



## The Discernment Process Chapel Groups

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The Discernment Process is a beautiful way to draw women to chapel-level women's ministry leadership, through the movement of the Holy Spirit and by the guidance of the chaplain.

### **Preparation for Discernment**

1. Talk with your chaplain about using discernment to select leadership for your ministry and share with him the discernment process documents. You can tailor the documents to suit your ministry. The chaplain will play an important role in the process, so having his support is very important.
2. Have your chaplain or current board appoint a woman (not on your board) to be the discernment facilitator. That person will oversee and facilitate the discernment process.
3. Set a date, time and location for your discernment process. See "Setting the Scene" for details on what you will need in your discernment space.
4. Have current board write out their position descriptions and ask them to include responsibilities, skills and time involved. Plan a time to share these descriptions with your whole group – women may feel inspired by hearing what goes on "behind the scenes."
5. Announce a "Call to Discernment" at least 60 days prior to the discernment process date. At this time, you should make available to all interested women:
  - a. St. Ignatius' Ten Guiding Principles of Discernment (adapted for MCCW)
  - b. Sharing Your Gifts Questionnaire
  - c. Servant Leader Information Forms
  - d. Beginning Personal Discernment Guide
6. Encourage your board to speak one-on-one with group members who might have questions or curiosity about serving. You never know who will begin to feel called.
7. Encourage all women in your ministry to attend discernment, even if they aren't discerning.

### **Setting the Scene**

When your discernment day has arrived, plan for time to set up the space before discernment begins. At minimum, you should also plan to have your chaplain, the discernment facilitator, an assistant, and one current board member in attendance along with those women discerning.

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*...and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also...2 Timothy 2:2*





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The discernment should be conducted in a closed room, if possible, in order to keep the environment intimate. Your space should be set up with an outer ring of chairs to accommodate all in attendance and an inner ring of tables with chairs to accommodate all discerning. Designate a spot in the outer ring for your chaplain, assistant and current board member to sit.

On the table for the discerners, place a small, lit candle and an image of Our Lady of Good Counsel.

You should also have ready a bible, a ballot basket and the balloting paper. These items can be set on a small table to the side or kept by the discernment assistant. The balloting paper can be simple paper pieces with the name of the position for which you are balloting pre-printed on it. You will want to have enough ballots for each position to accommodate all discerners.

All who enter the discernment room, should receive:

1. Our Lady of Good Counsel Prayer
2. Position descriptions

Your table should be set with copies of the following for each discerner:

1. *Here I am Lord* Lyrics
2. St. Ignatius' Ten Guiding Principles
3. *The Summons* Lyrics
4. Being a Servant Leader Information Forms
5. Sharing Your Gifts Questionnaire
6. Pen and Paper

Your chaplain, discernment facilitator, discernment assistant, and current board member should each have a packet including:

1. Order of Discernment Process
2. Our Lady of Good Counsel Prayer
3. Position Descriptions
4. *Here I am Lord*, Lyrics
5. St. Ignatius' Ten Guiding Principles
6. *The Summons* Lyrics
7. Pen and Paper

### **Discernment Process**

When you open the doors to the discernment space, plan to have "Gentle Mother" playing quietly in the background. At your designated time, invite everyone to gather in your discernment space and have a seat in the outer ring of chairs. After everyone has been seated, close the door and let the Holy Spirit Guide the process.

### **Prayer and Opening comments (Facilitator)**

1. Ask the group to read together the Our Lady of Good Counsel prayer
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2. Explain that this time is intended to be sacred. Therefore all those present to witness discernment are asked to remain quiet and prayerful for the duration of the discernment.
3. Go over the position descriptions and ask if there are any questions.
4. Ask those who continue to feel called to participate in the discernment of the board to stand up and move to center seating. Those who chose not to will stay seated in outer ring.

### **Begin Discernment (Facilitator and Assistant)**

1. Assistant begins *Here I Am, Lord* and asks the whole group to sing. As they are singing, the facilitator lays hands on the shoulders of each discerner.
2. Facilitator encourages ALL in the room to pray for the discerners at this time.
3. Facilitator selects and reads a scripture verse on service/love and asks the women to prayerfully listen to the verses. Ask the discerners to write down one word of what spoke to them.
4. The facilitator will then ask each woman to share her word as the assistant writes them all down.
5. Once all have shared, the assistant will read back to the group the words.
6. The facilitator will share on how the words were unique or similar in the group.
7. The facilitator then reads the Ten Guiding Principles of Discernment. (The discerners should have gone through these prior to discernment.)
8. Assistant begins *The Summons* and asks the whole group to sing.
9. The facilitator will ask the discerners to briefly share two of the gifts/attributes they wrote down based on the Sharing Your Gifts Questionnaire, which should have been completed during the personal discernment time (preferably over a period of weeks).
10. The facilitator says a short prayer of thanksgiving for showing such beautiful support for the region.

### **The Call for Leadership**

1. The facilitator will read Acts 1:21-26. The verses emphasize prayer and trust in the Lord. After a quiet moment for reflection, the facilitator should go around the table and lay hands on the shoulders of the discerners once again.

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2. The facilitator will then say: *"At this time, we are going to select our next <name of position>. If you feel called to serve <name of chapel group> in this position, please stand up."*
3. If one person stands up, no ballot needs to be cast. The facilitator will say, *"Please help me welcome our new <name of position>."*
4. If more than one person stands up, the facilitator will ask all women within the inner circle to cast a ballot for one person.
5. The assistant will hand out paper to each discerner to write down a name and collect them into the basket once completed.
6. The assistant will go out of the room and count ballots with the current board member, and then give name to facilitator for announcement.
7. If there is a tie, the appointed board representative will be tie breaker
8. Repeat for each position until the process is done. If no one steps up for a particular position, the facilitator should assure the group that the Holy Spirit knows and move on to the next position.
9. If there are more women than positions, remind everyone that they all have gifts that can be shared in the chapel. Our Lord has said, "In my house are many rooms!" Women can assist in other ways within the chapel group, for example, hospitality, publicity etc.

### Closing

1. In closing the facilitator should let the ladies know that we... *"Offer prayers of thanksgiving to Our Blessed Mother for her constant intercession, the model of her Immaculate Heart and the gift of her Son and the presence of the Holy Spirit!"*
2. The facilitator will then ask the chaplain to give the final blessing!
3. The facilitator will ask the new board members to stay for any necessary business as the assistant begins playing *Gentle Mother* as all others exit.

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