

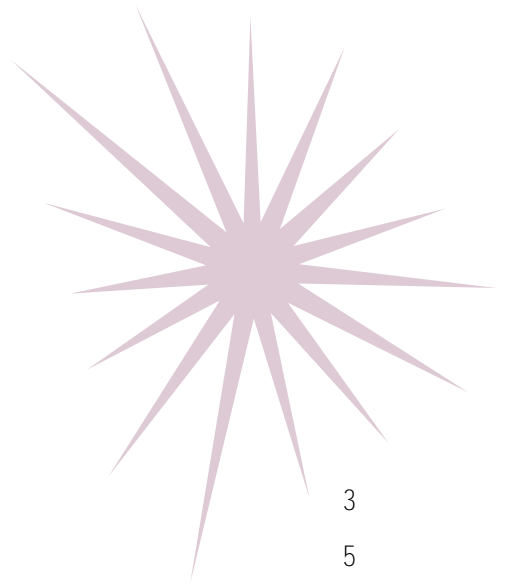


Called to be **global sisters**

Seeing each other with new eyes

*A program designed to increase our
understanding of women from other cultures*





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Purpose

This three-part program prepares participants to meet women from other cultures. By looking at our similarities and differences, we are able to increase our understanding of each other.

Time required

One hour

Materials needed

- Space large enough for participants to work comfortably in pairs
- Newsprint (at least 10 sheets) and markers (one per participant)
- A newsprint sheet containing the first set of questions on page 3
- A newsprint sheet containing the next two sets of discussion questions on page 3 (or a copy of the handout following page 3 for each participant)
- A copy of the role-play handouts for each participant
- Tape to hang newsprint on walls
- Name of your companion synod (To learn the name of your companion synod, call your pastor, synod office, or synodical women's organization president.)

credits

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introduction

LEADER: *Welcome everyone and share your enthusiasm for this program's topic. Acknowledge that getting to know someone from a place you've most likely never been may seem a bit intimidating at first. Reassure the group that "sisterhood is global" and that we have more in common with women around the world than we think. Ask participants to be open-minded as they set off on this virtual cross-cultural adventure!*

learning about each other *20 minutes*

LEADER: *Read Daphne's scenario to the entire group. Invite participants to work in pairs and answer the following questions (written on newsprint in advance of the session). After five minutes, call the groups back together. Ask for volunteers to share a few responses. Record sample responses on newsprint to discuss with the entire group. (5 minutes working in pairs, and 5 minutes in the large group)*

Daphne is visiting the United States for several weeks. She is from a small village in Tanzania. She will be a guest in your home for several days. You have never visited Tanzania.

1. What do you know about Tanzania?
2. What would you most like to learn from Daphne?
3. What would you most like for Daphne to learn from you?

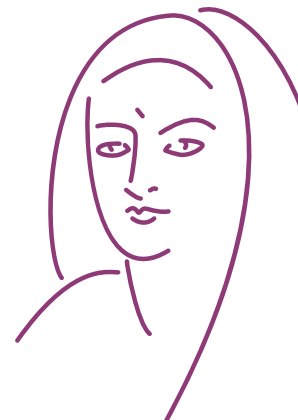
LEADER: *Present to the group the following two lists based on actual exchanges between U.S. women and women from other countries: (1) things that women from other countries would like us to know about them, and (2) questions that they would like to ask us. (The lists may be written in advance on a sheet of newsprint, or you may distribute photocopies of the handout on the following page.) Then ask the group to discuss the similarities and differences between what the two groups of women want to know about each other. (10 minutes)*

Women from other countries would like us to know:

1. How people in their country view the United States
2. The richness and strengths of their culture
3. How much they love their country
4. What their faith community means to them
5. The economic and political situation in which they live
6. How women are treated in their country and church
7. The critical justice issues faced by women in their country

Women from other countries would like to ask us:

1. Why is your society so materialistic?
2. Why does everything move so fast?
3. Why does poverty exist in the United States?
4. How are women are treated in your society?
5. What are the major justice issues that women in the U.S. face?
6. How can we work together?





Called to Be Global Sisters

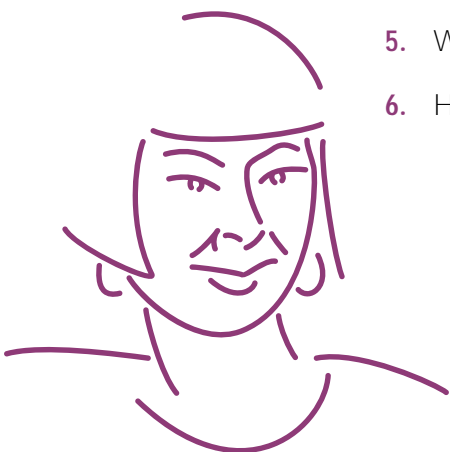
Seeing each other with new eyes

Women from other countries would like us to know:

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talking with each other *30 minutes*

LEADER: Now that we've explored what women want to know about each other, it's time to get specific by using the following two role plays. Each role play features one woman from another part of the world and one from the United States. Role plays allow us to walk briefly in someone else's shoes and experience a different perspective.

GUIDELINES: Distribute copies of the handouts containing both role plays to all participants. Ask them to skim the role plays quickly with an eye toward selecting the story they like best. Split the group into two subgroups: those who want to explore Role Play 1 and those who want to explore Role Play 2; the two groups need not be the same size. Invite participants to work in pairs, with each one representing a character. *(5 minutes)*

After reading the profiles again, each woman will introduce herself to the other, explaining her situation and telling as much about herself as possible. It's OK to expand on the written information, for example, by making up names for family members or inventing details about her life. Participants should be encouraged to have fun being an actor for a few minutes! After both have fully shared their stories, the pairs should discuss the follow-up questions. *(15 minutes)*

Now reconvene the large group to discuss what was gained from this exercise. Ask: What did you learn about yourself and your partner? *(10 minutes)*

Women of the ELCA resources

Available from Augsburg Fortress Publishers, P.O. Box 1209, Minneapolis, MN 55440-1209
800-328-4648 Fax: 800-772-7766 Web site: www.augsburgfortress.org

Called to a Global Perspective: Passport to Your Heart is a resource for women who want to explore cross-cultural connections further. It provides a dozen ideas for becoming more globally minded, shaping a global vision, building global bridges, and more. Code 6-0001-6483-1.

"For the Healing of the World: Speak Out for Women" addresses barriers that stand in the way of justice and healing for women, children, and families, and illustrates how you can be involved in breaking down those barriers. Code 6-0001-6491-2.

For Your Liberation and Mine: Women of the World Working Together for Justice contains six individual resources, including a Bible study, information on the Lutheran World Relief Coffee Project, and practical suggestions for how women can be involved in supporting women around the world. Code 6-0001-0656-4.

Stand Up for Justice! provides practical ideas for becoming an advocate for women in the United States and around the world. Code 6-0001-6495-5.

Who? Me? Women of Faith Making a Difference offers a step-by-step process to address justice issues—such as violence, abuse, poverty, education, and housing—that have a direct impact on women, children, and families. Code 6-0001-6479-3.

role play 1

setting the scene

Margaret is thrilled to be traveling with other women from her synod to Peru, a Spanish-speaking country in South America. During the trip, she volunteers for a special immersion experience, which places her as an overnight guest in the home of Margarita. Margaret's Spanish is rusty but good enough that she doesn't require a translator. After an evening meal, the two women stay up late talking.

MARGARITA lives in a shantytown that is home to more than 2,000 families. She helped start a soup kitchen that serves community residents, yet many remain malnourished, and children often go to sleep hungry. Few opportunities for paid employment exist, and educational opportunities are inadequate. The community is sometimes caught in the cross fire between armed guerrilla groups and government forces. Margarita belongs to a women's organization that sponsors classes on women's rights, health issues, and child care. She regularly participates in protest marches urging the municipal government to provide more jobs and social services.

MARGARET lives in a middle-class suburb in the U.S. She is a dedicated volunteer who generously donates her time to a food pantry, a meal program at a homeless shelter, and a literacy program. Through her volunteer work in a low-income community, she has seen children who don't get enough to eat, families who live in cars, and mothers and fathers who can't find jobs that would allow them to support their families adequately. She has heard stories of violence related to drugs and gangs. Her church sponsors educational programs on poverty and other forms of injustice. Sometimes they hold an "offering of letters" in which they express concerns to elected officials.

Discussion questions for both role plays

- What did you learn about each other?
- Did anything surprise you?
- What do you have in common?
- What is different about your situations?
- What are the major concerns each of you has?
- What insights into women's concerns did you gain?
- Did you find yourself making assumptions about the woman from the other country?
- Were these assumptions based on opinion or fact?
- In what ways might you be supportive of each other?

role play 2

setting the scene

Magdalena is from Namibia, an English-speaking country in southern Africa with a population that is predominantly Lutheran. She is visiting the United States for the first time. Her itinerary includes a stop at Martha's congregation. During her stay, Martha agrees to take her to lunch, and the two women have a chance to speak openly and candidly.

MAGDALENA, a homemaker and mother, lives in a city. She has been regularly abused by her husband during their 16-year marriage. When they married, her husband refused to allow Magdalena, who hoped to become a teacher, to continue her education. He sometimes tied her to the bed so she couldn't go out. Many times she has called the police, who come and give a warning to her husband. They say they can't do more because it is a domestic affair. Her older relatives tell her that violence is a normal part of marriage. Once, when she confided in her pastor, he told her that she should stop provoking her husband. Magdalena would like to seek help from a local center for abused women, but she worries what would happen if her husband found out.

MARTHA, a homemaker and mother, lives in a small town in the Midwest. She and her family are active members of their church, where friends often comment on their "nice family." Martha is too ashamed to talk about what really happens at home. Her husband calls her names, is critical of her cooking and housekeeping, and constantly tells her she isn't a good mother. Sometimes he physically abuses her. He gives her a small allowance on which she is to feed and clothe the family, and he restricts her access to the family car. Recently he has begun verbally abusing the children as well. Martha has been experiencing increasingly longer periods of depression. She knows she needs help, but she doesn't know whom she could trust with her secret in her small town. She is embarrassed to speak with women in her congregation.



3



moving ahead together *10 minutes*

LEADER: *With their newfound awareness of commonalities that cross cultures, participants are now ready to dig deeper. Probe for ideas on how your group can reach out to women from other cultures. Remind participants that communication and understanding involve a two-way relationship. We have as much to learn from women in other countries as they have to learn from us.*

Write each of the following questions on a separate sheet of newsprint. Hang the sheets around the room. Give each participant a dark-colored marker and invite all to walk around and write suggestions in reply to each question. Allow sufficient space for as many answers as possible.

If there's time, discuss some of the answers. Decide as a group whether to bring these sheets to another meeting or to allow a volunteer subcommittee to take the information and report back with concrete suggestions for next steps.

1. What are some ways we can learn about women from other cultures?
2. How might we be involved with our companion synod in [name of country]?
3. How might we engage in dialogue with women from other countries who are currently in the United States?
4. What concrete things might we do to support women in other countries?
5. What specific next steps are you personally willing to take?

closing prayer

Creator God, you made the earth and all that is within it. You made us in your own image, yet all unique. You made us with many differences, yet with much in common. Help us to celebrate our bond as sisters together, seeing each other with new eyes—seeing each other as you see us. Amen

Called to Be Global Sisters is one program in the Listen, God Is Calling series produced by the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to help women's groups explore together what God is calling them to be and do.



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