

That we may speak...

OUR MINISTRY OF ACTION



A step-by-step guide to help congregations choose an issue and begin a ministry of advocacy



That we may speak: Our ministry of action

A step-by-step guide to help congregations choose an issue and begin a ministry of advocacy

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The purpose of this guide

The study has been created to help congregations:

- gain insight and understanding about advocacy
- develop a plan of action
- launch (or improve) a ministry of advocacy.

To accomplish this, a group needs to come together to study the subject and to think through its implications for their own lives and the life of the congregation. Any group of youth and/or adults in the congregation could benefit from this study. It may prove particularly stimulating for leadership groups in the congregation—church council, elected committees, task forces, and others. It could, likewise, prove beneficial to create a new “advocacy team” of representatives of various groups in the congregation to study and initiate a ministry of advocacy.

A word to the leader

This is an opportunity to invite participants to select and advocate for an important issue in your community. You are responsible to plan the sessions, make sure resources are available to participants, guide the discussion, cover the material, encourage participation by all, help summarize learning, and help carry through on any possible action that may arise from your study.

This guide is designed to be used in a small group setting. There are four, 45- to 90-minute sessions. Each session builds on the previous session. In addition, “home work” is assigned at the end of each session that is used in the next session. Scripture passages are mentioned and discussed in each session. Inviting participants to bring Bibles or having Bibles available is necessary to the learning experience. It would be possible to complete the guide in a one time retreat setting. A more realistic—and fruitful—schedule would be a weekly, biweekly or monthly class, allowing sufficient time for participants to complete assignments between class sessions.

Read the complete study guide before your first session so that you can anticipate preparations and issues that may arise. *(Suggestions for the leader are written in the margins of each page. Activities that need advance preparation are*

labeled.) Your choices will help you plan how to go about your study and decide what additional resources you may choose to use. Be sure to check out the resource page and contact the appropriate organizations to order materials that will be helpful.

Session format

Opening Prayer or Song

Let's Get Started *(a focusing activity or question)*

Let's Focus *(an introduction to the session topic)*

Let's Talk *(questions for group discussion)*

What Does the Bible Have to Say? *(examination of biblical texts and commentary)*

Exploring Further *(to consider more of the topic)*

Before We Go *(guided conversation and suggested actions)*

Closing with Prayer

Enrichment Activities that will require advanced preparations for each particular class and will involve more class time, could include:

Session One Invite a local politician to share his or her perspective on “church and state.”

Session Two Invite a local person who has experienced a system that needs to be changed. Consider someone who works for minimum wage, a current or past welfare recipient, someone who has experienced medicaid either with a parent or their child, or someone who lives on social security.

Session Three Invite an advocate to share their work with your study group. Contact your state public policy office, a local coalition, social ministry organization, domestic violence organizations, county or state child welfare offices, nursing home association or other possible advocacy organizations.

Session Four Invite other people from outside your congregation who are working on the same issue you have chosen to focus on to share their experience. This may be someone who works in the government or a local coalition leader.

