embrace
WOMEN'S EVANGELISM & DISCIPLESHIP

LEADERSHIP GUIDE
Embrace is a ministry of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina that seeks to encourage women to walk humbly with Christ in their world and build strong families capable of creating a legacy of faithfulness.
BIBLICAL BASIS OF WOMEN’S MINISTRY

WHY DO WE MINISTER TO WOMEN?

Ministry to women is important. Jesus valued women in His ministry and used women to minister to others. Scripture provides examples for ministry to women:

- Older and younger women – Titus 2:3-5
- Elizabeth and Mary – Luke 1:39-45, 56
- Ruth and Naomi – Book of Ruth
- Jesus and the Samaritan woman – John 4
- Lois and Eunice – II Timothy 1:5-6
- Dorcas – Acts 9:36-43

In all of these examples of Scripture, the Lord used women to minister in the Church, to other women, and to serve Him. Today is not any different than biblical times because God has qualified each woman to minister.

- God has given each believer a spiritual gift to use in His Kingdom service and for His Kingdom purposes. Passages of Scripture in I Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4:11-13, I Peter 4:9-11 and Romans 12 attest that God has given each believer in Jesus Christ a gift to be used in His service.
- God has called us to minister. Matthew 28:19-20, commonly called “the Great Commission” gives us a mandate to go into all the world and make disciples. This command given directly from the Lord Jesus is not exclusive to pastors, missionaries or church staff. The command is given to all believers. As women we are to take our part in evangelism, missions and discipleship as clearly outlined in this passage.

Embrace and Women’s Evangelism and Discipleship has both a vision and a mission for what we would like to see God accomplish in the hearts of women across the state of North Carolina. The vision of Embrace is derived from Titus 2:3-5 and is as follows:

Embrace God’s call to pray for and minister to women, their families and future generations for the building up of Christ’s Kingdom.
The Titus 2 passage of Scripture, where this vision finds its roots, is Paul’s encouragement to Titus to have the older women of the church teach and train the younger women of the church. The word “older” used in Titus 2:3 is the Greek word presbutudas, and it means a person who is spiritually or chronologically more mature than a neas, or younger woman, who would be a new follower of Christ.1 The older women are to invest in the lives of the younger women in the areas of growth in Christ, family life and actions and attitude. Many older women often ask, “What am I supposed to teach the younger ladies?” Paul told Titus to have the older ladies train the younger women to “love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands” (Titus 2:4-5, NASB). All of these areas are to be taught so “that the word of God will not be dishonored.” This is discipleship in action. The older ladies were to teach the generations that came behind them how to act as God desires in their thoughts, actions and words. Titus “was essentially told to tell the older women to teach the younger women to live lives of integrity in their homes, churches, and communities so as not to defame the Lord and who they claimed to be as believers.”2 Embrace desires that the older ladies in our churches invest in the lives of the younger women and teach and train the younger women to honor the Lord in all that they do.

Embrace also has a mission:

**Embrace responds to God’s call and design to live in intimacy with Christ as they serve Him through the local church to prayerfully care for and develop a lifestyle of evangelism, discipleship and missions in women, leaving a legacy for future generations.**

The mission of Embrace is comprehensive to include evangelism, discipleship and missions involvement and is taken directly from what Jesus commanded His followers to do in the Great Commission. Every ministry within the Church should be focused on accomplishing the Great Commission. Women’s ministry is not any different.
IMPACTING LOSTNESS THROUGH DISCIPLE-MAKING

In 2013 the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina adopted the strategy of “impacting lostness through disciple-making.” Recognizing that there are over 300 languages represented in North Carolina and over 4.1 billion people who make up the “population of unreached people groups where Evangelical Christians comprise less than 2% of the total population,” it is imperative believers focus on Jesus’ Great Commission mandate of disciple-making. Through making disciples who make disciples, families, communities and peoples around the world can come to faith in Jesus Christ and be taught in His Word and continue the process of making disciples.

WHAT IS DISCIPLE-MAKING?

When Jesus gave His disciples the Great Commission before returning to the Father, He told them, “Go and make disciples” (Matthew 28:19-20). Disciple-making involves both evangelism and discipleship. Disciple-making is “win[ning] another person to Christ and then tak[ing] that person from the time of his conversion and help[ing] him become a solid, dedicated, committed, fruitful, mature disciple who could in time repeat that process in the life of another.”

Disciple-making includes sharing the gospel with a lost person, leading the individual to Christ and then teaching that person the things of God. This process happens as women are living their lives in their homes, churches and communities.

HOW IS EMBRACE INVOLVED IN DISCIPLE-MAKING?

The Great Commission involves every ministry of the church. Jesus’ mandate of making disciples includes every church ministry and women’s ministry is no exception. Additionally, Paul wrote to Timothy to take “the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (II Timothy 2:2). Paul’s charge to Timothy included four generations of disciples: Paul to Timothy, to faithful men, to others also. Women are also a part of teaching the things of God to women who can teach the next generation and generations that follow.
Women’s ministries are critical in teaching women the Lord’s precepts and encouraging each woman to live in obedience to God’s Word. Embrace encourages the development of women’s ministries focused on making disciples. This includes teaching women how to engage others in ongoing gospel conversations, leading a woman to Christ, and then teaching her God’s Word so she can go and do the same for other women. All of this takes place as a woman lives her life daily. We encourage women to be about making disciples wherever God may have her.
Embrace is a comprehensive disciple-making ministry model that finds its foundations in two key passages of Scripture: Matthew 28:19-20 and Titus 2:3-5. In Matthew 28, Jesus gives His followers the command and commission to make disciples. Making disciples includes engaging women in gospel conversations and seeing them profess Christ as Lord and Savior, and then teaching them the things of God so they grow in their walk with Christ and continue the disciple-making process. This happens as women live a life on mission, recognizing that disciple-making happens in their everyday lives.

In Titus 2, Paul encourages generational connections as he admonishes Titus to find mature women in Christ to disciple younger women. The areas of growth in Christ, family life, and actions and attitudes are areas Paul identifies as needing to reflect the glory of God.

Embrace seeks to help churches and associations develop women's ministries that encourage and equip women to be growing disciple-makers who make disciples who make disciples.

Embrace is a model of ministry for women to use in their churches. The focus is not to have a monthly meeting or to meet in sporadic times throughout the year. Instead, the ministry should be ongoing and continuous in order to meet the needs of the ladies in the church and enable and equip them to reach out to the ladies in the communities around the church and the world.

Embrace will look different in each church. This is because each church is different in size, people, needs of the ladies in the church, and what God has called them to do as a body of believers. The following steps are practical ways to begin the Embrace ministry in the church. Embrace is adaptable for any size church and any group of women. The steps outlined are a guide for beginning the ministry, however, you might find that you need to tweak a step or two in order to make Embrace work in your church. That is okay – ministry is not like a cookie-cutter, where every Embrace ministry is going to look exactly the same in every church in North Carolina. One important thing to keep in mind is that the ministry should be driven by Scripture and not by
events. This means that Bible study is foundational to the stability and success of the ministry. Isaiah 40:8 says, “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever” (NASB). Building the ministry upon the foundation of Scripture is vital for the ministry to be all that God desires of the ministry.

**HOW DO WE BEGIN EMBRACE IN OUR CHURCH?**

The following sections of this manual will walk you through how to implement Embrace in your church. These are basic, practical steps, but it is necessary to keep in mind that after praying and speaking with your pastor, things might not necessarily fall into perfect working order. However, keep pressing ahead with what the Lord has called the ladies in your church to do to serve Him.

The steps of beginning Embrace in your church are as follows:

- Pray for the Lord's direction
- Speak to your pastor
- Ask hard questions
- Survey the ladies in the church
- Determine who God is calling into leadership
- Set the purpose, objectives and goals

**PRAY FOR THE LORD’S DIRECTION**

Prayer is vital to our lives as believers. As previously noted, prayer is necessary for us as believers to live as Christ desires and allow Him to empower us to do His will. The same is true for ministry. The Church is the Bride of Christ, and everything that takes place within the Church should be done for Christ’s Kingdom purpose, for His glory, and according to His will.

**WHAT DO WE PRAY AS WE SEEK GOD’S WILL?**

One of the primary things to pray is, “What does God desire of us as we minister to women?” Ministry to women is God’s will, as is so clearly outlined in Scripture and modeled by the Lord Jesus. However, the Lord’s plan for each church is different. Some of the following passages are a good starting point to pray through as you seek the Lord’s will for your church:

- The Lord’s heart would be primary and zeal for His house would consume us (John 2:17)
- For continuous devotion to teaching, fellowship and prayer (Acts 2:42-47)
- For one mind, love, spirit and focus on one purpose (Philippians 2:2)
- Our agendas would be the Lord's agenda (1 Thessalonians 2:3-3:13)
- The Lord would keep our motives in check (Proverbs 21:1-8)
- For reliance upon Him because apart from Him, we can do nothing (John 15:5)
- For the mind of Christ and spiritual discernment in all things (1 Corinthians 2:14-16)

**SPEAK TO YOUR PASTOR**

As the undershepherd of the church, your pastor is God's appointed leader of your particular body of believers. God's Word speaks very clearly that we are to "obey [our] leaders" and submit to them (Hebrews 13:17). Because our pastors are accountable to the Lord for their roles and they are His earthly appointed leaders of the Church, it is necessary that we go to our pastors and ask his direction and vision for the church (1 Peter 5:1-7). We should not take over his authority. This is a vital step, and to neglect it is to be outside of the will of our Lord.

When you set up a time to speak to your pastor, be prepared to share the vision the Lord has laid on your heart. Some key elements to cover with him would include the biblical basis of a women's ministry, why a ministry to women is important, how a ministry to women would enhance and support the overall mission of the church, how the women's ministry leaders would be accountable, and what needs the ministry would be able to meet.

However, you also need to be willing to listen. Simply because you sense a nudging in this area of ministry, it might not be part of the vision that that Lord has given the pastor for the church. Be willing to accept and trust God's plan. Moving forward with the ministry to women may very well be part of the vision the Lord has given the pastor for the church. If is indeed the case, listen to what your pastor says. One thing you need to assure your pastor of is that you will only proceed ahead if he blesses the ministry and believes it is part of God's will for your particular church. All too often in churches today, women charge ahead with their plans without speaking to the pastor. This should not happen. Additionally, it is necessary to assure your pastor if he does give you his blessing, the ministry will be accountable to the pastor and other church leaders.
ASK HARD QUESTIONS

Whether your women’s ministry is beginning from scratch or transitioning from one model of ministry to another, it is necessary for the leaders to take an honest look at what is currently taking place with the women in their churches. Some of these questions include:

1. Who are we trying to reach?
2. Who is actually being reached?
3. Who is absent and why are they absent?
4. How has our audience changed?
5. What are the greatest needs of our audience – both within the church and outside the church walls?
6. What are our current barriers to ministry and how can they be removed?
7. What are our greatest strengths and weaknesses?
8. What are our greatest opportunities and threats?
9. In what areas do we need to change?
10. Are we willing to follow the Lord’s leadership in change, even if it hurts?

At times, it is difficult to be honest with ourselves when we assess what is currently taking place in our churches and our ministries. Honesty is necessary for growth, though.

Honest evaluation of the current state of the ministry to women within the church will also aid in the planning process for
the ministry. Often, ministry leaders believe planning is an affront to the Lord, but truly, nothing could be further from the truth. God, in His infinite wisdom, shows evidences of His planning throughout Scripture. When mankind was in need of a Savior, God had already planned to send His Son for the salvation of the world. When God created the heavens and the earth, He did so in a methodical manner and plan where each day of Creation built upon the previous day. The Lord God desires us to plan for our ministries, but we must do so within His will, guidance and direction.

SURVEY THE LADIES OF YOUR CHURCH

One important aspect in beginning the Embrace ministry is to survey the ladies of the church to determine and assess their needs. Often church leaders do not understand why people will not attend a Bible study, a retreat, or take part in a missions project. Many times it is because church leaders have failed to take into account those whom the activity is for: the people. In order to design a women’s ministry that will best meet the needs of the ladies of your church, you need to ask or survey the ladies to determine their needs.5
DETERMINE WHO GOD IS CALLING INTO LEADERSHIP

God has equipped women in His Church to lead in a special capacity as they serve the greater body of believers and other women. As the church moves forward with Embrace, it is necessary to realize that one woman cannot do all the work of the ministry herself. God did not call her to do all the work herself, nor did He equip her to do so. Just as the Lord Jesus Himself modeled team ministry with His disciples, it is important for Embrace to be led by a leadership team.

WHO'S ON THE TEAM?

When picking a team, it is important to remember all areas are covered. North Carolina is college basketball country. The individuals that make up the college basketball team are each varied in skill and ability. The point guard cannot do the same job as the forward, and the forward cannot do the same job as the guard. Additionally, the center and power forward have different responsibilities. Though each has a different responsibility and a different skill set, they are all on the same team and need one another. Together, by using their skills and doing their jobs, they comprise a team with the same goal and purpose: winning.

For Embrace, it is necessary to have a group of women made up of different skill sets and abilities. Just as in the basketball example, each member of the team had a different responsibility, all the members of the leadership team serve on the same team and are working to accomplish the same goal.

On a ministry team, not everyone can have the same responsibility, and not everyone is gifted in the same way. Where one lady is weak, one is strong. Also, no two ladies see a situation the same way. A woman in her 20s views life differently than a woman who is in her 80s, yet both perspectives are important. Women who are single have different viewpoints than those who are married. Because of all these differences, it is necessary to make sure the leadership team is made up of women who are different in age, life stage, spiritual gifts, talents and abilities. You might wonder how you find out about a woman’s spiritual gifts, talents and abilities. The answer is simple: ask.

When putting together your leadership team, you need to look at the gifts, talents and abilities of women, but also look at some other areas. Questions you might ask yourself are:
• Does this woman model Christlikeness? In our church? In the home? In the community?
• Is this lady faithful in the small things?
• Does this lady live her life with integrity?
• Is this whom God desires in this ministry role?
• Can this lady work in a team environment?
• Is this lady a role model for the other women of our church?

While outward things are important, it is necessary to remember that the outward things are an expression of what is occurring internally. As believers, our transformation process begins inwardly and manifests itself outwardly.

For Embrace, the types of roles in the women's ministry will vary by church. In the beginning stages of the ministry, you need to start small. For example, you might begin with an Embrace leader, a discipleship coordinator, an evangelism coordinator, a missions coordinator, and a prayer coordinator. The four coordinators are responsible to the Embrace leader, who coordinates all four groups.

LEADER AND APPRENTICE

Any good leader should be apprenticing someone else to take her role. A good principle of leadership is to “work yourself out of a job.” While that seems awkward, ministry is about involving as many people as possible and helping them use the gifts God has given them for His purposes and His glory. Therefore, it is necessary as one leader serves in a leadership capacity, she is simultaneously teaching another woman – or apprenticing her – to take her position.

The coordinators of various ministry areas (e.g., discipleship, evangelism, missions involvement, prayer, etc.) should serve in their role for a minimum of two years and a maximum of three years. After a coordinator’s time is completed, she should rotate off the leadership team. While she is serving in this role, she should be teaching a “co-coordinator” about the ministry role. The co-coordinator will assume the ministry responsibility of the coordinator once she has rotated off the leadership team. When the co-coordinator assumes coordinator responsibilities, she should begin apprenticing her own co-coordinator.

By apprenticing another woman for a ministry role, more women will be able to serve in the Church and use the gifts God has given them for His Kingdom.
Additionally, through apprenticing another woman a safeguard is set in place. A move, illness, or any other variety of situations could occur that would require the coordinator to leave her ministry role. In this case, it is necessary for someone else to assume the ministry leadership role who knows the history of what has taken place and take up the leadership mantle. An apprentice is able to do this.

**MINISTRY DESCRIPTIONS**

When working at any paid position, a job description is almost always provided. A job description aids in a variety of ways. Job descriptions help employees know to whom they are to report, what they are responsible for in their job, and what they are not responsible for doing. Additionally, job descriptions help the leadership of any company keep an employee accountable for what they are to do and provide criteria for the qualifications of the position.

Ministry descriptions for volunteers are just as important. As volunteers are recruited to serve in God's Kingdom, they need to understand what is expected of them and be held accountable for seeing the responsibilities that they have been given are fulfilled. A good ministry description will include the title of the position, to whom the individual reports, length of service, qualifications for the position and an outline of the person’s responsibilities.
The following is an example of a local church’s ministry description for the women’s ministry leader:

**WOMEN’S MINISTRY CHAIRPERSON**

Reports to minister of education  
Serves for a two-year term  

**Qualifications:**  
Active in church service for more than three years; good time manager; good leader of a diverse group; able to reach out to women across generations; able to keep team focused on purpose, objectives and goals; able to work within the assigned budget; servant’s heart  

**Responsibilities:**  
1. Uphold the vision and mission of the women’s ministry committee  
2. Maintain lines of communication with both church staff and women’s ministry committee members  
3. Schedule regular meetings with committee, arrange for meeting space, communicate time and place, plan agenda  
4. Plan and maintain yearly budget  
5. Coordinate development of the yearly calendar of events  
6. Assist all members of the committee in any and all requirements of their individual roles  
7. Pray for and encourage all members of the women’s ministry committee to be the best in service for the women of the church and the church body at large

Ministry descriptions can be written for each member of your leadership team following the provided format.

**SET THE PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES, GOALS**

Setting the purpose, objectives and goals (POG) is an important step in the process of preparing to minister to the women of your church. POG stands for

**P – PURPOSE**  
**O – OBJECTIVES**  
**G – GOALS**
Prior to determining the POG for your church’s women’s ministry, it is necessary to examine the church’s mission statement. Everything the church does should be designed and done to help support and accomplish the church’s mission statement. For example, one North Carolina Baptist church has the following mission statement:

**Reaching Catawba County for Christ**

Everything that is done within this church is done in order to reach Catawba County for Christ. This includes the preaching and worship services, children’s ministry, youth ministry, music ministry and pastoral ministry. The women's ministry is not any different. As the women’s ministry leaders at the church plan, they make sure that all that they do helps the church accomplish the mission of “Reaching Catawba County for Christ.”

**P – PURPOSE**

What is the purpose of the women’s ministry? What is the women’s ministry trying to accomplish in relationship to the church’s mission statement? These are the questions that the women’s ministry purpose statement should answer. A purpose statement should provide all the women of the church with direction in understanding why the women’s ministry exists.

The mission statement for our example church has already been stated. In light of the mission statement, the women’s ministry leaders have made the following purpose statement for the women’s ministry:

**To provide women a place to embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ through evangelism, prayerfully study and apply the Word of God through discipleship, and share the love of Jesus through mission opportunities.**

This statement supports the church's mission statement. The women’s ministry is trying to reach Catawba County for Christ by:

- Helping women embrace the Gospel of Jesus Christ through evangelism
- Prayerfully studying and applying the Word of God through discipleship
- Sharing the love of Jesus through mission opportunities
O – OBJECTIVES
Objectives define what the ministry is trying to accomplish in very practical terms. Objectives are written in very broad terms. Objectives are indeterminate, meaning that the objective does not have a definite ending. However, the objectives are directly dependent upon the church mission statement and the women’s ministry purpose statement. For example, based on the examples of mission statements and purpose statements from our example church, the women’s ministry could have the following objective for its ministry year:

To bring women into personal relationship with Christ in our church and our city through God’s Word

This statement is very broad, yet it also comes from the church’s overall mission and the women’s ministry purpose statement. Ideally, a women’s ministry should have two objectives for the ministry year.

G – GOALS
Goals are written in light of the objectives and the needs of the women in the church; goals are how the objectives will be accomplished. Goals are typically short-term, measureable,
specific and more narrowly written. When writing goals, it is a good rule of thumb to look at quarters (three months of the year) or six-month periods.

Well-written goals will be able to stand up to the SMART test. The SMART test is a test to determine if goals are Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Relevant, and Trackable, or SMART. In light of the SMART test, it is necessary to determine if:

- The objectives and goals are specific enough.
- The women’s ministry leaders know when the goals have been met.
- The goals can be accomplished with the time, budget, and other resources provided.
- The goal is relevant to the women’s ministry.
- It is possible to track process of goal accomplishment along the way.

For the above objective, there are two goals. One is well-written according to the SMART test, and one is not.

**Goal One:** To design and implement quarterly outreach events for the women of the church by encouraging them to enter into a relationship with Christ through the teaching of God’s Word

**Goal Two:** To begin a women’s ministry Bible study that will meet once a week and will grow by four women each quarter

Look at the first goal in light of the SMART test. Is the goal specific? Yes. The women’s ministry will have outreach events. Is the goal measureable? Not really. There will be quarterly events, but how many? And how will the women’s ministry leaders know if the women have entered into relationship with Christ through His Word? Is the goal attainable? Yes. This is an achievable goal. Is the goal relevant? Yes. This goal is relevant to what the church is trying to accomplish. Is the goal trackable? No. There is not a number that helps the women’s ministry leaders determine how the ministry is growing.

Look at the second goal and put it against the SMART test. Is the goal specific? Yes. The women’s ministry will have a weekly Bible study and a plan for growth within the quarter. Is the goal measureable? Yes. The Bible study will meet weekly and will grow by four each quarter. Is the goal attainable? Yes. This goal is attainable. It is not too easy to accomplish, but not too hard, either. Is the goal relevant? Yes. This goal helps meet the objective, which undergirds the women’s ministry purpose statement, which
supports the church’s mission statement. Is the goal trackable? Yes. The women’s ministry leaders will track the growth of the Bible study by four new ladies each quarter.

The second goal is the more well-written goal.

For each objective, there should be two goals written to help accomplish the objective.
WHAT DOES A DISCIPLE-MAKING WOMEN’S MINISTRY LOOK LIKE?

In Paul’s letter to Titus, he identifies several things that were problems in the church at Crete. Paul notes a need for sound doctrine in order to be able to refute those who contradict the Lord’s Word (1:9), as well as rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers who were upsetting entire families because they were teaching things that they should not for their own dishonest gain (1:10-11). The people in the church were turning away from the truth (1:14), and they were professing to know God, but by their deeds, they were denying Him (1:16).

As noted earlier, following this discourse Paul encourages Titus to speak the things fitting for sound doctrine (2:1). He then notes the critical role women have in this process. The more mature women in Christ are to reach out and teach the less mature women in Christ (2:3-5). The disciple-making relationship was to happen in a manner that helped women grow in their walk with Christ and bring honor and glory to God.

Though a disciple-making women’s ministry will look different in each church, one woman can begin a small group with three other women. During their time together, the group of four women can study God’s Word and pray together. Additionally, they can learn how to share the gospel and practice their testimonies with one another.

For resources to use in the disciple-making process, visit embracenc.org.
Each of the three women discipled by the first woman would be told at the beginning of the time together that she will be encouraged and expected to disciple other women at the conclusion of their time together. However, she would not begin this process alone. As she has been discipled, the one who discipled her would provide guidance and direction as she begins to disciple other women. The process would continue as these three ladies are discipled and become disciple-makers.
During the time together, it is critical that the groups remain focused on teaching Christ and His Word. To meet solely to chat, spend time together, or simply to study books – separated from time spent studying God’s Word – isn’t necessarily the heart of disciple-making. However, disciple-making can take place in a variety of settings. Women are encouraged to gather for a meal, over a cup of coffee, while taking children to a park, or in a wide variety of settings. Women will have to determine what works best for them.

CONCLUSION

Women are important to the role of disciple-making. Embrace encourages women to live lives that bring honor and glory to the Lord while focusing on His Kingdom work of making disciples.

FOOTNOTES


2Ashley Lane Allen, “A Study of Selected Factors Related to Mentoring in Women’s Ministry Leaders in Selected Southern Baptist Churches” (PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX, 2009), 94.


5For sample surveys, please visit our website at embracenc.org


go therefore and make disciples of all nations...

MATTHEW 28.19-20