



STAND IN THE GAP FOR WIDOWS

Widows Retreat Event

MINISTRY GUIDE

Stand in the Gap for Widows is a research-based ministry that partners with churches, organizations and people of passion to fulfill God's calling found in James 1:27 to look after His widows. Stand in the Gap for Widows is designed to be volunteer driven, not clergy intensive. The model of SITGM for Widows is, "We care for you so that you can care for your widows." Partnering with SITGM for Widows means that you receive care and consultation from our staff as we walk alongside you in the development of your own widow ministry through the utilization of our research and Widow Ministry ToolKit. This is a tool kit of best-case practices, helpful suggestions and practical information that we provide to our partners for a nominal yearly Partner Consultation Subscription investment. In our Tool Kit, you will find information on how to establish and maintain a widow ministry. Our widow ministry guides include social, small group, practical needs, retreat and card & book ministries.

We have created the Widows Retreat event opportunity ministry guide as a means for you to provide a retreat for the widows in your church and community. We have done this practice ourselves here at Stand In The Gap Ministries and have taken all we have learned to help you do a similar event. We also want to say a special thank you to our regional retreat partner, Spring Valley Ministries, for their support and involvement in this component of our ToolKit. If you would like to learn more about Spring Valley Ministries, you can check out their Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/springvalleyministriesok/>

The Widows Retreat component of the ToolKit offers you an opportunity to grow the relationship amongst your widows and care for them in a more meaningful way through a retreat. Each church and ministry will do this event in a different way.

Here at Stand In The Gap Ministries, we had the opportunity to partner with a retreat center close to Tulsa, OK. They worked with us from the beginning to end of our retreat and provided exceptional service and care for our widows that attended. They also provided some discounts for us because they believe in caring for widows in the way God calls us to. You may want to find a retreat center in your area that would be willing to work with you in the same way, so we suggest that you contact local retreat locations, share what you are doing and see what offerings they may have.

The documents in our ToolKit retreat section by no means are all-inclusive or have to be followed to the letter. They are instead resources that may allow you to know how to do a retreat and spur on ideas for your own formation and also give you a starting point for your own retreat and ideas. A retreat is definitely something that requires resources and also volunteers. If your church can help provide volunteers for this, you will definitely want that support. We ran our retreat with two people leading the way and also with the support of the retreat center we used. You could take the tasks and agenda that we have outlined and assigned different tasks to each person involved. We also have just provided the templates and outlines we followed to help get you started. We are happy to help you by having a planning meeting or Zoom call to discuss the documents and their utilization for your particular ministry.

The most vital information we can provide, would be to make sure that you are creating an environment of love, support and community for the widows that attend. When thinking of speakers and activities, keep in mind that most widows don't just want to talk about their loss, but instead need to have a growing relationship with Christ and to walk away from an event like this, knowing who they are in Christ and that God has put others in their life that understand what they have been through.

We have developed the following documents for your use at your retreat. If you need help with design or have any questions or issues downloading and using these documents, our widows team would be happy to assist you as you prepare for your event. For most of the items we have provided an editable PDF template and also an example of what we used for our event to help you in creating your own. We also have provided photos from our event to give you ideas and spur on thoughts in your planning process.

Our training video will also be available to answer some questions and we are also willing to help in meeting with you as you plan and pray about this event. These documents are not intended to be all-encompassing, but we are hopeful that they will give you a starting point and ideas to get you started.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS:

Internal Planning Document Template.

This is the main planning document that can be used throughout the process. This document includes a timeline and important ideas and things to remember. It is important that you start by discussing and praying about what you want this retreat to be about and focused on. We encourage you to start with a scripture and plan the other items accordingly from there.

****Internal Planning Document Example included****

External Planning Document Template

This is the main planning document used as a way to share with the retreat center or any other external people attending. It also is where we kept the agenda and other important information that would be shared with the ladies attending.

****External Planning Document Example included****

Devotional Planning Template

This component allows you a place to plan for devotionals. For example, we did three devotional sections and two speaking sessions. You could do them all or have different ladies, who you trust and feel would have good input to share what God has laid on their hearts.

****Devotional Planning Example included****

Pre-retreat promotional graphics and Facebook Group

This was an important way to provide information to each of the ladies. You will want to make this a private group, so you can add them individually (if you are friends with the attendees) or you can add through emails. The only thing to note is that the email must be associated with their Facebook account to access the group. If you have any questions on setting this up, we can address it in a planning meeting with you. We included a photo of what our group looked like. We did a countdown, introduced our speakers and activities, included driving and arrival time, as well as provided importation information for them (we included this information and when we posted in the External Planning Document Example).

We also provided some of the graphics and information that we posted on our Facebook group, so you can use them on your own, if you would like.

Scripture Cards

We had a theme scripture for our retreat and handed this out each day, so everyone had the scriptures handy. We have provided you a template that will allow you to make your own scripture cards and also examples of the completed ones we handed out.

****Scripture Card Examples included****

Event Signage for Retreat

We used these in the main lodge area where we would be eating and also we had games, devotional books and gathering space. We purposely built in free time to allow the ladies opportunities to mingle, build friendships etc. Because of that free time, we wanted signage to inform them of what else they could do in this free time and we brought games, devotional books and Bibles and placed them in our main lodge for use during this free time.

Room Assignments and Door Sign Templates

These can be used on the outside of the doors of the retreat rooms and also for you to know which rooms everyone was in. They are helpful in making everything very personalized and special.

****Door Sign Example included****

Meet The Crew

We had leaders attending the retreats who did not know each other, so we used these on the inside of each room so that people could get to know each other. We have made templates for this, so you can personalize these as you would like.

****Meet The Crew Examples included****

Checklist and Timeline for every day

These were used as a way to make sure that everyday we were not forgetting what needed to be done. This included everything, such as set-up for the day, transitions to new events etc. This were very helpful in running the event and if you have multiple people helping, it will insure items don't get missed.

****Checklist and Timeline Example included****

Room Set-up

We had a limited amount of time to set-up the rooms before everyone arrived, so we created this to know what and where we would be putting items in the rooms. Personalize them as you would like.

Contact Information and Safety

These were provided in every room. They were done as a way to let the ladies attending know some important information about the retreat.

****Contact Information Example included****

Agenda

We provided the agenda in a printed format in each ladies' retreat bag as well as on lanyards that they had for the retreat.

****Agenda Example included****

Song Lyrics

We chose to not do a projector for the worship side of the retreat. They instead had these forms with the titles and lyrics for each session (we had 2) and we put the song lyrics on them and had them available for each session.

****Song Lyrics Example included****

Retreat Recap Form

This was used as a form for us after the retreat. We also provided a survey: (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdGh3U-Wf9Guvd_6NvJsJA-jNmWWhpiG7rYKk6QWo0pxXKQg/viewform?usp=sf_link) to all of the ladies after the retreat, so we could use their feedback.

****Retreat Recap Form Example included****

Invite email with simple invitation

We sent an email out to our ladies inviting them. In this email we included a Google Form for them to sign up. We did charge a \$50 deposit to hold their spot. If you are unfamiliar with Google Forms, you can even have them respond to the email as their RSVP. From this email, we created a spreadsheet that has their email, phone number and address for contact information. We did not include this spreadsheet since it has personal information, but if you need help creating this, please let us know.

Lanyards

We purchased these badge holders:

(https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01JPIJC9W?ref=ppx_yo2ov_dt_b_fed_asin_title&th=1) and also ordered personalized lanyard straps:

(https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0CHF27TBH?ref=ppx_yo2ov_dt_b_fed_asin_title) from Amazon and did a 2 sided card to place in them. One side had their name and the other side had the agenda for the weekend. This made for easy reference during the event. We have also included a template for you to make your own. If you look in our photo section, you will also see the example of what we did.

Retreat Photos

We have shared some photos from our retreat to help you as you plan your own. We hope these are helpful to you as you figure out the logistics of what things will look like. Each photo is named by what they were at our retreat. We do not want you to feel you have to follow exactly what we did, but we wanted you to see some examples of what our items were and how it looked. We hope this is helpful.

How can Stand in the Gap for Widows help you?

- We are here to provide needed edits and support as you plan this event. We are also happy to set-up meetings with you to help you plan your event.

How can you help Stand in the Gap for Widows & our partners?

- If you enhance or modify our materials, please let us know so we can share your ideas with our partners.
- If you create a new best-case practice for your widows, we would love to add it to our ToolKit. We are happy to give you and your church full credit.
- Celebrate your successes with us. We love to share photos and quotes from widows and volunteers on our Facebook page and website.

Please contact our widows team at widows@sitgm.org for assistance or to share your ideas. Thank you for helping us fulfill our mission to connect people in need with people who care!

Documents Included:

1. Internal Planning Document Template (make editable)
2. Internal Planning Document Example
3. External Planning Document Template (make editable)
4. External Planning Document Example
5. Devotional Planning Template (make editable)
6. Devotional Planning Example
7. Pre Retreat Promotional Graphic
8. Pre Retreat Promotional Graphic 2
9. Pre Retreat Promotional Graphic 3
10. Facebook Group Photo Example
11. Scripture Template 1 (make editable)
12. Scripture Template 2 (make editable)
13. Scripture Example 1
14. Scripture Example 2
15. Event Signage (make editable)
16. Event Signage 2 (make editable)
17. Event Signage 3 (make editable)
18. Door Sign Template (make editable)
19. Door Sign Example
20. Room Assignment Template (make editable)
21. Meet The Crew Template (make editable)
22. Meet The Crew Example
23. Checklist and Timeline Template (make editable)
24. Checklist and Timeline Example
25. Room Set-up Template (make editable)
26. Contact Info/Safety Template (make editable)
27. Contact Info/Safety Example
28. Agenda Template (make editable)
29. Agenda Example
30. Lanyard Template Front (make editable)
31. Lanyard Template Back (make editable)
32. Song Lyrics Template (make editable)
33. Song Lyrics Example
34. Retreat Recap Template (make editable)
35. Retreat Recap Example
36. Widows Retreat Invitation
37. Invite Email
38. Accommodations Photo
39. Accommodations Photo 2
40. Activities Photo
41. Devotional Outside Photo
42. Doors Photo
43. Flowers 2 Photo
44. Flowers 3 Photo
45. Full group with Shirts Photo
46. Full Lodge Photo
47. Lanyard Front Photo
48. Lanyard Back Photo
49. Lodge 2 Photo
50. Meal Area Photo

51. Retreat Bags Photo
52. Session Table Photo
53. Snacks Photo
54. Stage Set Up Photo
55. Worship Photo