

How Is WMU in the Association Different from WMU in the Church?

What a great question! As an associational leader, it can be difficult to understand how your role in the association differs from the role you play when you are leading in your church. Just as all WMU® resources teach six specific objectives, so the association has four specific objectives to accomplish in the year. While you are obviously a leader in your church, your leadership role in the association is not to recreate what you have done in your church. Your work is actually quite different and is as follows:

1. **Nurture a missions *environment* in the churches and association.** How do you create an environment in the association? In other words, how do we raise the awareness of missions among our churches so they are constantly reminded of their call to fulfill the Great Commission? This is your task! Consider starting a missions newsletter where churches share their mission stories. Report at associational events on what churches are doing to reach into the community. Use email to remind church leaders of missionaries and state resources that can supplement what they are doing in missions.
2. **Provide and participate in associational missions activities and projects.** While many churches can plan and carry out their own missions projects, it can be helpful and encouraging when churches in the association come together to do missions. This is especially true if you work with a number of small churches. Plan one or two of these projects for the year and invite all the churches to participate. Be a part of the associational ministries as you can.
3. **Equip churches to provide missions awareness and involvement.** As you know, one key to success as a leader is preparation. In order for our churches to be successful in missions, they need to be prepared. While many “fly by the seat of their pants,” this is not the most effective leadership style! As the associational leader, it is your role to equip and prepare the leaders. This means providing training for leaders. You can provide training events or meet individually with a leader. Using the missions guides for leaders provided by WMU, train both your seasoned and your new leaders on the emphasis for the year, their roles and responsibilities, and major events in the year.
4. **Develop and strengthen WMU in all congregations.** You are an advocate for missions education! Research has shown that when churches have WMU, those church members are more involved and give more to missions causes. Education means everything. It is how we develop the next generation of missionaries, and it is how we keep our adults focused on the call to win others to Christ. Meet with church leaders. Review the church objectives with them, asking them about their missions needs.

All four objectives are key. Do you see how your work differs as an associational leader? Your role helps missions education to thrive in the churches. Your leadership will set the tone for how churches prioritize missions.

If you need assistance or you have questions, you can contact your state office and the national WMU office. We are excited to partner with you.