

The Ministries Template At Work

The Ministries Template is an exciting new tool, but you might appreciate a time of contemplation in each area. The following reflections and questions are designed to encourage you to prepare to use the template. You might want to use it with a group of women, or alone, as you prepare to create programs. Begin with prayer, and then allow God to inspire you as you proceed!

Ministry Area: Worshiping God

Merriam Webster’s dictionary defines “worship” as reverence offered a divine power. That’s a rather cold and unsatisfying description of what we are called to do with our entire lives. Romans 12:1 tells us, “I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship,” (NRSV). Worship is an act, and it is a way of being. Worship encompasses the whole of our relationship with God.

How do we carry out worship in our women’s groups? What is the role that worship should be given? How can we ensure the place of this ministry area in the overall life of our women’s ministries?

For your reflection:

What are some of my favorite memories of worship experiences? Why do these stand out?

What role does worship have in my life of faith?

For your ministry plans (jot down ideas here—individually or as a group):

How do we already include worship as part of our women’s and girls’ ministries?

How can we be intentional about emphasizing worship in our women’s and girls’ ministries in the future? Are there new ideas or experiences we could create?

Ministry Area: Growing Spiritually

We all know that we’re supposed to grow in our faith. The idea of faith as a garden, with buds and blossoms, is most likely a familiar one. Our hope is that our faith will continue to develop and mature throughout our lives. But what is spiritual growth, really? How do we measure it? Is there ever a time when we’ve actually achieved it? How do we go about challenging ourselves to greater spiritual growth? How do we go about challenging others?

For your reflection:

How have I grown spiritually over my lifetime? What has helped me to grow?

For your ministry plans (Jot down ideas here—individually or as a planning group):

How do we already challenge women and girls to greater spiritual growth through our ministries?

What kinds of new opportunities could we offer in our ministry to do this?

Ministry Area: Developing Our Spiritual Gifts

Many people have problems believing they are truly gifted, talented, skilled. It would seem that often women have the most difficulties thinking of themselves as gifted women of God. Somewhere in mid-adolescence, insecurity sets in and we begin to downplay or ignore our own God-given talents. Or, perhaps more simply, we’ve just never had the chance or time to explore talents we may have lying dormant. Since we have been gifted by God, it is part of our calling as women of faith to explore those gifts, develop them more fully, and put them to use in God’s ministry. As ministry leaders, it is also our responsibility to discern those gifts in other women and girls, and to offer as many opportunities as possible for people to discover and grow in their own giftedness.

For your reflection:

What do I feel are my God-given gifts? What might I do to explore and develop those gifts more fully? What might I do to discover other gifts in myself that I don’t even know about yet? In what ways can I continue to share my gifts in my mature years?

For your ministry plans (Jot down ideas here—individually or as a planning group):

How can we develop a ministry leadership structure that will truly allow women and girls to develop and use their spiritual gifts (rather than, say, just filling a position with a warm body)?

What opportunities and programs could we offer that would give women and girls the opportunity to discover, believe in, explore, develop and use their spiritual gifts to the glory of God?

Ministry Area: Caring for Each Other

You’ve probably met the person who, after visiting a church, said “the worship was nice, but the people were so unfriendly.” Perhaps you’ve heard someone say “that congregation doesn’t even seem to like each other.” Paul instructs us, “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it,” (I Corinthians 12:26, NRSV). As members of the body of Christ, we are to care for other members of that same body in very real and meaningful ways. We lift each other up in prayer, we lend a shoulder of support during tough times, we celebrate each other’s joys. We do not seek to break down the fellowship, but to build it up. We may still hold each other accountable for our actions, but we do so in love, not judgment. We can only be fully open to a relationship with God insofar as we are fully open to a relationship with each other.

For your reflection:

How caring am I about other members of my congregation? ...my women’s ministry group or girls’ ministry group? Is there someone for whom I should be showing more care? How could I care for that person?

For your ministry plans (Jot down ideas here—individually or as a planning group):

How could our women’s and girls’ ministries demonstrate greater caring for each other? ...for women and girls who are not active in our ministry groups? How could we lead the entire congregation in a greater caring of each other?

Ministry Area: Reaching Out to Others

This is the area in which our love and caring now extends from our own congregation, our own ministry groups, even from members of our own faith, into the community outside of the walls of our church. Jesus tells us to “Go...and make disciples of all nations,” (Matthew 28:19), and “... ‘Truly I tell you, just as you [ministered to] one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me,’”(Matthew 25:40, adapted). We are to be active in the communities and in the world, serving, discipling, reaching out to anyone that God sends to us. We are to be agents of Christ’s love in the world, sharing the story and alleviating suffering as we are given to do.

For your reflection:

How might I reach out to others in the world around me? What is God calling me to do?

For your ministry plans (Jot down ideas here—individually or as a planning group):

How can “reaching out to others” be a part of our women’s ministry? ...our girls’ ministry? Are there ways in which we might lead the congregation in reaching out to others? How can we reach out to the unfamiliar territories? How can we further serve Christ in our world? What further ways can we reach out to both National and International Ministries?