

Cluster Leaders Workshop

By Kathy Randall

Sample agenda may include:

- Opening
- Lighting the Christ Candle
- Introduction of Cluster Leader position
- Follow-up with leadership resource material
- Design the perfect job description
- Questions and answers about the new direction
- Evaluation
- Closing

Opening

Open with welcome and a prayer for guidance for all leaders

- Time may allow for a “getting acquainted” exercise that gels the group (if not, try turning to your neighbor and tell two sentences about the first PW meeting you can remember attending...or have all introduce themselves—aloud, at the same time if time is short. It breaks the ice and then you have showed some hospitality. Do not let them take over however with lengthy introductions that rob you of time for instruction. The size of the group will matter.)
- Get into meaningful work quickly. Real leaders ask immediately, “Is this worth my time?”

Introduction of Cluster Leader position

At the direction of the 2006 PW Business Meeting, presbyteries were instructed by their consensus vote to ask

- “What name fits our area best of the women networking for PW?” and
- “How do we best communicate?”

From these results, it was decided that the name used nationally will be Cluster Leader and the sample job descriptions are meant to inspire presbyteries. The job descriptions should not limit creativity—they can be adapted for the needs of your PWP. The Cluster Leader has a new role in Presbyterian Women. When clusters/districts are formed in presbyteries it is done to manage the size and workload of the area. The PWP Moderator will be the key contact for the presbytery, but the Cluster Leader will have a key role in carrying the information to a deeper meaning.

Key responsibilities of a Cluster Leader

(Choose one or all for your PW in the Presbytery)

- Serve as liaison for all PW matters from the presbytery to assigned congregations.
- Assist with installations of leaders in the congregations as requested.
- Keep an accurate list of addresses with contact names per church in cluster.
- Secure a location for training events when asked. Assist as needed.

- Work with all leaders in planning trainings to cover ALL positions.
- Collect samples of devotions and installations as a resource for congregations.
- Work toward becoming a retreat specialist or resource leader for your cluster.
- Focus on the nurture of individual congregations. Communicate regularly.
- Serve at the direction of the PW Presbytery Coordinating Team.

PW Presbytery Moderators have different styles of leadership and so will Cluster Leaders. It is important to allow those differences to strengthen Presbyterian Women. The national Churchwide Coordinating Team of PW is interested in working more closely with the needs of the PW in the Presbyteries, rather than the presbyteries following the lead of the greater church in leadership style.

It is healthy to recognize that various parts of the country have different management styles. Embrace the variables and work toward the needs of your region. Add to the list above or modify it.

Follow-up with leadership resource material

Many management books have insights that can be applied to groups such as Presbyterian Women. There is a list of recommended resources at the end of this workshop.

Notes from *The Leadership Pill: The Missing Ingredient in Motivating People Today* by Ken Blanchard and Marc Muchnick (New York: Pocket Books, 2005)

“Leading people is the opposite of trying to control them.”

“Leadership is not just what happens when you are there, it’s what happens when you are not.”

“The key to effective leadership is the relationship you build with your team.”

“People will think for themselves when you quit doing it for them.”

Design the perfect job description

Write a job description for the Cluster Leader that addresses the needs in your presbytery. *If working at tables and chairs, allow a table to do group work in discussing the needed components to accomplish the job. Report to the larger group when completed.*

Questions and answers about the Cluster Leader position

Use these questions, or ones asked by your group, for a discussion of how the Cluster Leader position is a change from past models.

Q: What is the real difference between the PW Enabler (1988) and the Cluster Leader (2009)?

A: In short, the leadership opportunity is being inverted—now coming from bottom up—not being led by the CCT and synod in thought. More inflow and outflow was deemed necessary with flexibility and simplicity. Each presbytery will have a different combination of needs and leadership styles. Clusters and direct link information models can reside in the same presbytery when needed. The result will be observed by the PW Synod Leadership Coordinator and resources tailored to meet that regionalism.

Instead of teaching presbyteries how they should function, the new system allows for enhancement of HOW certain presbyteries process things well. Some presbyteries will function in clusters. Some will allow independent activity with resources coming direct from CCT/PW committees. Some will establish a cluster for churches wishing limited contact, where PW groups have not worked for them yet still need some resources. These clusters are targets for future growth. The end result can be a blessing to PW in realizing that in our differences we bring much to the whole. Training outlines will not be presented as mandates and reporting will be greatly reduced. Modify as needed. Simplify.

Q: Now that presbyteries are beginning to use the Cluster Leader position, who will coordinate their efforts?

A: For the most part, the PW Presbytery Moderator will receive the latest news from CCT and direct it to the needs of the presbytery. Some presbyteries will see that incorporating the oversight of Cluster Leaders into the job description of the PWP Vice Moderator or Moderator-elect is an excellent leadership training tool for everyone. For clarification: remember that the Leadership Coordinator title is recommended to be reserved for the synod position in communication with CCT. When an additional person is available in the presbytery to coordinate the efforts of the Cluster Leaders and not the Vice Moderator, some will call her a Cluster Coordinator, or the name of your choice. Clusters reside only at the presbytery level.

Q: Is there only one Leadership Coordinator per synod?

A: Yes, one position has been titled “Leadership Coordinator.” The Leadership Coordinator has voice and vote on the PW in the Synod Coordinating Team (PWSCT). Synods are asked to elect her by July 2009. She will serve as one of three members of the Leadership Team (including the PWSCT Moderator and the Synod Rep to the CCT) for decision-making between Synod Coordinating Team meetings. This collegial decision-making brings new life to synods once dependent on regional staff for leadership. Louisville staff member Cheri Harper, program associate for synod support (Cheri.Harper@pcusa.org), will be happy to assist all 16 synods with questions that may arise. For some synods, this new role will combine the previous duties of the Synod PW Enabler Coordinator and the Leadership Development Coordinator.

Q: What is the real difference between the Synod PW Enabler Coordinator (1988) and the Leadership Coordinator (2009)?

A: The leadership opportunity in this position is being inverted—now coming from bottom up—rising to, not being led by the synod in thought. More inflow and outflow was deemed necessary with flexibility and simplicity to allow presbyteries to flourish. The primary goal will be to serve the PW Synod Coordinating Team by providing resources and leadership materials. The results

of the work of the PWP Cluster leaders however will be observed by the PWS Leadership Coordinator and resources provided to PWP Moderators tailored to meet that regionalism instead of teaching presbyteries how they should function. In an effort to move even closer to the women in the pew, Presbyterian Women wants to celebrate the varying leadership styles that are making things happen across the nation.

Comparison of PW Presbytery Cluster Leader to a PW Synod Leadership Coordinator

(Note: the Synod has one Leadership Coordinator and the Presbytery has as many Cluster Leaders as needed to manage the workload)

Leadership Coordinator (Synod)

One person on PWSCT

Develops PWS team skills

Focus on nurture for PWSCT

Serve on Gathering Planning PWS

Cluster Leader (Presbytery)

As many as needed on PWPCT

Develops PWP & congregation skills

Focus nurture on PWP & congregations

Serve on Gathering Planning PWP

Key responsibilities for a PW Synod Leadership Coordinator

(Choose some or all, but make a point of writing a new job description)

- Communication
- Leadership enhancement
- Nurturing and exposing the team to techniques for personal growth
- Sharing information to stretch all leaders
- Creating examples of fun, but worthwhile ideas for retreats and meetings
- Serving on the Gathering Planning Team for all events
- Encouraging all leaders to evaluate the work of the PWSCT
- Challenging leadership in PW in the Presbyteries to do training regularly

Sample: Leadership Training Evaluation form

Using colored card stock and one half sheet of paper, print the following questions. Provide pens for participants to use in writing their answers.

What was one thing you really enjoyed?

What idea needs more explanation?

If you could change something about this event, what would it be?

What part helped you the most?

Additional comments?

Leadership Resource List

Becoming an Effective Leader: The Results Driven Manager. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Business School, 2005.

The Leadership Pill: The Missing Ingredient in Motivating People Today. By Ken Blanchard and Marc Muchnick. New York: Pocket Books, 2005.

Leading From the Front: No-Excuse Leadership Tactics for Women. By Angie Morgan and Courtney Lynch. New York: McGraw Hill, 2006.

The Ice Cream Maker: An Inspiring Tale about Making Quality the Key Ingredient in Everything You Do. By Subir Chowdhury. New York: Currency, 2005.