

## 4 Programs

CCW Programs are as unique as each CCW. They include the spiritual programs for the women of our parishes, the service projects that we want to do for our parish and community, and the educational/development/enrichment and even fund-raising events that make them possible. However, usually when we speak of ‘programs’, the reference is to the educational, enrichment and entertainment programs offered to all parish women (and sometimes others).

Most Parish CCWs find it convenient, practical, and sometimes necessary (especially when limitations on parish meeting rooms require annual room reservations) to plan their general membership programs for an entire year, usually the ‘school year’. Such an annual program plan has many advantages: it can be disseminated to the members in a newsletter or membership booklet; the publicity chair/committee has the advance notice needed to plan and execute effective publicity within the parish (or media beyond the parish, depending on the program); the membership chair/committee has ample time to encourage invitations to new members and provide ‘welcoming’ activities; and the hospitality committee can organize decorations and refreshments suited to the particular program. The above ‘chairs and committees’ may not be specifically designated since many CCW boards prefer to act as a ‘committee of the whole’, but nevertheless, the advantages of annual program planning remain.

Another advantage of annual program planning is overall viewing to achieve a balance of programs. Do you have one or more purely spiritual programs: morning or evening of reflection, retreat day? Do you have one or more educational programs; financial planning, health information? Have you tried at least one joint effort with another group in your parish or community? Into which Commission area does each program fall? Presenters at a recent NCCW annual event emphasized that every program can have an element of every Commission (for examples how this could work, use the contact below).

Pursuing the NCCW mission goal to “*support, empower and educate*” Catholic women opens a nearly limitless range of program possibilities. In selecting programs, ask

1. What are the interests of our parish women – or a group of them?
2. What resources do we have to organize a program to meet those interests?
3. Can we work with other groups within the parish or community to bring a program to more people?

All programs should

1. begin and end with prayer (short or a more extended liturgical prayer depending on the program),
2. provide information (a brief business meeting, or just announcements),
3. introduce the program with background information,
4. and state the schedule (‘We will take a break half-way through the program for refreshments and socializing’; or ‘there will be time for questions and discussion at the end of the program during refreshments’, etc.).

***“An adequate period for social exchange should be provided in every meeting format. (Women) come to meet others...and to exchange ideas...There should always be time for refreshments, discussion of the program, and socializing.”***<sup>1</sup>

The more needs any program meets, the more successful the program.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> NCCW Guidance and Resource Manual, p1-15; <sup>2</sup> Ibid.