

## The Middleseat



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*By Virginia Von Seggern*

An airplane's middle seat is not a popular choice for many people, but I choose it, and some of my most favorite witnessing stories have taken place because of it.

I usually fly with a black LWML tote bag. It can handle lots of wear and tear, and it holds all the extras I need to carry — a book, a bottle of water, the paperwork I need to get done before arriving at my destination. Quite often, I tuck the tote bag under the seat ahead of me, where I can easily reach the contents.

The tote features a bright gold LWML cross printed next to my title "LWML Past President." That graphic and the title serve to identify me, and people frequently ask about the organization. The bag is a terrific conversation starter, and while carrying it I've met a number of Lutherans, pastors, other LWML members, and other Christians.

Recently I was on a plane seated in the middle seat. A young woman rushed onto the plane, looked for one of the remaining seats, and

dropped down beside me. I could tell she had been crying, and she did not appear to want to talk about whatever was bothering her. I sat quietly for the time being.

About halfway through the flight, the young woman had regained her composure, and she began to talk. She said that she noticed the cross on my tote bag and wanted to know whether I was a Christian. Talk about having the door opened! I assured her that I was a Christian and explained the cross on my bag was the logo of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League.

The young woman responded that she was a member of an LCMS church but hadn't attended services for many years. She recognized the cross from her childhood. As we began to talk further, the young woman explained her distress at the beginning of the flight. Her father was not expected to live much longer, and she had been called home to attend to his last moments. She asked me to pray with her, and we did right on the spot. I gave her a small devotional booklet that was in my tote bag, and she gratefully accepted it.

Upon arriving at our destination, she gave me a quick hug, thanked me for the book and the comfort ... and away she went. I've always wondered if her father did in fact go on to his heavenly home or recover, as she hoped he might.

The Lord uses the unpopular middle seat — and provides a seatmate — for some very interesting faith sharing opportunities.

I continue to carry my LWML tote bag and always have a supply of small devotions to give away. I'm ready for my next *Ablaze!* moment.

*Virginia Von Seggern served as LWML President from 1999–2003.*