

PARTICIPATION: GENERAL INFORMATION

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Participation Ministry Team Leader is responsible for encouraging ALL Protestant women in all Protestant Chapel communities to actively participate in PWOC. In PWOC we have *participants*, as all Protestant women in chapel communities are *members* of PWOC. The Participation Ministry Team Leader greets and welcomes participants and newcomers at all meetings. She also encourages active participants to reach out to prospective participants. Often some of the responsibilities of the Participation Team Leader overlap with the Hospitality and Newcomer Ministry Team Leaders. Work closely in coordinating the mission of your job responsibilities.

Registration and Roster

An on-going responsibility for this team leader is keeping up-to-date information on participants. This information can be gathered by using a registration card or a sign-up sheet. Consider including the following information:

- Name
 - Mailing address
 - Phone number and cell
 - E-mail address
 - Birthday and anniversary
- Information, such as areas of interest, gifting, desire for involvement, etc., can be invaluable when board members are building committees and when you are trying to incorporate people into the ministry.*

With this information, a roster can then be printed so that active participants may be able to contact one another. When asking for information, always include a privacy act statement, being sure to have permission for personal information to be published for distribution among the group. Always print an addendum to the roster as new women become involved. A good rule of thumb is to distribute the first roster by mid-October and print an addendum in early February.

Attendance

Many chapels or religious education facilities are required to keep a total of how many people are using the facilities each week. This is also worthwhile information for the board to have as they plan for upcoming events, as well as to study attrition rates. This can be handled in different ways, depending on size and purpose: a sign-in sheet that everyone signs, a count during the opening time when all are together, or a count handed in by different Bible study classes. You will want to coordinate with the President on how she would like to do this, especially concerning distribution of PWOC pins. Newsletter editors usually like to acknowledge birthdays and welcome newcomers and visitors in the monthly newsletter. You will need to have this information prepared to give to the Newsletter or Publicity Team Leader before the monthly newsletter deadlines.

Nametags

The Participation Team Leader is responsible for providing nametags for each meeting. It is suggested that a permanent nametag be prepared for each participant. It is beneficial to have

board positions indicated on board member's permanent nametags. This is not to show elitism but to enable participants to get to know board members so that they can approach them concerning their particular areas of responsibility. Many PWOCs use a permanent nametag for weekly studies but use paper disposable tags for programs. Coordinate with your Programs Vice President concerning nametags for program days.

Disposable nametags for monthly meetings are good for several reasons. Programs usually have a decorative theme, making the nametag part of the theme package. Also, programs provide a great opportunity to invite new people, and it is much easier to photocopy paper tags and have them ready for everyone. Prepare these ahead of time during a work session, inviting participants to gather informally for fellowship and preparation of materials.

When considering permanent nametags, think about the yearly theme and try to coordinate.

You may want to use the PWOC logo on a nametag or just use a graphic that is representative of the theme. Be creative and simple in choosing your permanent nametags. Don't underestimate their importance. At one PWOC, a new participant came to a weekly Bible study. The next week she approached the President with tears in her eyes saying "thank

you." She expressed gratitude for having a permanent tag ready for her. In her words, "it meant that you were waiting for me!" Little things really do mean a lot!

There is another reason to keep it simple; if they are difficult and time consuming to prepare, it is too easy to procrastinate about making new nametags. Rubber stamps and computer graphic programs are a great source for designs. Computer-generated nametags are certainly easy, are uniform, and are attractive. If you are not computer literate, there may be someone in your group who is. Perhaps there is someone who does calligraphy, rubber-stamping, or some other creative hobby and who would be willing to take on the nametag responsibility.

Welcoming Newcomers

You may also have the responsibility of finding ways to assimilate and welcome newcomers - or-if your PWOC is large, you might have a separate board position for a Newcomers Ministry Team Leader. Whether it is the responsibility of Participation or Newcomers, be sensitive that some people are not comfortable with hugs from others, let alone someone they've just met! Always smile and let people know how glad you are that they have come to be with you. Be aware of childwatch policies so that you can share that information with those attending for the first time.

Think about how you would like to be welcomed.

It is a thoughtful gesture to have some sort of welcome memento to give out at this time. Items like a magnet with Scripture, a bookmark, or even a pocket calendar with all of the PWOC information included are possible welcome favors.

If possible, introduce the newcomer to a regular participant. You may want them to sign a guest book when they first visit and then fill out a registration card upon their return. Follow up after their first visit by mailing them a note or by calling them to express your joy that they came and the hope that they will return. Often groups will recognize newcomers during the opening so that everyone can meet them. Because so many people

fear speaking in public, you should consider introducing newcomers yourself, instead of putting them on the spot to speak in front of strangers.

Consider the possibility of a newcomers' get-together, especially in larger PWOCs. One PWOC reported that they did this on a quarterly basis, sending out invitations to everyone who signed the guest book in that time span. The get-together was very informal, including children. Several times the meeting was held at a park on post; other times, hostesses volunteered their homes. Board members alternated attendance at these gatherings; they also provided snacks or salads for lunch that day. Usually there was a "get-to-know-you" mixer and then an informal time of asking questions or sharing general information about the ministry of PWOC. Usually the group was small, making the time personal and non-threatening. It proved to be very worthwhile.

Information Table

Remember that your primary goal is to encourage participation in the ministry of PWOC; make information available to show ladies where they can become involved. Depending on the amount of information you have to share, position the table where it is easily seen and accessible. A separate "information table" could display things like newsletters, announcements of upcoming events, a bulletin board, and anything else that may need to be distributed to your group.

PWOC Pins

Traditionally in PWOC, pins are presented when a person has attended three meetings. They could also be presented at the completion of a Bible study or when a person is farewelled. No matter when you award pins, you will need to keep a supply of pins on hand. Be sure to inform the President or Financial Liaison well in advance of the need so that pins can be reordered.

Encourage women to wear their PWOC pins in the community. They may be a conversation starter that would offer an opportunity to invite someone to a PWOC meeting. Also, be sure that there is a printed explanation of the symbolism of the PWOC pin in the yearbook or calendar.

Farewells

In the military lifestyle, there is the joy of welcoming new people, but there is the inevitable sadness of saying farewell to those departing. Whatever the contribution to the ministry of PWOC, find a way to show appreciation for the participation of each of the women who leaves.

You may be asked to project a number that may be leaving in order to prepare a farewell memento. The purpose of this effort is not to simply give a gift, but to show genuine appreciation for what each woman brings to the PWOC Body of believers. Send them off with love and prayers so that the next part of their journey will be blessed.

THE OPPORTUNITY

What an opportunity you have to aid women in the continued discovery of their gifts and talents and finding ways to involve them in this most dynamic ministry. God bless you as you **PARTICIPATE** with Him in His work here on earth.