The Beijing Circles Resource is Flexible

• A group can commit six weeks to using it as study guide.
• But we also hope that Circles will commit to each other long term. The guide is written, not in a prescriptive manner, but to stir prayers and dreams that will unite people in their desire for action, and the actions that result will be those most pertinent to the local community.

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Join the Circle
for a Learning Opportunity
Grounded in God’s Call
to Local and Global Action

Women of Faith Changing the World
What is a Beijing Circle?

Beijing Circles is a name given to the group of circles that formed around the issues of the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995. The creation of circles came out of our work as AWE, Anglican Women’s Empowerment, as we attended the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women event held annually at the end of February. Beijing Circles is a tool which can help us educate ourselves and one another about the issues affecting women globally, and then to advocate within our church and the world to bring about positive change.

We’ve connected scripture and prayer with the twelve issues of the Platform. Those issues reflect women’s experience in our world. We hope to provide you with some resources and some stories to help you get started and stay connected to this work.

The Circle is an Equalizer

The circle process is explained more thoroughly in the Beijing Circles Resource booklet, downloadable from:

http://www.episcopalchurch.org/41685_88344_ENG_HTM.htm

or available in hard copy from Episcopal Books and Resources:

www.episcopalbookstore.org

Order or Download the Beijing Circles Resource Guide

• The resource booklet is written from a perspective that reminds us that issues that face women around the world also face women in our own communities. When we do our own work, it connects us in solidarity in new ways with those around the world.

• The circle reflections and process call us to action, but that action is not prescribed. We believe that women everywhere are resourceful and able to assess both issues and assets in their local communities. It means doing our own work, our homework, and sometimes making the invisible ones visible.

• Many congregations and dioceses are working diligently on the Millennium Development Goals. The Circle work is directly related. Anyone interested in working on Goal #3, “Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women,” will find this especially helpful. Even if you don’t use Beijing Circles, the Beijing Platform for Action is the set of lenses we believe will move the world forward, most effectively in promoting gender equality.

• There are many ways to use the booklet. Working with others in your congregation is the most obvious. People involved with your companion diocese, if you have them in your diocese or congregation, may also find it useful. Invite women who attend churches of other denominations. Contact someone who works in a women’s program or ministry, ask if the Circle would work (feel free to adapt it) with women facing some of these issues in your own community. Think about involving girls: daughters, grand-daughters, nieces, friends.

• Before your first Circle orientation, read the introduction to the booklet and watch the DVDs that have been created, “Shall We Gather,” and “Beijing Circles: East Timor to Yonkers.” Every congregation received a copy of “Shall We Gather” in 2006. If you can’t find yours, contact a neighboring congregation or your diocesan office.

• When you meet for your first Circle, use the very first unit, the general introduction. Work the process and give us your feedback!