



### **Contributors:**

The author of the Cider Service is unknown. Most likely, it has been handed around and “tweaked” by many groups. Feel free to edit, reprint and adapt it to the needs of your MCCW/CWOC group.

### **Our Mission:**

“MCCW reflects a visible presence of Christ in military communities by fostering and nourishing women in spirituality, leadership and service. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, MCCW serves as a vital enhancement of the religious support mission of military chapels.”

**Military Council of Catholic Women-Worldwide**

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Military Council of Catholic Women  
Presents:  
A Cider Service  
“Celebrating the Qualities of Womanhood”

# Leader's Guide

## The Cider Service Leader's Guide

### **Purpose:**

*This program makes a great opening or closing program for the year, one in which the ladies can become acquainted and or better acquainted through the use of storytelling. A great community-builder!*

### **The Recipe:**

1/2-gallon apple cider  
1/2-cup orange juice  
1/2-cup cranberry juice  
1/2-tablespoon fresh lemon juice  
1/2-teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/2-teaspoon allspice  
1/2-teaspoon ground cloves  
1/2-cup sugar  
2-3-small slices gingerroot

*Mix all ingredients in large pot. Bring to boil and simmer gently 7-10 minutes. Strain and serve (may be kept hot in crock pot). Or, to serve as a cooler, let cool 30 minutes and place in refrigerator. Let set overnight (or minimum 2 hours). Pour over ice, add slice of lemon. This recipe serves approximately 8 8-oz. servings, or 16 4-oz. servings.*

*\*\*Each ingredient should be pre-measured and displayed on the table with the punch bowl (for coolers) or crockpot (for hot cider). Use custard dishes (pitcher for the cider), and mark each ingredient. Don't forget a cutting board and knife, for the apple.*

*\*\*Since the recipe calls for simmering and straining, the cider assembled during the program cannot be served immediately. A quantity sufficient for each attendee to have a cup/glass should be prepared day(s) prior to the program.*

# Program

## Program Notes:

*This program uses nine ladies to make the cider and tell personal stories to illustrate the qualities each ingredient represents (plus one person to read the introduction and lead the closing prayer). The storytellers must be selected in advance and should be chosen on the basis of willingness to speak in public, and the quality of the story they have to tell. They should be instructed to:*

- 1) Use about 2 minutes to tell the story.*
- 2) Use a personal story (as opposed to one found on the Internet, etc.).*
- 3) Make sure their story has a beginning, middle, and end.*
- 4) Practice telling their story aloud a couple times at home. A rehearsal should be held about a week prior to the program, so everyone is comfortable with their role (walking to the front, pouring in the ingredient, reading the ingredient description, and telling their story).*
- 5) Stories should be written down and given to the leader in advance, since out of nine women, at least one is bound to have a last minute emergency arise and be unable to attend the program. Then the leader can 'save the day' by adding the ingredient and read the story herself.*

*\*\*Small cards with the recipe, or just the ingredients (and the qualities they represent) could be scattered on the tables/chairs in the room to spur discussion. After the closing prayer, the women in attendance could be encouraged to spend a few moments in small groups to share their own stories of the qualities of womanhood.*

*\*\*Ask the storytellers to assist in serving each woman a glass or cup of cider. This allows the rest of the ladies to congratulate the storytellers on a job well done, and share their own stories.*



# Program

## Introduction

*This is a Cider Service to celebrate the qualities of women. Women have many parts and many qualities. The cider we are making today is made up of 9 ingredients that represent 9 qualities in women. If we omit even 1 ingredient, then our recipe will lack the full flavor that our cider could have; just as our lives may be missing a special characteristic if we do not possess some quantity of each of these qualities. As we name and describe each ingredient, think about which qualities you possess and those you'd like to deepen.*

## Apple and Cider

The key ingredient in spiced cider is the apple cider itself. Although thought to have originated in Southwest Asia, in the region between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, we know from diggings of the Stone Age lake dwellers in central Europe, that apples were used long before recorded history. The apple in our cider will represent our spirituality, a key ingredient in who we are.

We usually cut an apple from stem to blossom, but when you cut an apple across the middle; it reveals a beautiful star. (*Show this*)

---May this star remind us of the Star which led others to the Christ child.

---May it also lead us, and those we love, closer to Our Lord. (*Add a slice showing the star to the bowl*).

# Program

## Cranberry Juice

Cranberry juice represents wisdom in our recipe today. Recent scientific research shows that cranberries may help protect against certain bacterial infections, heart disease and cancer. We show wisdom by using this information to keep our families and ourselves healthy. In 1st Corinthians, Paul writes that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and that we should glorify God in our bodies (1 Corinthians 6:19). Our Catechism says that our life and physical health are precious gifts entrusted to us by God and that we must take reasonable care of them.

So, by adding cranberry juice to our cider, we recognize all the wisdom of womanhood in being aware of our gifts, nourishing and using them.

*[Personal story of a wisdom passed down from a parent, grandparent, or other mentor]*

## Sugar

A little sugar needs to be added to our cider. It provides sweetness; it flavors, preserves and can also be a medicinal aid. The sugar reminds us of how the quality of friendship sweetens our lives. Without it, our troubles would be too sharp, too bitter to bear. Just as there are different kinds of sugars, all our different friendships flavor and sweeten our lives.

*[Personal story illustrating unexpected friendship, 'odd-couple' friendship, etc.]*



*Virtue*



# Program

## Cinnamon

Cinnamon, the bark of a tree, is one of the oldest known spices. Arab traders brought it from China 1700 years before the birth of Christ. The Romans believed the cinnamon fragrance was sacred. Its warm aroma fills a home with a sense of welcoming. In our cider, it will represent our hospitality – greeting a new neighbor, welcoming a friend we haven't seen in ages; entertaining visiting relatives, having

the neighborhood kids over.

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me." (Matthew 25:35)

We'll tie two cinnamon sticks in the shape of a cross to represent the spiritual nature of our hospitality.

*[Personal Story about being made to feel welcome, some other story of hospitality]*

## Cloves

Cloves are the dried flower buds of an aromatic tree grown in the Indian Ocean Basin. The red flowers of the clove tree are small, but grow in great profusion in small clusters. The small, unopened bud is sun-ripened and prepared for many uses. Ground, it is used as a spice in many kinds of cookery around the world. Its oil is used in perfumes, soaps and medications. As you can see, these tiny buds do many things! Women, too, are called to be and to do many things – to be industrious: to be in three places at once, to manage the home, to coordinate the family calendar, to carpool, to volunteer at school, church and in the community and perhaps to work in a job outside the home. We rely on the strength of God in being able to balance all these demands.

*[Personal Story about all the different hats you wear and how you keep God in the picture.]*

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## Orange Juice

Oranges date back as early as 2200 years before the birth of Christ although they are thought to be even older. An orange can be peeled and divided into sections and the sweet pieces shared. The orange juice we add to our cider shall symbolize our generosity. We share our talents and treasure with our communities, our families, our husbands, our children and our friends. We encourage, we teach – we love them as they are.

Blessed Mother Teresa wrote, "Every act of love is a work of peace, no matter how small."

*[Personal story of unexpected sharing; or, the most valuable thing someone ever shared with you.]*

## Allspice (add a good sprinkling)

Many people think that Allspice is a spice made from combining several spices together. However, it is a single spice with a flavor that resembles a combination of cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg. The flavor is somewhat woody and slightly numbing. Allspice shall represent the sense of humor that we possess to numb life's problems. We have the ability to laugh at things even when we're going through a

stressful time and we feel like crying. We don't take things too seriously and we know that laughter is, sometimes, the best medicine. St. Ignatius Loyola said, "Laugh and grow strong."

*[Personal Story of how humor broke the tension during a bad time.]*



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## Lemon Juice

Next we add a little lemon juice to our cider. The lemon has an aromatic rind and an acidic juicy pulp. The outermost surface, called the zest, is sweet to the taste. Under the zest is the white part of the skin, known as the pith, which is quite bitter. Lemons grow on spiny evergreen trees and produce ripe fruit practically all year round. The color, scent and taste of a lemon awaken our senses. In our cider, lemon will represent the sensitive part of women. We are caring and attentive to the needs of others and we are sensitive to how others

treat us.

In his Apostolic Letter on the Dignity and Vocation of Women, the Holy Father writes that a woman is strong because of her awareness that God has entrusted human life to her in a special way.

*[Personal story of how a person's needs were caused and met]*

**Ginger Root**  
Our last ingredient is a thin slice of Ginger Root.

This is the aromatic root from the tropical ginger plant, which had its origin in Asia. It has yellowish-green flowers. Ginger root shall be symbolic of the fortitude that women possess. Our strength keeps us and our families centered and firmly rooted in the ground. As military wives, we demonstrate this quality frequently: when we leave our families for our husband's first assignment, when our husbands are deployed or TDY and also when we are faced with another move away from our new friends. God gives us strength to go on in times of hardship and tragedy.

We can be strong for our sick, hospitalized child; we can be strong when all our possessions are lost or destroyed from a move or natural disaster;

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## Ginger Root (cont'd)

We can be strong when we lose a baby to miscarriage; and we can be strong when our marriage is in trouble.

In God, who is the source of our strength, we have strength for everything.

*[Personal Story about relying on God for strength and receiving it during a time of weakness or great challenge.]*

## Closing Prayer Let us pray:

Dear Lord, we celebrate our lives as women. We thank You for the many qualities You have given us that make us uniquely and individually special. We ask You for Your assistance with the qualities to which we each are giving special attention as we strive to improve our lives. We are grateful for the opportunity to share our hearts and lives with each other.

--May this allow us to grow closer as we begin new friendships, renew old friendships and deepen our faith.

We ask all these things (making the sign of the cross)... in the Name of God our Father, through Jesus Christ, His Son, and by the Power of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

