"). Pages 1.3 and 1.4 of the Manual explain the principles of PW. Study these before you begin to design your program.

Using information gained from determining the interest level, decide on the design of your PW program.

- Have a variety of events
- Plan for different days and times for meeting
- Plan large events to include everyone and small events to meet individual needs
- Plan programs that will embrace the PW Purpose
- Order materials from the PW national offices in Louisville on various PW programs and areas of interest

Determine the leaders you will need to meet the needs of your program and plan for a method of inviting individuals to serve in these positions. Please know that you do not have to have a set number of leaders to begin your PW group. You are welcome to create a leadership structure that best serves your group's needs. To do this, you will want to

- Talk to PW leaders in your area for suggestions
 - Synod Representative
 - Synod Moderator
 - Presbytery Moderator
 - PW Cluster Leader

- PW Moderators from area congregations
- PW Leadership Coordinators
- Involve all the women in your church in the decisions
- Discern spiritual gifts needed to accomplish your plan. List those gifts and discuss who in your church has such gifts. Consider inviting women who show particular gifts to a particular ministry. If God is calling you into a ministry and if God has given women in your church the gifts needed to be part of this ministry, it only makes sense to invite those women to participate with you. When we fail to look for those who have the spiritual gifts for the ministry, we end up with the same old group of tired, discouraged women (Sylvia Washer, *Motivating Participation in PW*, PW Churchwide Leadership Training).

Read pages 3.3 and 3.4 in the PW Manual for suggestions to help you start your program. Remember these are suggestions—your PW should be unique to your interests and needs, and not all of these will apply.

Attend a PW meeting or event in your presbytery. You can learn from what you see and interacting with Presbyterian Women will give you new and exciting ideas.

When you have your program designed and your list of needed leaders, plan your first meeting for all the women in your church. Suggestions for carrying out your plans are listed on page 3.5 of the *PW Manual*.

Living the PW Purpose Strategies and Activities

The Spirit of God is powerful, and when we live by the spirit, we are moved into action. Presbyterian Women of Bethesda Presbyterian Church in Camden, South Carolina, offers the following reflection on such faithful living:

Is it possible for you and me to make a difference in what is happening in our world today, or should we wait for others who have more power or more money to initiate change? Change, I believe, is seldom dramatic but is achieved over time in much the same way as nature wears away mountains or cuts canyons into the subsoil. If Presbyterian Women believe that our actions can make a difference, it will happen. Let us work for positive change by adopting achievable strategies that will reinforce our Christian faith and improve our lives and the lives of others. Perhaps the impact of each individual's efforts will not be as dramatic as a thunderstorm but like a gentle rainfall, it will be much more nourishing and beneficial.

When we engage in action motivated by faith, we live out the PW Purpose consciously or unconsciously. The purpose of Presbyterian Women convicts us to

- Nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study
- Support the mission of the Church worldwide

- Work for justice and peace
- Build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and witnesses to the promise of god's kingdom.

Below are some suggestions that can be used to carry out the PW Purpose. Remember there are many more!

To Nurture Our Faith Through Prayer and Bible Study

1. Use the *Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study*
2. Subscribe to *Hungry Hearts, Hungry Minds: The Quest for a Reformed Discipleship and Spirituality*, a quarterly resource published by the Theology, Worship, and Education Ministry Area. www.pcusa.org/spiritualformation.
3. Increase daily prayer time.
4. Make an extended and inclusive prayer list.
5. Attend Sunday school and encourage others to attend.
6. Attend Bible study groups.
7. Attend prayer groups.
8. Support the PW/*Horizons* Bible study.
9. Use the PW/*Horizons* Bible study resources found in *Horizons* magazine.
10. Have prayer partners.
11. Take part in a prayer chain.
12. Prepare devotional booklets.
13. Review books on prayer and devotional books and share with others.
14. Encourage families to have daily devotionals.
15. Sponsor church Bible reading, read the Bible in one year.
16. Challenge youth and adults on Bible reading and study.
17. Challenge everyone to bring Bibles to church.
18. Use bulletins to motivate people to pray and study the Bible.
19. Participate in and organize spiritual retreats.
20. Help sponsor Vacation Bible School for children, families and women.
21. Sponsor a coffee hour for gathering of small groups to study and pray.
22. Hold a prayer vigil.
23. Hold a shut in for 24 hours for prayer.
24. Make available a special prayer request box.
25. Show you care with little things.
26. Share information about concerns.
27. Pray for family units in church.
28. Seek out help from your pastor for your PW Bible study preparation. If your pastor does not work with PW Bible study leaders, seek out help from another pastor who does. Encourage your pastor to start helping.
29. Have workshops on spiritual leadership and spiritual practices.
30. Use *Horizons* Bible study and magazine for ideas for spiritual nurture.
31. Use *Make the Most of Your Magazine*, available as a free download from www.pcusa.org/horizons, for program ideas for your circle or group.
32. Conduct prayer visitation for ill and new babies.

33. Create a homebound circle and have other circles send cards, provide birthday visits and secret pals and call members of the church who are homebound.
34. Participate in small group Bible study.
35. Hold a service luncheon with an offering once a week during Lent.
36. Encourage everyone to hold a daily devotion during Lent using a Lent devotional book
37. Participate in worship and prayer services from Palm Sunday to Easter.
38. Study hymns and the scripture on which the hymns are based.
39. Help children learn the Shorter Catechism.
40. Learn a new Bible verse each day.
41. Pray for missionaries.
42. Learn about different versions of the Bible.
43. Plan a World Day of Prayer service and attend a service in your area. Planning materials are available from World Day of Prayer USA Distribution Center, 888/937-8720 or visit www.wdpusa.org.

To Support the Mission of the Church Worldwide

1. Engage in prayer and study using the PC(USA) *Mission Year Book of Prayer & Study* on a daily basis.
2. Obtain copies of the PC(USA) *Children's Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study* and introduce children to the resource through Vacation Bible School, children's sermons, Sunday school and other programs.
3. Order the *PW Together in Service Manual* for mission project ideas (PWR-07-431)
4. Participate in projects including:
 - Enough for Everyone (www.pcusa.org/enough)
 - Fair Trade (www.pcusa.org/coffee)
 - Energy conservation (www.pcusa.org/energy)
 - Sweat free products (www.pcusa.org/sweatfree)
 - Debt and credit (www.pcusa.org/oikocredit)
 - NetWorkers (www.pcusa.org/health/international/networkers.htm)
 - PW Palm Project (www.pcusa.org/pw/missionmatters/tis/congo).
5. Take part in mission opportunities, local and abroad.
6. Nominate someone for the PW Global Exchange.
7. Visit residents in a nursing home.
8. Read to someone who is blind.
9. Advocate for and serve people who are homeless.
10. Subscribe to *Horizons* to be better informed about PW activities.
11. Invite a missionary to speak.
12. Participate in Crop Walk.
13. Participate in the Fellowship of the Least Coin prayer movement.
14. Make kits for disaster victims. Contact Presbyterian Disaster Assistance for information (www.pcusa.org/pda)
15. Participate in the Blanket Program.
16. Collect 3 cents a meal for missions, put jars on tables.
17. Allow space for Meals on Wheels at your church.
18. Help feed people through food programs.

19. Bring specific items needed for the church service center.
20. Partner with local agencies that serve the needs of people who are poor, abused or incarcerated.
21. Participate in or create new care projects for people who are homebound.
22. Organize and/or participate in Christmas projects such as Stocking trees, Mitten trees, Angel trees and local efforts.
23. Sew and knit for newborns.
24. Celebrate Christmas in July, collect underwear and socks for people who are homeless or in need.
25. Participate in Beth-El Mission for migrant workers.
26. Send Christmas cards to prisons.
27. Reuse old Christmas cards to make baskets for cookies.
28. Attend meetings on local and presbytery levels to find out what missions are being supported by the church.
29. Collect used stamps to be used for mission work.
30. Have a workshop on aging and disability.
31. Support college students.
32. Support Christmas International House.
33. Be a part of the Central American Task Force.
34. Support Dimes for Hunger.
35. Learn more about peacemaking.
36. Support the One Great Hour of Sharing special offering.
37. Take part in the Birthday Offering.
38. Take part in the Thank Offering.
39. Pledge to PW on congregation, presbytery, synod and Churchwide levels.
40. Support theological schools.
41. Support Mission Haven.
42. Take part in the partnership with Haiti and Nicaragua or other global partnership.
43. Support and visit Presbyterian Homes.
44. Read a copy of *Embracing God's World: Involving the Congregation in Mission* (Witherspoon Press, available from Presbyterian Distribution Service, 800/524-2612, item number 1-57153-068-1, \$12.50 plus shipping).

To Work for Justice and Peace

1. Subscribe to PC(USA) Peacemaking Program's E-Newsletters and publications www.pcusa.org/peacemaking.
2. Join the Action Alert Network of the Office of Women's Advocacy to receive action alert on justice and peace matters. www.pcusa.org/womensadvocacy/alerts/index.htm
3. Plan an antiracism education event with antiracism facilitators in your presbytery.
4. Help children learn to solve problems without violence.
5. Vote in local, state, and national elections.
6. Support a local or national spouse abuse network.
7. Give to a local food pantry.
8. Become aware of injustices and resources available within your community.
9. Support Habitat for Humanity.
10. Support Heifer Project International.

11. Support children's homes.
12. Be a poll worker, or take food to poll workers on Election Day.
13. Support and participate in mission trips.
14. Learn nonviolent conflict resolution skills.
15. Volunteer at a rape crisis center.
16. Take children of women prisoners to see their mothers on Saturday
17. Stay informed.
18. Write to local politicians and congresspersons about issues of justice.
19. Support shelters for battered women by giving time, devotionals, and money.
20. Start a prison support group (nurture families of prisoners).
21. Support people who are being released from prisons.
22. Be an ally to someone suffering from injustice.
23. Encourage pastors to observe Criminal Justice Sunday.
24. Support food banks and soup kitchens.
25. Prepare food and send food to family members in need.
26. Visit prisons.
27. Host parties for the Department of Juvenile Justice on special days.
28. Organize and train volunteers for community programs.
29. Remember the Holocaust in hopes that it will never happen again.
30. Organize, attend or participate in Martin Luther King Day and Race Relations Day celebrations.
31. Read *Justice and Peace Links*, an online newsletter written by Presbyterian Women about pertinent justice and peace issues and created by the Justice and Peace Committee of the Churchwide Coordinating Team. To receive the newsletter, contact Patricia Longfellow, patricia.longfellow@pcusa.org or visit www.pcusa.org/pw.

To Build an Inclusive, Caring Community on Women that Strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Witnesses to the Promise of God's Kingdom

1. Adopt a person or couple unable to attend church.
2. Plan weekly contact with people adopted.
3. Help people who are ill—take food, provide transportation to the doctor's office, etc.
4. Get to know a young couple in your church.
5. Invite someone who does not have a church home to come with you to a church service or event.
6. Reach out to new church members by inviting them into your home or include them in social activities.
7. Organize dialogue groups composed of women of diverse racial ethnic backgrounds to overcome barriers and increase mutual understanding.
8. Offer a series of educational sessions using the PW DVD *Becoming the Beloved Community* (Available from Presbyterian Distribution Service (PDS), 800/524-2612, item #PWR-06-120). It comes with a study guide.
9. Intentionally create opportunities to get to know people of different cultural and economic backgrounds.
10. Have a newsletter with scriptures and nurturing thoughts, share with whole community.
11. Invite community, not just members, to special events at church.

12. Participate in Habitat for Humanity building programs.
13. Collect food items for food centers and soup kitchens.
14. Volunteer to help at a food center or soup kitchen.
15. Participate in a prayer chain.
16. Invite women from other churches, including different races and cultures, to attend meetings.
17. Host a breakfast between two services or between Sunday school and church and sit at tables with people you do not know as well.
18. Intentionally invite young persons to special events, both inside and outside of church.
19. Adopt a local school and help when needed.
20. Visit people who are elderly and confined to their homes.
21. Provide dinners for those in bereavement.
22. Create and support rainbow groups to provide support for people who have suffered a loss through divorce, death, or other circumstances.
23. Start or participate in an angel ministry—write to prisoners for names of their children and their ages. Invite them to be a part of the ministry.
24. Let people know they are always welcome to circles.
25. Initiate or join a prayer chain and prayer partners program, bring in unchurched youth partners and keep in touch with them.
26. Assign circles to college students to support through phone calls, emails, and other forms of outreach.
27. Create a scholarship fund for college youth.
28. Help youth go to Christian camps and retreats.
29. Support the PW Cluster Leader Program. Invite your PW Cluster Leader to join your Presbyterian Women at a meeting, worship, or special event.
32. Give daily smiles away.

End of the Year Evaluation

Evaluation is essential to grow as an organization. The following is a very simple process for doing an evaluation:

List Goals of the PW Purpose

On chart paper, list the four areas of commitment found in the PW Purpose:

1. To nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study
2. To support the mission of the church worldwide
3. To work for justice and peace
4. To build an inclusive, caring community of women

Brainstorm Events and Activities

Brainstorm about the events and activities PW members have been involved in during the year. As they are named, place them under the area it matches. Example:

To nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study

- Participated in a prayer chain

To work for justice and peace

- Supported spouse abuse network

Review Activities

After all activities and events have been listed, examine the charts and see if your program is balanced. If one area has many items under it and another one has only one or two, then in making your plans for the next year, be purposeful in adding activities to that area.

Look at the activities listed and ask the following questions

Success Measures

Was it a success? How was success measured?

Participation

How many were involved? Remember numbers are not the only measure of success. A small group can have a meaningful and successful event. Were new women included, either in leadership or as participants?

Outcome

What was the end product of the event/activity? Who benefited from the experience?

What were the problems? What caused them? What is still left to do? Is this something that should be repeated next year?

Plan

Once your evaluation is complete, use the information for future planning.

PW and PC(USA) Leadership Resources

To order, call Presbyterian Distribution Service (PDS) at 800/524-2612 or visit www.pcusa.org/marketplace. Resources published annually or multiple times during the year do not have PDS numbers, but may be ordered by title through PDS. Also visit www.pcusa.org/pw for a complete list of resources.

Communication

PW Communication Basics (PWR-01-120)

Horizons Magazine, September/October 2001 (HZN-01-240)

Dialogue

Building an Inclusive, Caring Community through Dialogue (PWR-03-121)

Ecumenicity

PW Practice & Support for Ecumenicity (PWR-00-127)

Historian

- *How to Write Church History* (PWR-02-105)
- www.pcusa.org/pw/resources/leadershipdev

History

- *A Sampler of Saints* by Elizabeth Howell Verdesi and Sylvia Thorson-Smith (PDS 72700-97-001) presents a pictorial history of Presbyterian foremothers who made significant contributions to Presbyterian Church.
- *Bound Together in Love* by Barbara McDonald (PWR-99-203) chronicles the history of creating Presbyterian Women.
- *Years of Strong Effort* by Annette Chapman-Adisho (PDS 72-710-98-001) offers a historical reflection on the development of women's organizations in Presbyterian Churches in 1967–1993 including Presbyterian Women.
- *Celebration Witness* by Elisabeth Lunz (PDS 72-710-97-002) offers a reflection on the history and experience of clergywomen in PCUSA during the first forty years since ordination, 1956–1996.
- *200 Years of Presbyterian Women* (PWR-00-210) is an educational video that introduces one to the history of Presbyterian Women, which began 200 years ago.
- *Horizons*, January/February 2008 (HZN-08-200)
- *Celebrating the Legacy, Visioning the Future, Living the Jubilee: Fellowship of the Least Coin at Fifty*, (PWR-06-462)

Inclusivity

- *Building an Inclusive, Caring Community through Dialogue* (PWR-03-121) is a resource developed to support Presbyterian women in their efforts for creating an inclusive community and dismantling racism through dialogue.
- *PW Etchings in Diversity* (PWR-99-102) is a collection of reflections by 26 Presbyterian women on how time and place of birth, family, race and culture, religion and ritual have shaped their lives.

- *Well Chosen Words* (PDS 72-700-99-003) invites us to choose words that include all God's people.

Leading Presbyterian Women

- *Horizons* is the official bimonthly magazine of Presbyterian Women. For a full list of *Horizons* themes, check the PW Resource Order Form or visit www.pcusa.org/horizons.
- *Expanding Your Horizons* (HZN-01-601) is a resource prepared to help PW groups explore *Horizons* as a programming resource.
- *Make the Most of Your Magazine*, ideas for using each issue of the magazine programmatically, available bimonthly as a free download from www.pcusa.org/horizons.
- *Horizons* Bible study and supplemental materials, for information on past, current and upcoming studies and supplements, visit www.pcusa.org/horizons
- *PW Resource Order Form*; free; updated biannually
- *Planning with a Purpose* (PWR-05-110)
- *PW Gathering to Work & Worship* (PWR-01-115)
- *PW Manual* (PWR-07-110)
- *PW Leadership Packet* (PWR-01-120); also available in Korean and Spanish
- *PW Polity & Parliamentary Procedure* (PWR-01-304) available in English and Spanish
- *Together in Service Guide* (PWR-06-433) is an excellent resource for living out our faith in service at home, globally, ecumenically and in the PC(USA).
- *20 Tips to Help Women SOAR*, available as a free download from www.pcusa.org/pw/resources

Leading Young Women of Faith

Lifting Up Our Voices: Young Women Explore Life, Liberation, & Faith produced by National Network of Presbyterian College Women (NNPCW) in 2002 (PDS 7275802001)

Mission

- *Together in Service Guide* offers a collection of wonderful ideas for engaging in God's mission in the world (PWR-07-431)
- *Together in Service* brochure offers information about how one can be a part of Presbyterian Women's hands-on mission program (PWR-07-431; free)
- *Sowing Seeds of Hope in Congo* brochure describes the PW Palm Project which provides a new mission opportunity for individuals and groups to make donations for the development of palm plantations in Congo (PWR-07-420; free)
- *Embracing God's World: Involving the Congregation in Mission*, 2nd edition! provides a framework and practical suggestions for ways Presbyterians can engage in mission today (PDS 70-612-05-922)
- *Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study* brings the Presbyterian family together daily for prayer and study. Join with them. Learn about and pray for those in situations of

joy or need and those who come alongside them to minister in Christ's name.
Published annually.

Public Speaking

Speaking Up (PWR-02-140) is a resource (CD and printed guide) guides the learner through the process of preparing her presentation step by step. Available in English, Spanish, Korean and Arabic.

Racism and Anti-Racism

- *Becoming the Beloved Community: People of Faith Working Together to Eradicate Racism* (PWR-06-120) is a DVD with an accompanying study guide produced by PW to help bring its anti-racism initiative closer to home. Eight Presbyterian women speak about their journeys with racism and anti-racism and call us into action for racial justice as a faith practice.
- *Breaking Down the Walls: Responding to the Racism that Divides Us* by Virgil Cruz and Jean Cooley (PDS 2259271) is a study guide that explores racism, both individual and institutional.
- *Building an Inclusive and Caring Community through Dialogue* (PWR-03-121) is a resource developed to support Presbyterian women in their efforts for creating an inclusive community and dismantling racism through dialogue.
- *Facing Racism: In Search of a Beloved Community* by Lonna Chang-Ren Lee (PDS 70-270-98-002) is a study guide for youth that addresses issues of racism.

Racial Ethnic Women Speak

- *Come! Be Refreshed! A National Gathering of Women of Color in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A)*. Church and Society, March/April 2005. (PDS 72-431-05-602)
- *African American Presbyterian Clergywomen: The First Twenty-Five Years* compiled by the Rev. Karen V. Brown and the Rev. Phyllis M. Felton. Louisville, Ky: Witherspoon Press, 2001.
- *Sisters Struggling in the Spirit: A Women of Color Theological Anthology* edited by Nantawan Boonprasat Lewis, et.al. Louisville, KY: Women's Ministries Program Area, 1994. (PDS 72-700-94-001)
- *Etchings in Diversity by Presbyterian Woman, 1990*. Twenty six racial ethnic women tell how time and place of birth, family, race and culture, religion and ritual have shaped their lives.
- *Untold Stories by the Third World Women Coordinating Committee*. Stories told at the 1976 UPW meeting, Purdue University.

Search Committee

- *PW Manual* (PWR-07-101, \$6)
- www.pcusa.org/pw/resources/leadershipdev

Spirituality and Worship

- *Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study* brings the Presbyterian family together daily for prayer and study. Join with them. Learn about and pray for those in situations of

joy or need and those who come alongside them to minister in Christ's name. Published annually; available from PDS, \$9.25 each; \$8.00 each for 10–24 copies plus shipping.

- *PW Gathering to Work & Worship* (PWR-01-115)
- *Hungryhearts*, a quarterly publication of the Office of Spiritual Formation in Louisville. Visit www.pcusa.org/spiritualformation or contact the Office of Spiritual Formation by phone (888/728-7228, ext. 5306) or email ada.middleton@pcusa.org for more information.
- *Circle of Prayer*. Prayers for peace and reconciliation from Fellowship of the Least Coin. Published annually.

Stewardship

Choices packet (PDS 70 370 97 200) is a comprehensive stewardship education program for ages 13 and up. The material is built around eight themes that explore the full meaning of stewardship as a life of discipleship.

Theology

- *Theologies Written from Feminist Perspectives: An Introductory Study* written by Cynthia Campbell (OGA 88-069) is a 1988 publication that discusses key doctrines of the Christian church from feminist perspectives.
- *Sisters Struggling in the Spirit* edited by Nantawan Boonprasat Lewis, et.al. (PDS 72-700-94-001) is a women of color theological anthology published Women's Ministries in 1994.
- *Toward a Liberating Faith: A Primer on Feminist Theology* written by Isabel Rogers (PDS 72-700-00-002).
- *Remembering What We Never Knew: The Epistemology of Womanist Theology* written by Katie G. Cannon (PDS 72-700-01-002) is a womanist theology primer.
- *Hacia una fe liberadora* by Magdalena L. Garcia (PDS 72-700-01-003) is an introduction to mujerista theology written in Spanish and English.
- *Coming Home: Asian American Women Doing Theology* (PDS 849-06-002) is a theology primer written by Unzu Lee from Asian American feminist perspectives.

Treasurer

- *PW Budget Brochure*; published annually
- www.pcusa.org/pw/resources/leadershipdev

Worship

- *Celebrate the Gifts of Women* is four-page worship resource published annually to be used for worship on the second Sunday of March when the church celebrates the gifts of women.
- *PW Gathering to Work & Worship* (PWR-01-115)