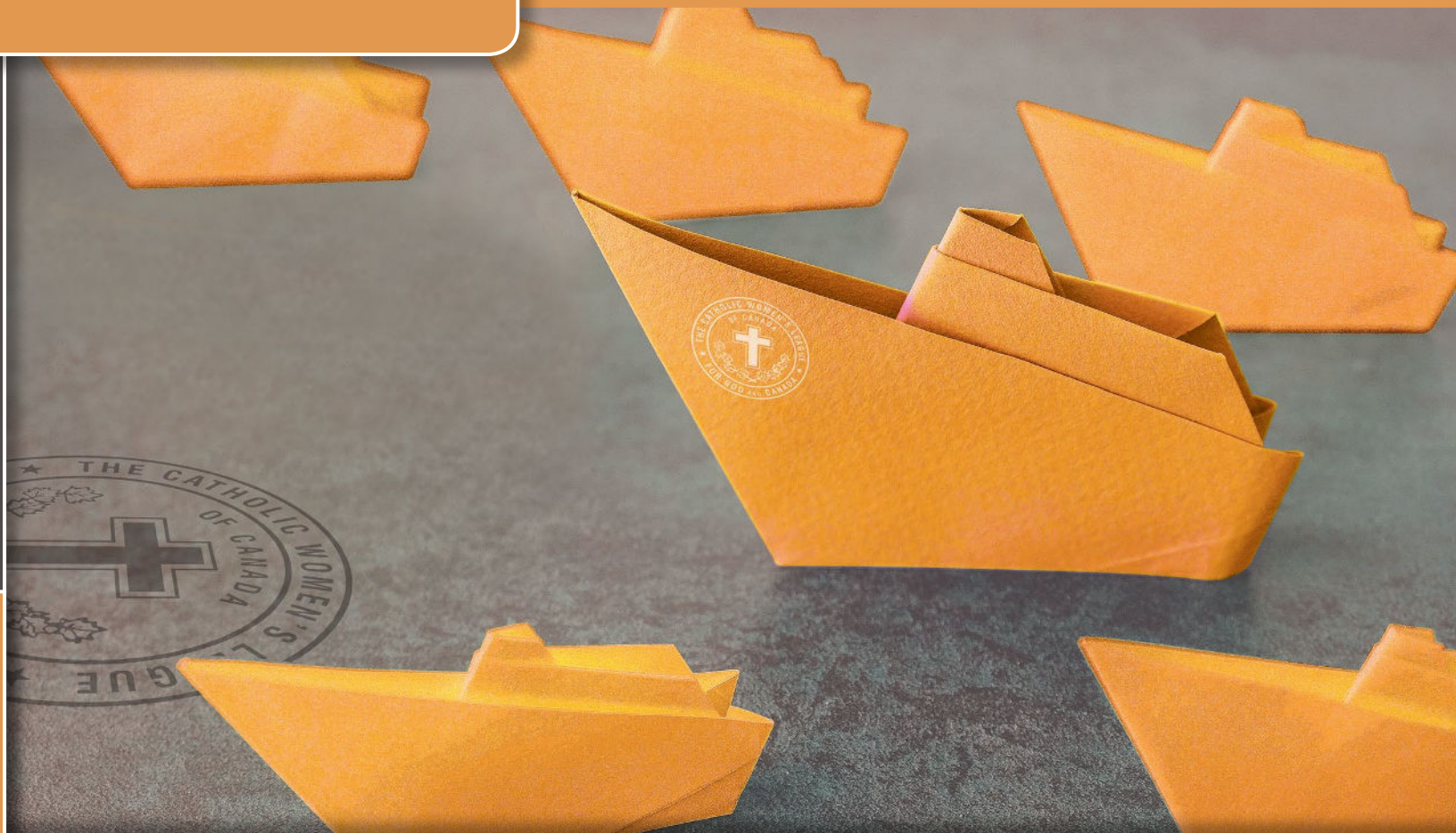


The Joy of Leadership Through Engagement in Ministry – A Practical Guide for Parish Councils

Parish Options Strategic Leadership Working Group



GOAL:
Address Critical
Issues.

STRATEGIES:

- Capitalize on members' willingness to take on short-term leadership responsibilities
- Introduce project-based committees beginning at the parish level
- Restructure the existing committee structure at the parish level to respect the uniqueness of councils.

*“You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit,
fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name.”*

(Jn 15:16)



Introduction

This guide is a product of The Catholic Women's League of Canada's strategic planning initiative and was produced by the parish options–strategic leadership working group. The team embraced the challenge to increase leadership throughout the League, as it is an investment in the organization's future. The League needs dedicated leaders to flourish, and members have an inherent need to be guided, nurtured and supported.

Since its beginning, the League has been a parish-based, grassroots organization, driven by its members' faith, skills, resources, intelligence and passion. The purpose of this guide is to inform councils about leadership and to encourage and support members in taking on leadership roles as service and ministry.

Leadership opportunities involve members at all points of their journey, from the new member to those reaching higher executive position levels. Individuals and groups work on many diverse project-based activities across the country each year. Each council is unique, but every council is committed to various activities and tasks that require many leaders.

There are two main types of leadership in parish councils—elected and non-elected positions. Elected positions are for executive officers voted in for a two-year term to lead a council through the recurring work and projects of the League. Non-elected positions are all other leadership opportunities held by members. They support the executive and help ensure the council's work and projects are accomplished.

This guide focuses on the non-elected opportunities that can inspire members to become more engaged and to discover and enhance their leadership roles. Leadership is a broad term that has been defined in many ways. Leaders are ordinary people who can accomplish extraordinary things—they make things happen. More importantly, they motivate others to excel by creating a culture where everyone knows their strengths and is encouraged to stretch and develop their potential. Everyone benefits from increased engagement and leadership. The

League needs dedicated members to provide leadership today and in the years ahead. An effective succession plan is crucial to ensure the organization remains vibrant. Members who are confident leaders will provide the basis for that succession.

This guide proposes practical solutions that take the unique qualities of councils and members into account, as well as women's busy lives, limited time and variable schedules. The strategies include flexible options to:

- restructure standing committee activities at the parish level
- capitalize on members' willingness to take on short-term leadership roles
- introduce project-based committees

The objective is to encourage members to take on leadership roles in their councils by capitalizing on their unique skills, talents and interests. This can increase engagement at the grassroots parish level and inspire a new generation of leaders. There are helpful tips, ideas and examples of leadership activities that can energize and empower members to grow in their faith, relationships and personal development.

The first section emphasizes the joy of ministry and the tremendous opportunity for members to live out their baptismal call to serve others through League activities. The League needs engaged members and leaders to flourish, and members are uniquely gifted and capable. A ministry perspective toward council activities offers exciting opportunities for members to unlock their hidden potential, embrace their unique gifts, and deepen their sense of belonging, purpose and fulfillment. This guide provides concrete steps to help councils of all sizes align their activities to reflect the core values of faith, service and social justice. It also offers practical incentives to inspire members to fulfill their call to ministry through service in the League.

The second section focuses on the engagement of members. It explains how knowing the members' talents and interests can empower them to take on leadership roles. Councils are successful because of member engagement. Cultivating relationships, collaboration and teamwork play an important role in drumming up excitement and encouraging members to get involved in activities they are passionate about. Recognition and appreciation are also crucial to engagement and personal growth. This guide includes examples of project-based committees and suggested activities.

The purpose of the leadership section is to inform members of elected and non-elected leadership opportunities in their councils. The focus is on the non-elected opportunities, which are unique for every council. Members can identify opportunities for short-term, ad-hoc or long-term leadership involvement. Recognizing and acknowledging leadership qualities and behaviours in members can assist and encourage them to take the lead on projects and activities. The examples provided show how members can discern their call to leadership and become effective leaders.



Faith



Service



Social Justice

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The League's Call To Ministry

There is power in a name. The word “ministry” captures the essence of the League as an organization—its Christian focus and work “For God and Canada.” It resonates with members as it conveys a sense of mission and awakens their baptismal promise to spread the light of Christ by ministering to the needs of others.

The League's core values are the fundamental beliefs that guide the actions of its members. They direct why and how members engage in the activities they do. Ministry is faith and service in action. It is joyfully using members' God-given gifts for the common good of society. For more than 100 years, women's ministry has blossomed throughout the League. The gift of ministry is inherent to who members are as Catholic women and the League as a Catholic women's organization.

Members of all generations view women's role as essential to the wellbeing of the church and society. Yet, parish councils have expressed difficulty filling standing committee positions. The strategy to restructure standing committees can be achieved in every council by reorganizing activities through emphasizing the call to ministry. This is just the spark needed to ignite members' passion and to enrich their sense of purpose, belonging and fulfilment.

The League offers vast opportunities to nurture members' faith, serve, and to create meaningful societal change, so a ministry approach to the standing committees is a realistic perspective that is easy to understand and embrace. Councils are encouraged to reorganize their activities within three ministries that reflect the core values of faith, service and social justice. This allows them to effectively capitalize on members' interests, passions and priorities and to stimulate their call to serve in the areas where each is uniquely gifted.

God has called members to be missionary disciples and has equipped them for the work of ministry in the League. Every member is called to ministry, as expressed in the Mission Statement. To realize its mission and live out its objects, “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.” The Objects of the League are the cornerstone for members' collective activities. They serve to unite Catholic women of

Canada in their work to:

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



Promoting League activities as a call to ministry is intended to inspire enthusiastic, can-do attitudes toward engagement and leadership. It also embraces the League's core purpose of “Uniting Catholic women to grow in faith, and to promote social justice through service to the church, Canada and the world.” The ministry approach benefits parish councils and members alike and takes their unique characteristics and qualities into account.

Members are the heart of the League. They are the spiritual and physical hub of activity in parish councils and the cornerstone of their parish. The emphasis on ministry emerges at the grassroots parish council level, where many activities originate and are carried out. This is where members can realize their vocation through service that supports their council, parish and community. Active engagement empowers members to walk in solidarity while positively impacting society through prayer, service and social action.

Every council is unique in its size, location and membership composition. Their activities are influenced by attributes like the council's age, number of members, age groups, cultural mix, language, and urban or rural region. Members are equally unique in their varying ages, stages, cultures, traditions, education and lifestyles. Though all are guided by their Catholic faith, they have varying skills and interests along with differing opinions on their council's activities.

Despite their diversity, members speak the same language of ministry discipleship. This presents an opportunity for councils of all sizes and attributes to celebrate and capitalize on members' diverse qualities and strengths. Reorganizing activities into three ministries that reflect the core values is a faith-inspired strategy to which members can relate.



The Key Components of Ministry

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

(1 Cor 12:4-7)

The League celebrates every member for her strength and dedication to exemplify, support and defend Christian values. It offers endless opportunities to make a difference and empowers members to walk in Christian solidarity while using their time, talent and treasure to bless their parishes and communities.

Though each ministry is distinct, they are interlinked and function as cohesive teams. Every activity offers an intrinsic element of faith and is blended with an element of service or action. The examples below were found in annual reports, communiqués, parish mailings, *The Canadian League* magazine and interviews with parish presidents.

Faith Ministry

“And he said to them, ‘Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation...’”

(Mk 16:15)

Faith is the core value that distinguishes the League from other women’s organizations. Members’ spiritual growth and renewal is the heart of the League and the essence of its existence. Members are called to be authentic witnesses to the love of God and to take active leadership roles in the life and evangelizing mission of the church by supporting and participating in faith-related endeavours.

Councils are encouraged to offer activities that enrich members’ spiritual growth and promote evangelization in the parish and community. Examples of faith activities that offer leadership opportunities include organizing bible study, providing clergy support, presenting bible and rosaries to youth, and organizing ecumenical prayer services.

Service Ministry

“So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.”

(Jn 13:14-15)

Service is the core value that exemplifies the League’s reputation of extending a spirit of welcome, hospitality and fellowship as a sign of love for one’s neighbour and for each other. *The League Prayer*, written by Fr. Gabriel Schachtel in 1952, includes words that still resonate today, “Teach us to share with others at home and abroad, the good things You have given us.”

Members are encouraged to follow Jesus’ model of servant leadership. Examples of service activities that offer leadership opportunities include providing outreach to members and parishioners (e.g., prayer shawl ministry), organizing parish receptions (funerals, etc.), offering breakfast and lunch programs to youth, and planning highway and park clean up events.

Social Justice Ministry

*“Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute.
Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.”*

(Prov 31: 8-9)

Social justice is the core value that reflects members’ passion for being actively involved in the wellbeing of society at the local, national and global levels. This ministry is essential to achieve the League’s envisioned future to be “a valued partner for social justice” and “a respected advocate at all government levels.”

Social justice is about advocacy. Advocacy responds to the structural causes of injustice that violate God’s laws. Members work to defend human rights, human dignity, the environment and equitable access to life’s essentials like food, shelter, education and employment. They are called to be the voice of the poor, the marginalized and vulnerable in society. Members’ work supports pathways to a brighter future for women, children and families, especially those affected by poverty, homelessness, domestic abuse, addictions, mental illness, human trafficking, incarceration and more.

Examples of social justice activities that offer leadership opportunities include hosting letter-writing campaigns, and identifying issues and writing resolutions to address the issue.

Benefits for Parish Councils and Members

Viewing council activities and members’ service from a ministry perspective can inspire them to live in joyful communion with their sisters. The emphasis on ministry is a call to action that can stimulate active engagement, teamwork and collaboration. This approach motivates members to channel their individual and collective energy into meaningful activities for which they are passionate. It offers opportunities to recognize their value, enhance their skills and draw out their potential to embrace leadership roles. Participation options enable everyone to contribute anytime and anywhere their schedule allows. Some examples would be praying at home, working at shelters or connecting with other members outside of a meeting.

More responsibility is transferred to members to choose and organize activities, which can stimulate collaborative ideas and participation. Members have significant input into their council’s annual calendar of events and are encouraged to take ownership of their ideas, which lightens the workload for executive officers.

Councils are empowered to prioritize activities to enhance members’ engagement and an overall sense of purpose, satisfaction and connectedness with their sisters. Though every initiative has merit, councils cannot realistically adopt them all. They can choose to focus on one, two or all three ministries and as many activities as members can practically achieve. The number of activities in each ministry does not have to be equally balanced. Some councils may prefer to focus on more service activities, while others may prefer faith or social justice. Councils have the flexibility to add, delete or modify activities as issues and opportunities arise in their parish and community and as new themes and initiatives are introduced by councils at other levels.

Embracing a ministry approach to the standing committees can build vibrant councils and stimulate joyful engagement and leadership. Members of all ages and councils of all sizes are equally valued, needed and encouraged to participate where and how they feel called to serve. Every member, council and action is welcomed, valued and celebrated.



Parish Council Activities from a Ministry Perspective

Begin by inviting the council's executive members to an in-person or virtual information meeting to introduce the ministry approach to the council's projects and activities. It is essential they understand the ministry perspective to be able to answer members' questions confidently. Explain the benefits of fulfilling the call to ministry through service in the League, including the opportunity to create a culture of service, engagement and leadership in the council.

Review the council's activities for the last several years by referencing its annual calendar of events, newsletters, annual reports, etc. Categorize activities under the three ministries using a simple chart like the following example. If an activity overlaps more than one ministry, categorize it where it fits best. This process gives a clear view of where the council focuses its attention. It also reveals any gaps in service, which presents an opportunity to evaluate existing activities and consider new initiatives.

Activity	Faith	Service	Social Justice
• create a resolution to defend human rights; support an action plan			✓
• host a clergy appreciation reception		✓	
• host a craft or culinary workshop		✓	
• host funeral receptions		✓	
• host a spiritual retreat	✓		
• organize a parish baby shower to support a pregnancy support centre		✓	
• organize council fundraisers		✓	
• organize an ethnic rosary	✓		
• organize a Pornography Hurts postcard campaign			✓
• present sacramental gifts	✓		
• sponsor an impoverished child through Chalice, etc.		✓	
• support the League's centenary tree-planting project		✓	
• support seminarians and retired priests	✓		

When introducing the ministry approach to the membership, create excitement and enthusiasm by scheduling a fun social event and inviting everyone to participate. Positive, enthusiastic and energetic messaging will help to vitalize members' call to ministry and influence their participation.

Encourage every member to choose one or more ministries that call to her heart and compliment her unique qualities. Completing the member information forms in the Welcome Program will help the council identify members' skills, talents and interests. Access the program and forms on the national website at cwl.ca. Share the council's activity chart and encourage members to choose activities for the year collaboratively. Invite everyone to express their views and to suggest new ideas, which promotes a sense of ownership, sisterhood and motivation to be involved. Consider asking the following questions:

- Which activities should continue?
- Which activities should be discontinued?
- Which new activities should be started?

Invite everyone to select the activities they can participate in and indicate those they would like to lead. Encourage members to recognize each other's talents and to persuade each other to lead an activity. Be mindful that some members like serving in a public role, some prefer working behind the scenes, and others prefer to pray for the success of their councils' activities. Regardless of their engagement and leadership choices, remind members their individual and collective actions bless the council, parish and community.

Strategies to Engage Members

*“When people are financially invested, they want a return.
When people are emotionally invested, they want to contribute.”*

(Simon Sinek)

Engagement builds an environment that enables members to thrive. It promotes leadership habits and helps people to become emotionally invested in what they do. A culture of engagement can be embedded into how a council thinks and acts. Through engagement, members are actively involved and are motivated by a personal desire to serve their council, parish and community. The first step is to foster a genuinely warm and hospitable environment. An engaging environment is one in which ideas, strategies and activities are shared and discussed. It is about developing leadership habits and building an environment that enables members to thrive, allowing them to be invested in the success of their council's projects. The intent of this document is to inspire members to use their talents to embrace leadership opportunities that embody the core values and vision of the League. The passion and dedication of these members will then motivate others to engage and serve.

Building on Foundation

Women join the League for various reasons. Whether it is opportunities for spiritual growth, service, social action or sisterhood, they all need to feel a sense of purpose and belonging. They want to experience the League's legendary faith, fun and fulfillment. Despite the different ways they serve and contribute, members share the same sense of calling. They are motivated by a sincere desire to serve their council, parish and community.

The League has a basic structure. The structure includes a national executive/board that sets the course for the membership, starting with a national theme. This theme, chosen by the national president, reflects her closest desires for the League and changes every two years. While council activities are not confined to the parameters of a theme, the theme gives councils a starting point for activities that they and individual members may wish to undertake. Under the national executive are provincial and diocesan executives, which vary by region of the country. Many provincial and diocesan executives also establish a sub-theme that can be used for further guidance. When encouraging members to become engaged with the League, hold discussion and prayer events on what these themes mean to them and what can be undertaken to see them bear fruit in communities. Themes can be an excellent starting point to engage members.

Encourage members to get involved according to their comfort level—wherever, whenever or however they wish. There are varying opportunities to serve and contribute following League protocol (policy and procedures provided by various levels of the League). The diocesan/provincial executives are there to assist and guide should questions arise.

Participation or engagement is two-fold—it benefits the council as members use their God-given talents to enrich the projects, and it gives them satisfaction and a sense of fulfillment in contributing to the success of council activities.

Knowing Council Members is Key

By getting to know members, a council executive can help them decide where they can serve best. Before planning activities for the council, ensure the member information forms from the *Welcome Program* have been completed for new and renewing members. These forms highlight what members enjoy doing, some of their talents and gifts and what they are passionate about. Next, invite members to participate in what inspires them to fulfill the League's core purpose, "Uniting Catholic women to grow in faith, and to promote social justice through service to the church, Canada and the world." Some projects and activities may be small and happen once, while others may be large and ongoing or a combination of both. All are valuable contributions to councils and the League!

Fostering engagement is about helping people find meaning and fulfillment. As the saying attributed to Antoine de Saint-Exupéry goes, "If you want to build a ship, don't drum up the men and women to gather wood, divide the work, and give orders. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea." Members should look and say, "That was awesome! I want to be a part of it!"

"For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another."

(Rom 12: 4-5)



How to Ignite Every Passion

Great initiatives often begin with the voice of one woman. One woman with one idea can motivate others in the parish council and beyond. She has the power to stimulate engagement and to amplify the powerful voices of members across Canada!

Once members have come forward with their interests and passions as identified on the applicable member information form, it is time to ignite the flame of those passions! It can be a humbling experience for those who have had to "run the show" for many years, but as St. John Paul II said, "do not be afraid," for it can also be very liberating for a council and the executive to have fresh ideas and members willing to "put out into the deep" (Lk 5:4).

Members may need some guidance on the types of projects they can undertake. It is good to guide them with a focus on the League's core values:

- faith – following Catholic teaching
- service – local, national and international
- social justice – actively involved in society

Sometimes it may be hard for members to be enthusiastic about a project they do not understand. It will help if the person leading it takes time to explain the project thoroughly and why they are passionate about it. At these times, active recruitment of members may be required to help with a project or activity. If relationships have been cultivated among council members, this will help them engage in projects they were hesitant to support previously.

Deacon Keith Strohm writes about this in the book, *Ablaze: 5 Essential Paradigm Shifts for Parish Renewal*: “Jesus invested himself particularly in twelve men, producing divine fruit within them. These men, in turn, spent their lives being Jesus for others, investing themselves and producing divine fruit through the power of the Holy Spirit. If we want to experience the release of fruitfulness and renewal within our parishes and dioceses, we will have to return to this model.” This can also apply to parish councils.



Parish councils carry out numerous activities under the faith, service and social justice ministries. These incredible achievements are a testament to members’ call to ministry and spirit of sisterhood, generosity and compassion. Visit the national, provincial and diocesan websites for ideas conveyed in *The Canadian League* magazine, annual reports, communiqués and event calendars.

Cultivating Relationships, Teamwork and Collaboration

The key idea of engaging members is to be open to new possibilities. Even if a project or activity was unsuccessful at one time, it could be tried again. With new people and a project occurring at a different time, it can take on a new life. Be open to new ideas. If members want to try something new, that is fantastic and could re-invigorate the council.

How does a council hear those ideas? By inviting members to speak at meetings and asking for their suggestions. Remember, not all members, especially new members or those with a reserved personality, may be comfortable speaking out. However, not all members attend meetings, so have parish council executives call members and ask them for their input. Another method would be to invite them to an in person meeting. Perhaps no one has ever asked them for their input before, and they do not know they can offer opinions outside of a meeting. Build a relationship with face-to-face interaction or a personal telephone call.

Members play a vital role in the success of the council. If one member has offered an idea, refer back to the member information forms to see if there are others who have similar talents, gifts and passions. If there are, these members need to be connected to engage their passion. If no other members share the same passions, look for members with similar ideals and connect these members. Finally, bring up a project idea at the executive and council meetings to see if members are excited to work on this project.

This is where teamwork and collaboration come in and could be an opportunity to incorporate the Companionship Program found in the *Welcome Program*. Members are League sisters and need to support each other. Some experienced members in the council may be thrilled to mentor and guide a new project without spearheading it. For a member who might be steering a first-time project, knowing there is someone she can call on to ask for an opinion or advice is reassuring. It is good to have healthy, cultivated relationships among council members. See the Project Planning Form (Addendum 1.1) for help planning a project.

How does one cultivate relationships among council members? As explained in the book, *Unlocking Your Parish: Making Disciples, Raising Up Leaders With Alpha* by Ron Huntley and Fr. James Mallon, members need to “meet people where they are, listen wholeheartedly, share the essential core of the gospel message, and pray with others.” This may involve organizing activities during or outside of regular council meetings where members get to know each other personally, but within the context of growing in their faith. Some ideas to develop informal relationships include:

- book study clubs
- coffee, prayer meetings
- fellowship evenings
- ice-breaker games
- prayer events (in-person or virtual)
- spiritual retreats

It can also be helpful to have the women socialize outside of their regular friendship circles to help new members find a place in the council and to make new friends. When members feel comfortable and welcome, the entire council will benefit. There are different personality types, and not all women feel comfortable joining a new group or table without an invitation. At council meetings and other events, try to have members sit with different women each time to develop new friendships. Be joyful in your interactions with others.



*“Therefore encourage one another and build up each other,
as indeed you are doing.”*

(1 Thess 5:11)

Recognition and Appreciation

Congratulations! Relationships have been built, passions ignited and projects completed. The council has stepped out into the deep. What is next? Celebrate and rejoice! Celebrate setting goals and achieving them. Recognize and congratulate members and the team for milestones and achievements. Celebrate service, membership, fundraising goals and other accomplishments.

Recognition helps people feel good about their achievements, gives them credit for their work and increases motivation and commitment to support the next goal. Members who feel good about themselves will produce better results and be inspired to do more. Every member can be an encourager. What gets recognized is often repeated with more enthusiasm than before. Express appreciation by identifying and acknowledging the unique skill or effort used by the individual. It affirms the character and personality traits of the individual. This can be done in written form, one-on-one or in front of others, depending on their preferences. Public recognition promotes good public relations. The council will see a domino effect of how those who lead projects will draw in other members to help out. It is a great way to engage members who are talented but timid to step up.

There are many ways to show appreciation to members. Consider that not everyone likes to be appreciated in the same way. Some members like to be thanked publicly, while others prefer a private telephone call or conversation. Get to know the members and express the language of appreciation that is most meaningful to each of them. The book, *The 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace: Empowering Organizations by Encouraging People* by Gary Chapman and Paul White, recommends the following:

1. **Words of Affirmation** – The member is thanked and acknowledged for her contributions. Some members like to be thanked publicly, while others prefer a private telephone call or conversation.

2. **Quality Time** – The member feels appreciated when people spend time with her on a personal level, such as being taken out for coffee or spending time with her in prayer.
3. **Acts of Service** – The member feels appreciated when people help her with her project or do something special, such as offering to drive her to a council meeting.
4. **Physical Touch** – The member may appreciate a hug or handshake more than public recognition or a tangible gift. Always ask if you can hug or touch someone before doing so.
5. **Tangible Gifts** – The national office has many gifts to choose from, such as rosaries, pens and notepads. Exemplary service, especially over many years, can be recognized with the maple leaf service pin or a pin acknowledging years of service. A gift does not have to be costly to show gratitude. It is possible to show appreciation with homemade gifts as well.

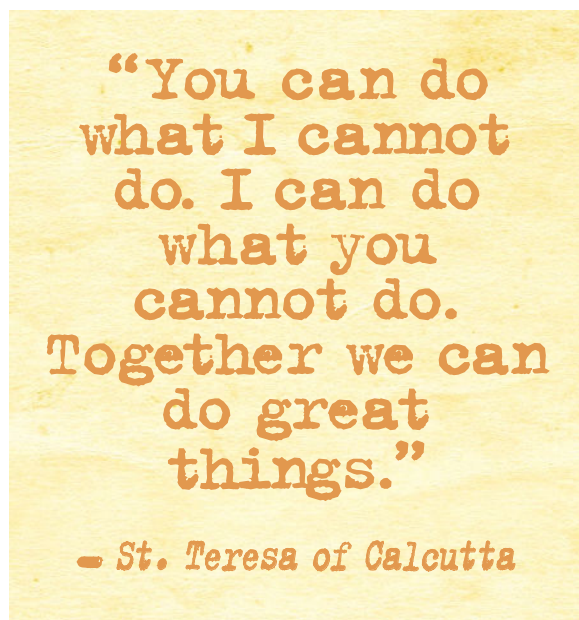
The New Member Information Form found in the *Welcome Program* has a section called “A Little Bit More About You.” This section will help provide an idea of what type of recognition a member may prefer. Make a note of that on her form.

Spiritual and personal growth are to be celebrated as well. Be grateful for any projects undertaken by members of the council. This is an opportunity to plant seeds of love, hope, encouragement and faith. Members are all leaders in the making, and with help and encouragement from their League sisters, there is no telling how much they will bloom and grow in the future.

Members who feel welcomed, valued and appreciated become more engaged—and engaged members make councils flourish! It is essential to recognize and communicate appreciation to each other, and more importantly, that members feel appreciated. Members all have a role in communicating hospitality, welcome, encouragement and gratitude to their League sisters. It is crucial that leaders share appreciation with their team and equally important that members express it to each other. Together, they can lead the way to more engaged members and vibrant councils.

Overcoming Challenges

What challenges might the council face when taking on new projects or initiatives? Women's lives are busy! Their roles and routines have changed dramatically over the last century. They have limited time to invest and want to ensure their contribution adds value and is time well spent. Balancing personal and spiritual growth, along with home, family and work demands, can be challenging. More and more women work outside of the home and may not feel they can take on activities with their council. Some councils have difficulty holding in-person meetings and taking on new projects due to the distances members must travel, especially in rural communities. Some members are not up to date on current technologies, such as using the Internet or Facebook or accessing virtual meetings.



Tips on What to Do

In 2016 and 2017, Dr. Barbara Parker of Parker Ministries conducted a Delphi study into millennial and older generations' expectations of women's ministry. She ultimately stated, "Women's ministry will need to be organized in small groups, focused on building relationships, and be made available at various times to meet the schedule demands of today's modern woman."

Every council will take a different approach. The key is to find something that works for the council's membership. Councils may need to adjust meeting times and days to accommodate working women and families. Recognize members can contribute to projects in their own way without the need to attend a meeting. A member who does not attend a meeting may still want to participate in council projects. Every member can become more engaged, achieve satisfaction and add significant value to the council with flexible participation options. These options are crucial to attract and engage members of all ages, preferences and circumstances.

Not all women prefer formal meeting-based participation. Some prefer casual meetings that focus on project-based activities, independent contributions or specific initiatives. The Project Planning Form (Addendum 1.1) can help coordinate an activity between members who attend meetings and those who cannot do so. These members can be approached in person or contacted by telephone with the assurance the council still supports their ideas, even if "thinking outside of the box" may be required to see a project through from initiation to completion.

Many members benefit from opportunities where they can work at their own pace, collaborate in small groups, build relationships, develop teamwork and take advantage of technology and social media. They can participate individually from home or collectively in small groups and make valuable contributions. Women with limited time and variable schedules can also add equal value.

Rural parish councils may have to adjust meeting times to before or after a weekend mass to reduce the number of times members travel. Councils may need to hold information sessions on using the Internet and current technologies. Members who need assistance could be paired with another member who can help them. See the *Welcome Program* for more details.

Opportunities for Engagement

Encourage members to get engaged in League ministries! If members have not identified a special project they want to be involved in, start by using available League resources. The League is a national organization, so parish councils follow the directives of the national, provincial and diocesan councils. Visit the national website (cwl.ca) to see what is current to the League, and it could inspire council members to act. This website also has links to access the present and past communiqués throughout the board's term. Suggest that members visit the website regularly—it is not just for executive members! *The Canadian League* magazine also carries a wealth of information. Provincial councils have a social media presence, such as websites or Facebook. Check the national website for the link, or ask any provincial executive members for details on projects within your area. Read the provincial directives for ideas. Some diocesan councils also have a website, Facebook page and newsletters.

Staying in touch with the national, provincial and diocesan councils' activities provides inspiration and ideas on how and where a parish council can get involved. Some projects are relevant to the entire membership, while others are more pertinent to specific areas or dioceses. Following the League by reviewing websites, reading the communiqués, reading *The Canadian League* and *On the Spot* on the national website will provide endless sources of inspiration to every council.

Of course, a parish council may have ideas for projects that are new and unique. Embrace them! Do not hesitate to take them on. Remember to report these projects when completing the annual reports so that the ideas can inspire others across the country!

Project-Based Committees

Imagine a parish council has uncovered projects it wishes to undertake, what is the next step? Strike up a committee for the project. There is no end to the committees it might have. Some could be for a one-time project, while others are ongoing. These committees may or may not have the same members involved in the various projects. For a one-time or new project, start by using a planning sheet such as the one included in the addendums. The council should also have standing committees for the various projects regularly undertaken. These could include committees such as the examples shown below. The list is endless! Which committees inspire a parish council or might engage its members?

Whether the council calls them committees, groups or teams, the experience and developed skills of a project-based leader gives women the confidence and courage to step into future elected leadership roles.

- companionship committee: ensure no member is left behind
- decoration committee: decorate the church or hall for council or parish activities
- fundraising committee: take on various fundraising activities
- green committee: include activities that support the environment
- hospitality committee: welcome members at meetings and events
- letter-writing committee: take action on resolutions or other urgent matters as directed by diocesan, provincial and national councils
- mentorship committee: guide and assist members taking on leadership roles

- parish activity committee: liaise with the entire parish
- pastoral care committee: organize prayer services and reach out to members in need
- reception committee: organize refreshments for coffee Sundays, graduations, sacramental and funeral receptions
- resolutions committee: write new resolutions or take action on resolutions adopted by diocesan, provincial and national councils
- social media committee: set up and maintain a website, Facebook page or other means of communication
- *Welcome Program* committee: assist in having members fill out information forms

Leadership in The League

“...whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant.”

(Mt 20:26)

Everyone is extraordinary—each member has a unique ability that makes her stand out. All members are or could be leaders, whether or not they choose to see themselves this way. It may come easier for some, but the League promotes all members’ leadership potential by providing a platform to nurture, grow and sometimes stretch beyond comfort levels.

Leadership is about communicating to members their worth and potential so clearly that they come to see it in themselves. Recognize and celebrate diversity, cultural differences and different traditions. Authentic leadership requires a willingness to serve others. It is a positive and creative influence on and in the service of others, which focuses on developing members’ God-given potential and gifts for the common good and fulfilling the League’s mission. It is important to recognize members’ leadership behaviours and attributes and to match their interests and talents as stated on their member information forms. This will help to ensure positive leadership opportunities for the council and its members. Everyone involved in a leadership role must feel valued and believe their work is important and has the potential to make a difference.

Leadership is not a title—it is a behaviour. Leadership qualities or attributes can be developed and enhanced over time. By knowing and understanding the characteristics and typical behaviours of leaders, members can recognize these attributes in each other and even in themselves. It can lead to a greater acceptance of the possibilities of embracing a leadership role and being recognized as a leader. A successful leader is someone who strives to:

- motivate others
- communicate effectively



- be joyful and hope-filled
- encourage participation
- take responsibility
- listen to others and put people first
- be empathetic and connect with others
- have a positive self-image and act as a positive role model

There are many opportunities for members to practice leadership skills and to raise their voices on important issues. The art of leadership involves unwavering faith, extraordinary effort and a deep sense of purpose. Leadership is a journey. It is about discovering behaviours and developing skills in oneself and others. The following skills of servant leaders are detailed in Appendix 1.2:

- active listening
- using power ethically
- seeking consensus
- practicing the art of foresight
- knowing when to step back
- acceptance and empathy
- nurturing community
- conceptualizing

Short-Term Leadership

Short-term leadership is time-limited, brief, one-time or recurring and can last up to one year. This enables members to foster leadership skills by using their talents and strengths with the support of others. *Ad hoc* leadership involves short-term opportunities that are temporary and created for a particular purpose. They are spontaneous or impromptu in nature and not previously planned for. Members can identify these opportunities as they recognize the need or as suggested by national, provincial or diocesan councils. Examples of short-term and *ad hoc* projects include:

Short-Term and <i>Ad Hoc</i>	Faith	Service	Social Justice	Short Term	<i>Ad Hoc</i>	Leadership Opportunities
Mask-making during the pandemic		✓		✓	✓	Organize and assign tasks
Retreats, speakers, stations of the cross, rosary	✓			✓	✓	Organize and host
League's 100 th anniversary		✓		✓	✓	Organize and assign tasks (tree planting and coffee table history book)
Council manual of policy and procedure		✓		✓		Organize and update as needed
HUG campaign (helping understanding giving)		✓			✓	Organize the campaign
Companionship Program		✓		✓		Coordinate mentors and mentees
Resolutions			✓	✓		Lead research and composition of new resolutions; lead action plan support for existing resolutions
Technology education and training		✓		✓	✓	Teach and train; organize speakers
Standing committee initiatives	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Organize subcommittees and assign tasks (environment campaign, membership drive, milestone anniversary celebration, bible study)

Long-Term Leadership

Long-term leadership usually lasts more than one year and may involve an ongoing project or an annual activity. Ongoing projects can also be inspired by national, provincial or diocesan initiatives found in communiqués, on CWL websites, in *The Canadian League* magazine and in parish council mailings. When leadership activities need a longer commitment, the project leader can initiate the project and mentor other members to take the lead after a specified period. These long-term projects help to get more members involved. Some examples include:

Long-Term Projects	Faith	Service	Social Justice	Leadership Opportunities
Feast of the League's patroness	✓			Organize celebrations or mass (plan the hymns, assign members for various duties)
Book of Life		✓		Maintain records of deceased members
Companionship Program		✓		Coordinate mentors and mentees
12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care	✓	✓		Organize and promote
Receptions		✓		Organize funeral lunches, sacramental celebrations, Coffee Sundays, etc.
Pastoral care	✓			Organize and assign tasks
Parish liaison	✓			Network with parish groups
Newsletters, parish bulletins		✓		Develop, organize and distribute
Community events	✓	✓	✓	Organize and promote (pro-life, environment, Development & Peace, Share Lent, etc.)
Standing committee initiatives	✓	✓	✓	Organize subcommittees and assign tasks (environment campaign, membership drive, milestone anniversary celebration, bible study)

Promoting Leadership in Members

*“Vision without action is merely a dream.
Action without vision just passes the time.
Vision with action can change the world.”*

(Joel A. Barker, *The Power of Vision*)

The development of strong leaders is crucial in succession planning for councils. When members recognize their own leadership qualities and skills gained through their experiences in short-term and long-term activities, they are more likely to consider future leadership positions in the League, including elected positions. The following principles are based on the works of many leadership experts and can be used as a framework for developing leadership:



1. Have a Shared Vision

The CWL strives towards developing “a shared vision” with all of its members, in which this vision is united with current and future members in concordance with the League’s reality and potential.

This is not a top down process, and activities are to engage the whole organization in participating in this process.

(Paraphrased from Life Member Suzanne Barrette, “Cocreating a Shared Vision for The Catholic Women’s League of Canada,” *The Canadian League*, Winter 1999)

Members volunteer for social connectedness and want to know that what they are doing is meaningful. They want to see how their service fits into the big picture and how it can positively impact others. When members feel connected to others, the longevity of their commitment increases. Ideas can be fueled or sparked by communiqués, *The Canadian League* magazine, parish mailings, annual reports and other League resources. Additionally, new ideas can come from the identified needs or goals of the parish council itself. Councils can allow for flexibility and openness by encouraging members to try new approaches that align with the core values of faith, service and social justice.

A leader’s confidence attracts followers. Realistic goals are important, but one also needs to be charitable, accepting and inclusive when enlisting others. A leader understands the necessity to encourage others and help them to see their potential.

The leader is visionary (goal-driven) by having the end in sight and communicating it with clarity and purpose to anyone who asks. A leader earns her followers by being authentic, enthusiastic, magnetic, self-confident, grounded, knowledgeable and inspiring. She is open to inspiration but does this through initiation by providing and setting up the way, and ultimately, taking the responsibility of success or failure.

In an effort to inspire leadership, these definitions and descriptions of the qualities of leaders offer many examples of behaviour for members to review. The more examples there are, the better the chances are that a member will recognize she has these same behaviours and attributes and will be able to relate them to the leader she can be.

2. Model Leadership

“Don’t ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive, and then go do it, because what the world needs is people who have come alive.”

(Howard Thurman)

Modelling is doing work well, doing good work and working with others. It is ultimately about embracing the values and mission of the League and putting them into action. Common values are essential to the organization, and members’ actions have to correspond to these values. A good leader strives to be both authentic and whole-hearted. It is about prayerfully listening to God’s call and reconnecting oneself to her true self and what she can do! Modelling leadership behaviour is another way of inspiring members to compare their own



behaviours and actions to those of leaders and to discover they have the abilities to become leaders themselves.

The leader can provide and set up the way, but it is important to bring inspiration and integrity to decisions. It can be a response to a current need or something identified by others. Modelling leadership is about the actions taken—creating a strategy and plan, setting objectives and determining milestones. Being a leader is about how she shows up, takes care of her team, conducts herself, communicates, and how she involves the people around her.

3. Embrace Change

It is often difficult to make changes, yet leaders need to evolve in their League journey. It is about growth and risk. Councils must consider how they can rise to the challenges of today’s world. There is a delicate balance between tradition and creativity. If leaders continue to do things as they always have been done, the League may not reach its full potential. A practice of prayerful discernment can help to bring light to what needs to be changed or perhaps replaced. It is okay to take a risk, and even if things do not go as planned, the experience itself provides a learning opportunity. Encourage new ideas, as they can bring energy and freshness to the council. Leadership takes ongoing work and practice. There can be various trials and turning points in a leader’s pathway, which can be a reflective learning process.

4. Empower Others

It is important for leaders to engage with others and build relationships, demonstrate how to pray, lead, discern or do what is needed. This gives them opportunities to practice what they have learned. Leaders help others to recognize their own leadership potential, motivate and engage others, encourage participation, and lead by example.

Consider the maintenance of the group in terms of meeting individual needs and creating relationships among the group. A trusting, open community is key. It is crucial to welcome the gifts and talents of members and to encourage them to take on leadership roles.

Leaders should communicate goals with clarity and purpose. Leadership is not just a title, but something to be shared with members. Respect and trust must be earned and not assumed. By letting go of control, the Spirit can guide them to work toward a common vision.

Co-leadership is another option that can allow members to work together and share their strengths and inspirations. This could be attractive to someone who is hesitant to take things on by themselves due to lack of confidence, or personal time restraints. Mentoring empowers others and plays a key role in this process. Refer to the “Companionship” section in the *Welcome Program*.

5. Encourage Others

“Through servant leadership, leadership can be transformed into a “territory” where other people can serve and contribute according to their abilities and those that produce results.”

(Paraphrased from Robert Greenleaf)

The *Welcome Program* provides an opportunity to get to know members through the member information forms. It offers ideas on how to create a culture of welcome where all members feel that they truly belong and are needed. This helps to know and understand each other better. The best way to grow a sense of appreciation for someone is to get to know them in terms of where they come from, their background and life circumstances. It helps to understand

them better, appreciate their challenges and develop reasonable expectations.

A reflective practice also helps to focus on one’s strengths and how to work with others in councils and other endeavours. Positive and inclusive feedback is vital to the growth process. When leaders take a step back to look at what they did, they affirm their path and see more clearly where they have been and where they have yet to go. Leaders think about what went well and what could have been done differently. Then, they can contemplate if they are ready to move on or if there is more to learn about their leadership abilities and skills. It is a continual process that takes commitment and self-reflection.

Become an Effective Leader

“A good leader inspires people to have confidence in the leader; a great leader inspires people to have confidence in themselves.”

(Eleanor Roosevelt)

Becoming an effective leader does not happen overnight—it requires a willingness to grow, develop and work. Leadership is a journey and is about cultivating behaviours. Recognizing leadership qualities in members can identify those who may be ready to take the lead with a bit of encouragement from the council. Leaders share many common attributes and behaviours, such as:

- being authentic
- upholding a commitment to common values
- having a positive attitude towards others
- treating everyone with kindness, dignity and respect
- being sensitive to the needs of others
- having patience
- embracing and practicing inclusivity
- bringing together the skills needed to accomplish a project
- leading by example
- following through with commitments
- identifying existing skills and talents

Ways to Discern the Call to Leadership

The national website has several resources to help members discern their call to leadership. Visit it regularly for new resources.

- **A Short Exercise in Discernment:** This workshop can be used individually or as a group to examine one’s gifts and talents.
- **Welcome Program:** Includes member information forms with a list of questions and examples to help members narrow down their fundamental interests, talents and skills.
- **Leading the League**
- **Handbook for Organization Chairpersons**

Continuing the Leadership Journey

There are some points for members to consider as they move into leadership roles:

- **Gather Courage:** Transitioning from any role takes an immense amount of courage. It may feel incredibly daunting, as members may not see exactly how it will go or who they will be serving, but that is okay. Having the courage and confidence to know that they have what it takes will take them a long way.
- **Assemble a Cheering Section:** When considering a leadership role, reach out to League sisters—a network and support group—and *ask them* for support. Leaders often forget that these are the exact people who want to help, especially when they are still learning the nuances of a new role.
- **Embrace Relevant Life Experiences:** Unless a leader knows what she has to give, she may have difficulty giving it. So, embrace and understand lived experiences. What is learned is often what people need—what has been done matters. Lean into the past—it is a big part of who a leader is right now in the present.
- **Start Slowly Shifting:** Members may feel insecure when taking the step into a more prominent leadership role. Encourage them to take some time to think about what they have already done and how they can build on their already established skills. They can bring in more of what they want and love to do by starting with small shifts to elevate what they do already.
- **Do Not Do Everything at Once:** There is no need to prove everything to everyone all at once. It is better to execute one new project thoroughly and successfully than to start several that remain incomplete. This helps reduce stress and avoid becoming overwhelmed so that leaders can grow sustainably, work on new projects with more purpose and show their competence with calm.
- **Teach, Learn and Grow from a Place of Service:** Leaders know a lot, but by keeping in mind that their desire to grow comes from a place of service rather than ego, they will be able to share their gifts genuinely. Learning is a lifelong undertaking. Leaders need not know everything right now. There is time, and there are resources to help them grow.

Participation in leadership activities will help members to fulfill their baptismal promises and meet the League's core purpose of "Uniting Catholic women to grow in faith, and to promote social justice through service to the church, Canada and the world." Without leadership, there will be no action. Without action, there can be no movement forward in service and ministry. Although it can feel intimidating to take that leap into leadership, it does not have to be done all at once, and it is definitely rewarding. By taking the time to take small, deliberate steps, leaders will gain experience and put their skills, talent and expertise to use, finding the joy of leadership in the League.

*"If you do your work with joy, you can bring many souls to God.
Joy is prayer, a sign of our generosity, evident in our eyes, our faces,
our actions."*

(St. Teresa of Calcutta)



Discovering New Opportunities

Where To Go From Here

Tips to Get Started

- get to know members by completing the member information forms from the *Welcome Program*
- discuss current and potential project ideas with members
- use the Project Planning Form (Addendum 1.1)
- consider a leadership workshop for the council (Addendum 1.2)

Councils come in various sizes with members of varying ages and different ethnicities, depending on where they are located. Leaders have to learn how to lead those who are different from them. If members enjoy being part of the council and feel appreciated, they are more likely to participate actively and help the council reach its goals. Life is not static. So councils also should not be static. The ebb and flow of leading members to accomplish the council's goals can be achieved through listening to ideas, effectively communicating recognition and appreciation and creating a more positive environment for all. By encouraging members to discover and embrace non-elected leadership opportunities, everyone can joyfully contribute to the League's mission of ministry and service.

It is hoped that having read this resource, members will encourage others in their council to accompany them on the pathway toward the future of the League—toward the next 100 years!

*“We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us:
prophecy, in proportion to faith;
ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching;
the exhorter, in exhortation;
the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence;
the compassionate, in cheerfulness.”*

(Rom 12: 6-8)

Leadership Beatitudes



- † Blessed is the leader who knows where she is going, why she is going, and how to get there.
- † Blessed is the leader who knows no discouragement, presents no alibi.
- † Blessed is the leader who knows how to lead without being dictatorial.
- † Blessed is the leader who leads for the good of the most concerned and not for the personal gratification of her own ideas.
- † Blessed is the leader who develops leaders while leading.
- † Blessed is the leader who has her head in the clouds, but her feet on the ground.
- † Blessed is the leader who considers leadership an opportunity for service.

*Reprinted from:
“Beatitudes of a Leader”
Leading the League: A Comprehensive Teaching Manual*

Learning Tools & Resources

Resources Referenced

THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF CANADA (cwl.ca)

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- Leadership Development Course Resource Manual (Quebec Provincial Council), 2010
- Leadership Workshop: Take That Seat! (Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council), 2012
- *Leading the League: A Comprehensive Teaching Manual*
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- *Weekly Habits for Extraordinary Leaders: How to Master Your Mindset, Inspire Your Team and Elevate Your Business.* Horowitz, D., 2020

WEBSITES

- Brett Power–Leadership Where it Matters Most brettpowell.org
- Community Toolbox ctb.ku.edu/en
- Girl Guides of Canada girlguides.ca
- GovLeaders.org govleaders.org
- Mind Tools mindtools.com
- Parker Ministries parkerministries.org
- Scouts Canada scouts.ca
- SmallGroups.com smallgroups.com
- Toastmasters International toastmasters.org
- Productive Flourishing productiveflourishing.com
- YWCA Canada ywcacanada.ca



Addendum 1.1

Project Planning Form

Date: _____

Prepared by: _____

Member contacted: _____

Project title: _____

Projected start date: _____

Projected end date: _____

Project leader: _____

Ministry (check one or more): faith _____ service _____ social justice _____

Number of people needed: _____

Potential candidates to join project: _____

Projected cost (if any): \$ _____

Projected revenue (if any): \$ _____

If revenue is generated, what is the designation for the funds? _____

Final evaluation/overall thoughts on the project: Was it successful on a spiritual, personal or other level?
(Not all success is measured in numbers or dollars).

Would the council undertake this project again? Why or why not?

Suggestions for improvement: _____

Addendum 1.2

Ideas for Presenting a Leadership Workshop

“Education is the key to learning. Learning is the key to knowledge. Knowledge is the key to understanding. Understanding leads to self-development. Self-development leads to confidence. Confidence reduces fear. Lack of fear leads to willingness to take on leadership roles.”

(Executive Orientation Program –
Public Presence and Member Development)

A workshop can be a valuable tool to assist members in discerning their gifts, talents and skills, understanding leadership concepts and taking on leadership positions confidently and willingly. It is a fun and interactive method of sharing information and experiences that can enhance members’ confidence and engagement in League activities.

A workshop should be flexible and adapted to the needs of each council. The following topics are suggested to incorporate into a workshop addressing the current needs of council members, especially concerning accepting leadership opportunities. It can be condensed to use as a program at council meetings or presented as a full-day learning experience and offers a wide range of topics from which to choose.

Workshops can follow a standard format that includes a welcome and opening prayer, overview of what to expect, specific topics to be covered (including breakout or discussion sessions), scheduled break times, a closing summary (that may include handouts, plan for the future and concrete examples for moving forward), an evaluation and a closing prayer.

Getting participants involved is key to a successful workshop. If only one person is presenting, it can become a lecture. Everyone needs to participate. Ideas to keep in mind for group discussions:

- Consider setting up chairs and tables in the room—a horseshoe or semi-circle will encourage conversation and interaction.
- Many people are nervous about speaking in public or in an unfamiliar group. If group sizes are small, members may be more comfortable talking and interacting.
- If people are mixed up in groups, they can learn to look at different perspectives.
- Decide if and how the group’s ideas will be recorded. For example, encourage one group member to write down the thoughts and another to share them with the larger group.

After the workshop, the participants should understand the big picture and their role in getting there. As the facilitator, reach out to the members attending to ensure they have attached some personal growth and meaning to the process. Follow up with them to offer further clarification, encouragement or new workshops.

With preparation, knowledge and self-confidence, any member can present a workshop to her League sisters, or several councils can work together to present a workshop. Further information on the topics suggested can be found in the document *The Joy of Leadership Through Engagement in Ministry* and the resources listed there.

- Welcome: The presenters introduce themselves and welcome everyone to the workshop.
- Opening Prayer or Prayer Service, such as the CWL Prayer for Renewal or:

A Leader's Prayer

Leadership is hard to define.

Lord, let us be the ones to define it with justice.

Leadership is like a handful of water.

Lord, let us be the people to share it with those who thirst.

Leadership is not about watching and correcting.

Lord, let us remember it is about listening and connecting.

Leadership is not about telling people what to do.

Lord, let us find out what people want.

Leadership is less about the love of power,
and more about the power of love.

Lord, as we continue to undertake the role of leader let us be
affirmed by the servant leadership we witness in your son Jesus.

Let us walk in the path He has set and let those who will,
follow.

Let our greatest passion be compassion.

Our greatest strength love.

Our greatest victory the reward of peace.

In leading let us never fail to follow.

In loving let us never fail.

(Jesuitresource.org)

- Why Are We Here? To give an overview of the big picture and to encourage leadership opportunities.
- Ice Breaker Activity
- Suggested Topics for Discussion
 - ◆ The League's core purpose, core values, mission statement, envisioned future
 - ◆ Ministry in the League
 - o faith ministry
 - o service ministry
 - o social justice ministry
 - ◆ Member Engagement Strategy, Teamwork, Recognition and Appreciation
 - ◆ Five Languages of Appreciation
 - ◆ What Does it Take to be a Leader?
 - ◆ Exercise in Discernment
 - ◆ What is an Effective Leader and What Does this Mean to Members?
 - ◆ Expectations of Leaders
 - ◆ Skills and Capacities of the Servant Leader
 - ◆ Project-Based Committees
 - o past committees
 - o where to find new ideas
 - ◆ New Opportunities
 - o activities from research, communiqués, *The Canadian League*, League websites, parish council mailings, strategic planning initiatives

- Beatitudes of a Leader (handout for participants)
- Closing/Wrap-up/Evaluation
- Closing Prayer Options

Inspired by the Spirit

Spirit of the Living God open our hearts and minds to experience the unconditional love of God. Empower us with the gifts of Your Spirit so that we may respond to God's call in joyful service. Inspire and bless the members of Catholic Women's League so that the fruits of Your Spirit may be evidenced in all that we say and do. Amen.

The Prayer of Receptiveness for Servant Leaders

Dear Lord, My desire is to consistently welcome your guidance into how I lead. I want your presence and perfect wisdom to illuminate my thoughts, decisions, and actions. I know that this illumination is possible, and through welcoming it, I will be a more effective and joyous servant leader. Amen.

(Triune Leadership Services)



What Does it Take to be a Great Leader?

The following qualities are adapted from *Leading the League: A Comprehensive Teaching Manual* on the national website:

- **Vision:** Leaders share their vision with members so that all clearly understand the direction the leader is headed.
- **Collaboration:** Leaders encourage participation in decision-making.
- **Empowerment:** Leaders encourage members to stretch and develop their potential by learning and applying new skills to increase everyone's ability to make meaningful contributions.
- **Recognize Contributions:** Leaders achieve the desired results by operating effective and efficient councils through fine-tuning best practices, abandoning ineffective methods and teaching members how to track and measure their contributions.
- **Model the Way:** Leaders have positive self-images and take pride in what they do and the members they work with, supporting what they say with action to become positive role models.
- **Model the Way:** Leaders take responsibility for themselves and hold others equally accountable to strengthen trust among members.
- **Set the Example:** Leaders listen to all input and are unafraid to change direction or admit when they are wrong.

Skills and Capacities of the Servant-leader

The following is adapted from *The Power of Servant Leadership* by Robert K. Greenleaf:

- **Listening** – Defined as a healing attitude rather than a skill. Listen first! Disciplined listeners can be thought of as natural servants.
- **Using Power Ethically** – Accomplished through a process of persuasion whereby the persuaded are allowed to come to this realization on their own terms.
- **Seeking Consensus in Group Decisions** – Having a good understanding of the issue and being able to communicate this; by listening; by deciding when is a good time to call for consensus; and by being able to discern when to hold off and speak privately to those in disagreement.
- **Practicing the Art of Foresight** – Living fully and focussing on the now while still seeing the impact of past events and how this relates to the future.
- **Carefully Choosing Language** – Allowing the subject to use imagination to connect personally to what is being said.
- **Withdrawal** – Being able to stand back and sort out what is necessary from what is not, and then attending to what is important (systematic neglect).
- **Acceptance and Empathy** – Accepts the person and empathises, yet does not accept poor performance. The ideal is to help all people develop their full potential.
- **Conceptualizing** – Being a persuader and a relation-builder while understanding and adjusting to the whole picture of past, present and future. It is considered to be the “prime leadership talent.”
- **Nurturing Community** – Love is generated and enhanced through life in a community which is then carried out into an individual’s works outside of this community. Unlimited liability is a requirement of love (unconditional love for all others).
- **Leading by Choice** – “The enemy is strong natural servants who have the potential to lead but do not lead, or who choose to follow a non-servant” (Robert Greenleaf).





The Catholic Women's League of Canada

C-702 Scotland Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R3M 1X5

Tel: (204) 927-2310
Website: cwl.ca
E-mail: info@cwl.ca

Inv. #630