



**Reaching Out Part 2/2:
(Reaching Underserved Women)**

Ask the women to gather in the middle of the room. Explain that you are going to give two options and each person has to decide which one fits them the best and go to that side of the room.

Give the following (or some of the following) options:

- Cradle Catholic or Convert
- On-Post or Off-Post
- Active Duty or Retiree
- On-Post Catholic Community or Off-Post Catholic Parish
- Under 34 or Over 34
- Active Duty or Dependent
- Biological Mom or Spiritual Mom
- Married or single
- Working outside the home or staying at home
- Army or another branch
- English as a first language or English as a Second Language

Thank the group for participating and ask everyone to have a seat. Begin with:

That is a great way to begin thinking about all the ways we are the same and different -- and to start identifying some of the many sub-groups within our military community. From that list, we have (read list). Any other groups you can think of?

Each of our CWOCs is made up of people from some or all of those groups, but how many of you have had this conversation: “There are so many Catholic active duty women in our community. I wish they would come to CWOC events.”

Or this one? “I see all these young mamas with littles in the pews every weekend but they never show up for CWOC!”

Or even, “I have a ton of friends who go to St. Awesome Local Parish, but I wish they would come do CWOC stuff with me!”

Even in MCCW, we are always having conversations about “we need to get more young women involved” and “how do we get more active duty women to participate?” I spent a good hour last



weekend at the Central retreat visiting with a friend whose husband is National Guard about how we can reach out to Guard women.

(Ask the group: Who does your CWOC need to reach out to? Affirm answers and then say:)

Right, so we could all stand to do some outreach to groups that aren't being served by our CWOC right now. But where do we start?

Let's start with why this is even important – for that let's turn to Matthew 28:19:

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy spirit,

All nations, right? It doesn't say "only the active duty spouses" or "only the Army women" or any other exclusive group. It tells us we have a mission to reach out to everyone, we have to be inclusive.

So, if we know who we need to reach out to and we know why we need to reach out to them, the next question is how? How do we build the bridge to the underserved women in our community?

I want to share with you all a beautiful example of someone who reached out to groups of people who weren't being fully served by the church or anyone else and did something about it. Do you all know Saint Marianne Cope?

St. Marianne Cope was German immigrant to the United States who spent her life serving those who were underserved -- in her early years she taught in a school for German immigrants, and then she went on to help found hospitals that served all without attention to race or creed.

In 1883 after years of reaching out to the underserved populations of New York, she and six of her sisters were asked if they would go to Hawaii to care for the ill there -- not just any ill patients, but patients with leprosy. So feared was this disease that more than 50 other religious congregations had been asked and every one of them said "NO!"

But not Sister Marianne Cope - her response was an overwhelming yes:

"I am hungry for the work and I wish with all my heart to be one of the chosen Ones, whose privilege it will be, to sacrifice themselves for the salvation of the souls of the poor Islanders... I am not afraid of any disease, hence it would be my greatest delight even to minister to the abandoned 'lepers'"



Sister Marianne and her religious community were called to HI to care for sick patients, but her “treatment” went beyond medical care. In accounts of her work there, she is noted for “introducing cleanliness, pride and fun to the colony. Bright scarves and pretty dresses for the women were part of her approach.”

So she didn’t just go and serve these underserved women with the basic necessities -- she went beyond and used creativity to give them back things they most likely lost with their illness -- pride, beauty and dignity.

So, how can we follow Sister Marianne Cope’s example? How can we find those who aren’t being served, go to them with enthusiasm, and go beyond their basic needs?

I’m going to give you three rules we can apply from Sister Marianne Cope’s life:

First -- we have to go to the margins. She and her sisters went looking for those who most needed help, those who were being ignored by others and sought to serve them.

Second, we have to go without fear! Is it hard to invite someone new to participate? It absolutely can be. Is it scary to think about shaking up the status quo in your CWOC? For sure...but like Sister Marianne who knew God would go with her when she ministered to those with leprosy, we can be sure God will accompany us as we seek to make disciples of all nations...or groups in our community!

And finally - we have to get out of the box. Now I am the first to say that the CWOC model is tested and tried and it WORKS, but I also know that there is always room for improvement -- how can we go beyond the expected in our efforts to reach out?

We are going to do some group work to start coming up with answers to those questions. But I want to mix things up a bit....so, let’s break up into groups of 3 or 4, but try to find women not from your chapel (Fort Bliss -- I’m talking to you!)

Okay, now, within your groups you are going to do four things:

1. Assign each group a potentially underserved audience
2. Come up with a program, activity, or outreach you could do for that group
3. Come up with three ways you could reach this group
4. Think of one person you actually know in this group who you can reach out to when you get home



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(Give the women 10 minutes to work and then ask the groups to come back together and share as time allows. Affirm the examples and say:)

I want to encourage each of us to remember Sister Marianne's example when we go home -- go to the margins, go without fear, and get outside the box.

I want to close by reading the verse that comes after Matthew 28:19:

“Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

Ladies -- if we accept this direction from Jesus to go and make disciples of all nations -- we can be assured that he will walk with us, every step of the way.