

Developing a Personal Mission Statement



Lutheran Women's Missionary League
Developed by the LWML Member Development Committee in 1995
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A familiar poster features three frazzled, wide-eyed raccoons with the quote, “There are those who spend their life making things happen, there are those who watch things happen, and the rest of us wonder what happened!” Most people fall into one of those three categories, especially when we pause to reflect on how quickly time passes and wonder what we have done with that time. Sometimes we have accomplished a great deal yet feel unfulfilled. There are also times when we make too many things happen, and we feel so unfocused and frustrated. Working with a personal mission statement can help us feel a sense of purpose and become more focused in our life.

The following worksheets are designed to help you work through a sequential process to develop your own personal mission statement. You may want to work through them on your own or join a friend as you work through the process.

Questions to "test" your mission statement draft:

- Does this mission statement describe what my life is all about?
- Would others think this statement describes my life's work?
- Do I feel motivated and challenged by this statement?
- Is this statement consistent with what I see myself doing or what I would like to be about?
- Do I have the skills, abilities, and gifts to accomplish the potential in what I have written?
- Is this mission statement attainable?

Before moving from draft to a finalized version, "live" with your draft mission statement for a while. Share it with others, particularly close friends and other people in your life. Dialogue with them about it. Is it consistent with their view of you? Once you feel comfortable with your draft commit it to memory so it can guide your activities.

Mission statements should be touchstones as we plan our work, relationships, our volunteer hours, and make decisions that significantly impact our life's choices. They are meant to be flexible, fluid, living documents. Review it from time to time so that it guides not only what you are currently about, but also what you've grown to become.

WORKSHEET ONE

EQUIPPED TO BE SAINTS

OBJECTIVES

- to explore how each of us has been equipped by our own personal history for a unique and personal ministry or service.
- to begin the process of developing a personal mission statement.

Our life has been made up of significant events that have helped shape who we are. Each step of that journey has been important in some way. Sometimes these steps made sense to us; at other times, God alone knew why we walked where we did. There has been a sequential process in being equipped to become His disciples. The first step of the mission statement process is to explore the history that brought you to this point through a "journey line" or "life line." In the space provided below, create a journey line noting significant moments that may have contributed to your growth as His servant. You are encouraged to note the learnings rather than the specific details of the moment. Think brush strokes, dates aren't important, events are.

Some significant points of interest may be:

- when and how you came to be a Christian
- when and how you came to be part of the LWML
- what significant events influenced who you are today
- what significant people in your journey influenced you (in either a positive or negative way)

REFLECTION TIME

Use words and/or phrases to respond to the following questions. Continue to add to your worksheet as new ideas and memories surface. Please complete this part of the process as your answers and reflections will be useful as you work through the next worksheet.

1. What types of activities or areas of work have you been involved in? What do others frequently ask you to do?
2. Reflecting on Question 1, what patterns do you observe? (examples: helping, teaching, serving, volunteering, leading)

3. List three to four times in your life when you have felt uplifted and fulfilled. What did you learn from those experiences? Are the peaks or high points on your journey line somehow related? Is there a common theme to those moments?

4. List three to four times in your life when you have faced difficult challenges. What did you learn from those experiences? In retrospect, can you see those challenges as teachable moments, as opportunities to equip the saints, as gifts? Recognizing them as gifts and choosing to use them in a positive way may help us determine what service we've been equipped to do.

5. List three or four qualities/characteristics that your life has equipped you with so far.

6. "We are where we've been" could be interpreted to mean that God has equipped us with these experiences to empower us to do His work. List three or four things (in addition to the qualities in the last answer) you've learned about yourself from the past that will shape your journey in the future.

7. Winston Churchill has been credited with the quote, "What you are is God's gift to you; what you do with what you are is your gift to God. "How have you put your gifts to work?"

As previously explored, our past is an integral part of who we are. To a large extent it has shaped what we find ourselves doing today. We need to build on the past and explore where we are going and what we are called to do. Worksheet 2 will help you more clearly define your own personal mission as Jesus' disciples.

WORKSHEET TWO

EMPOWERED TO BE SENT OUT

OBJECTIVES

- to identify how each person has been uniquely gifted
- to appreciate all of our many gifts and be able to affirm that uniqueness

List words and phrases that best describe your response to each of the following questions.

1. List what you are currently involved in. Include ministry activities on the local, state, and national level; volunteer activities; hobbies and leisure pursuits; specific family and career activities you enjoy. Be as specific as possible.
2. Most people have favorite activities that really motivate us and bring a sense of satisfaction and enjoyment. What do you do that you like doing? What gives you energy? What motivates you? Be sure to list whatever YOU like to do, regardless of how others perceive it.
3. If someone took snapshots of you during a typical week, what would those pictures show you doing? Write down words or phrases that describe the actions in these scenes.
4. If that same photographer took pictures or videos of you in the future, what actions would be captured? What do you want to be doing five years from now? List three to five things you see yourself doing or that you believe you've been called to do.
5. What do you value? What do you cherish? Values act as a guidepost that help us measure the quality and substance of life. Values can be such things as: a spiritual life, family cohesiveness, autonomy, freedom, ability to lead others, service to others, justice, health, peace, economic security, etc.

READ AND STUDY MATTHEW 25:14-30 – THE PARABLE OF THE TALETTS

1. How does it feel when you identify with Servant One and Two?
2. All of us identify with Servant Three at times. What are some of the obstacles we face in trying to utilize our blessings?
3. What would help you to utilize your gifts more fully? (Example: self-confidence, support from friends and family, priorities sorted out, energy, a clearer sense of purpose, etc.)

TALENT SEARCH

Set a timer for 3 minutes. During that time, make a complete list of ALL (don't be shy!) the blessings you've been given. Mark your responses below. It may help your thought process to keep repeating the phrase(s) "I've been blessed with..." or "God's given me ..."

I've been blessed with ...

God's given me ...

Set the timer for three more minutes. During that time, list your answers to the following question: What would a spouse or close friend add to your list?

REFLECTIONS

If you had to share your answers from this worksheet with another person, what key information would you share?

WORKSHEET THREE

PAUSE FOR REFLECTION

Please spend some time reflecting on the information you have gathered about yourself thus far. These reflections will help you in developing your personal mission statement.

1. Review "Worksheet One: Equipped To Be Saints" and "Worksheet Two: Empowered To Be Sent Out." What patterns do you notice? Do you find yourself doing what you are equipped to do as well as what you enjoy doing?
2. What do you see yourself doing in the future? (Activities/services such as family, occupation, educational opportunities, church, leisure time or hobbies)
3. With what person or groups of people are you most frequently doing these activities from Question 2?
4. Why are you doing what you are doing? Why do you want to do the things you listed in Question 2?
What's really important to you?

5. Begin to identify descriptive statements that identify how you would like to be described; what you want to do; what gives you a sense of purpose. Examples may include:

- * I enjoy doing what I can to help others.
- * I am willing to learn from other people.
- * I enjoy being in service related professions or activities.
- * I give priority to my faith, my family, then my career or volunteer responsibilities.
- * I value healthy relationships.
- * I try to balance my volunteer activities and family responsibilities.
- * I am committed to nurturing the spiritual development of others.
- * I am uniquely blessed with...
- * I value ... (prioritizing your values will also help you as you begin to draft your mission statement.)
- * I am a person who ...

The last phase of the mission statement process will ask you to string together thoughts, learnings, phrases, and reflections to discover your unique ministry or service. It has been said that we detect rather than invent our mission in life. Using the gifts that God has given each of us, we need to determine how to best fulfill His vision for our life. Victor Frankl once wrote, "Everyone has their own specific vocation or mission in life. We cannot be replaced, nor can our life be repeated. Thus, everyone's task is as unique as is the specific opportunity to implement it." What an eloquent paraphrase of St. Paul's writing in 1 Cor. 12: 4-6: *There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in men.* In verse 11, Paul continues, *All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and He gives them to each one, just as He determines.* The rest of that familiar passage describes the unique, yet interrelated gifts of each part of the body. Each part is uniquely created with a special function, ALL of which are equally necessary.

Personal mission statements are exactly that- personal (unique to the author) and mission driven. There are some basic components:

- Personal strengths (character, qualities, blessings)
- Framework of your life's setting; roles you currently fill or wish to take on
- What contributions you want to make, accomplishments you would like to achieve

WORKSHEET FOUR

MISSION STATEMENT DRAFT

MISSION STATEMENT: is a “clear, concise statement (25 words or less) that defines the unique reason or purpose for one’s existence or efforts.” (adapted from Process Planning – A Model for Empowerment, Les Stroh, Cornerstone Consulting, 1991)

Look over your work so far. You may see particular words, phrases or themes that continue to surface on your worksheets. Those key elements lend purpose and direction to our efforts. In the space below list themes, word patterns that reoccur (Examples: helping others, equipping people, teaching others, encouraging growth, serving others). Begin to combine these themes into phrases that seem to characterize your efforts. Draft your own mission statement using these words, phrases and thoughts from your efforts so far.

Following are some sample mission statements that may spark your thinking. Be sure to use these as examples. Someone else's statement embodies the work, gifts and dreams of that individual. Your statement will reflect you, your blessings, and aspirations.

SAMPLE MISSION STATEMENTS

Group Mission Statement

LWML: The mission of the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League is to assist each woman of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in affirming her relationship with the Triune God so that she is enabled to use her gifts in ministry to the people of the world.

Personal Mission Statements

To actively seek opportunities to share my faith in Jesus Christ with others.

Committed to serve God, reflecting His love in my life, sharing His love with others and reaching out to those in need by the enabling power of His Holy Spirit.

To so live my life that others will see my faith and be led to the Savior through me.

To serve the Lord willingly, effectively and capably in my work and to continue to grow in knowledge of what He has done for me.

As a committed Christian, to be a catalyst for identifying potential and releasing energy in people to help mold and perfect the family of God.

As a Christian caregiver, I'm dedicated to equipping and empowering people to develop and maintain healthy lifestyles.

To learn from those around me, to teach with my gifts of insight, process and craftsman hands; to help others live with respect and honor.

To help teens and children grow in the Lord and to help them deal with pressures in their lives in a Christian way.

My mission as a chosen vessel of God is to use my gifts to bring others into a closer relationship with Him.

To make a spiritual difference in the lives of the people I touch by serving as a catalyst for change, by speaking God's word and modeling a Christian lifestyle.

To be a fully learning, growing person who is committed to:

- *growing, will empower others to grow beyond their current bounds,*
- *asking hard questions, will challenge/nudge others to tackle life issues and*
- *acting upon what I believe, will teach others, especially women, to be "power-filled people of integrity."*

To provide experiences where my family and co-workers can grow together, building each other up to glorify God and serve Him.

DRAFT YOUR OWN MISSION STATEMENT USING WORDS, PHRASES AND THOUGHTS FROM YOUR WORKSHEETS.

The mission of _____ is ... _____
