



Guidelines for running an MLP membership drive at your church

last update 4/4/2004 BMH. Based on an earlier version by The Church of Reconciliation, Feb. 2003

"The mission of More Light Presbyterians is to [seek] the full participation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people of faith in the life, ministry and witness of the Presbyterian Church (USA). "

These guidelines provide a detailed outline of how to organize an MLP membership drive at your church. More Light Sunday, the first Sunday in June each year, can be a good day to conduct this drive since you'll do your drive in solidarity with other More Light groups and their actions on the same day. However, you can run a membership drive on almost any Sunday of the year.

Advance Preparation

1. Assemble a team to conduct the drive

You'll need:

- 2 or 3 people to work at the table where people can join.
- 3 or 4 people to have conversations with others about joining.
- 1 or 2 people to supervise and coordinate.

2. Meet and plan the membership drive

- Discuss the reasons for the membership drive and what is possible for MLP and for full inclusion of LGBT persons as a result of the drive.
- Review and, ideally, practice the conversations that you'll have with people on the day of the membership drive... conversations that will inspire people about MLP's mission and invite them to join.
- Check out the resources listed in the Resources section below.

3. Choose a time and location. Good times and places are:

- Before *and* after a Sunday worship service.
- At a dinner or other major church event.
- In your church's narthex, foyer, or perhaps outside.
- A time and location when/where many people from the church will be present and available.
- If possible, on a day when people wear name tags.

4. Publicize the drive

- In your church's worship bulletin and newsletter the week in advance of the drive.

- Via email to your church's email list.
- *Especially* important: with a spoken announcement during your church service, given by someone on your membership drive team.
- Remind people about MLP's mission for full inclusion in the PCUSA.
- Be enthusiastic! You need to leave people inspired about MLP's commitment to equality in the Church and the rest of the world.

5. Obtain abundant supplies in advance

- MLP membership forms (not membership envelopes) are best for on-site membership signups.
- You can give membership envelopes to people who aren't able to complete a membership form on site.
- Have plenty of pens. Have plenty of paper clips to keep checks and membership forms together.
- Get MLP brochures and literature.
- Some churches have experimented with inexpensive gifts for on-the-spot signups: "sign up right now and get a flashlight", etc. The rollout of the MLP Hearts & Minds project (see www.mlp.org/heartsandminds) offers you the option of giving people a free DVD when they sign up.
- Have chairs available so that people can sit down to write their checks.

The Day of the Drive

1. Set up the table, chairs, banners

- Be sure to provide space and chairs for people to fill out forms and write checks.
- Attract attention with catchy signs, displays, banners, etc. For signs, black magic marker on neon yellow or pink paper or posterboard can work well.
- Staff your table with at least 2 or 3 people so that each person who stops by will get individual attention to their questions and concerns.

2. Try hard to have people pay their dues right now.

- Have people fill out the membership form and their check while they're at your table and thinking about it. Offer people the MLP membership form (not an MLP membership envelope) to do this.
- Despite the best of intentions, people are much less likely to actually send in a check if they leave with just an envelope membership form and having written no check to MLP.

3. Nevertheless, some people will just take an MLP membership envelope

- Don't prevent people from taking a membership envelope if that's what they really want to do.
- On your own sheet of paper, write down the name of each person who takes a membership envelope.
- Let each person who takes an envelope know that you'll follow up with them later by phone.

4. Have one person oversee and coordinate the process
 - Make sure your team is taking care of all everybody.
 - Make sure that your team is carefully managing membership forms, checks, cash, etc.
 - Ensure that you're writing down the names of people who take membership envelopes.
 - Be sure that your team members are having conversations with likely supporters.

Important points to remember for the day of the drive

1. Have 3 or 4 members of your team engage people in conversation.
 - People won't notice your membership drive table if they just walk by. You need to get them to slow down and look. Conversation gets people to stop walking and pay attention.
 - Inspire people with what their MLP membership will mean for MLP and for the movement for full inclusion in the Church.
 - Be straightforward and make clear requests. For example: "Hi Bill, did you know we're having a More Light membership drive today? Have you joined for this year? Would you like to do that now?"
 - A person who supports MLP's work for full inclusion will *want* to contribute, and by asking them to contribute, you give them that opportunity. Joining MLP allows people to express their commitment to equality, and they'll feel good about themselves for doing so.
2. Mail forms and checks to:
 - More Light Presbyterians
 - PMB 246
 - 4737 County Road 101
 - Minnetonka, MN 55345-2634

Follow Up Afterwards

1. Make phone calls
 - Call people who took a form but who didn't join at the actual drive.
 - Call likely MLP supporters who weren't present at the drive, or who didn't stop at the signup table.
 - Personal phone calls are *much* more effective than email or newsletter notices... but you should use those methods also, to supplement phone calls.
2. Make sure people know that MLP depends on member dues
 - MLP needs membership renewals every year.
 - MLP's annual operating budget comes mostly from annual membership dues from individual members.
 - Many people think that because they paid dues once 2 or 3 years ago, that they're members and have now done their part. That's not correct... MLP needs their help every year, and MLP membership requires yearly renewal.

3. Personally thank each person who joins or renews membership
 - Make sure that people know that their contribution is important, and that you and MLP greatly appreciate their support.
 - Send a thank-you note or card to each person. MLP national will generally mail a form thank-you letter for each contribution, but your personal note will be from somebody the donor knows.

Resources

1. Supplies. To get quantities of MLP membership forms, MLP membership envelopes, and MLP color glossy brochures, call the MLP New Mexico office (aka Michael Adee's office) at (505) 820-7082 and leave a message that describes which supplies you need, what quantity, and your mailing address. To keep MLP's printing costs down, please try to make good estimates about the quantities that you need.
2. Check out the numerous resources available at the MLP web site. Go to www.mlp.org and click on the "resources" link.
 - There are helpful 2-page "More Light on..." articles about ordination, same-sex marriage, spirituality, bisexuality, and other topics of interest.
3. Download and print some copies of "What We Wish We Had Known", aka "The Blue Book", from www.mkpc.org/Blue_Book_2001.pdf. The MLP New Mexico office can also provide copies of this mini-book on request, but it's generally easier to download and print it yourself.

**Thanks for your support of MLP, as we work together
for equality in the PCUSA and the rest of society!**