

## Adventures in Planning KAOL Breakout Session Script

Welcome to the Adventures in Planning breakout session — I'm so happy that you are all here today.

Let's begin with a word of prayer: Dear Lord, Thank You for the opportunity to serve You through the LWML. Please be with us today as we work together to come up with ideas for promoting LWML materials and as we learn how to vision and plan. In all that we do and say today, we pray that we are respectful to each other, that we follow Your will and that Your Gospel be shared. In Jesus' name. Amen.

We will be using the handout "Adventures in Planning" as the basis of our discussion today. Just as we started our session today, the beginning of any planning session is **prayer**. Prayer should take place even before, during the discussion (especially when running into difficulties or before the final decision is made), and, of course, a prayer of thanksgiving after the session is over and the decision made. Our prayer should include that God directs the discussion, that the outcome is based on Scripture, and that each individual involved in the discussion is respectful, shares their opinions, and speaks with Christian love.

The next step is to "**Share the Topic**" or like I like to say, share the what. Some people need time to process their thoughts and pray before making a big decision. Because some people are more deliberate in their thinking, it is important to share the topic of discussion prior to the meeting to give them time to research and think. Be sure to share if the conversation is to be confidential and cannot be shared with others. If there is documentation to help with the discussion, be sure to provide the information so that members come to the meeting prepared. As a facilitator, you will want to prepare for the discussion as well. Prepare your questions, prepare how you will conduct the discussion, pray, pray, and pray.

It is important to post the topic either on a projector screen, on a paper provided to the group, or somewhere visual so that you can refer back to the topic if the discussion gets off track. Be sure to provide an area to write down "Parking lot topics". Those are things that need to be parked to the side for revisiting at an appropriate time. Provide the group with the reason for the discussion so that everyone understands the "why." It is always a

good idea to remind the group before any discussion the reason the LWML exists — to joyfully proclaim Christ, support missions, and equip women to honor God by serving others. For example, our discussion today will fall into the LWML Kansas District’s Primary Focus area under the goal to Equip Women.

The topic we will discuss today is “Planning a Leadership Workshop -- GAOL.” You can see the topic written on your handout. The reason we are discussing this topic is to become aware of LWML leadership training resources and to learn about how to plan an event.

So, let’s begin with our first point of discussion – What do we want to accomplish during our event? We are going to use a group brainstorming technique for a three-minute session to come up with ideas for leadership training resources. You’ve seen quite a few today that you could use. Before we start, I’m going to share some basic **brainstorming guidelines**. Brainstorming is sharing as many ideas as possible without judgment.

- Every idea has merit and should be shared.
- Judgment of ideas should be withheld until all the ideas are shared.
- Try not to interrupt the person sharing.
- Wild and exaggerated ideas should be encouraged.
- Strive for quantity of ideas, not quality.
- Build on others’ ideas — “Piggyback.”
- Everyone and their ideas have equal worth.

I know I didn’t give you much time to pre-think about this, but let’s begin to brainstorm. And I need a volunteer to write down ideas as they are being shared. Thanks so much for volunteering. Let’s see how many ideas we can come up with in three minutes. What are your ideas?

These are great ideas and I appreciate you sharing them.

Did you notice that I provided a time frame for discussion? How many minutes did I give you to come up with your ideas? Three minutes is correct. It is important to set a time frame for discussion so that the group knows what is expected of them. It is also important that we share any rules/guidelines. It is always important to have someone take notes and whenever possible have the notes visible to the participants. **Setting Expectations** and **Taking Notes** are a vital part in the planning process.

If you're like me, you probably didn't shout out an idea during our brainstorming. That's OK. This next type of discussion allows for participation from everyone.

Let's try this method for soliciting ideas as a group. This time, I would like you to brainstorm about what your workshop's schedule might look like. What elements are important to you? How long will it last? Will you have a meal? Will it be catered or potluck? Please take out the plain piece of paper or use the back of your handout. In groups of four, I would like you to discuss what's important to include in your schedule of events for your workshop. Each of you write down EVERYONE'S ideas shared by your group. I'm not going to give you much time, so your ideas need to come out in a condensed version, not in an epic novel version. You have three minutes to come up with ideas in your group.

Your time is up. Now in your group, I would like you to vote for the top three ideas. Let's try to do this in two minutes.

At this point you would pick a spokesperson in your group to share your ideas with the large group by writing them on the board up here. In the interest of time, we are not going to do that today. But at the end of the discussion, you would be able to see everyone's top picks.

Another method would be for everyone to write their ideas on sticky notes and place them on a bigger sheet of paper for everyone to review.

A big part of a successful planning process is **Seeking Participation from Everyone** and this type of activity does just that. Regardless of the way you solicit feedback, it is important that everyone in the group feels heard and feels a part of the discussion. Maybe you start with a small committee who brings their ideas to a larger group. Or maybe the leader gets ideas from each member prior to the meeting and brings the results to the entire group for discussion.

Beginning at an individual level can be helpful in the initial discussion phase. When we look at the individual ideas, there often is a clear pattern or similar ideas.

The first step in **reaching a decision** is to determine the area(s) where the group is in agreement. Once all the like ideas are found, then ask the group to share their feedback about the choice left using terms such as "I'd prefer" or "My concern is." Give the group a chance to select their first,

second, third choice or top choice. The vote can be done privately or out loud. Before the vote, pray.

If there is serious contention about a decision or a difficult choice, ask the Lord to show the way for the right decision. If options are closely related, consider using the best of both decisions. Be willing to compromise if needed. Have the group take a break to clear their heads and come back to the discussion later.

Once a decision is made, praise God and thank your group for their hard work.

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Another tool to help in any planning process is this wonderful document from LWML. It's a downloadable although it is over 300 pages.

Let's close our time together in prayer:

Dear Lord, thanks for being with us during our activity today. Help us to encourage all women to play an active role in making decisions that impact the LWML and help those decisions to be pleasing to you. In Jesus' name. Amen.