

International Women's Day March 8

Community Celebration
Planning Guide

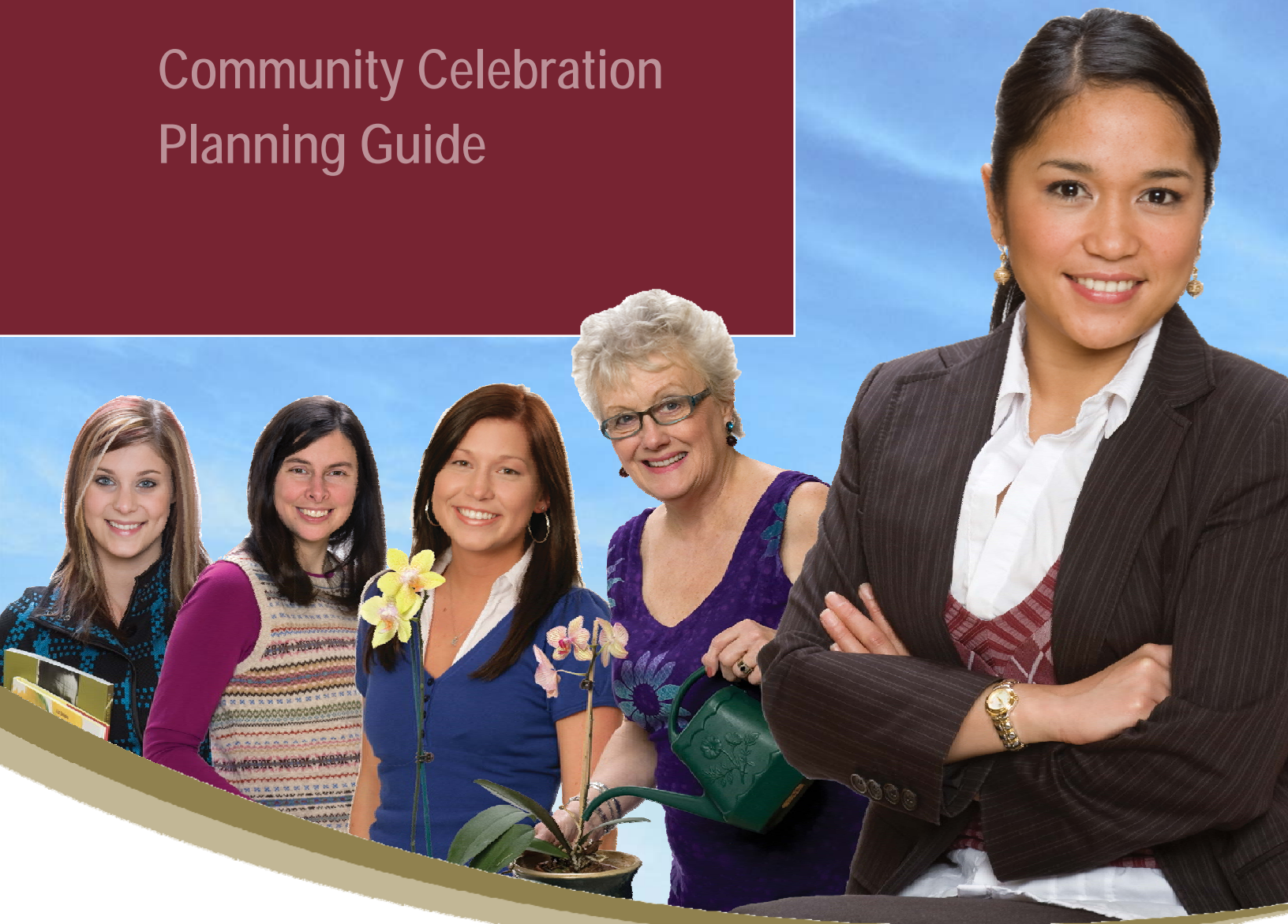


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**International Women’s Day March 8.
*Community Celebration Planning Guide***

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Background

International Women's Day (IWD) is a major day of global celebration for the economic, political and social achievements of women past, present and future.

Acknowledging the contributions of local women is essential to realize true equality and respect in our homes, our workplaces, and in New Brunswick society as a whole.

IWD was first declared in 1910 with the first event held in 1911.

The challenge for this year is to make the women of past proud, the women of current inspired, and the women of the future envisioned. Women have made great strides in equality yet there is still a great deal to be achieved. The IWD will provide a unique and global opportunity to reignite, inspire and channel women's equality for the future.

Purpose

This celebration guide provides options for activities with a goal to assist communities and organizations in creating an opportunity to reflect on, and celebrate women's contributions and successes as we stand in solidarity and join in one voice for all women.

The activities and resources herein are suggestions. There are many ways to celebrate IWD and it is at the discretion of each community to determine what is most appropriate. So get creative! have fun! and help celebrate and recognizing women during IWD!

Material Required

Roles

- Host/Emcee
- Women to bring forth symbols of solidarity
- Creating Connection Facilitator (or Host)
- Volunteers - quantity dependent on activities selected and predicted number of attendees.

Material

- Celebration Template
- Podium*
- Microphone*
- Table for “Stand of Solidarity” symbols
 - ___ Tablecloth
 - ___ Pillar candle for table
 - ___ Dove (cutout or representation)
 - ___ Book
 - ___ Broken chain (paper chain)
 - ___ Medicine/bandages
 - ___ Bowl of rice
- Taper candles for participants
- Matches or lighter for candles
- Sound system*
- Music*
 - ___ CD/MP3 + Player OR
 - ___ Performer (sound system required?)

Resources: Creating Connections suggested activities

OPTION 1: Recognizing the women in our lives

- Participant handouts (*see Appendix A*)
- Watch or instrument to keep time

OPTION 2: World Café

- Tables
- Paper tablecloths to be written on (optional)
- Markers for writing on tables (optional)
- Moderator Instructions and Tips (*see Appendix B*)
- Table topic tent cards (*see Appendix B*)
- Watch or instrument to keep time

OPTION 3: Yoga

- Yoga Instructor
- Soothing music and player (optional)

****based on suggested activities***

Welcome

(Host)

Thank you all for attending the International Women's Day celebration.

This year we are thrilled to have you join us in supporting and celebrating this day.

Established in 1911, International Women's Day is a major day of global celebration for the economic, political and social achievements of women past, present and future. It is a day in which women from around the world unite in thoughts, prayers, struggles, hopes and dreams. Women's accomplishments in education, business, science, art, medicine, public service, athletics, and every other field have made our world better and stronger.

Today, we celebrate the women in our lives. They are the cornerstones of our communities working tirelessly and making countless differences in the lives of those around them. We are gathered in spirit with all our sisters to acknowledge:

- those in small remote villages, mountains, deserts, and refugee camps;
- those living in mud and straw thatched homes, large urban cities, and rural countryside;
- those in the workplace, the poor, the rich, and the unemployed;
- those in our schools, colleges and universities,
- those who are mothers, working women, and those who do both;
- those who are single, married, divorced or widowed;
- those who are young, older or physically disabled; and
- those whom we know and those who are strangers;

Today we honor:

- **the women of the past:** those who stood up for change and fought for the rights that we live and enjoy today;
- **the women of the present:** those who are in this room today and those women around the world who use their voice to help make our world a better place for women; and the
- **women of the future:** those who will continue to champion women's voices, to break barriers and keep visible women's achievements and plights.

Today, we unite to make the women of the past proud, the women of the present inspired, and provide the women of the future with vision.

As we take a moment to reflect and hold in our thoughts all the women of the world, we invite you to light your candles of solidarity to symbolize our connection with them and with each other.

TO DO:

Have participants light their candles

Stand of Solidarity

(Host or speaker; requires women to bring forth symbols of solidarity)

While today is a celebration of women's progress and a day to reflect on the future, it is also a day that we stand in unity for hope and change for those women with limited opportunities and those without voices around the world. It is a day that we call on all nations' to make this a just and fair world for women, girls, men and boys alike. So with this in mind, let's stand together for those women whose basic human rights are not protected.

- Today we stand in solidarity with our sisters, especially those who know not peace; *(bring forth symbol of a dove)*
- We stand with those who struggle to make ends meet, to feed their children, and often go without themselves; *(bring forth bowl of rice)*
- We stand with those who are oppressed and victims of all types of violence; *(bring forth a broken chain for emancipation – paper chain)*
- We stand with the many girls and women around the world who are denied an education based on their gender; *(bring forth a book for literacy)*
- We stand with those who have no access to healthcare, those with addictions, as well as those women to heal the sick with their loving hands; *(bring forth medicine / bandages)*

We hold these women in our hearts. *(Moment of silence)*

TO DO:

After moment of silence have group extinguish candles, leaving the main candle on the table lit.

Creating Connections

(Host or facilitator)

OPTIONAL: I now invite (name of women leader) to lead us in an activity to help us connect.

We gather to honour the legacy of those women who have gone before us, whether celebrated or anonymous, who have contributed so much to the strength and spirit of our province as a whole. We recognize those women who are our teachers, coaches, mentors, mothers, grandmothers, aunts, and sisters who are helping the next generation achieve their goals.

International Women’s Day celebrations such as this one are not only important as an opportunity to reflect on the accomplishments of women, but also to create a connection, a spiritual network with all women around the globe through empathy, understanding, solidarity, and action.

To create and keep this connection alive, let’s now spend some time connecting with one another here.

Suggested activities to help women connect at the celebration:

Option 1:	Option 2:	Option 3:
Recognizing women in our lives	World Café tables or topics	Yoga/stretching
For all group sizes; approximately 7-10 minutes. See activity outline below.	Best for mid size to larger groups; need several tables or space to have group break outs; 30-40 minutes minimum (at least 8 minutes per topic). See activity outline below.	Activity to connect with others beyond language; group size depended on room size, need space to stretch out at arm’s length from each other; no more than 5 – 10 minutes. See activity outline below.

1. Recognizing women in our lives

Group size: All

Time required: 7-10 minutes

Goal: To connect women one-on-one by sharing experiences, stories, perspectives, etc.

IWD is not only time of celebration, but a time when women come together in solidarity. This exercise is an opportunity to have women in the room connect and share with each other one-on-one.

Have women:

- stand and turn to someone next to them / close by;
- introduce themselves (name, something about themselves – 30 seconds); and
- individually reflect on, and share their response to any **ONE** of the following questions:
 - ◆ *What woman has had the greatest impact on my life, and why? (a real woman from your life or historic).*
 - ◆ *What most concerns me related to women's issues looking forward?*
 - ◆ *Why International Women's Day is important to me? Why am I here?*
 - ◆ *What do I want most for the women of tomorrow?*
 - ◆ *What would I try if I knew I could not fail?*
 - ◆ *How do I find direction, fulfillment and purpose in my life?*

TIPS:

- ◆ Practice active listening - show that you are interested; make eye contact; put aside all other distractions; do not interrupt; engage in clarifying questions after the speaker has finished, etc.
- ◆ Help each other create a "safe-environment" – keep an open mind; no right or wrong answers; have a willingness to share and learn; share only what you are comfortable sharing.
- ◆ Halfway through the allotted time ask pairs to switch speakers if they haven't done so already.

2. World Café

Group size: All, but best for medium to large size

Time required: 30-40 minutes

Goal: To connect women by exploring important topics through group conversation and collaborative learning.

World Café methodology is an intentional way to create a living conversation around questions that matter. Café conversations link and build on each other as people move between groups, cross-pollinate ideas, and discover new insights into the questions or issues that are discussed.

The methodology of the World Café is simple:

- Set up room like a café, with tables (preferably round) that seat up to six;
- Each table is designated a “topic”;
- Pick at least three topics and label tables 1, 2, 3, etc., based on the topic;
- Based on participant numbers you may duplicate tables resulting in multiple 1, 2, or 3 tables;
- Participants select a table to begin a table topic discussion with others (8 to 10 minutes);
- When time is called, participants move to another table (new topic, so if started at a table “1” move to 2 or 3) for a second discussion for another 8 to 10 minutes, preferably with several new participants;
- Repeat at least once more to allow participants the opportunity to discuss several topics;
- Each table has a moderator (host) that:
 - helps keep the dialogue moving; ensures everyone’s participation;
 - welcomes newcomers to their tables after rotations; and
 - shares the essence of the conversation thus far to build on
- After two or more rounds, the whole group can gather and moderators can briefly share emerging themes, insights, and learnings, discussed at each table.

Table topics might include: (choose 3 or 4; depending on number of “rounds” and options you want to provide)

- *How can women best support one another?*
- *What women have had the greatest Impact on your life, and why? (a real women from your life or historic).*
- *What most concerns you related to women’s issues looking forward?*
- *Why International Women’s Day is important to me? Why am I here?*
- *What do I want most for the women of tomorrow?*
- *What would I try if I knew I could not fail?*
- *How do I find direction, fulfillment and purpose in my life?*
- *How to strive for, achieve, and maintain balance in our lives?*
- *What needs to happen for women to reach equality?*

TIPS:

- ◆ Give the group a “2-minute warning” before their time is up to ensure everyone has a turn
- ◆ Cover the tables in paper and provide fun markers to capture group thoughts and conversation;
- ◆ **The seven design principles of World Café are:**
 1. Set the context
 2. Create hospitable space
 3. Explore questions that matter
 4. Encourage everyone's contribution
 5. Cross-pollinate and connect diverse perspectives
 6. Listen together for patterns, insights, and deeper questions
 7. Harvest and share collective discoveries

3. Yoga / Stretching

Group size: All depended on room size; need space to stretch out at arm's length from each other

Time required: 5-10 minutes

Goal: To help connect women to others beyond language.

Connecting through Breath

Yoga is about more than connecting body, mind, and spirit. It's also about connecting with other people. When we pause to quiet our minds, we tap into energy within ourselves that you can't find through constant activity. Silence is an amazing teacher. In that quiet, we can connect with each other even though we're not connecting through language. Breathing and moving together with mindfulness creates positive energy that begins to radiate through the space of the room as we let go of what is not serving us any longer and draw from the strength of others.

Have yoga instructor do a simple breathing, stretching, centering routine approximately 5-10 minutes in length that keeps in mind all ages and abilities to meet the above objectives.

Closing remarks

(Host)

This concludes today's event.

We sincerely thank each and every one of you for partaking in this celebration of women. We hope this year is filled with much happiness and success for each and every one of you, and look forward to your ongoing contributions and achievements that help make this (town/city, province, country, world) a better place for all women.

Thank you.

APPENDIX A

Handouts – Creating Connections Suggested Activities Option 1 (page 14)

IF you have selected this activity for your celebration:

- print the instructions on the next page;
- cut the pages in half; and
- offer to participant prior to the activity.

IWD is not only time of celebration, but a time when women come together in solidarity. This exercise is an opportunity to have women in the room connect and share with each other one-on-one.

Have women:

- stand and turn to someone next to them / close by;
- introduce themselves (name, something about themselves – 30 seconds); and
- individually reflect on, and share their response to any **ONE** of the following questions:
 - *What woman has had the greatest impact on my life, and why? (a real woman from your life or historic).*
 - *What most concerns me related to women's issues looking forward?*
 - *Why International Women's Day is important to me? Why am I here?*
 - *What do I want most for the women of tomorrow?*
 - *What would I try if I knew I could not fail?*
 - *How do I find direction, fulfillment and purpose in my life?*

TIPS:

- Practice active listening - show that you are interested; make eye contact; put aside all other distractions; do not interrupt; engage in clarifying questions after the speaker has finished, etc.
- Help each other create a "safe-environment" – keep an open mind; no right or wrong answers; have a willingness to share and learn; share only what you are comfortable sharing.
- Halfway through the allotted time ask pairs to switch speakers if they haven't done so already.

IWD is not only time of celebration, but a time when women come together in solidarity. This exercise is an opportunity to have women in the room connect and share with each other one-on-one.

Have women:

- stand and turn to someone next to them / close by;
- introduce themselves (name, something about themselves – 30 seconds); and
- individually reflect on, and share their response to any **ONE** of the following questions:
 - *What woman has had the greatest impact on my life, and why? (a real woman from your life or historic).*
 - *What most concerns me related to women's issues looking forward?*
 - *Why International Women's Day is important to me? Why am I here?*
 - *What do I want most for the women of tomorrow?*
 - *What would I try if I knew I could not fail?*
 - *How do I find direction, fulfillment and purpose in my life?*

TIPS:

- Practice active listening - show that you are interested; make eye contact; put aside all other distractions; do not interrupt; engage in clarifying questions after the speaker has finished, etc.
- Help each other create a "safe-environment" – keep an open mind; no right or wrong answers; have a willingness to share and learn; share only what you are comfortable sharing.
- Halfway through the allotted time ask pairs to switch speakers if they haven't done so already.

APPENDIX B

Handouts – Creating Connections Suggested Activities Option 2 (page 16)

B1. Table moderator instructions and tips

B2. Table topic tent card template

IF you have selected this activity for your celebration:

- print one instruction and tips sheet for each moderator and explain role/expectations;
- complete the table topic tent cards using the template provided based on questions selected and table number (see activity for details); and
- print the tent cards (best on card stock).

World Café - Table moderator instructions and tips:

World Café methodology is an intentional way to create a living conversation around questions that matter. Café conversations link and build on each other as people move between groups, cross-pollinate ideas, and discover new insights into the questions or issues that are discussed.

The methodology of the World Café is simple:

- Room is set up like a café, with tables that seat up to six;
- Each table is designated a “topic”;
- The topics selected are:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

NOTE: Based on participant numbers we may duplicate tables

- Participants will select a table to begin a table topic discussion with others (8 to 10 minutes);
- When time is called, participants move to another table (new topic, so if started at a table “1” move to 2 or 3) for a second discussion for another 8 to 10 minutes, preferably with several new participants;
- We will complete _____# of rounds.

YOUR ROLE

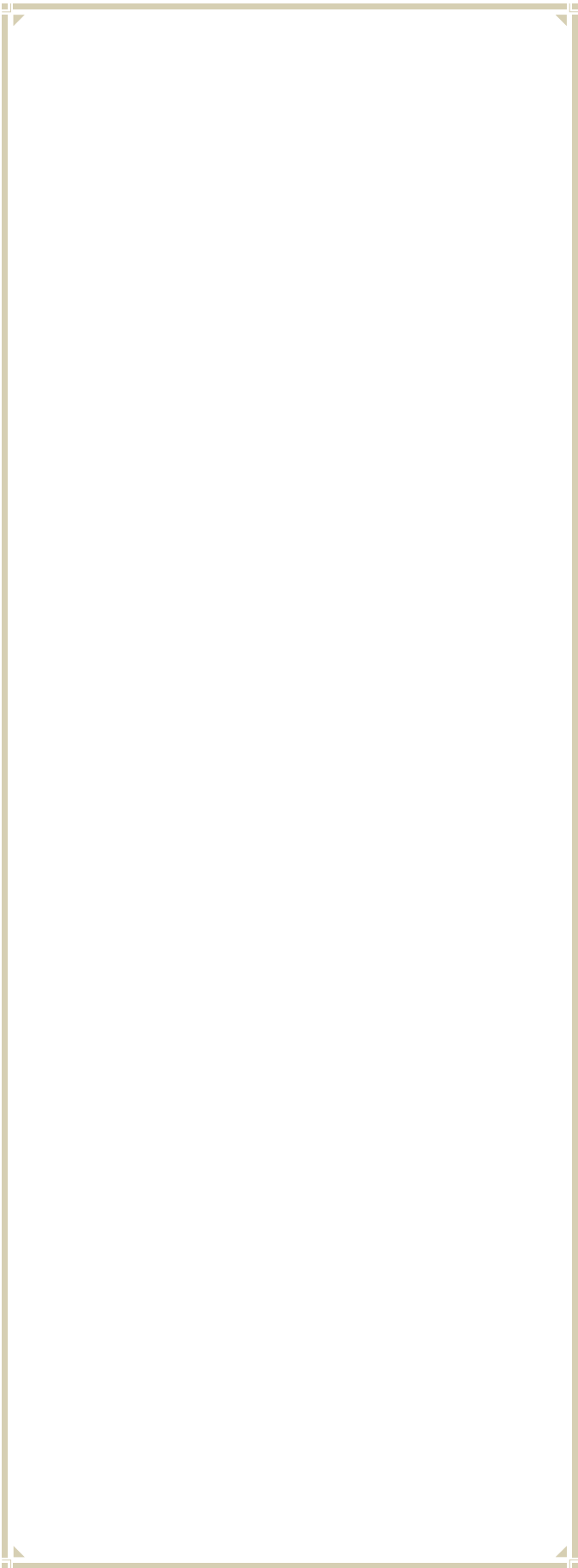
- keep the dialogue moving; ensures everyone’s participation;
- welcome newcomers to your tables after rotations; and
- share the essence of the previous conversations.

Upon completion of the rotations, we will: (i.e. have moderator share with larger group emerging themes, etc.)

TIPS:

The seven design principles of World Café are:

1. Set the context
2. Create hospitable space
3. Explore questions that matter
4. Encourage everyone's contribution
5. Cross-pollinate and connect diverse perspectives
6. Listen together for patterns, insights, and deeper questions
7. Harvest and share collective discoveries



APPENDIX C

**Additional resources and suggestions
to celebrate International Women's Day**

1. A Four Directions Prayer for Women

Prayer leader to read “Leader” section and then ask “ALL” to respond with the below responses.

Leader There are gifts from each of the peoples in the four directions of the world. The winds of the different directions remind us of these gifts. We invite participants to stand and face the four directions, honouring the wholeness of humanity and creation.

Let us turn now to the East. We give thanks for the women of the East. This direction symbolizes new life and reminds us of our connectedness to each other and to creation. Let us remember that the sun rises in the East and that each day is a gift. Life is a gift.

ALL: Each day is our new beginning. (Announce echo)

Leader **We turn to face South.** We give thanks for the women of the South. The South represents warmth and growth. Give women the strength and courage to be open to new learning and care for the world.

ALL: Give us strength and courage. (Announce echo)

Leader **We turn to face West.** We give thanks for the women of the West. The West represents the gift of rest, the passing of time and of those who have gone before us. Give us the wisdom and grace to use the gifts of time and leisure well; give comfort to those who mourn, and rest to those who are weary.

ALL: Give us wisdom and grace. (Announce echo)

Leader **We turn to face North.** We give thanks for the women of the North. The gifts of this direction are clarity of vision and the fortitude we need to live each day. Help us to see each other with eyes of understanding and acceptance. May our hearts be opened so that we might truly behold the earth and each other.

ALL: Give us vision and fortitude. (Announce echo)

Leader We turn to complete the circle and to look: to the Creator who cleanses our Earth with snow, wind, fire and rain; who fills us with the wideness of mercy and lovingly embraces us all, and who inspires us all.

2. Have each woman select a prayer stone or other token item in remembrance of the day

May the stone that you have selected be a lasting reminder of this day, our thoughts and prayers, and hopes and dreams for all women throughout the world.

3. Movies or Youtube videos relating to IWD or women/girls concerns (examples below)

- Official Goddess Flash Mob - Universal City Walk
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZxXqnrQUq8>
- Loud, Proud and Passionate! (music video w/ words)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uxxomUVsSik>
- The Equality Effect
<http://www.vimeo.com/17848291>
- How To Be Alone
<http://www.vimeo.com/3850863>
- Women helping Women be Women (women's menstruation)
<http://www.vimeo.com/11065648>
- Lisa Shannon: A Thousand Sisters: My Journey into the Worst Place on Earth to be a Woman (book video promo)
<http://www.vimeo.com/10910323>
- A Powerful Noise Trailer (doc trailer)
<http://www.vimeo.com/13037067>
- auFeminin.com (en française seulement)
<http://www.aufeminin.com/>

4. A Prayer for Women

Lord, I pray that your precious daughters will feel the extent of the love You have for each one of them.

I pray that we will begin to see each other with Your eyes, and through Your love for us.

I pray that we will stop asking who is the greatest, and start reveling in all that we are.

I pray that we would be honest enough to follow Your will when it comes to our relationships; that we seek harmony, over injury.

And I pray that You would give us the ability, by Your Spirit, to forgive.

Lord, we pray today for all the women of the world. May we continue to be a reflection of Your glory.

Today we honor the women of all times and all places. Help us to be faithful to your call to love.

Amen.

5. Close session by inviting female performers to offer a song, poem, dance, etc.

6. Suggested activities to celebrate International Women's Day / Week

Following is a list of suggestions to help you organize an activity to highlight *International Women's Day/Week*. In order to ensure the success of your event, make sure to choose an event that suits your audience's interests and concerns.

YOU COULD ORGANIZE:

1. A discussion relating to the theme for *International Women's Day/Week* or to the concerns of the women in your community, your co-workers, students at your school. The topics could include:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> poverty | <input type="checkbox"/> women in non-traditional roles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> violence against women | <input type="checkbox"/> employment and pay equity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> self esteem | <input type="checkbox"/> sharing power and decision-making |
| <input type="checkbox"/> portrayal of women in the media | <input type="checkbox"/> strategies to introduce change |
| <input type="checkbox"/> stereotyping and socio-sexual roles | <input type="checkbox"/> legal questions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> equal rights | <input type="checkbox"/> feminism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> women's struggles | <input type="checkbox"/> gender relations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> challenges of work and family | <input type="checkbox"/> women's health issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> education and training for women | <input type="checkbox"/> or issues of particular interest to Aboriginal women, lesbians, senior women, women with disabilities, immigrant women, or women mem- |
| <input type="checkbox"/> career choices | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> women and science | |

2. A conference or round table with guest speakers to discuss issues relating to the status of women. Members of the panel could be affiliated with an organization fighting for women's rights.

3. A brunch, a newsmaker lunch or a community dinner with your colleagues, neighbours or friends, on general issues of interest to women (see above list).

4. An information fair with kiosks to distribute pamphlets and other material such as the material prepared by Status of Women Canada (SWC) (1) for *International Women's Day/Week*.

5. A photo or art exhibit in your work or school cafeteria, the public library, etc., featuring works created by women. Invite women's organizations to attend the activity.

6. A quiz or contest on the history of the struggle for women's rights in Canada.

7. A show, concert or play relating to the theme for *International Women's Day/Week* and donate the profits to a local organization working for women in your community.

YOU COULD ALSO:

1. Highlight the special leadership qualities, contributions, achievements, progress or volunteer work of coworkers or members of your community working for women's equality (give a prize, write an article about them, or invite them to speak about their activities).
2. Interview women in your organization or your community who work in a non-traditional job or who have key responsibilities.
3. Invite women from several generations to share their personal experiences.
4. Present a film or video on issues relating to women (see list of suggested films on the following pages) followed by a discussion. It may be helpful to have the discussion moderated by a special resource person. You could also invite a guest speaker to make a presentation followed by a question and answer period.
5. Produce a promotional poster on International Women's Day/Week and post it on bulletin boards or on the walls in your office or school.
6. Prepare and send out an e-mail message or bulletin in your organization.
7. Write an article on International Women's Day/Week for your organization's newsletter or in a special publication dedicated to women.
8. Write an Op-Ed piece and submit it for publication in your local newspaper or school paper.
9. In your classroom, ask students to do search for information on the contributions of women's work in Canadian society. Turn it into a composition, a poem, a book report, a speech or research paper.
10. Run a contest for photos, drawings, sculptures or other art on the theme "Canadian Women Taking Action to Make a Difference!".
11. Copy the information sheets produced by SWC(1) for *International Women's Day/Week* and distribute them **free of charge** to as many people as possible.
12. Visit the "Calendar of Events" sections on SWC's Web site (1) to find out what activities are happening across the country to celebrate *International Women's Day/Week*.

(1) FOR MORE INFORMATION

Status of Women Canada (SWC)

Web site: www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/iwd/index.html

Source: Status of Women Canada, <http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection/SW21-57-2000-4E.pdf>