



For more information
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To Welcome,
Inform and
Embrace



The Catholic Women's League of Canada

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The Catholic Women's
League of Canada

WELCOME PROGRAM



“Whoever welcomes you welcomes Me, and whoever welcomes Me welcomes the One who sent Me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward”

(Matthew 10:40-42)



Introduction



This program for welcoming members to The Catholic Women's League of Canada has been designed in response to the voices of members across Canada. It relates to two critical issues identified in the strategic plan—1. Include (leave no member behind) and affirm (make members feel welcomed, needed and wanted), and 2. Validate all members. It is intended to assist you as you welcome members to your parish council and to encourage the involvement of all members. You spoke, and you were heard. Best practices and great ideas were researched from councils and external organizations. Included in this program are suggestions, ideas and resources for you to adapt and customize to use in ways that will work best for your council.

Welcoming is not a one-time event. It is a continuous process and mindset that touches members on an ongoing basis. It is what will help members to feel that they are genuinely connected and part of the organization. It is what makes the League a great sisterhood and will keep members engaged and committed. It is essential to make sure new members feel welcomed and at home from their first day and every day. The responsibility for welcoming does not fall solely on the parish council president. She should be sure to ask for the executive's cooperation and participation and work with them to implement practices to welcome and affirm all members.

God did not intend for us to live in isolation. We are made to be relational, to have relationships with others that grow and thrive. We are made for community; living and participating in community is necessary for our well-being. The benefits of community include inspiration, motivation, feeling understood, connecting with others on the same journey and supporting each other. Community is encouraging and fun; it attracts the Holy Spirit and fosters love. These are some of the reasons women join—the companionship of sisterhood experienced in the League.

The League's mission to call "its members to grow in faith, and to witness to the love of God through ministry and service" and its core values, (faith—following Catholic teaching; service—local, national and international; and social justice—actively involved in society) form the basis on which this Welcome Program is built.

The Welcome Program consists of "A Guideline for Welcoming All Members," which gives tips and advice on how to create a welcoming environment for both new and returning members. It offers practical ways to connect with members and provides them with a sense of belonging.

The Membership Information Form section contains ways to get to know members, their interests and talents, and to get an idea of where they will fit into the League. Using members' natural talents, education and experience lets them know they are valued.

An Orientation Program is recommended to assist in welcoming members and informing them about the League, its mission and core values. Informed members are more committed and likely to remain involved and engaged with the council and the League.



A sample Welcome Kit is provided to assist councils in developing a resource for new members, giving them tools to be successful.

Councils are encouraged to incorporate the Companionship Program, and two options are included. A one-on-one mentor and companion program benefits a new member who is being accompanied at the beginning of her League journey. It also helps to keep existing members engaged and committed as they accompany a new member and help her to learn about the League. Another opportunity for a companionship type program would be available with grouping into the core values of faith, service and social justice. This would create a natural group of women working and journeying together.

The Validation Program provides ideas to councils on how to recognize members and acknowledge their contributions to the League, church and community. Acknowledging a member's contributions of time and talent will increase her sense of belonging and connectedness.

The suggestions and resources provided in this Welcome Program will help you and your council build a culture of welcome and community for all members, ensuring every member of the League feels welcomed, affirmed and validated.