



The Catholic Women's League of Canada

President Handbook

2023

The Catholic Women's League of Canada
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League Objects

The objects of the League shall be to unite Catholic women of Canada

1. to achieve individual and collective spiritual development
2. to promote the teachings of the Catholic church
3. to exemplify the Christian ideal in home and family life
4. to protect the sanctity of life
5. to enhance the role of women in church and society
6. to recognize the human dignity of all people everywhere
7. to uphold and defend Christian education and values in the modern world
8. to contribute to the understanding and growth of religious freedom, social justice, peace and harmony

Mission Statement

The Catholic Women's League of Canada calls its members to grow in faith, and to witness to the love of God through ministry and service.

President's Responsibilities

The duties of the president are to

- inform the membership of the League's position on current issues, priorities and programs
- foster open communication with the members and with the spiritual advisor on all League matters
- preside at all council meetings and conventions
- be a signing officer for all official documents
- provide active leadership
- initiate policy, in consultation with the officers of the council concerned
- keep fully informed on the operation of the League
- report annually to the membership
- be an advisory member of all committees except the nominations and elections committee
- be the official spokesperson for her council
- perform such other duties as may be incumbent upon the office
- appoint committees
- read and be familiar with the *National Manual of Policy and Procedure* and the *Constitution & Bylaws*
- be responsible for reporting activities to the next level
- be familiar with the responsibilities of the other positions
- work closely with the council executive to ensure that all responsibilities are met

President's Role with the Executive

The parish council president performs her roles and responsibilities in collaboration with the council executive. The roles of the executive are to:

1. direct and administer the affairs of the League within the parish
2. coordinate and organize programs to promote the objects of the League
3. represent members in spiritual, social and political issues within the community
4. develop League policy and plans
5. promote the League within the parish

For more detailed information on the responsibilities of the president and executive in fulfilling these roles, see Appendix 1.

The president shall:

- call an executive meeting prior to the general meeting
- encourage all officers and the spiritual advisor to attend
- prepare an agenda with the assistance of the secretary
- chair the meeting
- allow time for discussion of agenda items
- bring recommendations to a general meeting

President's Role at General Meetings

The president shall:

- call a general meeting of the council
- encourage members to attend
- prepare an agenda, with the assistance of the secretary, based on the business arising from the executive meeting
- chair the general meeting
- allow sufficient time for discussion of agenda items and further exchange of ideas
- designate greeters
- arrange for a social period
- appoint a member to be responsible for a guest speaker
- deal with any other items determined by the council

Tips on Conducting Meetings

Parliamentary procedure refers to the rules of conducting business meetings to ensure that the business is completed without bias in an orderly manner that allows fair group decisions to be made. Meetings will run more smoothly if all members are familiar with good meeting procedures and use them in a fair and courteous manner.

The president should:

- start on time
- speak so that everyone can hear
- avoid holding a private conversation with other executive members
- follow the agenda; complete one item on the agenda before going to the next
- be impartial

- maintain order
- be fair and courteous at all times
- use parliamentary procedures

Tips on Motions

A motion is a proposal by a member in a meeting that the group take a certain action. It allows the opportunity for all members to discuss the proposal, thereby participating in the decision-making process.

The president should:

- assist members to formulate motions to include all applicable details
- encourage discussion on the motion
- keep the discussion on topic
- enforce the rule that each member may speak only twice to a motion, and allowing other members to speak once before any member speaks a second time
- repeat the motion and call for the vote when all discussion on the topic is completed
- ask for both the affirmative and negative votes when calling for the vote

Planning

It is a good idea for executive members to have a plan for the activities of the council during their two-year term. The president assists the council in planning by presenting her own two-year plans. Plans should be made with the involvement of members. The officers and standing committee chairpersons should base their plans on the information gathered from the members, as well as by considering League projects at other levels. Plans should be evaluated yearly for progress toward the goal and direction for the coming year. As well, the process of planning and evaluating the progress will be an asset when preparing annual reports and recruiting members.

League Resource Material

To ensure that the council operates efficiently and effectively, it is essential to have a good working knowledge of The Catholic Women's League of Canada.

The president should:

- review/act on/distribute parish mailings, communiqués and/or annual reports from all levels
- consult with the president at the next level to establish/revise policies and procedures for the council, as necessary

- be aware of the vice-president’s responsibilities for League resource materials, which are quite extensive, and ensure that the vice-president understands them (see *Vice-President Handbook*)

The president should be familiar with all items available in the Resource List. The Resource List is available from national office and can also be found on the League’s website (cwl.ca).

Guidelines for Reporting

These guidelines for reporting have been drawn up to conform to the *Constitution & Bylaws*. See the *National Manual of Policy and Procedure*, which provides detailed information on reporting under the headings “Guidelines for Annual Written Reports,” “Parish Activities” and “Appendix 3: Sample Parish Activities Report.”

If guidelines are provided by your diocesan council, use them.

What to report on:

1. Keep Membership Informed
 - Have you kept the membership informed about current issues and priorities of the League?
2. Communications
 - Have you fostered open communication with the spiritual advisor?
 - Have you acted as the official spokesperson for your council?
 - Have you reported annually to the membership?

Resources and References

The Canadian League magazine—a list of articles pertaining to standing committees and copies of individual articles are available from national office.

Communiqués from the national executive/board are regularly posted on the League website (cwl.ca).

The following resources are available from national office:

- *Personal Letter-Writing Guide*
- Resource List

Be familiar with and promote the use of:

- *Ceremonies Booklet*
- *Constitution & Bylaws*
- *National Manual of Policy and Procedure*
- *Welcome Program*

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Appendix 1: Responsibilities of the Executive

1. Direct and administer the affairs of the League within the parish council
 - Collect membership fees and remit per capita fees to national office, respecting deadline dates
 - Support diocesan, provincial and national levels through per capita fees
 - Decide, by vote at a general meeting, on amendments to the *Constitution & Bylaws*, increases in per capita fees and elections of diocesan officers
 - Discuss resolutions and give direction to the president and accredited delegates to take to the diocesan convention or annual meeting of members
 - Adapt work of standing committees to the needs of members and parish; be flexible in seeking ways to interest and activate members; seek help from diocesan executive, when required
 - Be aware of the work of the League at parish, diocesan (regional), provincial and national levels
 - Complete forms for the full number of voting/accredited delegates to attend conventions and annual meetings of members, if possible
 - Hold executive meetings prior to each regular meeting to discuss current business and future plans, to prepare recommendations and to plan the program for the general meeting
 - Maintain parish archives in a secure facility, preferably on church property
 - Notify national office and the diocesan and provincial chairpersons of faith when a member dies, using the appropriate form
 - Plan monthly general meetings, with an annual meeting in January or February
2. Coordinate and organize programs to promote the objects of the League
 - Implement projects/programs at the parish level and as directed from other levels
 - Provide education and leadership development for members
 - Provide spiritual enrichment programs for members, using League resources when possible
 - Plan a spiritual program to begin every general meeting
 - Recognize and celebrate members' contributions to the League
3. Represent members in spiritual, social and political issues within the community
 - Set up programs for community service as needed

- Take action on resolutions adopted at diocesan, provincial and national conventions and annual meetings of members
 - Promote and participate in local ecumenical activities
 - Support and participate in activities of the diocesan council
 - Promote and engage in inter-council communication
 - Carry the parish vote at the diocesan level of the League
 - Ensure that the full number of voting and accredited delegates attend conventions and annual meetings of members
4. Develop League policy and long-term planning
- Prepare plans for activities
 - Prepare an annual budget
 - Develop, review and update the parish manual of policy and procedure
 - Keep a book of motions
 - Discuss topics of concern to be addressed by resolution; collect resource material and request diocesan help to work through the resolution process
5. Promote the League within the parish
- Recruit and maintain members—reach out to all women of the parish
 - Be actively involved in membership recruitment drive; use promotional material from national office
 - Inform all members about communiqués from other levels
 - Encourage attendance at workshops or training sessions offered by other levels of the League
 - Have representation at the parish pastoral council and take an active interest in other parish activities.
 - Be a source of sisterhood and support for each other
6. Provide an honour guard for deceased members