

ACTIVIST TOOLKIT FOR TODAY

PRAY

GATHER & LEARN

ENGAGE THE MEDIA

IRRITATE



Written By

**THE WOMEN'S ORDINATION
CONFERENCE**

A Voice for Women's Equality in the Roman Catholic Church



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
<i>Welcome</i>	
<i>Why Bear Witness?</i>	
Women's Ordination Conference	3
<i>Join the Movement</i>	
<i>Resources</i>	
Women's Ordination Action Days	5
<i>Pray</i>	
<i>Gather & Learn</i>	
<i>Engage the Media</i>	
<i>Irritate</i>	
Demonstrate for Equality	8
<i>Why and Demands</i>	
<i>Network</i>	
<i>Core Group</i>	
<i>Organize</i>	
<i>Demonstrate</i>	
<i>Stay Active</i>	
Social Media Guide	12
Conclusion	18



INTRODUCTION

Welcome

Welcome to the Women's Ordination Conference Activist Toolkit for Today! Founded in 1975, Women's Ordination Conference (WOC) is a feminist organization dedicated to advocating for women's ordination as deacons, priests, and bishops into an inclusive and accountable Roman Catholic Church. We focus on grassroots activism and advocacy to bring about structural change within the Church. We strive to bring about a priestly ministry that includes all people of God and models feminist, anti-racist, and inclusive values. We are excited that you are passionate about women's ordination and we welcome you into our strong herstory of advocacy and action.



Why Bear Witness?

Bearing witness creates space for individuals and communities to call attention to injustice. To bear witness is to reclaim our Church. It is a public outcry, a form of resistance, and a way to connect with others while affirming our belief in the full equality of women in the Roman Catholic Church.

With that in mind, this toolkit is meant to empower you to bear witness for women's ordination and equality in your home, in your community, and beyond. To help you do so, we have included WOC resources, action days, steps you can take to successfully demonstrate for equality, and a social media activism guide. We hope that our Activist Toolkit for Today allows you to transform your passion for women's equality into action!



WOMEN'S ORDINATION CONFERENCE

Women's Ordination Conference is a global movement that advocates for women's ordination into a renewed priestly ministry in the Roman Catholic Church. We are activists, advocates, theologians, parish workers, educators, and ministers who work tirelessly to bring our message of gender equality to the Vatican and beyond. We believe transformation and renewal in our Church will come from informed Catholics taking action. The inequality of women in the Church perpetuates and contributes to the subordination of women and girls around the world. Imagine the effects on policy, education, ministry, and women's lives if the Catholic Church truly modeled equality! We strive to be prophetic, visible, dialogical and theological in our efforts and are uncompromising in our mission for women's ordination - join us!



Join the Movement

- **Become a Member** - To stay informed about the women's ordination movement, become a member of the Women's Ordination Conference. As a member, you receive a subscription to our bi-annual newsletter, *New Women, New Church*.
- Follow WOC on social media:
 - Facebook: [Facebook.com/OrdainWomen](https://www.facebook.com/OrdainWomen)
 - Instagram: [Instagram.com/WomensOrdination](https://www.instagram.com/WomensOrdination)
 - Twitter: [Twitter.com/OrdainWomen](https://twitter.com/OrdainWomen)
 - YouTube: [Youtube.com/OrdainWomen](https://www.youtube.com/OrdainWomen)
- Subscribe to our blog, **The Table**.
- Contact the **WOC office** for resources and connections.
- Check current **action alerts** and campaigns.

Resources

- **Why Ordain Women** - This resource provides some history of women's roles in the church and rationale for women's ordination.
- Vatican **Teaching** on Women
- Top Ten **Reasons** to Ordain Women
- Comprehensive Catholic **Lectionary** - The CCL aims to include every significant story about women in the Bible not included in the canonical Sunday lectionary, eliminate exclusive language for God and human beings, and educate readers and communities to a spectrum of Biblical theologies.
- Lucile Murray Durkin **Scholarship** for Women Discerning Priestly Ordination
- Funny Money - Our "**Equal Justice Reserve Note**" features St. Therese of Lisieux and the message that you are withholding your funds from the institutional Church until women have equal rites and rights in our Church. Best used in collections or attached to flowers! Print yourself or make a donation to WOC and receive a stack of bills.



WOMEN'S ORDINATION ACTION DAYS

There are many days throughout the year that Women's Ordination Conference local leaders bear witness. Contact WOC to connect with your local leaders and join them in their witness on one of the dates listed below!

March 8th: International Women's Day

March 25th: Annual World Day of Prayer for Women's Ordination

Holy Thursday: Holy Thursday is a celebration of the priesthood. Each year, priests renew their promises on this day.

Good Shepherd Sunday ("Vocations Sunday"): Witness for Women's Ordination on World Day of Prayer for Vocations

Feast Days of Female Saints and Women of the Bible: Honor the leadership of holy women by holding witnesses on the feast days of Mary Magdalene (**July 22nd**), St. Therese of Lisieux (**October 1st**), Prisca (**January 18th**), and others.



Pray

Whether done on your own or with others, prayer can be powerful and transformative. Here are some ways you might support women's ordination through prayer:

- Hold a prayerful vigil outside a church or cathedral.
- Organize a liturgy. For example, you might use or adapt Gloria Ulterino's *Drawing from Wisdom's Well* and *Walking with Wisdom's Daughters* to create a feminist liturgy.
- Hold an evening prayer service by candlelight.
- Hand holy cards of inspiring women saints or informative pamphlets to parishioners and priests as they walk into church. Ask them to pray for women's ordination.
- Pray a Novena for women's ordination.



Gather and Learn

Gather with your friends, family, or community to share why women's ordination matters to you and commit to deepening your understanding of the issue. Some of the examples of prayer above are ways of gathering. Other ways to gather include:

- Sponsoring a discussion about women's leadership in the Church
- Inviting speakers to talk to your local women's group about women's ordination or the lack of decision-making power Catholic women hold in the Church
- Hosting a **book club** centered on women's equality in the Catholic church
- Reading and discussing recent Catholic news articles, Vatican documents, or WOC resources.
- Hosting a potluck during which guests are given questions to discuss with others about why women's leadership in the Church is important to them
- Screening a movie or watching a video related to women's equality in the Church and discussing it after
- Offering a **"listening session"** for women where they can voice their experiences as women in the Catholic church
- Cooking a meal with others as Eucharist

For access to a sample gathering, download our Equal-Tea PDF [here](#).



Engage the Media

Another way to advocate for women's ordination is to engage a larger audience and amplify your message using media outlets. For example, you can:

- Write a letter to the editor or article for a newspaper, magazine, or other publication
- Send listener feedback to podcasts discussing women's equality in the Church
- Tweet about women's ordination. Tag @OrdainWomen and use #ordainwomen so that WOC can help amplify your message.
- Create a video in which you discuss your story about or passion for women's equality in the Church. Share it on Facebook, Instagram, or YouTube and notify WOC.
- Write a blog post and notify WOC.

Irritate

Finally, you can also shake things up by practicing the "Ministry of Irritation." Some ways to do so are:

- Gather and circle in silence with signs and banners outside your local cathedral.
- Distribute 3×5 cards and ask people to list gifts the church has lost as a result of denying full participation of women. Compile the list and read it at your witnessing event. Send a copy of it to the bishop and local parishes.
- Use WOC's custom banner template or make your own and join members around the world in dropping or holding a banner in a group outside a Cathedral or church.
- Use WOC's funny money to send Church leaders the message that you are withholding your funds from the institutional church until women have equal rites and rights in our church. Best used in collections or attached to flowers! Print yourself or make a donation to WOC and receive a stack of bills.

Click [here](#) for access to a sample demonstration.



DEMONSTRATE FOR EQUALITY

Of all the actions you can take for women's ordination, demonstrations are arguably the most visible and vibrant. They also require the most planning. To aid in your preparation, we have broken down the demonstration planning process step-by-step below.



Solidify Your Why and Your Demands

Identify why women's ordination in the Catholic church is important to you. Why is it close to your heart? Why does it matter? Why take action now? Once you have discerned answers to these questions, share your personal connection to this cause with others.

Next, create demands, goals, or actions that could address the issue at hand. What do you want to see your parish, your local leaders, or the Church hierarchy do to work toward women's ordination? Have at least one or two specific demands in order to strengthen your overall message.

Network

Think about the people you know and the connections they have. Who can help you organize your action or connect you with media contacts? The Church has a global influence, so there are likely allies "outside of the Church" who would support women's full equality within the Church. Reach out to contacts via text, phone, email, and social media. To obtain a list of local WOC leaders, contact WOC's national office.

Remember: It is important that your planning team represent all people in the community you are advocating for. Therefore, when creating your team, reach out to ordained women, lay women, women of color, and LGBTQ+ women as well as men. Do you need to consider translating or adapting your message into a second or third language? Working across language differences can be challenging, but engaging translation services or community-based translators can be prioritized.

NEVER force or coerce a person from a marginalized community to join your planning team or be the voice for all people in their community. If your planning team does not represent all people, do the work to inform yourself about other perspectives and make sure those perspectives are included in your discussion and demonstration through words or video (with proper credit to the creators). One of the best ways to inform yourself is reading books, poetry, and articles written by marginalized people about their experiences. Another way to inform yourself is to find discussion about a particular justice issue online and pay attention to marginalized group's perspectives.



Form Your Core Group

Once you have found people who have agreed to help you organize for your demonstration, form a virtual group that will allow each of you to communicate with one another. Some options for doing so include using standard text messaging, iMessage, and email. You can also use apps like Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, GroupMe, Slack, or another preferred app for group communication. This group forum will be useful at times that meeting in person is unavailable to you and your group.

Organize

Now that you have formed a core group, assign roles and responsibilities for each organizing member. Roles and responsibilities that you might want to delegate to group members are outlined below.

Locale and Logistics

- Solidify a time, date, and location for your demonstration.
- You may need to obtain a permit from state or city officials in order to hold your demonstration in a public place. Research state and city laws or contact local officials about public witnesses.
- Make sure your location is accessible to all people. This includes those who have disabilities and those who rely on public transportation. If you have a speaker, can everyone engage with the content?
- If you suspect that police or law enforcement will be present at your demonstration, let your organizing team and attendees know in advance. Determine the people that are willing to be detained or arrested. Additionally, identify or reach out to those who are willing to advocate on behalf of your group and demonstration.

"Sometimes people think they have to do big things in order to make change, but if each one would light a candle we'd have a tremendous light."

THEA BOWMAN



Public Relations

- Reach out to news media outlets (TV, print, and radio) via phone, email, and social media and ask them to cover your event.
- Contact and book speakers if needed.
- Find a photographer to take pictures during your event.

Social Media Promotion

- Use social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) to spread awareness of your demonstration far and wide!

Content and Speech Development

- Consider: What will you actually do when you are witnessing?
- Content might include opening and closing comments, prayer, poetry, a call to action, or a song.
- Google Docs and Slides are great tools to use to ensure that your content will not be lost or accidentally erased. They also allow for easy sharing with fellow organizers.
- Allow time for attendees to share emotions. Sharing emotion will connect people and get them more invested in the cause.

Visual Design

- Consider: How can I visually portray the message of my demonstration?
- Banners, signs, posters, canvas, and art pieces all are great ways to visually appeal to those in attendance. You can design and print signs, banners, or posters at your local print stop. Some common WOC banner slogans include: "Ordain Women," "Ordain Catholic Women," "Priestly People Come in All Genders," "Praying for Vocations? Ordain Women!," and "Women Do Priestly Work. Ordain Them!"
- Consider adapting your message and language to be best understood. Do you need translation?
- If you have the time and resources, you could contact local artists and support one who is willing to provide a visual design. You could also search artwork on social media and, once you find a piece you want to use, could contact the artist for their permission to use it.



Post-Demonstration Platform

- Create an online platform where organizers and participants can convene after the demonstration. That platform might be: a website, Facebook group, a Slack “workplace,” or email. This will save you time and stress after the demonstration, when you want to share photos and continue the conversation about your cause and demonstration.

Demonstrate

You have worked hard organizing and now the day is here! Remember to spread your message to as many people as possible, including those not in attendance. Any media presence you have at your event is great, but use social media to take the media attention a step further. This is why having one or two organizers dedicated to social media is helpful.

In addition to media attention, it is helpful to set ground rules at the start of your demonstration if it involves audience participation. Some ground rules might include:

- Do not interrupt while someone is speaking.
- Priority will be given to marginalized voices.
- Those that typically speak a lot: be mindful of how much you are speaking. Let others speak too.
- Speak loudly so everyone, including those that are hearing impaired, can hear you.

Finally, if you expect interactions with the police or law enforcement, remember to inform attendees about that before the day of the demonstration and have people in attendance who are willing to be detained, arrested, or to advocate for those who are.



Stay Active

Now is the time to use that platform you set aside for communication amongst organizers and demonstration participants. Post photos from the event on the platform, encourage those in attendance to share their thoughts about the day, share media coverage of the event, discuss actions that can be taken to create change, and plan for new actions. You might also have a discussion on your platform (and in your wider social media community) about who was not there, why they did not attend, and what actions you could have taken that would have encouraged them to attend.

“Yo soy mujer en busca de igualdad, no aguantar abuso ni maldad. Yo soy mujer y tengo dignidad, y pronto la justicia serd una realidad. Mujer, tù eres mujer, porque supiste ver, la realidad de tu poder. Hoy canto al Dios del Pueblo en mi guitarra, un canto de mujer que se libera.”

ADA MARÍA ISASI-DÍAZ



SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE

Using social media can help connect you to your community and supporters, get your message out to press, and strengthen the impact of your action. If you're not comfortable with using different platforms, it may be helpful to find a volunteer who is familiar with social media and ask for their help. Otherwise, here are some social media basics to help you get started.



Facebook

Facebook is the most common denominator social media platform. This is a first step in social media.

- Create an event page, invite your friends and community members, and keep it updated by posting reminders, relevant news, and day-of information. You can even “go live” from the event and broadcast a video directly from Facebook on your phone. The video will be recorded and you’ll be able to share it around, so it is a good idea to get a tripod or some way to stabilize your device.
- Start a group! This is a central place where organizers and volunteers can plan, collaborate, and “stay on the same page.” Your group could be a local “chapter” or simply a space for a one-time event - see what happens! Make sure to check the privacy settings of the group and what is private is set to “private.” Regardless, whatever is written on the internet can find a way to be shared. Be kind. Speak with integrity. Assume best intentions.

Instagram

Instagram is a great space to reach a different audience and share images of your event and faces to your campaign.

- Create an Instagram account for your event. This account would allow you to compile all the pictures and videos from your campaign and event in one place for people to see.
- Share a story! Using the "Story" feature, share a reflection, photos, or even "go live" during your event. Stories draw followers to your Instagram account because they appear at the top of followers' Instagram feeds, whereas a regular post might not.
- Post highlights! Stories are time sensitive, but highlights are not. Once you have created a story, you can add it to a highlight on your Instagram account homepage so that it stays there permanently for followers to view. You can create different highlights for different aspects of your event (i.e. "Meet the Team," "Event Artwork," "Logistics").
- Finally, tag @ordainwomen in your posts so that WOC can spread the word about your event.



Twitter

In addition to advertising your event and alerting media, Twitter is great for day-of coverage of your event. It helps to assign one or two people who can take photos and tweet about what is happening, using a common hashtag. Make sure to tag @OrdainWomen and use #ordainwomen so that WOC can help amplify your message. Similar to Facebook, you can also “go live” on Twitter, if you want to do a short interview of someone at your event.

Some common hashtags include:

- #ordainwomen
- #catholicwomen
- #catholicfeminist
- #calledtopreach
- #churchreform
- #catholicreform
- #catholicwomencalled
- #womenpriests
- #catholicchurch

WhatsApp

WhatsApp’s “chats” feature is perfect for forming a virtual planning group. It is especially convenient if anyone on your planning team is international because messaging is free.

GroupMe

GroupMe allows users to create groups much like Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp. However, the best part about GroupMe is that you do not need the app to use it. GroupMe works over SMS, so as long as a person is added to your group, they will be able to chat with the group.



Slack

If you and your team like organized communication, Slack is for you. Create a "workspace" on Slack to form your group and then create "channels" to organize your work by topic. For instance, you can create "Content," "Outreach," and "Social Media" channels so your communication about each topic is contained to specific sections of the app.

Canva

If you are creating your own designs for your demonstration and you have a limited budget, Canva is a great tool to use. Using Canva, you can create custom social media designs, logos, flyers, posters, invitations, brochures, and so much more. Canva even has a print feature that allows you to order prints to your door.

"In... instances of denial and exclusion from the table, despite the propriety of word and gesture, Eucharist is rendered empty ritual. Christ cannot yet be fully present, and I dare say, will not come."

M. SHAWN COPELAND



CONCLUSION

As you begin taking action for women's ordination, we want to leave you with one final note from Joan Chittister, OSB, a Catholic sister, leader, and advocate for women's rights:

“Shout your truth. Many will tell you to quit, soften it, be more careful. But if you want to make even the slightest change, do not listen to them. **Keep shouting. Shout louder. That’s what it means to be a witness.**”