



### Contributors:

The author of the Bread 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 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**

[www.mccw-worldwide.org](http://www.mccw-worldwide.org)

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## The Military Council of Catholic Women Presents *“The Bread Service”*



# Guide

## Bread 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 remembrances shared at the conclusion of the service.*

### *Set-up:*

- *Table should be set with a tablecloth*
- *Cross/ Crucifix should be at the center*
- *Candles or and/or flowers may be also added*
- *Breads: Store bought breads can be used, or homemade and may be on the table at the beginning of the service, or may be brought up and added to the table as they are introduced. They may be on attractive platters or in cloth-lined baskets. A single person may introduce all the breads or a different person may introduce them each.*
- *Chairs should be arranged in a horseshoe pattern facing the table.*
- *Be sure to make copies of Praying Together (below), so that all may participate. Also, choose music based on the talents of the group and provide hymnals if the participants are expected to join in the singing.*

*This is a touching presentation, especially if the ladies accept the invitation to share their stories and remembrances at the end. It is recommended to have a couple boxes of tissues available.*

# Program

## Opening Song: "We Are Many Parts"

### Introduction

From earliest time, women have baked bread. They have blessed it and fed it to others. It has been a resource of survival, a gift of love, a symbol of friendship and hospitality, a sign of spiritual life.

Today, we will use breads as symbols of the women, past and present, who have led us, inspired us, and challenged us. Some of these women are your mothers, sisters, daughters and aunts. Some are friends and neighbors, some you know only from newspapers and television reports, or from history books. Some you know from the Bible. We invite you to spend this time reflecting on these breads and whom each one represents in your life. As we recall these women we bless them, we thank God for them, we pray for them.

### Presentation of the Breads

#### 1. Challah

At sunset, on Friday evenings, every Jewish woman gathers her family around her as she lights the candles and offers a special blessing over the Challah bread. Thus begins the Shabbat. The challah is a symbol then, of her relationship with God, a symbol of her faith. For us here today let it signify women of Faith:

- Those who have long been believers
- Those who are new to the faith
- Those in whom you have witnessed a profound experience of God
- Those who serve as spiritual guides for others
- And we pray for those who are in doubt and struggling with their faith



# Program

## 2. Sourdough Bread

Sourdough Bread has as its leavening agent a small amount of dough kept from the last batch. Thus we hold in mind:

- Our mothers, our grandmothers, our female ancestors
- Those whose lifeblood we have in our veins.

## 3. Corn Bread

Corn bread recalls for many, life in the south, for others it represents lives lived in slavery. Let it represent for us women who are shackled in the slaveries of our society:

- Slaves to poverty
- Those with addictions – drugs, alcohol, or gambling
- Victims of physical or sexual abuse We pray for these women and also for those who offer them help:
- Counselors, doctors, friends.

## 4. Brown Bread

Dark, coarse, brown breads were the staple of the laboring class of Europe, those who immigrated to the United States, prepared to work hard for a better life. Let it represent for us:

- All women as they work
- Women who are unemployed and seeking jobs
- Those who are discriminated against in wages and kinds of work, because they are women.

## 5. Rice Cakes

In antiquity, rice was, in many places, very rare and treasured – it was kept for medicinal purposes. Here it will represent:

- Women who are ill and are suffering physically.
- All who need healing
- The caring women who work in healing ministries: doctors and nurses,
- Nurse-aides who bath the elderly, tending to residents of nursing homes,
- Volunteers who visit the sick who have no one else to visit them.

# Program

## 6. Flat Bread

Flat bread is common to many Middle Eastern and African cultures, and calls to mind those caught up in the conflicts of that part of the world.

- Those who suffer in war
- Those who live in fear
- Refugees and exiles, forced to leave their homes
- Those who are bereaved.
- Those who are the peacemakers
- Those who serve as relief workers and offer comfort

## 7. Cinnamon Bread

Let cinnamon bread signify women who for various reasons are considered ‘different’ in our society:

- Women who suffer from psychological illness
- Women who are judged ‘abnormal’ because of rigid stereotyping
- The dreamers, the visionaries, and the prophets in our midst who will take us to places we otherwise would not dare to enter

## 8. Saltines

Saltines shall represent the ‘salty ones’

- Those who have shed many tears
- Those who have endured
- Those who have learned and shared their wisdom
- Those who are fragile

## 9. Shortbread

“Short Bread” or “Short Cake” endearing nicknames for any little girl – let it signify children and those women concerned with children

- Mothers and grandmothers
- Teachers
- Midwives
- Childcare workers
- Those who are role models for tomorrow’s women



# Praying Together

## Meditation Music.

### Praying Together

*(Standing, hands extended, praying together, aloud)*

We claim this bread, food we have in common with all the world's people. We bless this bread, as it nourishes us, may it give us energy for good works; as we share it, may we strengthen our bonds with each other.

We claim these women. Symbolized by the bread, they are our sisters; they are ourselves. We bless these women.

---May they know the truth of their human dignity and foster self-respect in others.

---May they be treated justly and work courageously for justice toward others.

---May they experience love and give mercy and joy to others.

---May they receive peace and stand for it in the community of the world.

We ask this blessing of God, in the name of Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

# Praying Together

## Closing Prayer and Invitation

Father, as you have blessed our coming together today, we thank you for these women past and present, who have led us, challenged us and inspired us. Guide us as we go out into the world bringing your love to the homeless, the addict, the abused, the many of which are considered unlovable.

In your mercy, go before us to prepare the way, walk behind us to be our protection, and walk beside us be our companion, surrounding us with the sweet fragrance of your everlasting love. We ask this in the name of the Father, the son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

[The leader invites all who wish to come forward, to choose a type of bread, name what kind you've chosen and say, "I choose this bread as I recall \_\_\_\_\_".





## Praying Together (Copies)

We claim this bread, food we have in common with all the world's people.

We bless this bread, as it nourishes us, may it give us energy for good works; as we share it, may we strengthen our bonds with each other.

We claim these women, symbolized by the bread, they are our sisters, and they are ourselves.

We bless these women,

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