

2015 NCCW CONVENTION LEADERSHIP COMMISSION WORKSHOP WISDOM

By: Jane Carter

I have always been amazed at the collective wisdom that is present in workshops at NCCW Conventions. Orlando was no exception! Participants were asked to come to the Leadership Commission Workshop, “Growing NCCW,” prepared to share great ideas and be a part of the future of NCCW. During the workshop, they were directed to share with one another and to respond to three questions. “Listen in” to the concerns, connections and creative ideas of the wonderful women of NCCW!

The first question asked participants to identify “”obstacles to Council Growth at any level.” Here are the top five responses:

- Members and leaders who are not open to change.
- We have a lack of leaders and those leading have no initiative. Women won’t step up or take more responsibility or individuals want to stay in one position “forever!” (such as Treasurer)
- We need to change CCW’s image.
- Time of meetings and scheduling for working women.
- We never evaluate anything; we are all discussion and no action plan!

Instead of just nodding in agreement or saying “oh yes, we have that too,” use them to start a discussion in your council and turn the obstacles into opportunities to make adjustments and work on areas that need attention!

The second question directed workshop attendees to move outside the parish level and connect with the community and even globally with food or water. The most common answers were:

- Water for Life—everything from monthly bake sales for water towers to partner parishes and educational presentations on the NCCW/CRS Partnership Program.
- Collection of food for parish and community foodbanks serving those in need.
- Delivering food to the homebound through the “Meals on Wheels” program.
- Outreach to the homeless—fundraising and feeding the homeless through soup kitchens and delivering sandwich bags.
- Work of Human Hands sales, either through catalogs or by ordering for a show.

Think for a moment about the work your council does to end hunger, provide clean drinking water, or promote good nutrition. Can you expand your efforts into the larger community and perhaps, even internationally?

The third and final question involved sharing successful methods that members had used to Grow Council Membership. It was impossible to identify just five

- PERSONAL CONTACT was the #1 successful method for membership development. Smile, be happy about being a member and issue the invitation one-to-one and face-to-face.
- Include FUN—be social, have special events and include food.

- Respond promptly, within 48 hrs follow up with new contacts and members who missed a meeting.
- Talk about CCW and what it means in your life, how you became involved, why you continue to be active.
- Support parish and parochial school activities—and invite the moms you meet every time!

Many of the responses were shared were really GREAT IDEAS for meetings and events. Here are 15 creative ideas—some are quick and easy, others ongoing or will take some planning. I encourage you to choose one and add it to your 2015-2016 Council Calendar:

- Survey members annually—then evaluate and revise the survey! One group suggested “A Penny for Your Thoughts” instead of a traditional survey—you could even hand out pennies with the form!
- Establish Naomi – Ruth intergenerational prayer partners.
- Give “credit hours” for certification to lay ministers, catechists and Catholic school teachers for speakers and spiritual activities both at your A/DCCW Convention and the NCCW Convention.
- Advertise that CCW is working/volunteering at parish and diocesan events! Wear your apron, scarf and buttons.
- Hospitality is the heart of the Gospel. Are you a Mary or a Martha? As a presentation or study group.
- Host a Spiritual Day for all women of the diocese—have a display with NCCW programs and brochures.
- Include a hands on service project as part of your regular membership meeting.
- Hold an annual auction of goods and services provided by members.
- Personally speak to every woman you do not know at every Council meeting.
- Schedule a trip—open to all women—to a local shrine, an historic basilica or cathedral.
- Promote council work as a way to “give back to God.” Stress time and talent, not just money.
- Carpool all the time. It’s not only about transportation, it builds relationships and allow for discussion (not gossip!)
- Try “circles” or “guilds” to form groups of women by passion, location or meeting date/time.
- Have summer bunco, bingo, scrabble or other board games, just for fun and fellowship. Consider inviting girls and young women for an intergenerational event.

Let us know if any of these ideas are helpful or fruitful. Share any new ideas that grow from them, and always tell us about your successes so we can share YOUR GREAT IDEAS, too!