



*The CWO Sourcebook:
A Guide to Starting & Growing
Catholic Women's Ministry in
Your Community*



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Why Women's Ministry?

Military life is hard. As active duty women, spouses, or dependants, military women face unique challenges and stresses unlike our civilian sisters in Christ. Along with those difficulties, we experience many joys and adventures also foreign to our fellow Catholics outside the military. For these reasons, the network of chapel-level women's ministries is a lifeline for Catholic military women, helping them rise to meet the many challenges and celebrating with them the many joys of military life.

A Way to Connect

How many of us have, upon receiving orders, reached out online or to friends to find out if there is an active women's ministry at our new duty station? When we PCS, the chapel is often the first place we look to make connections and the presence of an active women's ministry program provides an immediate network of friends, faith, and support.

This is especially important for the youngest military women among us. Think back to your first duty station. Were you away from home and the supportive faith community in which you grew up? Were you eager to find friends and a place in your new community? Finding a supportive faith community in her first duty station often means the difference between a young military woman's faith life growing and flourishing and her falling away from the faith.

Growing in Our Faith

A vibrant women's ministry also provides opportunities for spiritual growth and reflection for us military women. Military life is fraught with unique stressors and having a strong foundation of faith is critical to developing the resiliency necessary to not just survive but thrive in this environment. As women grow in their faith through participation in women's ministry programs, we are able to serve as stronger role models and teachers in our domestic churches, increasing overall levels of resiliency in whole military families.

Supporting Our Catholic Chapels and Chaplains

We military women are frequently the backbones of our military chapel communities. Taking the lead under the guidance of our dedicated chaplains, we organize fellowship, teach religious education, lead the rosary, wash the linens, serve on the community council, and so much more.

A well-organized women's ministry can be a vital enhancement to the faith life of our Catholic communities when they seek guidance from their chaplain to identify the needs of their community and implement creative solutions to fill those needs.

Why CWOC?

From its inception MCCW has forged a model of Catholic women's ministry widely recognized today as Catholic Women of the Chapel. This model, which is built on the same pillars of spirituality, leadership, and service as MCCW, has worked in military communities around the world for years.

This model is both structured and flexible – making it simultaneously recognizable to military women who have seen CWOC before; and flexible enough to be scalable to a specific chapel’s needs and available resources.

The CWOC structure includes:

- A leadership team including the chaplain as moderator and women representing the chapel community sharing the responsibilities for the ministry
- A commitment to spiritual growth – through both participation in the sacraments and devotions and faith formation activities
- A commitment to leadership – both by developing current leaders and investing in future leaders
- A commitment to service – just as each of us is called to give the gift of self, so too a CWOC should serve its chapel, military, and surrounding civilian communities
- An emphasis on biblical hospitality, putting on Christ for others, especially as a CWOC reaches out to new members of its community and to the diverse groups in its community

CWOC flexes to fit the needs of your community:

- Timing of gatherings – CWOCs can meet weekly, monthly, quarterly; as often or infrequently as suits your community
- Content of gatherings – CWOCs gatherings may be occasional special programs, a book study group, a First Friday mass group followed by fellowship, or a combination of those and much more
- Leadership structure – some CWOCs have formal boards with committees of volunteers handling a wide assortment of tasks, others are led by a small team who shares the basic duties
- Membership – some CWOCs will be a mix of active duty, dependant, and retired women; others may have a membership that leans heavily toward one of those groups

Where to Begin

Perhaps your chapel community already has a thriving CWOC or women’s ministry program. Or a long-standing CWOC that is in need of new energy. Or your chapel is without women’s ministry completely.

This Sourcebook is a great place to start no matter what women’s ministry in your chapel community looks like. MCCW-Worldwide has compiled resources here and online at www.MCCW.org, to meet your ministry where it is and to help you to grow it to the next level.

About MCCW

For 60 years, the Military Council of Catholic Women has supported women's ministry programs in Catholic military chapels. What started in 1955 as a group of spouses committed to serving their Army chapels in Germany, has grown to a worldwide ministry serving all four branches of the Armed Forces.

Today, MCCW operates in seven regions around the globe: Pacific United States, Western United States, Central United States, Southeastern United States, Northeastern United States, Asia, and Europe.

In 2013, to better serve its audience, MCCW became a 501(c)3 and a subsidiary of the Archdiocese for the Military Services. In alignment with the mission and goals of the AMS, MCCW seeks to:

- promote the spiritual enrichment of all Catholic Women in the AMS
- coordinate and stimulate the work and ministries of Catholic women throughout the AMS
- foster and nourish the Catholic Faith within the AMS
- establish religious formation and leadership development to people under the canonical jurisdiction of the Archdiocese for the Military Services
- serve as a resource to women's ministry programs in Catholic military communities, and provide outreach to Catholics affiliated with the United States Armed Forces.

What Can MCCW Do For You?

"So," you ask, "what does all that mean for me, a woman in a military chapel community? Or the chaplain of that military chapel community?" Here is how MCCW can help you and your chapel:

- **Resources:** Whether you need help starting or growing a CWOC, program ideas for major liturgical seasons, or suggestions on the best faith and bible study resources available, MCCW has what you need. MCCW is committed to building a library of resources for your chapel and providing those resources to your chapel at little or no cost.
- **Events:** MCCW plans and hosts high-quality events that provide opportunities for faith formation, leadership development, and spiritual growth. Biennial regional retreats provide women with opportunities for faith formation, quiet reflection, and a chance to step away from the demands of military life. Held in alternating years, the Faith Formation Forum brings together leading Catholic evangelists, beloved devotions, and leadership development training in order for attendees to return home enriched and ready to contribute to the leadership of their CWOC.
- **Connections:** MCCW uses social media, personal relationships, and its website to foster and grow a network of sisterhood between Catholic military women worldwide. This network encourages the sharing of women's ministry ideas and eases the stresses of military moves by creating a built-in circle of acquaintances.

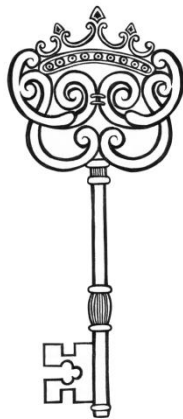
About MCCW-Worldwide Resources

Spirituality, leadership, and service have long been the pillars of the Military Council of Catholic Women's and Catholic Women of the Chapel's activities. Resources in this guide and online at www.MCCW.org are categorized into those three areas for ease of use.

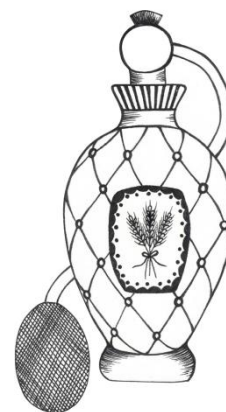
These symbols will help you identify which type of resource you are viewing:



Spirituality



Leadership



Service



Our Patroness

With all prayer and supplication, pray at every opportunity in the Spirit.

- Ephesians 6:18

In all things, it is best to start with prayer. For more than 60 years, MCCW has prayed for the intercession of its patroness, Our Lady of Good Counsel, and many chapel-level women's ministries have also adopted her as their patroness. The prayer below is easy to adapt for your CWOC.

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Prayer to Our Lady of Good Counsel

Feast Day - April 26

O Lord of heavenly wisdom, who has given us your own Mother Mary to be our guide and counselor in this our lives, grant that in all things we may seek the grace to seek maternal instruction and to profit by it in humility and love.

O Mother of Good Counsel, Patroness of the <Installation Name> Catholic Women of the Chapel, help us to understand and fulfill the mind and will of your Divine Son, Jesus Christ.

Under the blessing of the Father, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, may we be responsible and intelligent Daughters of the Church.

May we labor in the spirit of renewal to realize more perfectly the Kingdom of God here below as the only true preparation for our share in the Kingdom of Heaven. Amen.

(composed by the Most Reverend Robert J. Dwyer, D.D. (1908-1976), then Bishop of Reno, for the 33rd national convention of the National Council of Catholic Women)

Web Resource

Find programming ideas for adopting Our Lady of Good Counsel as the patroness of your chapel women's ministry at www.MCCW.org/resources.



...to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace...Romans 8:6



Where Do We Begin?

Starting a Catholic Women of the Chapel Program

If your chapel is without a women's ministry program, or if you have a program that would benefit from changes or new ideas, the best place to start is with your chaplain. Your chaplain is the shepherd of your flock and the authority for your group, so you will want to share your ideas with him and listen to his guidance and input before moving forward.

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Set a Meeting with Your Chaplain

Find an appropriate time for a sit-down meeting with your chaplain. You will want to allow plenty of time for a good discussion, so plan for at least 30 minutes to an hour. Before the meeting, you might consider sharing with your chaplain an outline of what you would like to discuss so that he can come prepared with feedback and ideas.

What to Discuss

When you first meet with your priest, start by sharing how a CWOC program can enhance your Catholic community. These groups exist to enhance the work of our priests and help them accomplish their goals, so discuss how your group can partner with him. Your discussion may also include:

- **What are the goals of your CWOC?** What does the chaplain see as your role within the Catholic community? What needs will be filled by your CWOC? If you and he are unsure, consider taking a survey of the women in your parish to identify needs.
- **Where and when will your group meet?** You and your priest will need to discuss how often and where your group will meet. Perhaps your community can only sustain quarterly CWOC events or perhaps you are ready to start a weekly group. Wherever your group is, you will want to work with your installation/garrison/base chaplain's office to identify available times and spaces to share with your priest.
- **How will your CWOC be funded?** Whether you will be holding weekly gatherings or quarterly special events, you will need funding. In some communities, women purchase their own materials and supplies; in others, materials can be part of the religious education or faith formation budget. Some communities can also take a special collection during the year to fund their various ministries. If you plan to send women to MCCW retreats or Forum, you will also want to discuss this. Funding sources vary by Catholic community, so be prepared with a sample budget and questions and ideas to discuss with your chaplain.

Web Resource

Find sample chapel needs surveys at www.MCCW.org/resources.

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- **Is childcare or “children’s ministry” available? If so, how would this be funded?** If your CWOC will be serving women with young children, you will need to address this perennial women’s ministry question. Be sure to explore your options so you will have ideas and questions to discuss with your chaplain.
- **How involved does your chaplain want to be?** Some priests like to drop in occasionally, some priests have never attended a CWOC gathering, and still others actually lead faith studies or special programs. You will also want to discuss with your chaplain how involved he will want to be in approving your programming, studies, and other activities. Follow your chaplain’s lead on this.

Web Resources

Find sample chapel ministry bylaws online at www.MCCW.org/resources.

- **How will you select and train leadership for your CWOC?** Come with ideas on how you will select and train new leaders for your group. MCCW-Worldwide offers a wide variety of leadership development resources, both in this guide and in-person at regional retreats and Forum.
- **What will your bylaws look like?** When you are first starting out, creating bylaws may seem overly formal and time-consuming, but having a well-defined mission and vision as well as clearly delineated roles, responsibilities, and methods for selecting new leadership can save your group from challenges in the future as well as ensuring that your CWOC can sustain itself after you and/or your chaplain PCS. Sample chapel-level bylaws are included in the appendix.
- **How will you advertise and promote your CWOC?** Ask your chaplain if your group can have a regular spot in the bulletin for weekly announcements and information. If your chapel has a social media presence, find out what rules and policies govern posting information about your ministry.
- **Will your CWOC have a representative on the Pastoral Council?** This varies by community, but having a representative on your community’s council will facilitate planning budgets and events as well as open doors to possible collaboration with other ministries.

Remember, your CWOC should meet the needs of *your* community – it isn’t a one-size-fits-all ministry model. No matter your vision with these fundamentals in place and your chaplain on board, you will be ready to get started.

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Leadership Structure

Determining the right structure for the leadership of your CWOC is important for the short- and long-term success of your ministry. Some groups will operate very casually, but many groups create a more formal board structure. Your structure will depend on many factors – the needs of your community, the number of women interested in helping, and your goals.

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Less formal structures you might consider include:

- **Leadership Team:** A small group of leaders divide up the main tasks necessary to run your CWOC, sharing in the duties equally.
- **Circular Leadership:** All of membership shares in leadership, with small task groups handling specific projects to which they feel called.
- **Small Board Structure:** A president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer share the tasks and duties of running your CWOC

In larger or more formal CWOCs, you might see the following common positions:

- **President:** Act as liaison to the chapel, send regular updates to membership, plan and direct leadership meetings and training, ensure that all board positions are filled, coordinate the overall schedule of programs and events, lead regular gatherings, communicate with outside entities like the installation chaplain or MCCW-Worldwide, assist other board members as needed.
- **Vice President (Events):** assist and fill-in for president as needed, coordinate special programs and events, oversee publicity efforts
- **Vice President (Faith Studies):** oversee the selection and ordering of faith study materials, lead faith study gatherings
- **Secretary/Treasurer:** record minutes at board meetings, maintain membership roster and sign-in sheets, submit all donations to chapel staff, maintain budget and report to chapel staff as needed, oversee processing of purchase orders, maintain continuity files for the group

Web Resource

A simple, but prayerful board installation ceremony guide can be found online at www.MCCW.org/resources.

Very large groups may also choose to create additional positions to handle specific tasks. Some common positions include:

- **Advisor:** a senior member of the ministry or chapel community who can help maintain consistency in mission and focus

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- **Welcome Coordinator:** distribute and collect registration forms from all members, update and maintain roster with help from secretary, produce and maintain nametags, oversee welcome table each week, act as greeter during all events, programs and gatherings
- **Liturgist:** coordinate all liturgical activities with chaplain and chapel staff, recruit volunteers for liturgical activities as needed
- **Family Needs Coordinator:** manages the ministry's response to family crisis or births, recruits volunteers to supply meals, donations or other needs
- **Hospitality Coordinator:** coordinate refreshments for events, programs and gatherings, set-up and clean-up of refreshment area, monitor supplies related to refreshments
- **Active Duty Liaison:** coordinates efforts to reach out to, include, and support active duty Catholic women
- **Childcare Coordinator:** work with chapel or installation childcare providers to ensure reliable care, maintain any and all forms related to childcare participation, registration, or reservations, maintain a list of members willing and trained to help with childcare
- **Outreach/Service Coordinator:** plan and execute regular service projects, promote service projects to membership and chapel community
- **Publicity Coordinator:** produce and distribute all publicity materials at the ministry, chapel and installation level, publish and distribute newsletter
- **Historian:** gather and maintain photographs, documents and other items as part of the ministry's history, maintain continuity files for the group

Remember, your CWOC leadership structure will be unique to your community and should follow the mission and vision you and your chaplain have for your ministry.

Child Safety Training

All volunteers who work with children must have child safety training. Find out more about local requirements from your chapel staff, installation religious services office, or your local diocese.



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Discernment 101: How to Use Discernment to Identify Chapel Leadership

MCCW-Worldwide, its regions, and many CWOC ministries have replaced elections for new leadership with discernment. The discernment process is a beautiful way to draw women to the leadership of CWOC through the movement of the Holy Spirit and the guidance of their chaplain.

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Here are some tips for using discernment in your chapel:

- Talk with your chaplain about using discernment to select leadership for your CWOC. He will play an important role in the process, so having his commitment is very important.
- Have current leaders write out descriptions of their work 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.”
- Encourage your leaders 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.
- Plan ahead for discernment. Your initial call to discernment should go out at least 60 days before discernment is to take place.
- Have your chaplain or current leaders appoint a woman (not on your leadership team), to oversee and facilitate the discernment process.
- Reach out to your MCCW-Worldwide regional coordinator or the MCCW-Worldwide discernment coordinator if your chapel has questions or needs assistance putting discernment into practice.
- Discernment can be used whether you have a formal board structure or a leadership team model -- the resources are easy to adapt.

Web Resources

MCCW-Worldwide has a wealth of discernment resources available online at www.MCCW.org/resources/discernment.

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Fostering Servant-Leadership Conducting Leadership Training for Your Board

Leadership is one of the three pillars of MCCW and CWOC. As such, engaging in regular leadership training is a valuable exercise CWOC leadership should strive to do at least annually. The goal of training is to enhance the skills of current CWOC leadership and to equip and encourage all members to participate in the leadership of CWOC. There are many options for training, including:

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- **Book-based Leadership Training:** Select a leadership book that your leaders can read and discuss together before the new year begins. Some options might include *Forming Intentional Disciples* (Sherry Weddell) or *The Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic* (Matthew Kelly).
- **Church Documents as Leadership Training:** Our Church itself can be an enormous resource for lay leader development. Consider reading the United States Conference of Catholic Bishop's statement on adult faith formation "Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us" or Pope John Paul II's apostolic exhortation "Christifideles Laici" on the role of lay people in the mission of the church and discussing as a group.
- **Installation Opportunities:** Your installation may offer leadership training opportunities through various offices and organizations. Check with your installation family readiness and support office to find out.
- **Local Diocese:** If your duty station is in the United States, the local diocese may offer leadership training or development that could benefit your leaders.
- **MCCW Leadership Development:** MCCW has a wealth of leadership development opportunities for your chapel. In addition to this guide, MCCW offers leadership development training at each of its regional retreats as well as the biennial Worldwide Forum.

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Passing the Torch: Creating and Maintaining Records for Future Leadership

Much of the rich tradition and history of our church would be lost to us today if faithful people over the centuries hadn't taken the time to record it for us. The same is true in our CWOCs. Important decisions, valuable lessons, and outstanding programs are lost to future leadership if the current leadership doesn't put into place a process and system for creating and maintaining good records. Here are some tips to help you get started:

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- **Put Someone in Charge:** Don't assume that everyone will automatically know how to or take the initiative to create and maintain good records. Include this responsibility in the job description of someone on your leadership team so this task doesn't get forgotten.
- **AARs Always:** After Action Reports are not just for our service members. A well-written, thorough report on a program, special event, faith study, or a year's work in a leadership position is beyond value to the future leadership. Make these a requirement for anyone in a leadership position and set deadlines for their submission.
- **Decide on a Storage Method:** Decide how your CWOC will store and maintain its records. A physical space like a binder or box kept in the chapel office or files maintained in the chapel coordinator's file cabinet are all good ways to ensure that the records are accessible to future leadership. Modern technological options like online cloud storage are another way to ensure that information can be accessed by anyone who needs it. Just be sure to maintain a record of passwords and usernames in a secure but accessible place.
- **Don't Forget the Fun Stuff:** Photos, hard copies of printed materials, and other mementos of your CWOC's work and activities can be turned into a fun scrapbook (or included in a perpetual scrapbook) that can be passed down each year. These visual records can become real treasures to leadership decades on.

Web Resources

For ideas on formatting and what to include, download MCCW's After Action Report Template from www.MCCW.org/resources.

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Ideas for Advertising and Promoting Your CWOC

Once your CWOC is up and running, you want to get the word out. There are many ways to do this:

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- **Chapel Bulletin:** Talk to your chapel coordinator to find out how your CWOC can reserve a regular space for updates, announcements and news. Make sure to find out in what format you should submit material and any important deadlines. Ask about including an occasional colorful insert advertising your CWOC's full schedule to help women plan ahead.
- **Installation Publications:** Your installation newspaper, e-news publications and social media pages may be available to you and can help your reach a wider audience outside your chapel community. Reach out to the Public Affairs Office to find out how to submit information to those publications.
- **Bulletin Boards:** Don't underestimate the power of a well-placed flier. You may find locations in your chapel, in installation MWR facilities and in other places on your installation. Make sure to check with the facility manager before posting your materials.
- **Outside Social Media:** Social media is key to getting the word out to your audience. If your chapel or installation religious services have a social media presence, find out how you can include your news and information there.
- **Your Own Social Media:** Many CWOCs have created Facebook pages to communicate with their members. If you choose to do this, consider whether you want to make the page open, closed or secret. Many groups have opted to be closed – in order to protect their members' information while still making it possible for new people to find the group.

Web Resources

There are several great digital resources that will help you make high-quality, professional-looking materials

For Poster Creation:

www.PosterMyWall.com

Apps:

WordSwag

Viva Video Pro

Find high-resolution color and black and white logos for CWOC online at

www.MCCW.org/resources.

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Let's Get Together: Tips for Running Holy and Effective Gatherings

Now that your CWOC is up and running, you will be hosting gatherings on a regular basis. Whether your CWOC meets weekly, monthly, or quarterly, here are some ideas to help you get started.

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- **PRAY!** Prayer is essential, so always begin your gatherings in prayer. Whether it is mass, a shared rosary, or a simple opening prayer prayed as a group, this will set the right tone for your gathering. It also helps everyone quiet their hearts before you begin.
- **Get the Business Out of the Way:** You will likely have information to share or announcements to make, so get those taken care of quickly and efficiently at the beginning of your gathering.
- **Consider Social Time:** Your gatherings are a time of prayer and formation, but also for fellowship. Consider designating a certain amount of time at the beginning or end of your gathering for casual socializing. Clearly designating this time will help keep your group on track during the remainder of your time together.
- **Welcome, Welcome, Welcome:** Your gatherings should also be a place of welcome, so be sure to reach out to new attendees. This could be done by appointing a member of your leadership team to welcome anyone new or by asking for new women to introduce themselves during the business portion of your gathering.
- **Make Nametags Available:** Unless your group is very small and rarely welcomes new members, nametags can go a long way toward making people feel comfortable. No one likes that awkward feeling of not being able to remember the name of someone they have met before.
- **Keep to the Clock:** Be mindful of the time women are dedicating to attending your gathering and do your best to start and end on time.
- **Snack Time:** They say that food is the way to a man's heart, but it is also a great way to get people to your gathering. Depending on your time and budget constraints, there are several ways to provide food. Some groups purchase light snacks and coffee for the group while others share the responsibility through potlucks or snack sign-ups.

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- **Sign-In Sheets:** For many groups, a sign-in sheet can be helpful in tracking attendance and participation. It is also a great way to gather contact information for first-time attendees.
- **Meet Them Where They Are:** This wise advice from Pope Francis is both sage and practical. Don't assume that everyone will have the same background, level of Catholic knowledge, or level of comfort sharing their faith. Help everyone feel welcome by offering explanations before you pray a new prayer or devotion, providing definitions of words that may be confusing, pulling out the catechism to explain a church teaching not everyone understands, and making a deliberate effort to include everyone in conversation.

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Let's Get Together: Setting Your Programming Calendar

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CWOC programming is not one-size-fits-all and the options are endless. From faith studies to DVD series, guest speakers to liturgical living activities or crafts, you have much to choose from. When planning, you will want to be mindful of the specific needs of your chapel community. If you aren't sure about the needs, interests, and time-commitments of your chapel community, take a survey to learn more.

You may also want to consider the liturgical calendar as you plan. Scheduling special Advent or Lenten activities, or programs that coincide with particular feast days can be a good way to highlight the rhythm of the liturgical year.

Begin planning early – you will want to be sure you have time to order materials, confirm speakers, and get the approval of your chaplain before your year begins.

Bible or Faith Studies

Bible and Faith studies are foundational to women's ministry. Selecting a study for your CWOC provides continuity and a sense of learning more deeply about a given topic. When selecting a study,

consider the interests of your members. Reading a dense papal encyclical may not be the best choice for a group of tired, young mothers, but likewise a study about the challenges of motherhood might not be the best fit for a group that includes many retirees. Also consider the time women have available to dedicate to the study – some studies require a lot of "homework" while others can be done largely as a group during each gathering.

As you look for studies, keep in mind the value of selecting Catholic studies, as opposed to more generally Christian studies. There are many amazing Christian resources out there, but even for the most well-catechized among us, it can be easy to miss subtle teachings that differ from or contradict our Catholic faith.

DVD Series and Video Resources

There are many DVD-based bible and faith studies available today, covering a broad array of topics. DVD studies can be ideal for groups that aren't able to commit to a lot of outside

preparation time. The internet and Catholic-specific web resources like "Formed" can also be a source of good, short video segments on religious topics. Just be sure to check the source if you are using a resource you find online – you might even ask your chaplain to review it before showing it to your group.

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Guest Speakers

Guest speakers are a great way to add variety to your programming. Look to your chaplain, congregation, installation, or local diocese for possible speakers on a variety of topics, but be sure to get approval from your chaplain before inviting anyone to speak. If the speaker will be presenting on a Catholic topic, it may also be a good idea to ask them for a letter of good standing from their priest or bishop.

Devotions and Liturgies

As Catholics, we are blessed with a rich tradition of devotions and liturgical celebrations that can add depth to your programming. Consider hosting a Holy Hour, sponsoring the First Friday liturgy or introducing your women to another Catholic devotion. As always, be mindful of the varied levels of familiarity with these activities and traditions and make everyone feel comfortable by providing background information for all present.

Special Events

Your CWOC may also be interested in planning and hosting special events outside your normal gatherings. These events add excitement to your schedule and can be an effective way to reach out to those who cannot attend your regular gatherings. These programs can be social, educational, or a little of both. You might consider a social event early in the year to build rapport and friendships. These events are another great opportunity to follow the liturgical year – an Advent event in late November or a Lenten activity in February highlight these important Church seasons.

Pilgrimages

Pilgrimages are a great way to deepen our faith and our knowledge about church history or the saints while getting out to see more of the community around us. While many of us might associate the idea of pilgrimage with the great religious sites of Europe or the Holy Land, there are actually many places to make easy one-day pilgrimages within the United States.

Days of Reflection and Retreats

These special opportunities are a great way to enhance the spirituality of your CWOC and Catholic community. Planning for these events should begin with prayer and consultation with your chaplain as well as an assessment of budget, location, and theme. If your CWOC doesn't have the resources to plan one of these on its own, consider partnering with other military communities close by or reaching out to MCCW for affordable presentation options.

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Service: A Cornerstone of Military Women's Ministry

One of the true gifts of Catholicism is a call to perform works of mercy both within our Catholic community and in our wider secular community. The same call is made to our ministry groups. The approach to service is different for different groups – some will appoint a person to coordinate various service projects throughout the year; others may select one ongoing service focus for each year. Here are some of the common areas of service you might consider:

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- **Chapel Needs:** Many groups need look no further than their own chapel to find service opportunities. Mass linen laundering, holiday decorating, and fellowship set-up and clean-up are great examples of chapel-based service. Talk to your chaplain to find out where the most pressing needs are in your chapel.
- **Meals for Moms or Meals for Families:** Many women's ministry groups in our Catholic chapels take on the responsibility of coordinating meals for families with new babies or for families in crisis. Some groups recruit volunteers to prepare the meals while others take a collection to purchase gift cards or host freezer meal parties to prepare and freeze meals for future needs.
- **Local Needs:** Your group might choose to focus on service needs in your military community or the wider civilian community around your installation. Shelters, soup kitchens, disaster relief aid programs and crisis pregnancy centers are all worthy causes that can bring the women of your ministry closer together. You might also reach out to any communities of retired religious living near your installation and consider visiting them (bring the children!) or offering to perform routine maintenance for them.
- **The AMS Co-Sponsored Seminarian Program:** Did you know that our chaplains serve more than 1.8 million faithful throughout the AMS? Our need for priests is great!
Providing for the spiritual and sacramental needs of men and women in uniform and their families is an essential task, and priest-chaplains are in higher demand now than ever before. Christ needs men to answer the call to the chaplaincy for the good of the Church, the country and the world and those men need our support.

Web Resources

Several great websites can help you organize meals for families in need. Check out:

www.CareCalendar.com

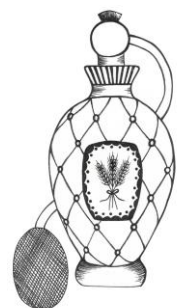
www.MealTrain.com

Make sure you have the supplies and volunteers you need for service events using websites like:

www.SignUpGenius.com

To pledge your support for our seminarians or to learn how your chapel can adopt a seminarian, visit www.MCCW.org/giving/seminarian-support/.

...serve one another humbly in love...Galatians 5:13



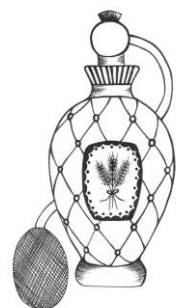


The Co-Sponsored Seminarian Program was created as a formal relationship between the AMS and cooperating U.S. dioceses and religious communities to encourage men to pursue priesthood in the U.S. military and throughout the Church by supporting vocations drawn largely from the armed forces. Your chapel group may choose to support this fund by participating in one of MCCW's pledge drives or by planning your own fundraiser in your chapel.

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- **Adopt-a-Seminarian:** The MCCW Adopt-a-Seminarian program connects current AMS seminarians and military chapel groups. Through prayer, letters, and care packages, the chapels provide much-needed support to their adopted seminarian. The forming of personal relationships between chapel groups and seminarians allows the seminarian to learn more about military life through regular contact with military families like those he will serve in the future.

...serve one another humbly in love...Galatians 5:13





Discipleship in the Military Community

Military life comes with its own rules, language, and customs and that is equally true in our military chapels. Understanding the procedures and the lingo, especially when working with people from other branches of service or with our Protestant brothers and sisters, will improve communication and overall success.

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Glossary

Archdiocese for the Military Services (AMS): The Archdiocese for the Military Services was created by Pope John Paul II to provide the Catholic Church's full range of pastoral ministries and spiritual services to those in the United States Armed Forces. This includes more than 220 installations in 29 countries, patients in 153 V.A. Medical Centers, and federal employees serving outside the boundaries of the USA in 134 countries. Numerically, the AMS is responsible for more than 1.8 million men, women, and children.

Practically speaking, the AMS maintains sacramental records, endorses Roman Catholic chaplains for the U.S. government, and exercises jurisdiction over religious education programs and the celebration of the Catholic liturgy in military communities. The Archdiocese offices and the Archbishop are located in Washington D.C. Four auxiliary bishops support the work of the Archdiocese. Learn more at www.milarch.org.

Catholic Advisory Council/Chapel Advisory Council/Parish Advisory Council/Pastoral Advisory Council: The many and varied names by which the group of chapel members who oversee chapel business, budgets and activities are known. This group usually includes both active duty and dependant members as well as leaders of key ministries in the chapel. Frequently, a representative of the women's ministry will sit on this council.

Chapel Coordinator: The contract employee who manages the day-to-day business of a chapel community. Not all chapels have such a position and in those, it is usually a chaplain's assistant or religious program specialist who manages the chapel. Sometimes these individuals are also called "parish coordinator."

Chaplain: a member of the clergy attached to the armed forces; this term applies to clergymen and women of all denominations and is used across all five branches of the military.

Chaplain's Assistant: The Air Force and Army use this title for enlisted soldiers or airmen working in the chapel environment. Their job is to set up for religious services, provide administrative support and when deployed, provide protection for chaplains, who don't carry weapons in combat. These men and women are not necessarily of the religion which they support in their job. (For other branches, see "Religious Program Specialist")

...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





Chief of Chaplains: The chief supervising officer for chaplains in the Air Force, Army and Navy. The chaplaincy in the Marine Corps is led by the Chaplain of the United States Marine Corps, who is also the Deputy Chief of Chaplains of the Navy.

Child and Youth Protection Training: All volunteers who work with children in military chapel communities must have child safety training. Find out more about local requirements from your chapel staff, installation religious services office, or your local diocese. Where local training is not available, the AMS provides resources for training.

Contract priest: A non-military priest who is contracted to provide Catholic services on an installation. This person is frequently a priest from the local diocese.

Garrison Chaplain: In the Army, the most senior chaplain in a garrison (“on an Army post”). This individual is tasked with overseeing all religious support and service activities for his or her garrison. If a Catholic chapel has a contract priest, this chaplain would be the most likely source of authority for women’s ministry.

Lay Leader: All five branches use this term to refer to people who can perform specific religious tasks when the unit/ship is geographically separated from services provided by a chaplain. Lay Leaders come from any military background and take on lay leader responsibilities as a collateral duty (additional duty). In the Catholic community, the training of lay leaders is overseen by the Archdiocese for Military Services.

Religious Education Coordinator: The individual in charge religious education activities in a Catholic or Protestant chapel community. Some of these individuals are volunteers and others are paid, contract employees. The AMS has specific guidelines for the training and certification of Catholic RECs.

Religious Program Specialist (“RP”): The Navy and Marines use this title for enlisted sailors or marines working in the chapel environment. Their job is to set up for religious services, provide administrative support and when deployed, provide protection for chaplains, who don’t carry weapons in combat. These men and women are not necessarily of the religion which they support in their job. (For other branches, see “Chaplain’s Assistant”)

Spiritual moderator: The chaplain or priest who provides spiritual guidance to a group. Catholic women’s ministries should always seek the guidance of a spiritual moderator. If a chapel has an active duty priest, he should fill the role. If a chapel has a contract priest, they may ask him.

Watchcare: Childcare provided by trained, paid employees for religious activities. This is sometimes called childcare or nursery. Not all installations provide this.

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Chapel Procedures

Budgeting: Budgeting for your women's ministry group will need to follow the budget cycle of your chapel, installation, and/or branch of service. Your chapel coordinator, chaplain's assistants, or religious program specialists should be able to advise you on this cycle. Most budgeting is done far in advance, so you may find that one leadership team has to make some of the budget decisions for the new leadership team before they are selected or installed. Including details about how this works in your community in your bylaws can help matters related to money run smoothly.

There are also various types of funds and funding that may be available to your ministry. Ask your chapel coordinator, chaplain's assistants, or religious program specialists to help you determine what funding may be available for things like study materials, speakers, supplies, and attending retreats and other events.

Designated Offerings/Special Collections/Religious Offering Fund: Chapel communities are able to collect and donate money to special causes or outside organizations in a number of ways according to the rules and policies of their specific branch of service. Some of these offerings are dictated by the AMS while others are at the discretion of the chapel leadership.

Chapel Bulletin: The weekly bulletin can be a great way to get information about your ministry into the hands of the people who need it. Find out who compiles your chapel's newsletter and ask them about space, deadlines and formatting submissions to ensure you don't miss out on this easy, free publicity.

Childcare: For many women's ministry groups, military and civilian, childcare is a perpetual thorn-in-the-side. Some military chapels have a childcare programs built into their budgets; others don't. Some installations can/will authorize this expense as part of the women's ministry budget; others can't/won't. Some installations will allow volunteers, with proper training, to provide childcare; others won't. Talk to your chaplain to find out more about what is offered and allowed at your installation.

If providing childcare seems to be a challenge you can't overcome, consider creative solutions like holding your meetings in the evening or on the weekend, scheduling special child-friendly events throughout the year, or offering programming for children during the same time as your gatherings.

Working with Your Chaplain

We know from the creation story that God created woman to be a helpmate to man. What we don't always remember is that this isn't just true for husband and wife relationships, but also in our relationships with our chaplains. We are called to serve our chaplains and our women's ministry should be focused on that role. At the core of our work, even our work to help our sisters grow in their faith, we should remember that we are there to enhance the apostolic mission of our chaplain.

How do we do this well? What should our relationship to our chaplain look like? How do we establish, grow, and strengthen that relationship? Here are some tips to get you started:

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- Make time to get to know your chaplain. As a CWOC leader, you will want to schedule time to visit with your chaplain about his goals and priorities for not just the women's ministry program, but also his chapel community as a whole.
- Understanding and supporting your chaplain's priorities will go a long way toward creating a strong relationship between him and your CWOC. Just as in a marriage you must ask, "How can I be a good wife in order to create a healthy marriage?" we should ask our chaplains, "How can we be good members of our chapel in order to help you create a healthy Catholic community?"
- Keep in mind that our chaplains' first duty is to ensure the ability of Catholics affiliated with the military to profess and practice their faith. They do this by focusing on providing opportunities for liturgy and the sacraments. Our CWOCs can help our chaplains with this priority by being aware of needs for volunteers to support the liturgy and sacraments (Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, lectors, altar servers, musicians, greeters) and helping to fill those needs or encouraging others to do so.
- Follow your chaplain's lead with regard to his involvement in your women's ministry. Some chaplains may want to take a hands-on approach – helping to select and maybe even lead your studies or attending your programs; while others will choose to take a less involved approach.
- Whatever your chaplain's level of involvement, find out what his preferred method of communication is. Even if your chaplain takes a hands-off approach to women's ministry, it is important that he be informed of what your CWOC is doing. Asking him if he would prefer periodic emails, phone calls, or in-person meetings will help you keep him up-to-date.
- Find ways to care for your chaplain – invite him to meals, bring him cookies, or celebrate the anniversary of his ordination. Remember that our chaplains are service members, too, whose duties and assignments may take them far from home and family.

Working with our Protestant Brothers and Sisters

Our military communities are made richer by the wealth of backgrounds, cultures, and faiths brought together for a common purpose in the Armed Forces. Likewise, the religious services on an installation can be made richer by different faith groups working in collaboration. Opportunities to work with our Protestant brothers and sister, in particular, can be a great source of fruitfulness.

- Many military communities have Protestant Women of the Chapel (PWOC) groups. These groups will look very similar to Catholic women's ministry with regular gatherings, opportunities for praise and worship, and bible or faith studies. Consider reaching out to the leadership of that group to find ways your groups can share ideas, pool resources, or come together for ecumenical programming.
- A wonderful resource in many Protestant churches is the pastor's spouse. In a non-military church, a pastor's spouse plays a critical role within the church community.

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- Often, he/she holds a significant “payroll” position, like religious education coordinator. In a military community, the pastor’s wife is more likely to serve in a volunteer position and it is not uncommon for them to be actively involved in the chapel’s Protestant community.
- In many military communities, the most senior chaplain will be a Protestant chaplain. Find out from your Catholic chaplain how to share news and information about your ministry with this individual. His or her support is important.
- If you are in a military community that does not have an active duty Catholic chaplain, the source of authority for your group will be the chaplain in charge of religious services on your installation. This chaplain may not be Catholic – it is especially important to reach out to him or her to help them understand your ministry, its successes, and its needs.

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Working in Your Wider Installation Community

Finding ways to involve your ministry in the wider installation community is a great way to encourage new women to participate in your activities while also sharing our faith. Consider these ideas to get your started:

- Many installations host special events each year for newcomers. Find out if your ministry can pass out information during that event, either in person or included in a packet of information.
- Installation events are always in need of volunteers. Volunteer your ministry to help and show up in group t-shirts to do a little indirect marketing.
- Many installations have opportunities for service, especially around the holidays. Find out if your installation collects gifts, food or other items around the holidays and learn how your ministry can get involved.

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CWOC and Children

It is the perennial question for all women's ministry, Catholic or Protestant, military or civilian – how do we minister to women while meeting the needs they have for their children? There isn't a one-size-fits-all answer to this and how each CWOC decides to move forward will depend on available resources, local installation policies, and the make-up of its group.

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Here are some ideas to get your leadership team started when discussing this question:

- **Children Welcome or Adults Only?** You might start your discussion by deciding whether you will welcome children at your meetings or if you would prefer an adults only meeting environment. If your group is entirely young mothers who would prefer to keep their children close, then perhaps you will consider having a children welcome policy. If your group decides to go the adults only route, you will need to explore ideas for childcare.

If your group is large enough and there is interest, you might consider splitting into two smaller groups – one child-friendly and the other adults-only - for faith and bible studies and then offering special programs or events for the whole group when childcare is available.

- **Installation Resources:** If your group is interested in offering childcare, check with your chaplain or the installation chaplain's office to see what resources might be available to your group. You will also want to ask about policies for childcare – what training is required, can volunteers offer childcare, do parents have to be within a certain distance during childcare? These will all factor into your decision.
- **Childcare Swap:** Chances are the Protestant women in your community are asking themselves the same questions about childcare. If it is within your installation's policies, look in to the possibility of doing a childcare swap with the Protestant women's ministry. Or check to see if your chapel's youth ministry participants need service hours. Perhaps with the right training, they could offer childcare for your group.
- **Homeschool Needs:** In your childcare discussions, don't forget to consider school-aged homeschoolers who might need a place to do their school work or take a break while mom is participating in CWOC. Some groups with large homeschool communities have added a position to their leadership team to provide faith formation and activities for homeschool students during CWOC.
- **Playdates:** Even if your CWOC ultimately decides to be adults only, consider scheduling occasional playdates for your members with young children. This is a great way to strengthen the bonds between your members and to offer easy programming in quiet times in your schedule.

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Additional Resources

The Sourcebook is meant to be a guide to help you start or grow the CWOC program in your chapel and the resources in this section supplement and support the information you have already read.

MCCW encourages you to also make use of the many digital resources available at www.MCCW.org.



Sample Women's Ministry Needs Survey

We will be beginning a women's ministry program in our community. Please help us understand your needs and wants for this ministry by filling out the following brief survey and dropping it in the collection basket next weekend.

1. How likely are you to participate in women's ministry at this time?

Not at all likely 1 2 3 4 5 Very likely

2. Which of the following women's ministry activities most interest you?

- ☐ Faith or bible studies
- ☐ Apologetics/Learning about our Catholic faith
- ☐ Devotions and liturgical celebrations (rosary, adoration, First Friday mass, etc)
- ☐ Service projects
- ☐ Special events (retreats, days of reflection)

3. How often would you be most interested in meeting?

- ☐ Weekly ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Quarterly ☐ Just for special events

4. Would you prefer:

- ☐ Daytime gatherings ☐ Evening gatherings

5. If provided, would you use childcare?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes

6. Are you:

- ☐ Active duty ☐ Dependant
- ☐ Retiree ☐ Other (please specify) _____

7. Have you participated in women's ministry at another military installation?

a. ☐ Yes

If yes, where? _____

b. ☐ No

8. Would you be interested in helping with the leadership of our new ministry?

☐ Yes

If yes, please include your name and contact information:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

☐ Not at this time



Online Resources

Resources from the Catholic Church:

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The Archdiocese for the Military Services

www.milarch.org

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

www.usccb.org

The Vatican

www.vatican.va

Resources for Programming:

Catholic Answers

www.catholic.com

Mother's Prayers

www.mothersprayers.org

Formed

www.formed.org

Dynamic Catholic

www.DynamicCatholic.com

Ascension Presents

www.ascensionpresents.com

Word on Fire

www.wordonfire.org

Pilgrimage and Retreat Planning Resources:

Catholic Pilgrimage Sites

www.catholicpilgrimagesites.wordpress.com

Catholic Retreat Sites

www.catholicretreats.net

*...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*

