

How to Start Missions Discipleship in the Church

Missions discipleship in the church provides opportunities for everyone—preschoolers through adults—to be involved in missions. Churches that provide missions discipleship encourage people to grow in their faith as they learn about missions, pray for missions, support missions, and do missions.

How to Start WMU in the Church

- 1. Seek out leaders.** The WMU director leads in organizing churchwide missions efforts such as the annual missions offerings. If the church has any of the age-level missions groups, the WMU director coordinates plans and leadership. Or the pastor or another church leader may lead missions awareness and involvement activities.
- 2. Order resources.** Using WMU resources will help to plan missions involvement and share information that is timely, inspiring, and challenging. *Missions Leader: WMU Planning Guide* is an excellent overall resource to help you get started. Order resources by visiting wmustore.com or calling 1-800-968-7301.
- 3. Plan.** Plan activities and experiences to engage the church in missions. Choose activities that fit the needs of your church. Form a WMU leadership team to plan and coordinate the work of WMU.
- 4. Invite.** Involve your church to engage in missions and equip them to share Christ. Invite people to participate in churchwide opportunities and in age-level groups.
- 5. Work with other leaders to provide multiple opportunities.** Collaborate to offer different ways to involve everyone in the church in missions. Continue to start new churchwide activities as well as age-level groups as needed.
- 6. Communicate.** Keep your church informed about missions activities, groups, and projects.

We're here to help!

If you have questions about starting or leading churchwide WMU, we would enjoy talking with you. Contact churchwide and associational WMU consultant Joy Bolton at jbolton@wmu.org or find links to state WMU websites at wmu.com/statecontacts.

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Churchwide WMU Leaders

One person with a passion for missions can impact an entire church. The beginning point is a desire to involve your church in missions. WMU leaders raise missions awareness and make missions opportunities available so church members and attendees of all ages, preschoolers through adults, can participate in missions.

Types of WMU leaders vary according to the needs of the church. In many churches, the WMU director leads WMU on a churchwide basis. A church may add WMU leaders to assist the WMU director and age-level group leaders. Suggested additional leaders include: assistant WMU director, secretary, and project leaders. The church may create other leadership roles as needed.

Basic Leadership Approach

The basic WMU churchwide approach can be accomplished with one to three leaders. When there is more than one leader, the churchwide leaders form a WMU leadership team.

WMU Director

The WMU director plans, conducts, and evaluates missions awareness and involvement through churchwide missions activities, projects, emphases, or age-level groups. The director's responsibilities may include:

- Promoting and encouraging missions in the church
- Working with the pastor or other church leaders to provide missions awareness opportunities for the entire congregation; which may include ongoing opportunities, short-term projects, or one-time events
- Serving on the church leadership team or other group that coordinates church activities
- Recommending WMU-sponsored churchwide missions plans to the pastor, church leadership team, or other planning groups
- Coordinating WMU-sponsored churchwide activities, projects, and age-level groups
- Identifying and equipping WMU leaders
- Developing and maintaining a WMU budget
- Reporting regularly to the church
- Connecting the church with associational, state, and national WMU

The WMU director may create a leadership team by adding an assistant WMU director and/or a WMU administrative assistant.

Assistant WMU Director

The assistant WMU director assists the WMU director in planning, conducting, and evaluating the work of WMU in the church. Suggested responsibilities of the assistant WMU director include:

- Planning and conducting churchwide missions learning experiences such as the International Mission Study, North American Mission Study, or state mission study
- Planning and conducting churchwide observances of the weeks of prayer for international, North American, state, and associational missions and the related missions offerings
- Planning opportunities to minister to missionaries and their families

WMU Administrative Assistant (or Secretary)

The WMU administrative assistant maintains WMU records, reports accomplishments, and orders curriculum materials and other resources. The WMU director may give her additional responsibilities for strengthening and implementing WMU work in the church. Examples of records to maintain include:

- Participation in churchwide missions activities.
- Participation in age-level groups
- WMU reports for associational or state WMU
- Notes of action plans during WMU leadership team meetings
- Budget information
- Subscription lists for WMU resources

Expanded Leadership Approach

WMU in a church may invite other leaders to plan and carry out the work of WMU. Tailor this to the needs of your church. The expanded leadership approach may include leaders in the following areas:

- Specific missions projects
- Churchwide involvement in WMU Compassion Ministries activities
- Coordinated involvement in Christian Women's Leadership Center
- Areas of expertise such as photography, newsletters, social media, etc.
- Leadership in age-level missions discipleship groups



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WMU Leadership Team

The saying “many hands make light work” could apply to the WMU leadership team in a church. Working together as a leadership team gives leaders opportunities to:

- Be informed
- Use their skills and knowledge
- Coordinate plans
- Maximize missions efforts of the church

The WMU director, age-level group leaders, and other WMU leaders form the WMU leadership team. Led by the WMU director, the WMU leadership team is responsible for the overall planning and coordination of WMU work in a church. This includes WMU-sponsored churchwide missions activities and WMU age-level groups. The pastor or other church staff member may serve as an ex officio member of the WMU leadership team. The church's Brotherhood leader may also serve as an ex officio member.

Quarterly meetings are suggested, but each WMU leadership team decides how often to meet.

The roles of the WMU leadership team include:

- Setting goals and carrying out action plans for WMU work in the church
- Developing and maintaining a WMU budget
- Preparing an annual calendar of events and activities to coordinate with church, associational, and state calendars
- Coordinating WMU-sponsored missions awareness and involvement
- Coordinating WMU age-level group activities and projects
- Conducting activities or projects involving all WMU participants
- Evaluating the work of WMU in the church

Planning for WMU Churchwide Activities

“Believe in it, live it, glory in it, we are children of a King—laborers together with God.” --Fannie E. S. Heck

Planning is vital to our work of making disciples of Jesus who live on mission. For churchwide missions activities and experiences, there are two different types of planning that take place: overarching yearly plans and specific activity plans.

Plans for the Year

Planning for the year ensures activities and events are placed on the church calendar and everyone has an opportunity to participate.

- The WMU director, leadership team, or age-level leaders work together to plan for yearly events.
- Plans may include special missions events or activities, annual events such as missions offerings, goals, leadership training, enrollment events, budget, facilities/supplies, and reports.
- Ideally, planning should begin before the church year but may continue throughout the year.
- Plans can be coordinated in a formal meeting, virtual meeting, over email, or by phone or text.
- Evaluate plans throughout the year to identify strengths and weaknesses and to help in making future plans.

Specific Activity and Missions Experience Plans

Planning for specific activities and experiences ensures participants will engage in learning, praying, giving, and doing missions.

- Plans for an activity or missions experience are made by the age-level leaders, members of groups, or those interested in leading the activity.
- Plans can include session activities, missional projects, outreach activities, as well as ideas for engaging new participants.
- Ideally, meeting plans for missions discipleship groups should occur at least a month in advance, and planning for specific activities and experiences should begin at least three months in advance.
- Plans can be created in a formal meeting, virtual meeting, over email, or by phone or text.
- Evaluate to identify improvements needed and celebrate accomplishments made through the activities.



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Planning Tips

- ✓ Begin all plans with prayer. Ask God to guide you to accomplish His purposes for His glory.
- ✓ Use *Missions Leader: WMU Planning Guide* for the current or upcoming year as a help in making plans.
- ✓ Secure copies of needed materials for everyone on the leadership or planning team.
- ✓ Gather information from your church calendar about events and activities already planned.
- ✓ Check for activities planned by associational and state WMU for the coming year.
- ✓ Use local school calendars to coordinate dates of events and activities.
- ✓ Work with your pastor and other church leaders to keep others informed and to coordinate your plans.
- ✓ Place dates on the church calendar well in advance.
- ✓ Keep written records of the plans made and responsibilities assigned.
- ✓ Review, adjust, and evaluate plans throughout the year.

Churchwide Missions Experiences and Activities

Would you like to see your entire church involved in making disciples of Jesus who live on mission? Through churchwide missions, WMU instills a biblical worldview for all ages and leads a church to be involved in missions. This approach can be the entire basis of WMU work in the church or can be combined with ongoing missions groups for one or more age levels.

A churchwide approach to missions and WMU work can be done by any size church. Starting with the weeks of prayer and missions offerings, every church can emphasize missions and engage people in learning, praying, and giving. With additional planning, every church can do hands-on missions and tell about Jesus. In cooperation with the pastor and other church leaders, WMU's role is to provide the needed leadership and volunteers to make missions engagement happen. Pray with these other leaders about the missions journey of your church.

Churchwide WMU includes missions activities, events, and projects. Begin with a basic approach by choosing from the list below, and then expand involvement with other churchwide activities as needed.

- Week of Prayer for International Missions and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering[®]
- Week of Prayer for North American Missions and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering[®]
- Week of Prayer for State Missions and state missions offerings
- Focus on WMU
- Children's Missions Day
- Christmas in August
- WMU Compassion Ministries Connections
- Pure Water, Pure Love
- WorldCrafts Market
- Adopt and pray for an unreached people group
- Pray for specific missions needs and missionaries
- Teach about the Cooperative Program
- Collect items needed by a local ministry or missionary
- Volunteer in local ministries
- Sponsor a missions trip
- Invite a missionary speaker
- Conduct a missions fair
- And more!