

Make the *Gather* Bible Study into a One-Day Retreat

By Audrey Novak Riley

Would you and your group consider organizing a one-day retreat using a *Gather* Bible study? In the past, many Women of the ELCA participants have enjoyed one-day retreats using the summer Gather Bible study (for 2015, that's "No Catchy Slogans," which appears in the June and July/August issues). And all three sessions of "No Catchy Slogans" are available for free download on our Website at www.gathermagazine.org.

A one-day retreat is a wonderful way to relax and enjoy fellowship with other women while studying Scripture. It can also help groups reach out to new participants, including younger generations of women. While many women have used the summer Bible study for a one-day retreat, the new shorter Bible study format means that other studies during the year could also lend themselves to this approach.

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INTERESTED? HERE ARE SOME TIPS FOR HOLDING YOUR EVENT:

- Choose a pretty place, if possible, such as the home of a devoted gardener, a local bed and breakfast, or a condo clubhouse with a patio.
- Invite women not only from your congregation, but from neighboring congregations. Don't forget the neighbors with whom we are in full communion: Episcopal, United Church of Christ, Presbyterian, Reformed Church in America, United Methodist, and Moravian.
- Organize light, healthy refreshments for your group. Share duties—let one person supply fruit; another one bring croissants or muffins; another one bring coffee and tea.
- Don't forget music. Each session suggests an opening and a closing hymn, all of which are printed in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. Your pastor or music director might be able to help you get enough copies for everyone in attendance. If you have accompanists, line them up well in advance and let them know what the hymns are so they can prepare.
- Consider starting with breakfast and song before turning to Session 1. After you've enjoyed that, take a little coffee break and a stroll around the garden before opening up Session 2. After that, it's time for lunch! No hurry. Enjoy a leisurely lunch and a nice chat in the shade before coming back together for Session 3.
- If you can, stick around and have another strawberry or two on the porch before calling it a day. As you wave goodbye until next time, thank God for the blessings of sharing conversation, prayer, food, song, and God's word with friends old and new, all on a summer day.