

COSROW Video Resource and Discussion Guide

Background: The [video](#) premiered at the 2019 NCCUMC Annual Conference in Greenville, NC. A collaborative effort between the North Carolina Conference Commission on the Status and Role of Women (COSROW) and NC Conference Communications produced the video to raise awareness about the comments and situations female clergy continue to face. The video was inspired by a similar project by Lutherans of the [NC Synod \(ELCA\)](#)

The NCCUMC female clergy were asked to share, **“Unhealthy/inappropriate comments women in ministry have heard made by parishioners and male clergy.”** Several male pastors were asked to read the statements aloud – they had not seen the statements before filming – so their primary reactions are captured in their facial expressions and tone of voice as they read the comments. The second half of the video is their responses to what they read and how it makes them feel.

Here are three examples of where people are using the video as a tool for change:

1. A male associate pastor showed the video to the church staff prior to the arrival of a new (and first female) senior pastor. The group covenanted to speak up if they heard the new senior pastor demeaned because of her gender.
2. A leader in the conference has said, “If you hear me make any kind of demeaning or sexist comment, call it to my attention right then and there. I want to be able to show other men how to respond to this feedback without defensiveness.”
3. The Conference United Methodist Men leadership council voted unanimously to show the video at their conference leaders’ gathering, and are calling on all UMM units to show it at their meetings.

Resources:

Here are some suggestions to have on hand and share with the group.

From our “Book of Resolutions” (Please refer to the Index in the Book of Resolutions for more related topics.):

- #3442 (pages 397 – 405) “Every Barrier Down: Toward Full Embrace of All Women in Church and Society” (especially bullet points on pages 399 – 400)
- #3443 (pages 405 – 407) “Eradication of Sexism in the Church”
- #8018 (pages 701 – 702) “Support for Clergywomen”

From the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women:

Free, downloadable COSROW studies and resources (“Sexual Misconduct in the Church: Understanding the Role of Power”; “Women Called to Ministry”; and “#MeToo Toolkit.”)

<https://gcsrw.org/Resources/Curriculum.aspx>

NCCUMC Media Center: [Biblical Gender Equality Resources for Men and Women](#)

Christians for Biblical Equality - <https://www.cbeinternational.org/>

Faithtrust Institute - <https://www.faithtrustinstitute.org/>

NC Conference COSROW web page: <https://nccumc.org/cosrow/>.

Please join us on Facebook: *NC Conference Commission on the Status and Role of Women*

Discussion Guide

To the Facilitator

Watch the video prior to showing so you are familiar with it and where there is a break. You will pause the video at one point so be sure to recognize where that point is. Below you will find some questions to open discussion on the content of the video and its reality in the lives of our female clergy. You may choose to scribe notes and comments from the discussion on a flipchart, so be sure to have space to display the comments as each page is filled.

The questions are designed in a particular order, moving from our personal reactions to the meanings of the statements and how they impact current female leaders and those who will follow. If time is an issue, you may choose which questions to use instead of using them all.

Just before the 5-minute mark in the video, this comment is read: "This is a big job for you. And, for us all." The screen then goes dark. Stop the video at this point and ask the group:

QUESTIONS:

1. What are your initial reactions to these comments? (you can ask for explanations or simply go 'popcorn' style with each viewer offering one or two words; record them, if possible)
2. How would you categorize the comments? (Example: several were made about a woman's appearance.)
3. How do you feel about the fact that some of the comments were made by other women? (members of their congregations)
4. Why do you think the comments were made in the first place?
5. These comments could have been made by someone who occupies the same pew as you do each Sunday. What does this say about us – the people in our local churches?
6. What does this say about our views of call and leadership?

After this part of the discussion has concluded, resume the video and listen to the men's responses to the question: "How do these comments make you feel?"

At the close of the video, continue the discussion.

QUESTIONS:

1. What are your initial responses to the reactions offered by the men?
2. Did their comments fall into any particular categories?
3. On what levels were the men affected?
4. Did any offer insights as to how they would respond in the future? If so, what were they?

Final Questions:

1. What's your big 'take away'? What's the message for all of us?
2. How will you respond should you hear similar comments now or in the future?
3. What will YOU do to change this culture that minimizes the ministry of Jesus Christ in our United Methodist Church?

Conclusion - Share this with the group:

COSROW members emphasize, "We can change the culture of demeaning women and your pastors; may we all work together to live the promise of Pentecost today and every day." To make changes, COSROW provides an action list:

- Speak up when someone is demeaned
- Use COSROW studies
- Identify and address salary and leadership gaps
- Male pastors were encouraged to prepare their church for open itineracy, for both female and pastors of color
- Learn and speak about the prevalence of sexual violence
- Address sexual misconduct

"Ask your female pastor about her experiences and then listen. Then ask how you can support her.... Ask yourself, 'How would I want my sister, wife, daughter, or friend to be treated in her own church?'"