

# Dreams for the Future

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*Women of the ELCA Mission Statement: To mobilize women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ.*

## Convening Brainstorming Sessions to Determine:

- ❖ What is your vision for the Women of the ELCA?
- ❖ How do you want the Women of the ELCA to reflect your vision?
- ❖ This is your organization, does it reflect you, and do you feel welcome?
- ❖ What direction should we take to make you feel welcome, to meet your personal faith growth needs, to help you minister to others, to help you build fellowship and community?
- ❖ What possibilities do you envision?
- ❖ How do we do this?

## Goals of this Brainstorming Session:

- ❖ Involve all women from our church, confirmed to age 105.
- ❖ Give voice to all without judgment or preconceptions.
- ❖ Honestly seek ideas about thoughts, vision for, direction of, strategies, and dreams for the future of the Women of the ELCA.



### Purpose Statement

As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.

**Think BIG! Have Fun! No LIMITS! We can and do make a difference in our churches, communities, nationally and in the world!**

## Prepare for the Brainstorming Session

- ❖ Set a date and time accessible to the majority of those in our church. Set a date and time that will allow students, those employed outside the home, professional women, the elderly, stay at home moms, etcetera to meet. This may mean an early evening time like 5:30 pm or 6:00 pm.
- ❖ Advertise and Invite: bulletins, epistles, FaceBook, text messages (a lot of young people like a text invite), e-mail, websites, personal and verbal, posters, and be creative. The session will have a time limit, please no more than one and a half hours; this will encourage more participation. This will also let participants know that we realize their time is valuable and we will make the best use of their time.
- ❖ Add prayers for guidance from the Holy Spirit and the success of the Brainstorming Sessions to the prayers of the church on the Sunday before the session.
- ❖ Select a person to convene and guide the session.
- ❖ Select someone to be the scribe for the session: written, photos, audio recording, and/or video recording. This person will be responsible for forwarding the results to RMSWO.

## Let's Begin

### Set up

- ❖ A large white board and dry erase markers to write down ideas, or a chalkboard, or a flip chart.
- ❖ A microphone if the group is large enough.
- ❖ Chairs arranged in a semi-circle in front of the white board.
- ❖ Refreshments are optional, but may be a way to break the ice.
- ❖ Provide name tags, and make sure everyone wears one.

Welcome every person individually and have everyone sign-in, get their names, addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses. The results will be shared with everyone, and this provides means to connect with these ladies in the future.

Introduce the leader and the scribe, and ask each individual to introduce themselves, and tell something about themselves. Keep it short and quick.

### Start the Brainstorming Session:

**Begin with prayer** such as: *As we convene today may the Holy Spirit guide our thoughts, hearts and souls as we explore the vision for, the direction of, and dreams for the future of the Women of the ELCA with the desire to include all the women of our church in its endeavors.*

**Read the Women of the ELCA Mission Statement.**

**Read the purpose statement** out loud, or have all read it together.

**Read the rules** of brainstorming listed below.

**Read the questions** at the beginning of this document.

**Ask for people to start sharing their ideas, and let the fun begin!**

### Rules:

- ❖ Postpone and withhold your judgment of ideas
- ❖ Encourage wild and exaggerated ideas
- ❖ Quantity counts at this stage, not quality
- ❖ Build on the ideas put forward by others
- ❖ Every person and every idea has equal worth
- ❖ Each person limit themselves to two minutes each time they share an idea
- ❖ Be creative, think outside the box, think of ways to be inclusive, have fun
- ❖ Stop at the set time limit for the session and thank everyone for their participation
- ❖ Celebrate with prayer: *Thank you God for bringing this group of women together and for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we were discerning the future of your organization the Women of the ELCA. Now Lord, help us to find ways to implement these wonderful thoughts, dreams and vision. AMEN!*

**Compile the results and submit to the RMSWO** to Gail Young, Mission Community Chair at 3111 Thomes Ave., Cheyenne, WY 82001, or e-mail to: young\_gail\_L@msn.com. Results will be compiled further and published.

**These actions are a result of the resolution passed at convention on "Discernment of Vision and Direction for Women of the ELCA." These brainstorming sessions may also be used at Cluster Events.**