**Reaching Different Cultures and Generations**

General introduction of Special Focus

Ministries Department and the session overview.

*(Before the session starts, select three (3) people for the sketch)*

Good afternoon to all,

As Vice President of Special Focus Ministries, I oversee the intentional outreach programs for Young Woman Representatives (YWRs) and Heart to Heart Sisters, our multicultural sisters. The term “Special Focus” refers to intentional outreach to the women in our church who are sometimes overlooked. The department has added a new focus, an outreach to our deaf sisters, which you will hear about later in this presentation.

This session is titled “Reaching Different Cultures and Generations”. I will go over what’s happening with these programs and how we can reach out to these sisters to welcome them into active participation in the LWML.

**Young Women**

One thing I have learned is, if you want to know something, the best way to find out is to just ask. So, how do you reach young women? Just ask them what they would like to do or what would get them more involved or engaged in the LWML. People like to give their opinions, especially when they are asked. Sometimes we hold back on our opinions depending on the situation. But when asked, we have permission to tell all. Then, in partnership, what needs to get done can get done.

**SLIDE**

And if we ask, we need to listen. We then need to act upon what we were told. That may mean trying something new or different, or being prepared to tell why we may not be able to do what was suggested or asked of us. People don’t feel appreciated or valued if you ask something of them and there is no follow up.

Ask the young women what they would like to do. Ask them to plan an event with you (the seasoned LWML women) assisting the young women.

In a lot of cases, it take us, the seasoned LWML women, to change in order to promote an effective outreach to the young women in the congregation.

**SLIDE**

Here are some things to think about.

The sketch you are about to see are from real accounts.

These events actually happened.

**THE SKETCH**

This session is to tell you how to reach out to generations and get them involved in the LWML.

These stories tell you that you may be the change needed in order to do effective outreach.

**SLIDE**

The desire to change is the key to growth in any area of life. Most of us desire improvement, yet at the same time we resist change. But you can’t have one without the other! Change is possible only if you want it badly enough.

The millennials are a tough crowd. They have plans for their lives that may not include the LWML at this time. We need to encourage them to participate as they are able. Equip them to build their own LWML groups. Don’t force leadership positions on them if they are not ready. We just want them to actively participate. They will let you know when they are ready for a leadership position. Show them that they are valued.

**SLIDE**

Here are some group meeting ideas for young women. Encourage them in this way.

**SLIDE**

Think outside of the BOX. Call your events by popular names that would attract young women. Have the young women plan an event FOR you or WITH you.

(Read some of the old and new terminology)

**SLIDE**

**Young Woman Representative (YWR)**

Each district has their own YWR selection process for their district conventions, so I am going to talk about the national level.

We just updated the program to allow districts to send up to four (4) young women to the LWML convention. We will also allow the YWR to bring a child with her during our morning and evening sessions. However as normal, the child will have to be cared for by someone else or be enrolled in Camp Insta-Friend during sessions. As you begin your YWR selection process, be sure to get to know the young women candidates.

The application process should help you determine if a young woman is able and willing to serve in her district post-convention. Even though the district pays her way, she should be willing to serve the Lord with gladness, not out of obligation. There should be some accountability. We want these young women to be active participants in the LWML. They should become the appointed Young Women coordinator on your district board, and be responsible for doing presentations, reporting at your district conventions, and helping to identify and encourage other young women to participate in the LWML. The current and former YWRs should build the district YWR programs.

**SLIDE**

**YOUth in Mission**

We should use the same means to engage our youth. Give them something to do. Ask them what they want to do and assist them in planning it. Help them start their own groups. Give them responsibilities within your group. You may have to drive them to meetings and events, so again, change may be necessary. Consider changing your group time to meet at the same time as the youth. I met and spoke with many youth during district conventions, and these young ladies want to serve the Lord. They are doers. Help them to do their thing. At the convention in Mobile, youth will be scheduled to help with GFTH, and we will have a youth LWML orientation on Thursday and a Youth activity on Friday evening. More information will be coming to you as registration opens. Be sure to enroll your teens in Camp Insta-Friends. There will be a lot of activity for them there.

**SLIDE**

So, to reach out to young women, remember these things:

*(Read from next 2 slides …)*

Train up a child … Teach our youth and teens to be an LWMLer now. They are ready now.

**SLIDE**

**Reaching Out to Our Sisters from Different Cultures**

*After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages.* This comes to us from Revelation 7:9a.

**SLIDE**

Now think about your congregation. Are there women sitting in the pews that don’t look like you? Don’t talk like you? AND, they don’t cook tuna casserole and jello for Lenten suppers. Sometimes we just think we don’t know how to approach people from other cultures, but we really do. It is as simple as inviting the women to your group meeting or event.

**SLIDE**

**We use excuses like, “We don’t have anything in common,” or “I don’t know how to communicate,” or even, “I don’t know if they would like to participate.” Instead, just **ask**. Invite and welcome ALL women in your congregation. But first it helps to know a little bit about the culture. Ask the person to share some information about their culture.

Get to know that person. You can use google or social media to learn some things about a culture. If the ethnic sisters are having an event, ask to be invited, and go there and see their cultural traditions. Show them that you care and that you want to learn.

**SLIDE**

Have you ever tried a Samosa? Naan bread? Tamales?

Are your funeral, Advent, or Lenten suppers always the same? Ask one of the multicultural women in your church to make a dish. Find out their skills. Perhaps one of the women might be the next district banner maker. Build a relationship and get to know the person for the individual she is.

**SLIDE**

*(Comment on being a learner. Read from next 2 slides)*

**SLIDE**

*(Read through the “Hot and Cold” slide)*

People from hot cultures are family-oriented, and people from cold cultures are task-oriented. If you know about the culture, you will not get upset if the Africans show up two (2) hours late for the rally. Plan accordingly.

**SLIDE**

The people of the western world and North America think they are always right in what they do. Let’s listen to what the other people in the world have to say.

This is number 4 of “5 Reasons to Learn About Different Cultures”. It says,

When you learn about other cultures, you learn that there is more than one approach to life. You also learn that your approach might not always be the best way. Perhaps the cultural heritage of someone else can add another dimension to your life.

**SLIDE**

**Heart to Heart Sisters Program (H2H)**

In 2001, we started the H2H Sisters program which is an intentional outreach to multicultural women. We knew that multicultural women were in the church, but they were not in the LWML. Then we started a H2H District Leader program so that women can identify ethnic women in their district and encourage them to participate in the LWML.

We have rewritten the H2H Sisters program to be administered at the district level. We found that model is best for networking, mentoring, and fellowship.

We will still have H2H District Leader training in Mobile. The website has the new manual and other great resources to assist in you in your outreach to other cultures.

*****(Walk through the webpage on the next 3 slides)*

**SLIDE**

**Outreach to Our Deaf and Hard of Hearing Sisters**

**SLIDE**

When we look at the LWML [Mission, Vision, and Primary Focus](http://www.lwml.org/who-we-are) statements, we see these words: assist each woman, each woman is welcomed, we offer each woman, we accept and encourage each woman, we equip each woman.

**SLIDE**

“Envisioning a world where the Deaf community participates equally and fully in the Body of Christ” is the vision of the [Lutheran Friends of the Deaf.](https://www.lutheranfriendsofthedeaf.org/)

We have deaf sisters in many of our LCMS churches. Sometimes we don’t reach out because of the language barrier. (The same reason why we sometimes don’t reach out to women from other cultures). We think we cannot communicate, but we can with love.

This is an opportunity to equip ourselves to support and encourage “each” deaf woman in our church.

To be true to our statements of each women, we need to intentionally reach out to our deaf sisters to involve them in active participation in the LWML.

More information on outreach to the deaf community will be coming to our website soon. The South Wisconsin District has a Deaf Community Liaison on its Board. I am working with her to build a program at the national level to support districts in their outreach.

**SLIDE**

NOW, envision a world where the Deaf community participates equally and fully in the Body of Christ, in the LWML.

We are teachers and equippers to others. The time is now for us to learn and equip ourselves so that we can provide outreach to our deaf sisters.

We need to learn sign language so that we can tell our deaf sisters about the LWML, and include them in the group participation, activities, and events. This is to equip you to know the deaf culture, and to teach you to have a normal conversation with our deaf sisters.

There is a deaf culture; a deaf language. This is a cultural outreach.

If you have ever played charades, you can communicate with the deaf and hard of hearing. The deaf community is fun-loving, caring, and understanding. They are not easily insulted by what we do if we try with a sincere heart.

**SLIDE**

Here is the ASL alphabet.

**SLIDE**

Here is how you say “Jesus Loves You”.

**SLIDE**

Google ASL YouTube and see all of the helpful resources that are there.

**SLIDE**

*(Read “Remember” slide)*

**In Conclusion**

Remember the description on the YWR Pin?

The double links represent LWML women of **all ages** (and I would simply say **all LCMS women**) who are joyfully united in spirit and purpose. While each member is different, in Christ all are linked together, complementing one another’s gifts, talents, and strengths.

Ladies, (and gentleman if present) the outreach to young women, multicultural women, and deaf women, and ALL Women in our LCMS congregations is a love-and-serve-your-neighbor thing. I am just reminding you of something that I think we all know we should be doing. It is who we are as Sisters in Christ serving the Lord with gladness in the LWML.

Thank you and may God bless the rest of your time here.

