

*A Quick  
Start*  
GUIDE



# WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

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## A Quick Start Guide for Women's Ministries

Created by the Women's Ministries Department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America

1st edition design and layout: Alan Eno

2nd edition cover design: Ani Holdsworth Design

2nd edition page layout: Christal Gregerson

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5120 Prescott Avenue

Lincoln, NE 68506

402.486.8800

[www.adventsource.org](http://www.adventsource.org)

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## Introduction

Women are the backbone of the church. In the North American Division women comprise approximately 55 percent of church membership and serve in every department of the church. Women's contributions are vital to the mission and success of the church.

Why, then, is women's ministries needed? An active women's ministry in the local church can enhance the overall church program in many ways. By ministering to women's unique needs and by purposely training and equipping women for service, women's ministries can help ensure that every woman in the church finds a way to be involved in the mission of the church.

The purpose of the Women's Ministries Department is to encourage, equip, promote, and challenge Adventist women in their journey as disciples of Jesus Christ and members of His Church and to bring women's perspectives to the issues facing the Church.

Women's ministries should be ministry-driven. It should be much more than a retreat, a tea party, or an annual Sabbath program featuring women. Women's ministries is about ministry (service) and making a difference that will count for eternity. Although nurturing and social activities play a part in the overall women's ministries program, the purpose of such events should be to help meet women's needs and equip them for service and outreach.

### **Women's Ministries Mission Statement**

The mission of the Women's Ministries Department of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists is to model Jesus Christ through meaningful relationships and effective ministries.

**Our values and objectives are to:**

- Provide opportunities for women to deepen their faith and experience spiritual growth and renewal
- Elevate women as persons of worth
- Address the concerns of women
- Build networks among women
- Mentor young women, teens, and girls
- Promote opportunities for wider service for women
- Challenge Adventist women to use their talents and spiritual gifts for the glory of God in the home, church, and community

## Starting Women's Ministries in Your Church

If women's ministries is new in your church, the newly-elected leader's initial goals should be to:

- Partner with the pastor
- Form a committee if the nominating committee doesn't select one
- Prepare goals based on the needs of the women God has directed you to serve
- Take your plans to the church board
- Pray unceasingly

Partnering with the pastor is an important first step. The pastor will be your best ally if he/she perceives that women's ministries is interested in augmenting the entire church program, not just in having a few social events for women. There are several division-wide women's ministries events each year for which a special sermon by a woman and/or a special program is suggested. The women's ministries leader should work with the pastor to schedule those dates at times that best fit the church calendar. (Visit [www.nadwm.org](http://www.nadwm.org) for more information.)

No matter how small the church is, the women's ministries leader needs a team to help plan and implement activities. The input of other women will be helpful in assessing the needs of the women in the church. Acknowledgement of these felt needs is essential for planning programs and activities that draw maximum participation. The committee will also help plan and implement activities and events.

In some churches, the nominating committee selects the women's ministries committee; in other churches, the leader selects her own committee. The best committee is one that reflects the makeup of the church members: a mixture of ages, vocations, ethnicities, and spiritual gifts. That way, your planning will take into consideration the needs of all the women in the church, not just the women you know best.

As a member of the church board, the women's ministries leader is responsible for keeping the board apprised of the part women's ministries is playing in the overall mission of the church. This will include coordinating women's ministries activities with the church calendar to avoid conflicting with other events. As an example, women's ministries would not plan competing activities during such church-wide events as an evangelistic series (ideally, the Women's Ministries Department will be actively involved in supporting the evangelistic series) or perhaps a Pathfinder or school outing (since so many women of the church would likely be involved with Pathfinders or the school). Working with the church board to benefit the entire church should be the goal of women's ministries.

### Developing a Vision Statement

Having a vision for your ministry is essential. Nothing meaningful can be accomplished unless you know where you want to go and how you plan to get there. At the very first meeting with your committee, begin working on a vision statement for what you want to accomplish through women's ministries. As the leader, you should help guide the vision, but remember that you don't have a monopoly on good ideas. Encourage team members to contribute as well. This will ensure that they will commit to and support the vision.

#### **The following steps are helpful in developing a vision:**

1. Spend time in **prayer and reflection**, asking for God's guidance in developing a vision for your ministry.
2. **Conduct a survey** of the women of the church to discover their needs. A sample survey can be downloaded from the North American Division Women's Ministries Department website at [www.nadwm.org](http://www.nadwm.org).
3. With your committee, **establish the core principles** of the department—what you believe is important and what should guide your planning. For example, if there are women in your church who might not be able to participate in events if a fee is charged, you would want to ensure that events are financed without fees. In many churches, asking for donations rather than charging fees works very well. Putting donation receptacles on each table or in prominent areas is effective. This would make it possible for all women to participate. If there are

divorced or single women in your congregation, you will want to be intentional about including them in your plans. If there are young mothers in the church, providing babysitting would make it possible for them to attend.

4. When you have determined the core principles that will guide your ministry and have collected the surveys from the women of the church, it's time to **analyze and discuss** the information and decide on possible activities and ministries.

### Setting Goals

After you have developed a vision statement to guide your ministry, the next step is to begin setting goals of what you want to accomplish for the year. Be sure to make realistic goals; otherwise, you will set yourself up for failure. As you achieve your goals, you can begin to aim higher. It would be wise not to attempt too many projects the first year. It's better to have a few successful projects than to attempt several large events that fail.

Remember: goals are about outcomes, not busyness. For example, if your goal is to enrich women's spiritual lives as well as to enjoy each other's company through a prayer breakfast, you must be intentional about including activities that are spiritual. Without a specific goal of spirituality, it would be easy to get carried away with the food and decorations and neglect the spiritual aspect.

Your goals should be measurable. One goal for the prayer breakfast might be that 70 percent of the women attending respond to an invitation to reconsecrate their lives to the Lord at the meeting, or that 30 percent of the attendance at the event be women under age 35.

You can also measure the success of your goals by having the attendees fill out short evaluation sheets after each event.

If you are planning a community outreach event, you should plan it for a time other than Sunday morning so it will not conflict with church attendance of prospective attendees.

As you make plans, be sure to list your goals. For example, three goals for lifting up Jesus might be:

1. Sponsor one prayer breakfast this year.
2. Start two small group Bible studies.
3. Mentor two younger church members.

Notice that each goal is measurable and easily attained.

Four goals for serving or ministering to women might be:

1. Grocery shop for three senior women each week.
2. Select several families in and out of the church who need seasonal garments and take the garments to them before the appropriate season.
3. Send women “just thinking of you” cards.
4. “Adopt” a newly-baptized woman or family in the church and nurture them in the faith.

## Women's Ministries Leader Job Description

### Overview

The women's ministries leader is elected by the church and serves on the church board. Qualifications include a sensitive, caring nature and a clear spiritual understanding of God's design for women. She assists the church in meeting the spiritual, emotional, and intellectual needs of women in their various stages of life and cultural background. She seeks to provide a spiritual climate for growth, encourages productivity, and rewards efforts and initiatives.

The Bible gives great insight into the role of women. Biblical women were entrepreneurs, judges, homemakers, and Bible teachers, to list only a few. Thus the Christian woman is called to live her life in terms of the great potential for the development and use of her abilities.

Christian women are compassionate with godly wisdom. They choose to act, to be voices proclaiming a better way, to be hands making a tangible difference, to work toward spiritually strengthening church members as well as the community.

As our model, Jesus ministered to women (Mark 7; Luke 7, 8, and 13), restoring their self-worth and value as human beings. The increasingly complex needs of women within North American society and the church make women's ministries a key priority in the church. “They (women) can do a work that men cannot do. They can come close to the hearts of those whom men cannot reach. The labor is needed” (*Evangelism*, page 465). “Why may they (women) not understand their own powers, and realizing that these powers are given of God, strive to make use of them to the fullest extent in doing good to others, in advancing the work of reformation, of truth, and of real goodness in the world” (*Welfare Ministries*, page 161). “Let woman realize the sacredness of her work and in the strength and fear of God, take up her mission” (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 3, page 564).

Women today are commissioned to use the talents and opportunities God has given them to fulfill His eternal plan. The responsibility of sharing the Good News belongs to all who call themselves Christians. If the church were not to fully utilize women's gifts, the church body would be denied the internal freedom under which it flourishes best. It would be denied the benefit of the spiritual and intellectual gifts of over half of its membership. Women would experience loss and those to whom she might minister also would lose the needed help. Women's ministries involves encouraging women to discover and use their gifts.

**The women's ministries leader:**

- Is appointed by the local church nominating committee.
- Is a member of the church board.
- Serves as chair of the women's ministries committee to encourage ideas and plans that maximize women's contribution to the mission of the church. The chair will put together an agenda, moderate discussion, and facilitate group cohesion through personal sharing, prayer, and fellowship.
- Assists the church in meeting the spiritual, emotional, and intellectual needs of women in their various stages of life and cultural diversity.
- Creates an environment that encourages productivity, rewards effort and initiative, and provides a spiritual climate in which each woman can experience growth.
- Assesses the needs of the women in the church through surveys and interviews and develops programs and activities to meet the needs identified through the surveys.
- Works closely with the pastor and the local conference women's ministries director.
- Sends regular reports to the conference women's ministries director.
- Is an advocate of women's concerns, needs, and contributions to the church. She keeps the church membership informed of women's ministries and its contributions to church life. This responsibility includes allotting time during personal ministries, announcement period, or Sabbath school to share with the congregation at large, being a liaison between the women of the church and the church board members, assisting the board members to keep in view the needs of the women in the church and recognizing women's ministries as a significant and vital part of church growth and church dynamics.



## Leadership Qualities

The women who take leadership positions in women's ministries do not necessarily need to have previous leadership training. They must, however, be willing to be taught and be able to work well with others in the church. Some of the qualities they should possess are:

### Spiritual qualities:

- Experiences an intimate relationship with God
- Serves God, not self
- Devoted to prayer
- Committed to God and His Word
- Models servant leadership style

### Positive personal qualities:

- Works well with women
- Possesses integrity
- Thinks before acting
- Is courageous
- Faces issues
- Is a visionary
- Serves others
- Has a positive self-image
- Motivates others
- Possesses a teachable spirit
- Delegates work
- Good time manager
- Keeps confidences
- Is proactive
- Is emotionally balanced
- Is reliable

### Personal qualities to avoid:

- Burnout
- Sense of inadequacy
- Spiritual dryness
- Fear of failure
- Unloving attitudes
- Conflict with authorities
- Critical spirit
- Habitual lateness
- Pettiness
- Strong individualism
- Over commitment
- Compulsive talking

### Wrong motivations for leadership:

- Pressure from others to become involved
- Desire for prestige and admiration
- Attempt to fulfill a personal need for acceptance and approval
- Unhealthy need to have power and authority over others

## Leadership Certification

The Women's Ministries Leadership Certification program was created because of the great need for the women in the church to develop skills that will enable them to serve in positions of leadership.

E. G. White reminds us that "There is a higher purpose for woman, a grander destiny. She should develop and cultivate her powers, for God can employ them in the great work of saving souls from eternal ruin" (*Evangelism*, p. 465). Developing and cultivating the abilities of women is one task of women's ministries.

The curriculum for the Leadership Certification program has been divided into eight subject areas:

- History and Philosophy (HP)
- Biblical Studies (BS)
- People Skills/Personal Growth (PS)
- Speaking Skills (SS)
- Leadership Skills (LS)
- Writing Skills (WS)
- Nurture Projects (NP)
- Outreach Projects (OP)

Due to the many subjects covered in the curriculum (about 65 in all), the program has been divided into four levels. Each level contains seminars from all of the eight subject areas of the curriculum.

In order for certification to be awarded, the participant must complete the required courses in a particular level; these are called Core Requirements. In addition, the participant must also complete three other seminars of her choice from among the remaining courses, called Electives.

All materials for Levels 1 through 4 are available through AdventSource: Phone toll free at 800-328-0525 or e-mail [service@adventsource.org](mailto:service@adventsource.org).

Certification Level 1 is available FREE at [www.nadwm.org](http://www.nadwm.org). Be sure to download the "Record Brochure for Levels 1-4" to help you understand the requirements that are needed. If possible, it is best to join with other women and take the seminars together.

It is the desire of the Women's Ministries Department to see women who are called by God for service in these last days empowered to lead.

For further information, call 301-680-6427 or email [wmassistant@nad.adventist.org](mailto:wmassistant@nad.adventist.org).

## Focus of Women's Ministries

Each church will have special needs and resources that affect how the Women's Ministries Department functions. The following principles will help keep women's ministries from becoming merely a "social club" for the women of the church.

**Spirituality** – Part of the goal of women's ministries should be to ensure that every woman in the church experiences a life-changing relationship with Jesus. Even social events should have a time of spiritual emphasis, such as a devotional, that is thoughtfully planned to inspire women.

**Outreach** – Women's ministries is concerned with outreach as well as "in-reach." Ministering to the women who attend church should not be the only goal. In order for women's ministries to enhance the entire church program and encourage women to use all their spiritual gifts to God's glory, women's ministries should be very deliberate about inviting 1) non-attending members and 2) women from the community to every women's ministries event. This will let the non-attending members know that they are missed and wanted back, and the community women will begin to feel comfortable in the Seventh-day Adventist Church as they make friends and enjoy fellowship with the women of the church. It is then easy and natural to invite them to other events at the church such as cooking schools, women's special days of emphasis, small prayer and/or study groups, and evangelistic meetings, especially those conducted by women. In addition, events for the community, such as health fairs, seminars on abuse prevention, self-defense for women, single parenting, and divorce recovery, to name a few, should be a part of the church women's ministries agenda. Even very small churches with limited resources can partner with local hospitals, law enforcement organizations, and community health groups to offer community events.

Women's ministries can sponsor mission projects in your community or one nearby. The following are potential areas of need:

- Women's shelters and homeless shelters
- Hospitals and nursing homes
- Impoverished neighborhoods
- Adults and young people who can't read proficiently

- Adults who can't speak English
- Single mothers who are faltering under their burdens
- Unwed pregnant teenagers

They all need the help of the women in your church. Why not determine to be the hands and feet of Jesus to reach out to them and make a difference in their lives?

**A Ministry for Every Woman** – A big part of spiritual health is reaching out to others to make a difference in their lives. Therefore, one of the goals of women's ministries should be to help every woman in the church find a ministry – an area in which to be of service to others. This may be accomplished in several ways. One is by sponsoring outreach events to the community, ministries to the girls/teens of the local church and school, or participating in a conference-sponsored outreach event. Or you might have spiritual gifts seminars to help women discover their gifts and then help them find practical ways to use their gifts. It might even be finding special ways to minister to their own children or families.

**Tell Your World** – We don't have to travel to a distant place to find individuals who need to know the Lord. They are all around us, and God has equipped each of us with the ability to reach individuals whom no one else can reach. They may be in your own home, your neighborhood, your workplace, at your beauty shop, gas station, or grocery store. Women's ministries can offer training to encourage and equip women to allow God to use them to make a difference where they live, work, or do business.

**Evangelism by Women** – Women should be encouraged to get involved in evangelism. There may be women in your church who are gifted with the ability to speak in public, give Bible studies, or lead small prayer or study groups. Women's ministries leaders should provide opportunities for these types of activities, being sure that women in the community are invited to each event.

**Reconnecting** – Making contact with women who have stopped attending church and letting them know they are missed and wanted back is as important as baptizing new members. Women are uniquely qualified to engage in this ministry, and North American Division Women's Ministries has developed a program called *Heart Call* to facilitate this ministry (for more information, visit [www.nadwm.org](http://www.nadwm.org)).

**Mentoring Young Women** – Meeting the needs of young women, teens, and girls and involving them in women's ministries is a wonderful way to ensure that they stay in the church. They need to know that they are loved and valued by the adult women. Planning activities for them and including them in your activities and events will reap rich rewards.

**Abuse Education, Prevention, and Healing** – Surveys of large numbers of church members indicate that abuse of every kind is as prevalent in the church as in the general population. For that reason, in 2001 the General Conference, at its Annual Council, voted that one day a year be set aside for every church around the world to observe Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day (now called Enditnow Emphasis day) to educate members about the evils of abuse of every kind and to help prevent it. Resources to enhance the local church's observance are available at [www.nadwm.org](http://www.nadwm.org).

Besides observing this special day each year, women's ministries should work to help make the church a safe place for abused individuals to receive help and healing. This includes believing a woman when she reaches out to you and recognizing that she should not be counseled that it is her Christian duty to stay in an abusive relationship, since this is unbiblical. She should receive counseling without the perpetrator being present, since she will not be safe to tell the true story to the counselor. Abuse victims and their children may need help getting to a place of safety. Providing such help could be an important service of women's ministries.

The young people of the church may be at risk for sexual abuse by church members. Any time a minor reports abuse, the police should be called to investigate the allegations, irrespective of who the reported abuser is.

Abuse of every kind destroys lives and distorts the victim's view of God. Abuse is a church problem, because in order to have a healthy church, the members must be healthy. Women's ministries should recognize that the problem exists in the church and mobilize to do something about it.

## Yearly Calendar of Special Days

### **1st Sabbath in March: Women's Day of Prayer\*\***

The Woman's Day of Prayer provides an opportunity for women to learn about each other and pray for one another. It is a time to reunite with God and one another to strengthen spiritual bonds. Prayers for women everywhere create a spiritual network of empathy and understanding between Adventist women.

### **2nd Sabbath in June: Women's Ministries Emphasis Day\*\***

Women's Ministries Emphasis Day is an annual event on the church's Calendar of Days and Events. The Women's Ministries leader should meet with her pastor at least six months prior to this day to discuss special plans for this Sabbath. This is an opportunity to plan a full day of activities including Sabbath School, the worship service, a fellowship dinner, and perhaps an afternoon program. The leader may also want to use this time to honor women in the congregation who have done something unusual or outstanding.

### **2nd Sabbath in July: NAD Women's Ministries Offering**

In sharing this offering with the participating conferences and unions, it is the intention of the NAD Women's Ministries Department to provide funds for conference and union Women's Ministries departments to enable them to plan and conduct ministry activities and events. Tithe envelopes should be marked "NAD Women's Ministries" to ensure that the offering is used as intended.

### **4th Sabbath in August: enditnow Emphasis Day\*\***

The North American Division recognizes that children and men, as well as women, are victims of abuse. God abhors abuse of EVERY kind, and we are working to prevent it.

Women's ministries is encouraged to include other church departments such as children's ministries, family ministries, youth ministries, and health ministries to assist in planning the events of this day.

Sermons and other resources for the annual special days are available from the NAD Women's Ministries website in English, Spanish, and French:  
[www.nadwm.org](http://www.nadwm.org).

\*\*Even though dates are assigned to these special days, they may be observed at other times during the year (with the exception of the offering). Work with your pastor to find the dates that best fit your church's schedule.

## Women's Ministries: What It Is and What It Isn't

### *Women's Ministries is*

- A place to address the spiritual, emotional, physical, and social needs of women in the church
- Encouragement for women to improve their potential for participation in the mission of the church
- A support system for hurting women, whether they are suffering from divorce, abuse, or simply loneliness
- A forum to address topics and issues that affect women
- Encouragement for young women through a college scholarship program
- Mentorship of young women so they experience joy in the Lord and become involved in service in the church
- Recognition that women have many gifts of the Spirit and an attempt to help women to discover and use these gifts to the glory of God
- Encouragement for women to become involved in all areas of ministry in their church, their community, and their home

### *Women's Ministries isn't*

- A place for women to promote equal rights for women, although we recognize the importance of the issue
- A forum for women who have complaints, justified or not, against employers
- A platform for the ordination of women, although we believe that everyone should use their talents to God's honor and glory and should receive just recognition for work done in His honor
- An arena for male bashing; women's ministries is anti-sexist, not anti-male
- An exclusive organization; women's ministries encourages inclusion of all women, exclusion of none

## Official Statements by the Seventh-day Adventist Church Pertaining to Women

For official statements and voted guidelines on issues pertaining to women, please visit our website at <http://www.nadwm.org/article/140/resources/official-statements-by-the-seventh-day-adventist-church-pertaining-to-women>.

North American Division Women's Ministries

Phone: 301-680-6427

FAX: 301-680-5135

Email: [wmassistant@nad.adventist.org](mailto:wmassistant@nad.adventist.org)

12501 Old Columbia Pike,

Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600 USA



## Women's Ministries

This Quick Start Guide for Women's Ministries is full of important information to help you start or revitalize a ministry at your local church. This guide contains a job description, instructions for getting started, tips for maintaining a successful ministry, troubleshooting suggestions, recommended resources, and more. Whether you're new to this ministry or a seasoned volunteer, this Quick Start Guide will inspire you with lots of great ideas you can immediately put to use in your local church.

Other titles in the Quick Start Guide series include:

- Family Ministries
- Men's Ministries
- Children's Ministries
- Single Adult Ministries

For a complete listing of Quick Start Guide titles visit [www.adventsource.org](http://www.adventsource.org)



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*A ministry for every woman*

*Every encounter  
is an opportunity to model  
attractive, Christ-centered,  
relevant, active, relational  
ministry, where someone  
will have the opportunity to  
meet Jesus one more time,  
or maybe for the very  
first time.*

