

Welcoming

the stranger

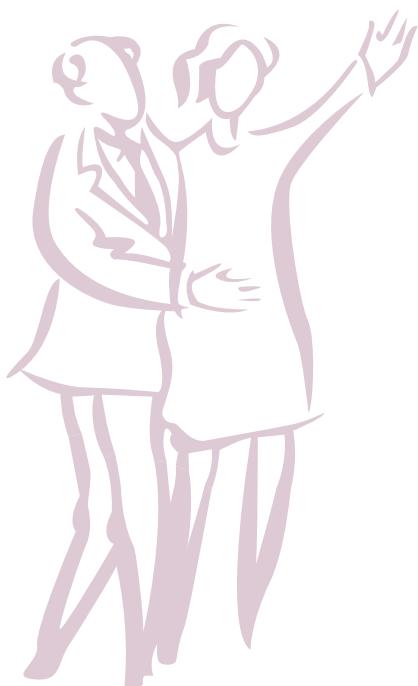
...a hospitality workshop



Women of the ELCA and the ELCA Division for Church in Society

Hospitality: When strangers enter welcomed and leave feeling they have been in the company of friends.

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credits

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introduction

*The life of Jesus was marked by his persistent care for the people who surrounded him. In Matthew 25:31–46, Jesus describes the last judgment, where the sheep and the goats are divided. The six deeds of caring service to others described in this passage are part of our response to God. Those six deeds are feeding the hungry, providing drink for the thirsty, welcoming the stranger, clothing the naked, taking care of the sick, and visiting the prisoners. We follow the example of Jesus when we serve the needs of others. We honor God when we welcome the stranger.**

While we are familiar with soup kitchens, homeless shelters, and prison ministries, we have neglected the deed of welcoming the stranger. We have a biblical mandate to address the needs of those we do not know and call them our neighbor. Yet, today as in biblical times, welcoming strangers is not an easy or desired task. This resource will help us understand hospitality and community in the way God intended it.

We live in times of economic upswings and downturns. Our neighbors will be affected by unemployment, poverty, homelessness, divorce, and domestic violence.

Strangers may come to our congregations seeking care and hospitality.

Many will be women and children. How inviting will our congregation be to the stranger who may look and act differently from us? Do strangers have to prove their worthiness to receive our hospitality? How open are we to “entertaining angels unaware?”

As Christians, we are called to offer hospitality by finding ways to make the stranger feel safe and comfortable. For the purpose of this resource, hospitality is defined as offering a “space” where strangers enter welcomed and leave feeling they have been in the company of friends.

The way in which we receive a stranger often is influenced by perceptions, judgements, and stereotypes that get in the way of our welcoming. This resource challenges us to find ways to break down stereotypes to create a more hospitable place within our congregations, communities, and homes.

* Michael Meier, *Step by Step: Fostering Financial Stewardship in Your Congregation*, ELCA Division for Congregational Ministries. 2001.

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using this resource

Welcoming the Stranger is designed to help the church family open its heart to people—especially those marginalized by society—who seek the gospel, fellowship, support, and assistance. It invites discussion and reflection on what it means to be in relationship with God and to be faithful to that relationship in the face of a stranger.

- The “Frames of Reference” helps participants reflect on attitudes that get in the way of hospitality.
- Scriptural references provide biblical reflection on the sacredness of hospitality.
- Role plays provide encounters with those we may call strangers and challenges our assumptions about them.
- Action plan suggests concrete steps to take to welcome strangers.
- Closing devotions ground participants in the Word of God through song and prayer.

There are two possible formats: presenting the 45-minute components in a multiple-week series or presenting the entire resource in a 3-hour retreat setting.

tips for facilitator

understand the goals Examine this resource carefully and consider how to adapt the materials to meet the needs of your audience and setting. Convey the two goals of this resource to the group:

- to identify barriers to welcoming strangers
- to develop a deeper understanding of hospitality.

know your audience Gather as much information about your audience as you can. What is the general understanding of hospitality in your congregation? Do the participants have a strong biblical understanding of hospitality? If so, how can you build on that? Be sensitive to members of your group who may bring painful memories of being a stranger. Remember that embracing new ways of thinking and being often comes with growing pains.

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set ground rules Suggest a few ground rules and then ask participants to add to the list. Seek agreement to follow the ground rules once the list is complete. Some suggestions include:

- Everything said during the session is confidential.
- Be sensitive to what others are feeling.
- Respect the opinions of others, even when you disagree.
- Speak from your own experience. Use "I" statements.

transition between activities Whether you use this resource for a retreat or over several meetings, you will need to provide some kind of bridge between each activity. This transition need only be a few minutes in length. Summarize what was learned in the previous activity, reiterate the goals for the process, and look ahead at how the next activity will build on what has already happened.



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Materials needed

8.5 x 11 paper "frames"
(*Photocopy Handout One*)

Markers

Bibles

frames of reference

45 minutes

Our frames of reference are the lenses through which we view the world. They are based on our perceptions and assumptions, as well as our personal experiences. This activity is designed to help participants explore their attitudes about people who may be different from them in appearance, economic or social circumstances, language, faith perspective, cultural heritage or skin color.

Encourage participants not to be judgmental about themselves or their responses. The purpose of this exercise is to provide an opportunity to find ways to be more hospitable to strangers.

Participants will be looking at themselves through this frame. The frame surrounds a self-portrait or mirror. You may even ask them to draw themselves inside the frame. Or at each table place a mirror that would fit neatly inside the frame and pass it around.

Hospitality is a mirror of what community looks like. Hospitality is an attitude and a lifestyle. Community is a gift from God. Hospitality is how we open the gift.



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Guiding the process

1. Photocopy the “frames” and distribute, along with markers.
2. Invite participants to answer the following questions, recording each answer on one side of the frame.
 - In our congregation, who would you consider a stranger?
Write this answer on the top/horizontal side of your frame.
Think of examples, especially those who might stand out, not “fit.”
 - What are some assumptions you might make about this stranger?
Write this answer on the vertical right side of your frame.
Think about where these might come from.
 - What keeps you from being hospitable to the stranger?
Write this answer on the bottom side of your frame.
Be honest as well as sensitive to possible painful memories.
 - What does a hospitable congregation look like? What do I look like in a hospitable congregation?
Write your answers on the vertical left side of the frame.
Let your ideas flow and don’t form an action plan yet.

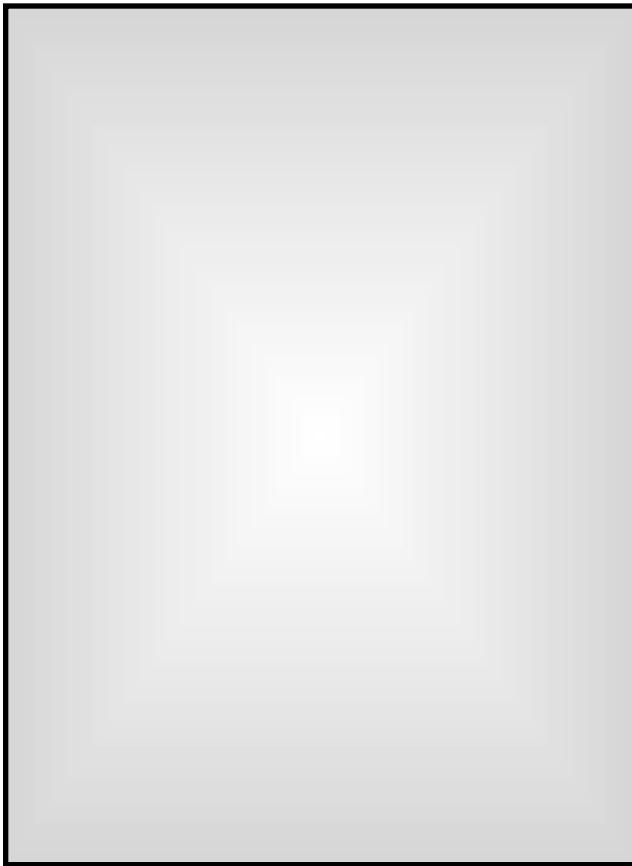
To make this activity more of an ice breaker, invite participants to decorate their frames after answering the questions.

3. Engage participants in a discussion on their responses first. Then introduce the biblical references and accompanying discussion questions.
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4. What does a hospitable congregation look like? What do I look like in a hospitable congregation?

1. In our congregation, who would you consider a stranger?



2. What are some assumptions you might make about this stranger?

3. What keeps you from being hospitable to the stranger?

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Biblical reflection

45 minutes



The Bible is clear that extending hospitality to strangers is important to people of faith.

In all of the texts cited in this reflection, the message is the same: God makes no distinction between neighbors and strangers. In fact, we are all both neighbors and strangers at one time or another.

In the Old Testament examples, God is calling us to be hospitable because we don't know who the stranger is. As people of God, no one is lesser or greater than another.

In the New Testament, Jesus is clear that if we love our neighbors as ourselves, we never have to worry about how we're treating the stranger.

At the end of the discussion, encourage participants to make one or two hospitable acts in the next week.

Guiding the process

1. Copy the "What Does the Bible Say?" handout.
2. Distribute to participants, along with Bibles for those who do not have one.
3. Ask participants to answer one question at a time, individually at first, jotting down their thoughts on the paper.
4. Invite responses from the entire group, allowing comments from as many as possible, resisting multiple comments from the talkative members. Ask participants if they see a connection between what they wrote on their frames and what they read in the Bible.
5. If your group is large, split into smaller groups to allow for better discussion.

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Biblical reflection handout

What does the Bible say?

1. In our congregation, who would you consider a stranger? *Read Genesis 18:1–8.*

- How did Abraham present the best he had? Why did he treat his guests so well?
- Share an experience when you have been the stranger. What were the circumstances and how were you treated?
- Do we offer our best to those in our congregation who are strangers? If we have not, what prevented us?
- Using Abraham as an example, what can we do differently in extending hospitality to strangers?

2. What are some assumptions you might make about this stranger?

Read Matthew 25:34–40.

- Re-read verse 35. Describe the stranger in your congregation. What makes this person a stranger?
- Verse 38 says, "And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you?" How would you identify *this* stranger in your congregation?
- Do you think it is always possible to identify a stranger?
- How do Jesus' words indicate that there are times when we are both strangers and neighbors?
- What would hospitality look like if we consistently practiced relationships of mutual respect and love in our faith communities?

3. What keeps you from being hospitable to the stranger?

Read Luke 10:25–37 and James 2:1–9

- Does hospitality begin with knowing who strangers are? Who neighbors are?
- In these stories, what are the barriers to being hospitable?
- In our congregation what are the barriers to hospitality?
- Are there any barriers that would give us a legitimate reason for being inhospitable?

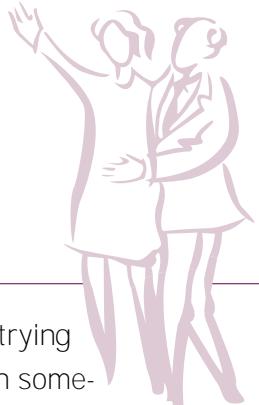
4. What does a hospitable congregation look like? What do I look like in a hospitable congregation? *Re-read Luke 10:27–28.*

- How does Jesus define hospitality?
- How does Jesus say we achieve it?
- How does our congregation compare with this model of hospitality?
- How do I compare with it?

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role plays

45 minutes



Role plays are an improvisational drama where participants become actors trying to resolve a situation. They are a fun and experiential way to walk briefly in someone else's shoes in order to experience a different perspective.

The role plays in this resource focus on barriers to hospitality with women and children living in poverty. They challenge us to take a closer look at ourselves and how we live out our faith.

Because the situation may evolve in different directions, there may be different endings. After playing the drama once and discussing the experience, participants may want to try it again to see what would happen if they changed an element or two. A few things to note about facilitating role play are:

- Some participants may not feel comfortable role playing.
- Convey to participants that they will not be critiqued for their acting skill.
- It is important to do the best they can reflect on what they experienced through their characters.
- No one should feel pressured to participate in a role play.

size of group

The following three role plays call for at least five characters each; however, the role plays may be adjusted to fit the size of your group. Ideally, each participant would have opportunity to play a character in at least one of the role plays.

- If you have a small group (8–15 people), participants may perform all three role plays. Adjust family size and social ministry committee size to accommodate your group.
- If you have a large group (more than 15), ask for volunteers to take on the roles.
- The “audience” has a job as well—to process what they see, hear, and feel, and consider what actions they might take as a result of the role play. Both cast and audience participate in the discussion after the role plays.

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length of role plays

Each role play should take no longer than 10 minutes. Characters need enough time to express themselves numerous times. On the other hand, role plays should not drag out until none of the characters has anything to say. Adjust the time as necessary, making sure participants have enough time to focus as deeply as possible on the issues related to hospitality.

importance of discussion after role plays

Role plays may evoke powerful issues. Set aside sufficient time for debriefing the experience. Stereotypes, biases, racism, elitism, painful memories and other emotional issues may be present. Use the questions at the end of the role plays to help participants debrief before moving on to other activities.

Guiding the process

1. Arrange the room to accommodate group size.
2. Give a brief overview and purpose of the role plays.
3. Reproduce the role plays and the audience reflection handouts and distribute the role play handouts to everyone and the reflection page to the audience.
4. Read the general introduction and the introduction to each of the three role plays aloud to the entire group.
5. Allow time for the participants to read all three role plays.
6. Ask those most comfortable "acting" to consider which roles they might like to play. Remind members of the "audience" this is not entertainment; they need to see, hear, feel, and act as well.
7. Tell each group they will have 5 minutes to choose characters and determine how they will begin the role play. They will be allowed 10 minutes (or less) to perform the role play, followed by full-group discussion.
8. Once the role play begins, the characters should divulge as much information about themselves as they can in a natural way.
9. The lead character for each role play (Grandma, Carol, Angela) should work in as many of the questions and prompts as possible.
10. The facilitator calls the entire group together (actors as well as audience) to discuss some of the following questions:

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"audience reflection" handout questions:

- What feelings did you experience? What do you think caused these feelings?
- What troubled you most about the role plays? What brought you the most hope?
- What barriers to hospitality do you see?
- How is what happened in the role play similar to what has happened in your congregation/women's group? How is it different?

additional questions

- How did you feel about the way the role plays progressed?
- Was there anything that another character said or did that made an impression (positive or negative) on you? If so, what?
- What might have been the characters' backgrounds or past experiences that influenced them in this context?
- If we had role played the Bible passages we studied previously, how would they have been different from what we just saw?
- If your group were to replay the situation(s), what would you change about the characters and the situations to better reflect a faith community that was on the journey to being more hospitable?

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role play handout

introduction

role plays

goals of role plays

1. To identify barriers to welcoming strangers
2. To develop a deeper understanding of hospitality

background

A family who lived in a rented house in the same neighborhood as First Lutheran Church suffered a significant loss. While out for pizza one night, the house burned to the ground. All of their possessions were lost. Before the fire, the family struggled financially. They lived on the edge of poverty. The fire was devastating to them.

The social ministry committee at First Lutheran Church (where most of the members were better off financially than this family) heard about the tragedy and quickly went into action. They gathered clothing, furniture and other household items to give to the family. They also helped them find another place to rent. The congregation's generosity greatly touched the family.



role play 1

setting the scene

The family was so impressed by what the congregation had done for them that they decided to attend a worship service at First Lutheran Church on Sunday morning. They dressed in the clothes that were given to them by the people of the congregation.

No one talked to them.

The family felt lost since they had not been there before. As they looked around the church, they began to get the feeling they didn't fit in.

The role play begins with Grandma Tessa after worship. She expresses her hurt feelings and wants the family to talk about what happened. She poses numerous questions, keeps the discussion going, and closes the role play after everyone has expressed themselves and the family has ideas on hospitality to offer the congregation.

characters for role play 1

1. **My name is Ben.** I am the husband/father in the family. I have tried to work hard to support my family, but economic hard times have kept me from working as much as I would like. I recently got laid off from my job. I have a wonderful wife and two children. I am a proud man, and I am very protective of my family. I am angered when my family is insulted or ignored.
2. **I am Marcia,** the wife/mother in the family. Before I had children, I worked in the floral department of a grocery store. My husband and I agree that my place is at home with the children, but since Ben's layoff, I've been working a part-time job. Ben is a great husband and father, but I wish he weren't so up tight about my working. I ponder the contrast between how the people at First Lutheran Church treated us when they helped us after the fire and when they ignored us at Sunday morning worship. I felt humiliated. Do I have the energy to confront their inhospitality?
3. **My name is Darrell.** I love to play basketball. My dad gives me lots of basketball tips, and I'm getting pretty good. But being on a team is expensive, and I'm worried that my folks can't afford it. I know it's a sacrifice for them. Maybe I should take a break from the team until Dad gets another job. I don't know how to talk to them about this. I also don't know how to tell them how much I hate the cast-off clothes that church gave us. Nothing fits right. And the baby toys—all junk! But on top of it all, they treated us like aliens. I know what I would do if the roles were reversed.

continued

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role play 1 handout

page 2

role play 1

continued

4. I'm Kate, the youngest. I'm a really good reader for my age and I love school. Everyone says that I ask too many questions, especially my mom when she is busy with one of her projects. But how else am I supposed to understand what's going on? I sure have a lot of questions about what happened at that church. I had so much fun in that Sunday school class that I'd love to go again. But nobody else feels the same way I do.

5. I am Grandma Tessa, and I live with my daughter's family. We get along pretty good. I'm a talker. I won't let there be silence very long. I ask questions and I want to know what everybody is thinking and feeling.

- Why did they ignore us? They were so nice to us before. What happened?
- Is this how they treat all new people? Or just us?
- How did you feel being ignored?
- Why didn't the people from the committee talk with us?
- What do we wish the members of the congregation would have done to help us to feel welcome?
- What can we do to help the members of the congregation be more hospitable?



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role play 2 handout
page 1

role play 2

setting the scene

This role play begins as the social ministry committee meets the week following the family's visit to the Sunday morning worship service.

Greta, who was sitting with the choir on Sunday morning and didn't get a chance to talk with the family, asks other committee members how the family is doing. Soon everyone realizes that none of them (or anyone else in the congregation, perhaps) spoke to them. Carol begins, facilitates and closes the discussion on the meaning of hospitality.

characters for role play 2

1. **My name is Diane**, and I'm the pastor's wife. I believe it is our Christian responsibility to take care of everyone who is poor. We must do everything we can to help them, especially since they can't do much for themselves. Some people say I tend to be smothering in what I do, but I just don't see it. I often feel sorry for anyone who isn't as fortunate as I am.

2. **I am Sandra**. I can barely tolerate the poor. I have no compassion for them. "They" should be better managers of their money, work harder, behave differently than they do. They should have paid more attention in school so they would be better educated and have better jobs. They get on welfare and never want to get off. It's all their fault. Actually, I would die if anyone knew that I grew up poor; I'd like to erase that part of my life. Lucky for me, I married up and never looked back.

3. **My name is Bonita**. I live with my elderly parents, caring for them as best I can. I'm uncomfortable having poor people be a part of our church. I just don't know what to say to them. I really don't have any friends who are much different from me. I'm not well traveled, don't speak any foreign languages. Guess I've been pretty sheltered. I prefer social ministry projects that focus on people who live in other parts of the world.

continued



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role play 2 handout

page 2

role play 2

continued

4. My name is Greta. I haven't forgotten the challenges I faced after my husband left me and my two children. He never contributed anything financially or emotionally. I support any efforts the congregation makes to be hospitable to people living in poverty. I will challenge any negative comment made regarding someone living in poverty.

5. I'm Carol, and I chair the social ministry committee. I want to help this committee accomplish important things. I try to remain neutral amid the wide variety of viewpoints on the committee. I see my role as keeping communication open and facilitating thought-provoking discussions by raising questions such as the following:

- Why didn't any of us talk to them? Why were we inhospitable?
- What biases were in the way for hospitality to occur?
- When have you ever felt unwelcome? How did it make you feel?
- What would have happened if the newcomers were prominent citizens of our community?
- Was there ever a plan to follow-up with the family after the clothes and household items were given?
- How do we extend hospitality beyond the doors of the church throughout the entire week?



role play 3

setting the scene

Marcia, the mother of the family, is not going to be put off by what happened at worship on Sunday. She notices in the bulletin a Women of the ELCA meeting to plan a luncheon and decides to attend.

The role play begins as she enters the room where the women are meeting. She sees two members from the social ministry committee and sits down next to them. Greta begins the role play by introducing Marcia to the others.

Angela chairs the meeting. Jane periodically interjects awkward questions to Marcia about being poor. During the meeting Marcia offers ideas about centerpieces since she is a talented floral designer. Other members respond either by ignoring her suggestions, interpreting what she said, or interjecting patronizing comments. Only Greta recognizes Marcia as a gifted person, one who is offering her gifts to their ministry efforts.

Things get complicated when Marcia realizes she is expected to donate the materials for the centerpieces. By the end of the meeting, she also learns that tickets to the luncheon are \$10. She wants to volunteer her time, but she can't afford to attend and she's too proud to ask for "special dispensation."

Once the planning is completed, Angela closes the meeting.

characters for role play 3

- 1. My name is Bonita** (I am also on the social ministry committee). I live with my elderly parents, caring for them as best I can. I'm uncomfortable having poor people be a part of our church. I just don't know what to say to them. I really don't have any friends who are much different from me. I'm not well traveled, don't speak any foreign languages. Guess I've been pretty sheltered. I prefer social ministry projects that focus on people who live in other parts of the world.

continued

role play 3

continued

2. My name is Greta. (I am also on the social ministry committee.) I have not forgotten the challenges I faced after my husband left me and my two children. He never contributed anything financially or emotionally. I support any efforts the congregation makes to be hospitable to people living in poverty. I will challenge any negative comment made regarding someone living in poverty. I begin the role play by introducing Marcia as being from the neighborhood. I explain that I've gotten to know her over the past few weeks.

3. I am Marcia, the wife/mother in the family whose home was burned. Ever since my husband got laid off, I've been working part-time in the floral department of our local grocery store. I am not going to be put off by what happened at worship on Sunday. I want to get involved and give something back to this generous congregation—that's why I came to see if I could offer my ideas to the group—perhaps helping to make the centerpieces.

4. My name is Jane. I rarely encounter a poor person. When one shows up, I consider it a *wonderful* opportunity to learn everything about being poor. I can't wait to ask questions! I want to know what it's like to be on welfare, where they live, how they manage on so little money, why they aren't working, what went wrong in their life, and on and on. When this Marcia poor person shows up, I am thrilled to have the chance to ask all of my questions—and I do!

5. I am Angela. I chair the planning meeting for the luncheon. I'm very competent and can take care of many things myself. I'm a leader in the local League of Women Voters. But I don't understand why Marcia showed up. She's not supposed to be here. She's not a member, and she's definitely not one of us. I can't see how she can be of any help to our group. We're quite capable of taking care of everything ourselves. We even took care of her family! During this meeting, I made sure that Marcia knows that if she wants to make the centerpieces for the luncheon, she will have to donate the materials. I also make sure she knows that the luncheon tickets are \$10.00. I close the role play once the planning is complete.

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role play handout

reflection

audience reflection

1. What feelings did you experience? What do you think caused these feelings?
 2. What barriers to hospitality did you see?
 3. What troubled you most about the role plays? What brought you the most hope?
 4. How is what happened in the role play similar to what has happened in your congregation/women's group? How is it different?



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Materials needed

Markers
Newsprint

action plan *30 minutes*

This activity will help the participants consider next steps for welcoming strangers in the congregation and in their hearts.

Dialogue is an effective prelude to concrete action. For many people, just having the opportunity to explore their attitudes, assumptions, and perceptions about strangers may become an impetus for change. The next step is to develop a plan of action.

The purpose is not to complete a detailed strategic plan, but rather to help participants share a common vision that hospitality is doable and that they are committed to change. The purpose is not to invent new activities, but to strive to transform our congregation into a hospitable community.

Guiding the process

1. Ask participants to create a vision of what is possible. What do I now see is possible for our congregation? What will our hospitable congregation look like? This is the time to allow new intentions to "bubble up," intentions that match our new understanding of hospitality.
2. Make a list with the group of what immediate changes might be possible. These changes begin with "right relationships" before new activities. Resist simply rearranging old behaviors. Refuse to operate out of guilt, but rather move toward where God wants us to go. How might we act our way into thinking?
3. Look to Acts and Hebrews for models of hospitable communities. Distribute the "Planning for Action: What Does the Bible Say?" handout. Provide time to answer the questions. Allow the biblical models to lay the groundwork for a plan of action.
4. Develop an action plan with a creative and practical time line including the needed leadership to ensure the plan is implemented.
5. Encourage participants to articulate their new expanded understanding of "stranger" as more than "the poor, hungry, naked, thirsty," using the "Planning for Action: Make it Real" handout. Name some groups within your congregation in need of hospitality, such as children, shut ins, etc.

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action plan handout a

planning for action

what does the Bible say?

1. Read Acts 2:44–47.

- In what ways is your congregation like the group in this text? Were there any strangers in their group? Why not?
- What is it about your congregation that would make people in your neighborhood want to visit?
- What more could you do to be like the group in this text?

2. Read Hebrews 13:1–2.

- How do these verses define hospitality?
- Why do you think we are given the message in verse 1? Look for the answer in Luke 10:27.
- What does it mean to love our neighbors as ourselves?



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action plan handout b

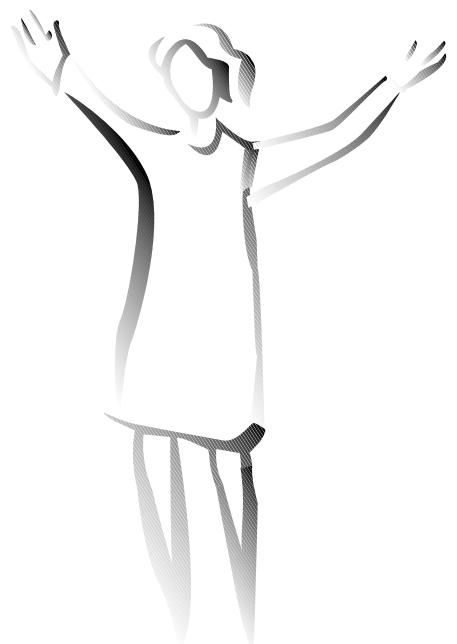
planning for action

make it real

- As a result of our discussions, what can we do to create a more welcoming place for strangers, replicating the biblical model in our own congregation?
- What attitudes and assumptions are you willing to let go?
- What are some specific ways you can serve strangers in your community?
- What human, financial, and material resources will we need?
- When will we implement our new understanding of hospitality and who will keep us going?
- How will we measure our progress or identify change?
- In what ways will we be changed?

next steps

1. Agree as a group about what needs to be done. The vision is the key first step.
2. Make a plan about how to get there. Reach a consensus.
3. Pray.
4. Plan to meet again.
5. Practice hospitality on each other.
6. Pray.



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closing devotions

15 minutes

Throughout this process, participants have been wrestling with issues of welcoming and hospitality, barriers in their relationships with others, and what God is calling them to do. Now is time for closure on what they have experienced.

Create a closing devotion by selecting from the suggestions below. Include ideas that have emerged from the session or from other favorite resources. Involve participants as much as possible. Use the following outline:

- a. Bible reading
- b. brief meditation
- c. songs and hymns
- d. prayers of the people
- e. charge to the people

Bible reading

Select one passage on hospitality your group explored earlier in the resource:

- Genesis 18:1–8
- Matthew 25:34–40
- Luke 10:25–37
- James 2:1–9
- Acts 2:44–47
- Hebrews 13:1–2

brief meditation

option one Give a brief summary of some of the key learning experiences from the session. Invite participants to give one word or phrase that names their struggles with difficult issues and hopes for the future.

option two Give an 8- to 10-inch piece of clothesline rope (or yarn or other similar material) to each participant. Ask them to name one key learning experience from the session. Let the piece of rope represent the key thing they learned. Encourage them to share how they might use this awareness in their lives. Have each member tie their piece of the rope to the next person's piece of rope until there is a circle of rope that represents the awareness, insights, and lessons learned as a result of participating in the activity. Let this circle of rope represent the group's hopeful plans as they develop the next steps toward becoming a welcoming place for strangers.

continued

Hospitality: When strangers enter welcomed and leave feeling they have been in the company of friends.

songs and hymns

Select from any number of resources listed on the next page.

prayers of the people

option one Pray a prayer of your own or invite several participants to offer prayers of their own.

option two *A Litany on Hospitality*

Voice 1 Gracious and Loving God, we come boldly before you as your children. We seek to do your will.

All **Transform our hearts, Lord.**

Voice 2 Help us to see one another, listen to one another, and understand one another.

All **Transform our hearts, Lord.**

Voice 1 Help us to love one another.

All **Transform our hearts, Lord.**

Voice 2 Help us to understand your hospitality.

All **Transform our hearts, Lord. Give us the power to do what you have called us to do. Grant us your peace. Amen.**

option three God of love and forgiveness, we thank you for the time we have had together today. Challenge us to grow in our relationship with you and grow in the ways we respond to strangers. Transform our hearts. Help us to change our lives. Help us to use our gifts to make our congregation a place of welcome and hospitality. We rejoice in the lives you have touched through us and praise you for the power you give us through your Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. (*See more options on page 32.*)

charge to the people*

Go out into the world in peace.
Love the Lord your God
with all your heart,
with all your soul,
with all your mind;
and love your neighbor as yourself.



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suggested songs and hymns

With One Voice (©1995):

- "A New Commandment" #664
- "Listen, God Is Calling" #712
- "Healer of Our Every Ill" #738
- "Bind Us Together" #748
- "You Are the Seed" #753
- "Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love" #765

Lutheran Book of Worship (©1978):

- "O God, Empower Us" #422
- "Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service" #423
- "Lord of Glory, You Have Bought Us" #424
- "O God of Mercy, God of Light" #425
- "The Church of Christ, in Every Age" #433
- "O God, My Faithful God" #504

This Far by Faith (©1999):

- "Let Justice Flow Like Streams" #48
- "In Christ There Is No East or West" #214
- "Bind Us Together, Lord" #217
- "We Are All One In Christ" "Somo uno en Cristo" #221
- "Help Me, Jesus" #224
- "You Are the Seed" "Sois la semilla" #226

Libro de Liturgia y Cántico (©1998):

- "Vamos todos al banquete" "Let Us Go Now to the Banquet" #410
 - "Un nuevo amanecer" "Aurora de esperanza: a Dawn of Hope" #469
 - "Somos uno en Cristo" "We Are All One in Christ" #470
 - "Su nombre es 'El Señor' ¿Le conoceis?" "His Name Is Christ the Lord" #517
 - "Cuando las bases de este mundo tiemblan"
 - "When All the Nations of Our World Are Shaken" #526
 - "Tú has venido a la orilla" "You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore" #560
-

Hospitality: When strangers enter welcomed and leave feeling they have been in the company of friends.

additional options for prayers of the people

option four

Hang 1-inch-wide by 36-inch-long ribbons along a wall. Each ribbon will hold approximately ten 3x5 cards. Hang as many ribbons as needed for the size of your group. Give each participant a 3x5 card and a safety pin. Invite participants to write a word, phrase or sentence on the card to be included in the closing prayer. Ask participants to pin their card onto one of the ribbons. Create a prayer by reading the cards. If your group is large, give two ribbons to each group of 20 and invite each group to choose one person to lead a prayer for their group.

option five

Todopoderoso y eterno Dios: tú concedes a la iglesia su unidad. Mira propicio a todos los que siguen a Jesús tu Hijo. Hemos sido todos consagrados a tí mediante nuestro bautismo; haznos uno en la plenitud de la fe y consérvanos unidos en la comunidad de amor. Rogamos esto por Cristo nuestro Señor. Amén.* (page 106)

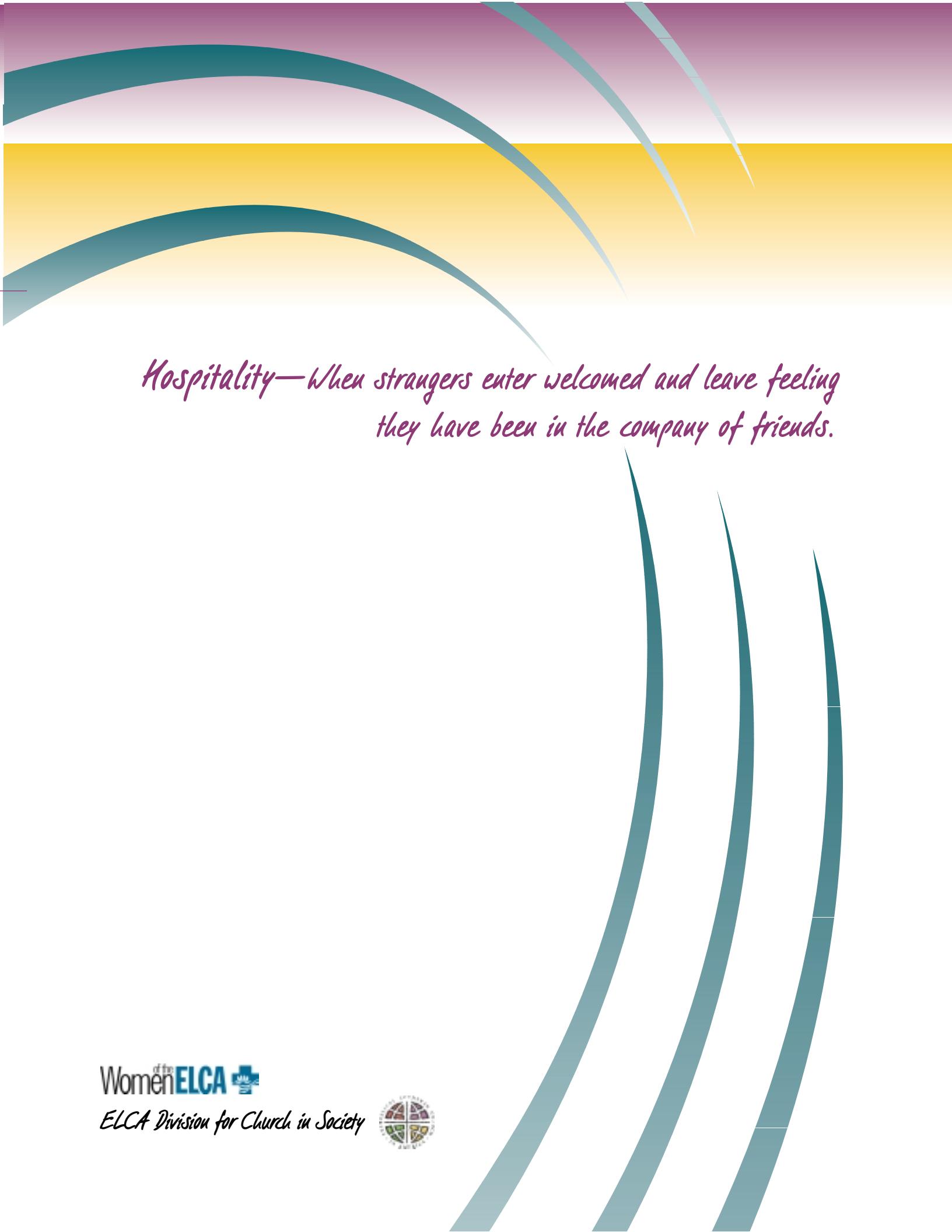
Todopoderoso y eterno Dios: tú eres el vindicador de los pobres y oprimidos. En tu bondad, vela sobre aquellos en posiciones de autoridad, a fin de que todas las personas en todo lugar puedan disfrutar de justicia, paz, libertad y una porción de la bondad de tu creación. Rogamos esto por Cristo nuestro Señor. Amén.* (page 107)

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option six

- Lutheran Book of Worship, (©1978): p. 42
- Lutheran Book of Worship, (©1978): p. 44
- Lutheran Book of Worship, (©1978): p. 47





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they have been in the company of friends.*



ELCA Division for Church in Society

