

2018 Philoptochos Convention  
Small Group Breakout Sessions – July 4, 2018

**Discussion Topic: Working Cooperatively with Priest, Parish Council & Other Church Organizations**

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The facilitators each introduced themselves to the delegates before each of the eight 30-minute sessions. We then proceeded to present an interactive and participatory workshop for the delegates on different aspects of Philoptochos. We emphasized the unique nature of the “Sisterhood” of Philoptochos.

**“Icebreaker”**

Our first activity was an icebreaker to have the delegates in each session get to know one another and to find things they had in common. The only things they could not say was they were members in Philoptochos, and were Orthodox Christians, two things we know all delegates had in common. The delegates were broken up into groups of six making sure to mix the groups. A scribe was chosen in each group to take notes. **The delegates enjoyed this icebreaker, and many suggested something like this be done at the start of the convention, so they could get to know new people earlier.** It was entertaining and interesting to hear what commonalities our delegates shared. To list a few from some of the groups:

ALL:

- were mothers
- were grandmothers
- were Godmothers
- wore glasses
- held leadership roles in their chapters
- were officers on their boards
- are/had been chapter presidents
- colored their hair
- loved to travel/vacation
- enjoyed cooking
- liked to read
- loved to shop
- were first time delegates
- were visiting Boston for the first time
- have been to Greece or traveled internationally

- favorite color was red
- were experienced conference attendees
- were not good with compromise
- loved animals
- liked jewelry
- enjoyed writing

### **“Composing and Elevator Speech”**

Our main activity was to ask each group to come up with a “tag line” an “elevator pitch” or “hook” to encourage or invite someone to join Philoptochos. What would they say to someone in a few words to make them interested in or want to join Philoptochos. This was a fun and engaging activity and the delegates enjoyed it. Here are some of the creative tag lines/hooks:

- Do you want to make a difference and have fun doing it? Then join Philoptochos!
- Wouldn't you want to be part of a multi-generational, loving and dynamic group of women who are a commentary of love?
- We are the strong, compassionate, right arm of the church. Please join us in Philoptochos!
- We would love to have your strength and talents to further our mission in helping others in need.
- Do you want to be part of something bigger than yourself?
- Join a group of dynamic, like minded women who come together to help those less fortunate.
- Was your Yiayia in Philoptochos?
- I need you, we need you, Philoptochos needs you!
- If you want to be part of a dynamic team of women, we need you!
- Philoptochos is the philanthropic arm of the Orthodox Church. We put our faith into action by reaching out to people in need.
- (Philoptochos is) Women connecting to make a difference!
- (We are) Servants of ministry
- (Philoptochos is) A force of nature... We are making a difference!
- We are a fulfilling, philanthropic, fun organization.
- Philoptochos provides you with the ability to give to those in need, and in return gives you the most rewarding and moving experience
- It's very empowering to give back and it's amazing to be an active citizen of the world.
- We are the connection out here, enthusiasm, passion, sincerity in voice.
- Philoptochos; we will feed your tummy and your heart!
- We are a dynamic army of women who serve their community in a variety of ways.
- Philoptochos means friend of the poor- a Greek Orthodox philanthropic organization that supports those in need.
- Philoptochos is a philanthropic organization 27,000 women strong, united by faith and the desire to serve

- You are a person who is kind and dynamic who can help us in our philanthropic work to help those in need. Please join us!
- We are a philanthropic sisterhood that works hard, prays hard.
- If you join Philoptochos you will help others, make friends, learn new things and make a difference.
- We belong to the largest Christian Women's philanthropic organization with 400 chapters and 27,000 members internationally. Join us!
- (Philoptochos is) A group of compassionate, dynamic women who make an impact by changing lives one person at a time, by identifying their needs and providing necessary resources.
- It's not just your mother's Philoptochos anymore!
- If you are a leader, come to Philoptochos-we change lives! So if you want to help lead that change, come join us in Philoptochos.
- (Philoptochos is) Fun and fellowship, sharing Jesus and giving back to the community.
- Would you like to be part of a group of women who work hard, have fun and help others?
- Meet new people, strengthen your faith, give you purpose
- I'd like to invite you to our next trip (or event)
- Would you like to eat, drink and be merry, join our group and help give to charity!

After the delegates finished creating their membership pitch, Jeanne Ranglas told her "baklava" story which equates Philoptochos to the delicious Greek dessert: lots of layers of philanthropy, a little nutty, but finished off with a sweet syrup baked all together in one beautiful pan! The delegates also received handouts which included the elevator speech, the stump speech and Jeannie's chocolate cake story.

### **"Words of Advice"**

One of the activities in each of the break-out sessions, was to poll the delegates to determine who has been a member of Philoptochos the greatest number of years and also who was the newest member. It was wonderful to know we had delegates attending the convention who have been in Philoptochos over 50 years and others for just a few months. Their age was not what made the distinction though. We then asked the "seasoned" and "newbie" members to share words of advice with one another, as a way of acknowledging that we can always learn from each other no matter what age and everyone is valued for what they have to offer! The two delegates in each session received a "Face of Philoptochos" button as a gift.

Some words of advice from the "seasoned" members:

- Care about others and be kind to everyone. Be loving and giving
- Be friendly
- Have fun, enjoy as you work in Philoptochos and don't overload yourself.
- Love one another. Welcome everyone
- Let criticism and negative talk go in one ear and out the other
- Be willing to take advice from older members
- Be patient

- Have patience with older members. We have a lot of experience to share
- Stay grounded in your beliefs when other seasoned members may advise against it
- Make everyone aware of what Philoptochos does in the community

Many words from the newer members to “seasoned” members were similar. Newer members also said:

- Thank you for the path you have laid for us
- Thank you for all your time and effort
- We appreciate your advice
- Be willing to listen and be open to new ideas
- Welcome everyone, be accepting
- Share recipes
- Allow newer members try new things
- Mentor a newer member

The Membership Workshops went well, and we received positive feedback from the delegates. The delegates expressed that Membership needed more time as it is an issue of great importance to all chapters: how to recruit, retain and engage members. Moving from room to room was challenging for the facilitators but staying in one room was appreciated by the delegates. Props had to be moved and couldn't be used as effectively as we would have liked as there wasn't enough time to set them up in each room.

The delegates enjoyed the interaction between those in their groups. They liked meeting new people, having a chance to move around and actually participate in the workshop, as they had been sitting for quite a while listening to many presentations. It was suggested that icebreakers should be done at the beginning of the convention, so delegates can get to know one another and create a feeling of comradery. Another suggestion was to limit the number of workshops delegates go to in such a short time frame. Perhaps have the 8 workshops but give the delegates the choice of 4 to go to and lengthen the time of certain workshops.

Overall, Membership seemed to be a well-received workshop. The facilitators enjoyed being part of it and working together.

