



United Church of God, *aIA*

WOMEN'S ENRICHMENT EVENTS GUIDELINES

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Index

1. Purpose for Women’s Enrichment Events Pg. 3
2. Getting Started, Some Questions to Ask..... Pg. 4-6
3. Planning Stage Considerations Pg. 6
4. Presentations and Speakers..... Pg. 7-8
5. Virtual and Recording Considerations Pg. 8-9
6. Advertising and Promotion Pg. 9
7. Miscellaneous and Other Activities..... Pg.10-11
8. Summary Pg. 12
9. Addendum: Guidelines for Speakers Handout Pg. 13
10. Addendum: Copyright Guidelines Handout Pg. 14

General Information

The United Church of God Women's Weekends began over 25 years ago in Spokane, Washington. From there, organized weekends began spreading throughout the country as women heard about and experienced their positive personal and spiritual benefits.

As these Women's' Enrichment Events continue to expand into new areas, many have asked how to plan and organize an Event. Although there is no single model that fits the needs of every area, we have developed these guidelines to provide a framework for developing these opportunities in a unified manner.

These guidelines have been prepared with the help and input of women who have been involved in developing and organizing these enrichment opportunities over many years. We are thankful for their work and many hours of service and support. May this information help make your event successful and rewarding for all attendees.

Purpose of Women's Enrichment Events

The primary purpose of Women's Enrichment Events is to create an environment in which women actively help one another grow in spiritual maturity by:

- Sharing valuable spiritual lessons.
- Discussing practical application of godly principles.
- Helping others by sharing personal experiences and encouraging one another in our struggles.
- Developing stronger bonds of unity and friendship.

These objectives are achieved through a combination of elements that may include practical presentations, workshops, interactive discussions, uplifting music, spiritual conversation, reflection and fellowship. There may also be opportunities for service projects, community outreach or other activities.



If you have questions or have additional needs, please feel free to contact United Church of God, Women's Services Team (Kay_Schreiber@ucg.org or Lena_Vanausdle@ucg.org).

Prior to Planning an Event

Organizing a Women's Enrichment Event can be a major undertaking. Here are some things to consider prior to making a decision about hosting a women's event:

- The event must have the approval and oversight of the local pastor.
- Is there a Women's Enrichment Weekend/Event already scheduled in the region? If so, are there enough women interested in attending to support a second event?
- Is there a venue that would be suitable for a women's enrichment event?
- Are enough women interested in attending the event to meet any minimum attendance or meal requirements set by the facility?
- Does your congregation have adequate volunteers to effectively organize and implement an event?
- Consider the various financial aspects to hosting an event.
- Are there enough qualified female presenters/speakers in the region or are speakers from outside the area willing to travel to the event? (See presenter/speaker selection section below.)

If the answers to the above questions are positive, then you will want to consider the following:

Additional Considerations

Frequency:

There is no set frequency recommended for Women's Enrichment Events. While many are held annually, others meet every other year or only occasionally. This should be determined by economics, attendee interest levels, willingness of organizers, availability of facilities, presenters and many other factors unique to each area.

Name:

In the past, organizers in each area have chosen various designations for their Women's Enrichment opportunities. To achieve consistency and unity we suggest that you use the designation "Women's Enrichment Weekend" or "Women's Enrichment Event," depending on the format or length.

Length and Format of the Event:

There is no single format that fits the needs of every area. Some areas may wish to start with a half-day or full-day event. The "weekend" format may include one or two nights. Factors to consider when determining the length of the weekend are:

- Attendees' needs
- Number of attendees expected
- Facilities available
- Qualified presenters available
- Cost of overnight accommodations
- Distances, travel times and traffic considerations

Some events begin Friday evening with presentations and continue through Sunday noon. Others offer optional Friday evening activities then begin their main presentations on Sabbath morning, continuing through mid-afternoon Sunday. Others have chosen to have Sabbath services with their regular congregation, then begin the women-only section afterwards, ending Sunday at noon or midafternoon. The latter option often requires only one night's lodging.

Sabbath services during the weekend must be conducted by an elder but may be an abbreviated format with a sermon related to the selected theme. Many women's events enhance the Sabbath service with extra hymns or special music selections.

Sample Weekend Schedule*

	Two-Night Format
Friday Evening	Arrival / Registration (if applicable) Dinner Welcome Get-acquainted activities or two to three shorter presentations
Saturday	Morning: Services (generally no sermonette, perhaps extra special music selections or "hymn-along") Lunch/fellowship Afternoon presentations (two to three @ 20-45 minutes each unless interactive) Dinner Presentations, free time, service project or special activities/crafts
Sunday	Breakfast Morning presentations, workshops or service project Lunch Departure

*To see examples of actual schedules, registration forms, brochures and presentations you can visit <https://women.ucg.org>

Choosing the Facility:

The type of facility will depend on the area, what is available, the number of attendees expected and the women attending. Facilities that might work are: conference centers, camps, hotels, inns, bed and breakfasts or the regular church facilities if available.

Prices:

Prices will depend greatly on the facility used and the meals offered.

- A few congregations may use their own hall and prepare their own food so the cost per attendee is less. For those needing lodging, women can find their own accommodations, select from a provided list or stay with someone who has opened their home.
- Camps or conference centers often include meal service or a cafeteria.
- In some areas hotels or similar facilities are the only viable options and can be the most expensive. To receive a complimentary meeting room, or one with basic setup charges, the group generally has to meet a minimum number for lodging and meals. A hotel that offers a complimentary breakfast and suites that can accommodate up to four people can be a good choice.
- Hotels or similar facilities often offer a “group rate” or nonprofit package, with discounted lodging and meal prices. Assess what the varying prices would be for each attendee, depending on the number of people in the room, how many nights, number of meals, etc. Include this information in the flyer or brochure. If possible, include a “day portion” rate which excludes lodging but includes meals and the per person estimate of incidental costs.
- When setting the registration price, consider other expenses above lodging and meal costs. These might be: promotion (brochures, photocopying, postage), travel expenses for a guest speaker (if applicable), supplies (folders, name tags, etc.), snacks, any mementoes or unanticipated expenses.
- To save photocopying and postage expenses, email final information to those registered.

Meals:

A certain number of meals may be included in the registration price. Some events have time slots for making one’s own meal arrangements. This is especially true at a hotel where meals are expensive. For example, a group may have Saturday dinner together at the hotel but have the hour lunch-hour break free for snacks, relaxation or eating at the hotel or nearby restaurant.



After your initial research and discussions with your Women’s Enrichment Planning Team and women in the congregation, design a draft proposal. This might include location, type of event, costs, possible attendee numbers and guiding scriptures and theme. Review the event proposal and ideas with the local church pastor.

Be sure to maintain ongoing communication with the local church pastor throughout the planning process and the actual event.

Considerations as You Plan

Theme:

Each event generally revolves around a single theme which is supported by one or two relevant scriptures. The theme selected should be timely, biblically based and focused on a specific spiritual principle that will be emphasized in a variety of ways throughout the event.

When selecting a theme, consider your audience and what would help the women in their spiritual journey and aid them with their common trials or circumstances. An appropriate theme often becomes apparent through this analysis. If you need ideas, we have a list of themes from past Weekends [posted here](#).

Important note: Themes and presentations should be inclusive of all attendees. It's a good idea to avoid topics that apply to only a portion of the audience, such as marriage or child-rearing. It's also a good idea to avoid topics that elicit strongly diverse points of view, such as medical or diet advice, or health regimens.

Presentations and Presenters/Speakers

Types of Presentations:

Women's Enrichment Events provide an excellent opportunity for women to be "teachers of good things" (**Titus 2:3**).

Presentations may be informational, inspirational and/or share life's experiences and spiritual lessons. Although presentations should always be based on sound biblical principles and use scriptural references where appropriate, they are not sermons or Bible studies.

Historically, primary presentations have focused on:

- Understanding a particular spiritual principle more deeply (usually related to the theme) and how to implement that principle more effectively in our lives. The format for this type of presentation can vary widely, such as a lecture, a combination of lecture and discussion groups or a workshop format.
- Sharing personal experiences and the spiritual lessons learned through those experiences. These are generally shorter presentations and good opportunities for less experienced speakers.

Interactive discussions can also be extremely valuable since they actively involve those attending and focus on implementation of the discussion topic. Opportunities for interactive discussions partly depend on the type of facility and meeting room since they generally require more space than a theatre style set-up. Breakout sessions may be possible if the room is large enough to set up tables or move chairs to form several small groups. Discussion groups are generally most effective when kept to about eight participants per group. A facilitator assigned within each group can help keep the conversation on track and encourage the participation of those who may be more reserved.

Length of Presentations:

Primary presentations generally run from 20 to 45 minutes. An interactive discussion or workshop might require more time. Shorter presentations generally run 10 to 15 minutes.

Presenters/Speaker Selection:

Speaker selection is a vitally important element of the event. Speakers, especially primary speakers, should be women who are well respected in their local congregations for their spiritual maturity, wisdom and personal example. Be sure to contact their local pastor for his approval.

Non-primary speakers are generally those giving presentations of 15 minutes or less. There is more latitude with assigning non-primary speakers to invite younger or less experienced women to participate and share spiritual lessons they have learned in their lives. Several events have featured a special time period in which several presentations are offered by less experienced speakers. These segments are beneficial since they consist of a mix of age groups and personal circumstances, and presenters are drawn from a variety of participating congregations.

The total number of speakers will depend on the length of the event, the length of the presentations and the availability of qualified and willing speakers. Ask presenters at least three months in advance of the event to give them adequate time to prepare.

If your area doesn't have enough qualified or willing speakers, you may consider inviting guest speakers from other regions. If doing so, you may want to offer to cover some or all of the transportation and registration costs.

Speaking Guidelines:



Speaking guidelines are outlined on page 12, which can be printed and shared as a separate document with each speaker. We recommend that the Planning Team checks periodically with each speaker to provide support and guidance as needed.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Have each speaker write a brief summary of her presentation. Before the Event, share with the local church pastor.
- Additionally, it's a good idea to have a pre-meeting with each speaker to review her session and answer any questions or concerns.
- **Please share and review the UCG Copyright Guidelines Document with all speakers.**

Considerations for Virtual Events and Recordings

Virtual Events:

During your Team Planning Meetings, discuss if and how the sessions could have a virtual option.

Some considerations:

- More women may be able to “attend” all or some sessions if there is a virtual option. This is helpful when there are health, travel, childcare or financial issues.
- Some presentations are perfectly fine in a virtual format, but some are personal and occasionally may have information that could be taken the wrong way. Some women are glad their presentations stay only in the meeting room.
- Will attendance drop if women could take the easy virtual way?
- Consider the full benefits of being “in person” or how the virtual attendees will feel included. If there are resources, how will they be accessed?
- Will the sessions be recorded and shared later? How will that be managed?

Recordings:

Historically, we have not recorded Women's Enrichment Weekend sessions nor shared them.

In order to help support a warm and intimate atmosphere at Women's Weekends, audio and video recordings of speeches and presentations is highly discouraged. This allows for the women to feel free to speak openly and share their experiences framed with that particular audience in mind. There are also copyright issues that must be considered.

If the Event is going to be recorded and shared later, let the speakers know and get their permission beforehand. If sessions are recorded, you might want share a copy with the presenter so edits and revisions can be made if needed, before it is shared.

Advertising and Promotion



Before you have finalized your brochure or other marketing materials, please review the **UCG Copyright Guidelines Document** (below on Page 13).

Promotion within Geographical Area:

- Word of mouth recommendations can be the best promotion.
- Promote the Event during women's Bible study groups in your congregations.

- Put announcements in church bulletins and on the local church website, preferably with an attached brochure that includes information, schedule and a registration form.
- Design brochures that can be easily printed and distributed. Factor in the cost of color ink. Custom printed brochures can be cost-effective if someone has design or printing capabilities at a low cost.
- You might choose to do a flyer, which can be easily emailed or distributed.
- Consider emailing the brochures, flyers and other information out ahead of time to attendees.
- Do as much electronically as possible.

Promotion Beyond Limited Geographical Area:

- The UCG website: women.ucg.org hosts information about Women’s Enrichment Events in the United Church of God.
- Coordinators should submit information (dates, location, theme, cost and brochure in pdf format if applicable) to: Kay_Schreiber@ucg.org or Lena_Vanausdle@ucg.org
- The *United News* includes a calendar section to promote various church activities. You can add your event information to that calendar.
- Calendar events are also noted in the Home Office Weekly Update.
- Consider posting your Women’s Enrichment Events on the UCG Elders Wives Facebook group as another way to promote outside your geographic area.
- After your event you may want to submit an article with photos for the “Local Church Updates” section of *United News*. These articles provide ideas and promote the women’s enrichment events. Any submissions require approval from the local church pastor.

Miscellaneous Things to Consider

Music:

Inspiring and uplifting music is a special part of many of the Women’s Enrichment Events. This might be in the form of several special music selections in place of the sermonette time during the Sabbath service, extra hymns sung by the entire group as part of the Sabbath service, a separate hymn-along on Sabbath morning and/or having music interspersed throughout the entire weekend.

Registration Funds/Donations:

There are different methods for handling registration funds:

- complete payment before a set deadline
- offer a payment plan
- offer a financial incentive for paying early
- **SUGGESTION:** set up a local online payment account with Venmo or Zelle so that payments can be made directly. This option has been successful in several areas.

Help for those with financial need:

Consider ways to make it possible for women to attend who want to, but cannot afford to attend. Encourage them to save as much as possible and then supplement as needed.

Some options are: (1) assistance from the local congregation's budget, (2) donations requested in the brochure/promotional material and (3) attendees/others pay so that those with needs can attend. Be sure that any financial help is equitable for all in need.

Other Activities

Miscellaneous Activities:

- **Get-Acquainted Activities:** Find ways to incorporate various activities and ways for women to get to know each other better throughout the event.
- **Sharing or “My Favorite Things”:** A Saturday night activity can showcase the women's talents and hobbies, both verbally “on stage” and/or on tables displayed throughout the event. (In some facilities available space can be an issue.)
- **Crafts:** Some women enjoy card making or other crafts as an activity on a Saturday evening.
- Offer an optional special social activity, such as horseback riding, hiking, shopping, etc.

Community Service Projects:

We are called to be lights to the world around us by showing love and good works. A nice addition is to incorporate a service project into the schedule to help serve others. Some ideas for a community service project are:

- Host a service project on Saturday evening or Sunday (Examples: making “no sew” fleece blankets for a local shelter, assembling school kits for children or making health kit bags for people in need, collecting food for a local food bank, etc.).
- Have a silent auction or raffle to benefit Good Works, LifeNets or a specific cause. Some women's events have helped to fund women's events in various international areas such as Guatemala, Mexico, Chile, Guyana and Zambia. The proceeds from this activity can be augmented by direct donations, if so desired.
- Request voluntary donations for a specific purpose. This allows for receiving donations without the time and effort of having a silent auction.

Summary

Women's Enrichment Events provide time away from normal routines to focus on godly principles. Bonds of friendship have the time and opportunity to develop in a stronger way, enabling women to give and receive the help, support and encouragement they need as they move forward in life. Organizers should try to achieve a balance between structured presentations and time for fellowship, relaxing and enjoying one another's company.

These guidelines and addendums provide a range of suggestions intended to foster a more unified approach while still allowing flexibility for each area's unique needs, desires and capacity.

Our thanks for the work and many hours of service and support over the years to those who have been involved. May this information help make your event successful and rewarding for all attendees.



If you have questions or have additional needs, please feel free to contact the UCG Women's Services Team ([Kay Schreiber@ucg.org](mailto:Kay_Schreiber@ucg.org) or [Lena Vanausdle@ucg.org](mailto:Lena_Vanausdle@ucg.org))

Women's Enrichment Events Guidelines for Presenters/Speakers

General Overview:

Presentations should be encouraging and uplifting. Speakers have an opportunity to be teachers of good things by sharing:

- Spiritual lessons learned through personal experience.
- Practical guidelines on how to implement important spiritual principles in our lives.

What to Avoid:

- Presentations are not sermons, sermonettes or Bible studies, and should avoid becoming doctrinal or corrective in nature.
- Topics that are primarily applicable to only a particular segment of the audience such as singles, wives or mothers.
- Topics that elicit strongly diverse points of view, such as advice on diet or health regimens.
- Topics that are primarily secular in nature and where abundant external resources are readily available to those interested.

The goal is to create an environment as uplifting, inclusive and spiritually focused as possible.

Primary Presentations (20-45 minutes):

The format of primary presentations can vary widely depending on the topic being covered. They can be lecture, a combination of lecture and open discussion or a workshop format breaking out the audience into smaller discussion groups.

Secondary Presentations (10-15 minutes):

Because of their shorter length, secondary presentations should focus on a single spiritual lesson learned through personal experience as it relates to the theme for the weekend. It is not necessary to reference scripture, although it is okay to do so if they are integral to the lesson learned.

Each speaker may be asked to submit a brief summary of her presentation, and this will be shared before the Event with the local church pastor and Planning Team.

UCG Copyright Guidelines—2023

Please follow these guidelines as you plan and present your upcoming Women’s Enrichment Events, virtual meetings and other opportunities hosted for women.

- Do not record or archive any copyrighted material without permission for use in private virtual meetings, women’s enrichment events, seminars, Sabbath services or other presentations. This includes songs, photos, poems, articles and graphics. Even though they may be used elsewhere on the Web doesn’t mean they can be used freely. Never assume it’s in the public domain or anonymous. Do diligent research for authenticity. Acknowledging the source of the copyrighted material does not substitute for obtaining permission.
- There are a number of royalty-free photo and image websites that have a large selection. These include unsplash.com and commons.wikimedia.org. Both of these sites require giving the copyright holder’s name and your photo source. For example, *neom-unsplash* for this sample image at <https://unsplash.com/photos/a-couple-of-people-are-swimming-in-a-cave-ijxWA9RHAbI>



[Photo by NEOM on Unsplash](https://unsplash.com/photos/a-couple-of-people-are-swimming-in-a-cave-ijxWA9RHAbI)

Home to kaleidoscopic-colored coral reefs and an abundance of diverse marine life | Islands of NEOM- NEOM, Saudi Arabia – Download this photo by NEOM on Unsplash

unsplash.com

- For printed brochures and graphics used at a Women’s Event, make sure what is used is royalty-free or has copyright permission—especially photos used in promotional brochures.
- If quoting copyrighted material, make sure to quote only a small portion of the author’s work, not an entire piece, and that due credit is given. It is best to keep quotes short enough to support the point and no more. Some older quotes may be in the public domain.
- When quoting a source, the format should be in this order: author, article title, publication name, date of publication. UCG writers follow *Chicago Manual of Style* for quote style and other style issues: <https://www.scribbr.com/chicago-style/author-date/>

Please contact UCG: MMS if you have additional questions or concerns.