

Fresh Means...

Fresh!

This section will help you evaluate what's currently being offered for women and gives tips for ways to freshen up your women's ministry. And since that likely means something's going to change, we've provided help with that in this section, too!



What's *Fresh* What's Not?

"How do we meet the needs of women in our church and community?"

"What do we keep, and what do we need to change?"

"How can we have unity when some women don't want change?"

Now's the time to start wrestling with these questions! Whether your church already has a women's ministry team or you're just starting, gather some key women together for this process of determining what is fresh and vibrant for your ministry and what's not.

If you don't currently have a women's team, the women you invite don't have to make a long-term commitment to being on the women's team. Simply invite two or three women who are passionate about helping other women. Use this guide to assess what already exists for women in your church and what you need to develop, using your ministry mission statement as a foundation.

Ask others to pray as you venture into the assessment process.

Step One

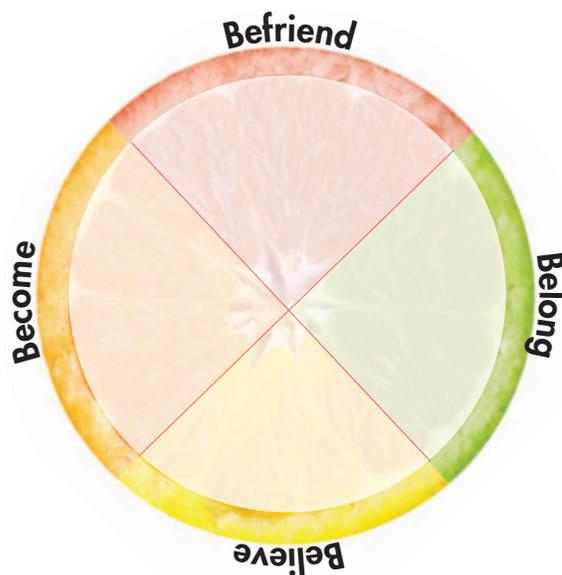
Make a list of everything currently available for women in your church. Avoid discussing your likes and dislikes. Include studies, events, service opportunities, retreats, and so on.

Step Two

Create a Purpose Wheel based on your mission statement. The Purpose Wheel is included in your  Lemon-Fresh Leader Resources folder so you can make copies for your team.

We've found that balanced ministries focus on four areas: outreach, creating community among women, spiritual growth, and development of gifts. We've simplified these into four words that capture the essence of these: Befriend, Belong, Believe, and Become. You'll see these words on the sections of your purpose wheel. If your team feels strongly that these words do not represent your goals, you can replace them with other words based on your mission statement.

The goal of this exercise is to ensure that what you're offering for women is balanced. For example, if you plan too many outreach events or study opportunities, your wheel will be out of balance and women will have difficulty experiencing the full purpose of your ministry. It doesn't mean the outreach events or study opportunities should be eliminated, but you'll need to consider how these balance with your entire ministry. If you have a flat tire in ministry, your women will not thrive and grow.



Step Three

Transfer each item from the list you created in Step One to the purpose wheel under the category in which it fits. You may have items on your list which don't seem to fit in any of the four categories. Make a note to review "misfits" later.

Step Four

"SACK" your current ministry! Here's how:



- **Stop.** Old programs are sometimes kept alive only because "we've always done them." Even the best ministries can become dated and no longer effective. You can stop the program or change it, considering how it fits in your purpose wheel.



- **Add.** Which of the four sections of your purpose wheel are blank or underdeveloped? Plan to add what's needed in your ministry. Many excellent resources are available to meet the needs of your women. Explore group.com/women to get started with a wide selection of resources.



- **Change.** It could be that you need to make some updates. Perhaps you need to offer a wider variety of Bible studies; for tips, check out the Bible Studies and Retreats That Zing! leader resource. Perhaps you have an annual event, but you realize the same women attend every year, and you want to include women of various ages as well as women throughout the community; gather ideas from Vibrant for All Ages and Fruitful Events. Whether you're adding something new or tweaking programs you already have in place, you don't need to do all the research and creating. We're here to encourage and equip you in every step of ministry!



- **Keep.** It works! Place it on your purpose wheel, and keep it.

Intentionally plan and evaluate in this way at least once a year. Listen to your team, and maximize the resources available to you.

Thriving Through Change

Going through the purpose wheel exercise likely has brought up the issue of change. Some things need to stop. Some things need to start. Some things need to change. And change is hard! Many of us will admit that things aren't working great, but making steps to change can hurt feelings, feel risky, and simply be frustrating. That's why it's important to learn about the nature of change and how it can affect your ministry.

Include everyone in the change process.

When we make changes for others without including them, we set ourselves up for confrontations, hurt feelings, and frustration. Engage the entire team in the process of preparing for and transitioning through change and everyone will be able to handle it better. Make team decisions, not "queen" decisions.

The best time to change is before you have to.

A living, growing ministry will never stay the same—to stay alive it needs to change! Since change is inevitable and we prefer to be agents of change instead of reactors to change, plan ahead and anticipate the changes that need to happen to best grow your women.

Change makes people feel insecure.

It's easy to get comfortable with the way things are done or with the people who do them. Often we get a sense of security from our surroundings. But our security can't be dependent on what's happening on the outside. The only real security comes from a strong trust in God and strong bonds of trust with our ministry partners. Taking everything to God in prayer, both alone and with the team, will help you stand on a solid rock of trust when the winds of change start to blow.

Respect in Transitions

There are different kinds of change.

Many changes happen continuously over time. God has us in a continual process of changing to be more like Christ. The same is true of our ministries—he’s continually helping and guiding us to be better and better at reaching women for Jesus! But sometimes an abrupt change will happen. A leader leaves, a key helper moves, or a new person joins the team. Maybe a catastrophic or tragic event happens in your community and you’re called to respond.

How do we prepare for both kinds of change? Read the Bible, pray, and develop strong and supportive relationships with other women. Develop an attitude of gratitude, a strong faith, and friends you can count on!

People generally react with “emotional motion” in response to change.

- *Moving Forward.* These people are supportive of change and keep the future in mind in planning for change. When change happens, they assess their feelings about the change and take a personal responsibility to achieve a positive outcome.
- *Neutral.* These people “go along” with change but don’t commit themselves to supporting it. They may be indecisive or have other reasons for withholding support. They may complain about changes but don’t actively work for or against them.
- *Moving Against.* These are people who tend to place blame and point fingers in reaction to change. They can be vocal and visible or passive and covert. People who disagree with change sometimes want things to fail in order to be proven “right.” They might even sabotage efforts for change.

When you stop something, acknowledge the women who have served in the past, assuring them of their worthwhile service and inviting them to continue to use their gifts and talents in new and refreshing ways. While you may not personally understand or appreciate every approach to ministry, consider that at the heart of ministry is a passion for reaching women. Regardless of the approach, we share that same passion, and we can stand together on common ground, regardless of differences.

Great leaders welcome change.

In fact, they love it! Why? Because they thrive on challenge and love problem-solving for positive change. They’re also adaptable and can stand on this promise of Scripture:

“We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.”—Romans 8:28

There are leaders who develop followers, and leaders who develop leaders. Jesus had followers, but he invested most of his time in developing leaders who could carry on the ministry after he was gone. Be sure you keep your eye on the future as you plan your ministry for today.

Zest!

Learn more about
your team members’

approaches to change by working through the Personality Café and Strengthening Your Personality Blend leader resources in your Lemon-Fresh Leader Resources folder.



Share the Fresh New Vision with a Kickoff Event!

How will women know what exciting changes you're making? How can you avoid the rumor mill generating discontent about changes? Invite all women to have fun at a kickoff event. Choose a fresh theme you've never tried before. Add scrumptious finger foods, colorful decorations, and stations for women to explore and connect, based on their needs and interests.

During this gathering, share what's ahead and let women know how they can get involved. Share your passion and enthusiasm by telling your own story. Let women connect with your heart!

Here are a few additional ideas to help you with your kickoff event.

Befriend!

Is welcoming new people and reaching out part of your mission? Be sure everyone is warmly greeted and quickly connected into conversation. One easy way to do this is to have each woman choose a sticker to add to her name tag when she arrives. Offer stickers that relate to the theme of your gathering and that are funny or silly. About 15 minutes into your gathering, have women find anyone else with the matching sticker. In these small groups, they can share their names and basic info, such as where they live or what they do. Then have everyone answer one fun question that will help them get to know the other people a bit better. This could be as simple

as "Share about your hobbies" or "Tell what you did for your last vacation." Allow women as much time as they want to keep chatting.

Simple activities like this help women meet others and step outside of their existing friendships a bit. It makes it easy for a newcomer to join into a conversation and not feel like an outsider. Never embarrass women in an icebreaker activity—simply encourage new conversations and ways to find a connecting point.

Belong!

Is it part of your mission to help women connect with others and find a place where they know they belong? Expand the importance of Befriending into the value of Belonging—building community with others.

During your event, have women get into groups of about 4 to 6 and brainstorm to discover at least five interests they have in common. When they've done this, have them choose one of those and pretend they're starting a club around that interest. What would they name it? What would they do at their gatherings? Who would join them?

After several minutes, have each group share their ideas with the larger group. Then...see if anyone wants to start one or more of these groups for real! You may end up with a new book club or knitting group or a date on the

Zest!

Involve others in the decision-making process. Of course, there are large-scale decisions that need to be made by a small team, but when you're planning how to meet the needs of your women, ask women! Use the customizable interest survey, Fresh Opinions, found in your Lemon-Fresh Leader Resources folder, to gather women's opinions. Remember to ask women who are already involved in ministry but also those who aren't. It's important to find out why!



calendar for women who want to go walking together. Even coming away with one new shared-interest group will be a success!

Emphasize how important it is to provide an opportunity for women to feel like they belong. Mention shared-interest groups where Christians and those who don't yet know Jesus are able to connect and build relationships.

Believe!

Spiritual growth is likely a part of your ministry purpose. This is an excellent time to let women know what you've got coming ahead—or simply to ask them about their interests in the area of Bible study.



If you have a few new studies coming up, have the books and info at a table at your gathering so women can peruse, ask questions, and see what to expect. Have your sign-up sheet there so women can commit right away.

If you're still gathering ideas, place a few books you're considering on the table and let women tell you which one seems to meet their needs most. Or simply let them write down their own ideas for Bible study (books they like, topics of interest, times of day that work best, and so on) for your leadership team to read through later.

Become!

It's likely you want to grow your leadership team or help women find ways to use their gifts. Using the Fresh Opinions survey is one way to do this, as well as inviting anyone who is at this gathering to join your next planning meeting. There are so many ways women can serve and make a difference—help them discover where they can plug in and grow into the women that God designed them to be!

Group

Fresh & Vibrant Women's Ministry
Fresh Means...Fresh!

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