

Mothers Day Keys

AN INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP RESOURCE FOR MOTHERS DAY NOTES

INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP

Intergenerational (all-age) worship is, first and foremost, worship — an encounter between God and God's people; a dialogue in which God speaks and people respond, both in the worship service and in their lives.

Intentionally intergenerational worship

- allows this dialogue to take place in a variety of ways, engaging several senses
- focuses on a clear theme and connects that theme with the lives of the worshipers
- provides worshipers (young and old) with an experience they can remember and talk about in their homes
- encourages interaction and dialogue among people of the various generations
- takes seriously the understanding that people of all ages worship together in the body of Christ
- recognises and values the children present in the worshiping congregation and 'the child within' each adult.

MOTHERS DAY

The origins of Mothers Day can be traced to a festival in which the ancient Greeks and Romans honoured maternal goddesses.

Mothering Sunday was an annual celebration in the UK, dating from the 1600s. On the fourth Sunday of Lent, there were prayers in church to honour the Virgin Mary and children brought gifts and flowers to pay tribute to their own mothers.

Our present day Mothers Day began in the USA following their Civil War. In 1870, Julia Ward Howe organised a Mothers Peace Day in Boston, Massachusetts. Mrs Howe campaigned for this to become an annual national observance. Her idea spread becoming Mothers Day, celebrated around the world.

Mothers Day is not a part of the official church calendar. It is a secular event, recognising the importance of mothers to families, communities,

nations and the world. Today it is driven primarily by commercial interests.

Mothers Day is a significant day in the lives of many people in your congregation and in the community: a time to get together and show appreciation to mothers.

Rather than encouraging a Mothers Day attitude that 'this is family time, we can't interrupt it for church', let's promote the attitude that worship is a significant part of our observance of Mothers Day — a time to join with our families and our wider church family to worship, recognise and thank the God who gives us Mothers.

USING THIS WORSHIP RESOURCE

These notes have been prepared by the Children and Family Ministry Team of Mission Resourcing SA to help congregations plan worship for Mothers Day that involves children and families as well as youth, young adults, middle-aged and older people.

You may make as many copies of the notes as needed for your worship planners and leaders. The use of music and other copyright elements is not covered in this permission.

Read through all the material. Discuss it as a planning team. You may use any of the ideas that are appropriate in your situation or the entire sample service.

If you use the resource, we would appreciate your letting us know what you do. Send a brief email to children@sa.uca.org.au.

Bible quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the New International Readers Version.

For other intergenerational worship ideas see: <http://sa.uca.org.au/cfm/ministry-leaders/resources/all-age-worship/>

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BIBLE TEXTS

In 2013 Mothers Day (12 May) falls on the last Sunday of the Easter season, the week between the observance of Jesus' Ascension (40 days after Easter) and Pentecost (50 days after Easter). The Revised Common Lectionary texts for Easter 7 are:

- Acts 16:16-34 (Paul and Silas in Philippi)
- Psalm 97 (A psalm of praise)
- Revelation 22:12-14,16,17,20,21 (Jesus' promise to come again)
- John 17:20-26 (Jesus prays for all believers)

THEME

Five key faith ideas for Mothers Day can be drawn from Psalm 97.

1. God is in charge.
2. God is right and fair.
3. God guards us and saves us.
4. We are glad about what God has done.
5. We praise God.

¹ The LORD rules. Let the earth be glad. (1)

His rule is built on what is right and fair. (2)

⁵He is the Lord of the whole earth. (1)

⁶The heavens announce that what he does is right. (2)

¹⁰He guards the lives of those who are faithful to him. (3)



He saves them from the power of sinful people. (3)

¹²You who are godly, be glad because of what the LORD has done. (4)

Praise him, because his name is holy. (5)

PLANNING

It's good to have an intergenerational team to plan an intergenerational worship event. A special team of at least three people, representing the youngest, the middle and the oldest thirds of the congregation can work with the pastor/minister/priest or lay ministry team.

The team may also draw on people who have abilities in the areas of hospitality, music, drama, visual arts and technology.

Planning as an *intergenerational* team can be a valuable experience for all involved.

Suggested planning steps:

1. Begin with prayer, and trust God's Spirit to guide your planning.
2. Look through these notes to see how they can help in planning the service God is leading you to hold.
3. Use your regular worship plan together with these notes and other resources to develop a worship outline.
4. Flesh out the outline, considering your own people, traditions and facilities.
5. Work with worship leaders to plan details: who does what, when and how.

INVITATION AND ADVERTISING

The first people to notify about your service are the members of your congregation. Begin early to let them in on the excitement of what is being planned. Encourage them to catch the vision of a deliberately multi-generational Mothers Day worship.

Mothers Day tends to be a day for families to get together. For many families, this means travelling. Some of your regular worshipers will be travelling to be with family. Some of your regular worshipers will have family visiting them.

What a great thing it could be if worship were part of what the family did together! This may be an opportunity for mothers in your congregation to bring along family members who do not worship regularly.

Be sure to provide a card that people can use as an invitation and reminder for family members about this special worship.

HOSPITALITY

Hospitality is the responsibility of all members of the congregation.

HOSPITALITY DURING WORSHIP

Those people who invite and bring other people to the service have the primary responsibility for looking after their special guests.

A designated **HOSPITALITY TEAM** may have special responsibility for:

- being aware of the safety aspects of the worship space, eg location of alternate exits, location of first aid equipment, identity of people with first aid training
- greeting people as they arrive
- helping people to get settled
Pay special attention to the very young, the very old and people with physical disabilities. Seat them where they will be able to see/hear, but not feel conspicuous
- being alert to needs of people during the service, and assisting as required.

Your hospitality team (also your planning team) need to be aware of the people who may be marginalized by an all-age approach to worship: some teens and young adults, singles, families with no children, people who are experiencing family problems and people who come to worship on their own.

HOSPITALITY BEYOND WORSHIP

There will be people of all ages in your congregation for whom Mothers Day is a non-event or a particularly difficult time:

- people who would like to be with family but cannot
- people who have strained relationships with family
- people who avoid being with family
- people who have no family to be with.

Consider providing a special meal after the service for people who would otherwise be alone on Mothers Day.

Consider having people trained as prayer counselors who can listen to people's concerns about their family relationships.

WORSHIP SPACE & VISUALS

A clean, tidy and attractive worship area can help guests and regular worshippers feel that this is an inviting place to be.

Many people who worship with you are visual thinkers; they take in information and express themselves more easily with images than with words. So make sure that you provide imagery that they can respond to. Involve people with artistic talent and your technology team (if you project images electronically) in creating

memorable visual impact for all worshippers. Be sure that visuals support the intended worship theme.

A key is the 'key' visual image for this service. On page 11 there is a page of key template shapes that you can use in decorating your worship space.

MUSIC

Many people who worship with you are musical thinkers. They take in information and express themselves more easily with music than in other ways. So make sure that you provide music that they can respond to.

Much of the music in worship involves congregational singing. Remember that visitors may not be familiar with — or comfortable with — this practice. Try to select songs for congregational singing with lyrics that do not force people to make faith statements that they do not actually believe. Invite people to sing when they are comfortable doing so or hum or just to listen.

Your regular instrumentalists and vocalists (organist, band, choir) may perform some music as well as leading/accompanying congregational singing. You may also try to involve musicians of all ages who are not regularly part of your music team. Display song words in your usual manner.

Small congregations, or congregations that do not have strong musical leadership, may choose to have the congregation sing with CDs or other recorded music.

Include traditional hymns as well as more contemporary songs and songs written with children in mind.

Find ways to involve young children in the music, even if they do not understand the words of songs, eg

- Parents can hold, bounce, sway or clap hands with very young children.
- Lower primary school aged-children can watch for and join in repeated phrases or hold up their keys when they hear a key word.

SONG SUGGESTIONS

Some songs that relate to the key faith ideas:

- He shall be called (Fragar)
- Glory to the King of kings (Bullock)
- The time has come for justice (Bullock)
- As we lift our hands to worship you (Bullock)
- Let the weak say I am strong (Morgan)
- May our homes be filled with dancing (Morgan)
- All things are possible (Zschech)
- I know it (Zschech)

- You rescued me (Bullock)
- I'm lost for words (Dalton)
- I have heard of your fame (Morgan)
- You are my song (Bullock)
- I just want to praise the Lord (Bullock)
- I will worship you (Bullock)
- Shout to the Lord (Zschech)
- The Heavens shall declare (Bullock)
- All people that on earth do dwell (Kethe)
- Sing to God with joy and gladness (Iona Community)
- You are the Father of creation (Russell-Schlencker)
- You are Lord over night and day (Daniels)
- Your people sing praises (Fragar)

And especially for children:

- I have the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart
- Praise him, praise him, all you little children
- He's got the whole world in his hands (make up verses about mothers and grandmothers)
- Happy Mother's Day to You (adapting 'Happy Birthday to you')
- We love our mummies (adapt 'We love you Conrad' from Bye-bye Birdie)

You may also want to include a more secular Mothers Day song, eg

- Song for Mama (Boyz II Men)
- Mama's Song (Carrie Underwood)

You can find '100 greatest mother songs' at <http://www.digitaldreamdoor.com/pages/best-songs-mother.html>

SOMETHING TO DO

Many people who worship with you are kinaesthetic thinkers; they take in information and express themselves more easily when they are moving or touching, handling or manipulating concrete objects. So make sure that you provide something to do. This may be as simple as holding a hymnal or Bible, or making notes.

In the sample service people are encouraged to handle keys. There's an arrival activity in which all worshipers have the opportunity to make a key to wear on a ribbon around their neck during the service. Adults help children with the making.

You may have a few people who prefer not to be involved in this type of activity. Encourage them to go along or even to help someone who needs assistance. Have some pre-made keys for anyone who realises during the service that they would like to have one.

SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT

Some people who worship with you are relational thinkers; they take in information and express themselves more easily when they have a chance to talk it over with another person. Find ways of allowing this to happen in your service. Possibly make aspects of the service (the prayers, for example) more conversational or provide 'talk about it' spots. Several of these are included in the sample service.

SOMETHING TO TAKE HOME

People like to have souvenirs of special events. Provide something to take home — for all the households represented (including visitors from other areas who are worshipping with their mums).

People are more likely to remember and talk about your message if you provide them with a tangible memento or conversation starter.

In the sample service there is a key for each worshiper; also a '5 Keys for Passing on Faith' sheet that can be given to parents and grandparents.

WORSHIP LEADERS

One person (or a pair of people) is the overall worship leader for the service. Worshipers (particularly guests) will recognise this person as the host/compeer who is responsible for the overall flow of the service.

Several other people (of different ages) can each lead different segments of worship.

For example, the sample service may have

- A craft team to organise the key-making activity
- a hospitality team
- a music team: instrumentalists and vocalists with a song leader
- a technology/projectionist team
- a worship leader
- a Bible reader
- two actors
- five 'speakers' and/or a preacher
- a prayer leader/s.

SERMON

An all age worship service does not require special sermons for people of different ages.

There is a single all-age sermon — short, generally a simple application of the overall theme of the service, and (where possible) incorporating visuals and actions.

If the sermon is for 'adults only', provide a theme-related activity for children to do during

the sermon, preferably sitting with their families in the worship area.

If children undertake a separate activity, allow a time for them to share what they have done with the older worshippers.

Starting points for a Mothers Day sermon could be the Five Key Faith ideas embedded in Psalm 97 or any of the God and Mothers texts listed on page 6.

The sermon is generally seen as 'the teaching' in a worship service. Where the teaching is done elsewhere or in some other way, there may not be a sermon within the worship. You may plan a service with no sermon as such, when the teaching aspect of worship is handled in other ways.

This resource includes a Bible study that can be done by adults, youth or young adults as a preparatory 'teaching' activity for the worship celebration.

UPSIZING & DOWNSIZING

This resource can be used in large or small congregations and can be adapted for use in a home setting.

Each planning group will need to adapt the ideas to suit their own particular situation: the number of people and the size and layout of the facilities.

REHEARSAL

If your service involves a plan, movement, people, props and/or other elements that are different from your regular worship pattern, you will need a rehearsal.

A complete walk-through will pinpoint any logistical problems, allow the worship leader/s to fine-tune instructions for the worshippers and ensure that the service itself runs smoothly.

Worship rehearsal may be combined with regular practice time of your music team.

You can use rehearsal time as an opportunity to pray together.

GOD AND MOTHERS IN THE BIBLE

- So God created man in his own likeness. He created him in the likeness of God. He created them as male and female. (Genesis 1:27)
- Adam named his wife Eve. She would become the mother of every living person. (Genesis 15:8)
- Your father's God helps you. The Mighty One blesses you. He gives you blessings from the highest heavens. He gives you blessings from the deepest oceans. He blesses you with children and with a mother's milk. (Genesis 49:25)
- Honour your father and mother. Then you will live a long time in the land the Lord your God is giving you. (Exodus 20:12)
- May anyone who brings shame on his father or mother be under the Lord's curse. (Deuteronomy 27:16)
- *God gives Hannah a son.* (1 Samuel 1,2)
- *Samuel judges between two 'mothers'.* (1 Kings 3:16-26)
- But you brought me out of my mother's body. You made me trust in you even when I was at my mother's breast. (Psalm 22:9)
- My father and mother may desert me, but the LORD will accept me. (Psalms 27:10)
- Lord, I serve you. I serve you just as my mother did. (Psalm 116:16)
- I have made myself calm and content like a young child in its mother's arms. Deep down inside me, I am as content as a young child. (Psalm 131:2)
- My son, listen to your father's advice. Don't turn away from your mother's teaching. (Proverbs 1:8)
- *Description of a good wife and mother* (Proverbs 31:10-12 and 25-31)
- Listen to me, heavens!
Pay attention to me, earth!
The LORD has said,
"I raised children. I brought them up.
But they have refused to obey me."
(Isaiah 1:2)
- The LORD answers, "Can a mother forget the baby who is nursing at her breast?
Can she stop showing her tender love to the child who was born to her?
She might forget her child.
But I will not forget you. (Isaiah 49:15)
- I will cause peace to flow over her like a river.
I will make the wealth of nations sweep over her like a flooding stream.
You will nurse and be carried in her arms.
You will play on her lap. (Isaiah 66:12,13)
- I taught Israel to walk.
I took them up in my arms.
But they did not realize
I was the one who took care of them.
(Hosea 11:3,4)
- Even though you are evil, you know how to give good gifts to your children. How much more will your Father who is in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!
(Matthew 7:11)
- Jesus said: "Jerusalem! Jerusalem! You kill the prophets and throw stones in order to kill those who are sent to you. Many times I have wanted to gather your people together. I have wanted to be like a hen who gathers her chicks under her wings. But you would not let me!"
(Matthew 23:37)
- Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. She will light a lamp and sweep the house. She will search carefully until she finds the coin. (Luke 15:8)
- *Jesus dying concern for his mother* (John 19:25)
- I remember your honest and true faith. It was alive first in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice. And I am certain that it is now alive in you also. (2 Timothy 1:5)

QUOTES ABOUT MUMS

- Mother's love is the fuel that enables a normal human being to do the impossible. ~ Marion Garretty
- No gift to your mother can ever equal her gift to you – life. ~ Author unknown
- A mother is a person who seeing there are only four pieces of pie for five people, promptly announces she never did care for pie. ~ Tenneva Jordan
- Being a full-time mother is one of the highest salaried jobs... since the payment is pure love. ~ Mildred B. Vermont
- If you have a mom, there is nowhere you are likely to go where a prayer has not already been. ~ Robert Brault
- A suburban mother's role is to deliver children obstetrically once, and by car forever after. ~ Peter De Vries
- Mothers hold their children's hands for a short while, but their hearts forever. ~Author Unknown
- The moment a child is born, the mother is also born. She never existed before. The woman existed, but the mother, never. A mother is something absolutely new. ~ Rajneesh
- All mothers are working mothers. ~Author Unknown
- When you are a mother, you are never really alone in your thoughts. A mother always has to think twice, once for herself and once for her child. ~ Sophia Loren
- A mother understands what a child does not say. ~ Author Unknown
- I remember my mother's prayers and they have always followed me. They have clung to me all my life. ~ Abraham Lincoln
- Women's Liberation is just a lot of foolishness. It's the men who are discriminated against. They can't bear children. And no one's likely to do anything about that. ~ Golda Meir
- A man loves his sweetheart the most, his wife the best, but his mother the longest. ~Irish Proverb
- Before I got married I had six theories about bringing up children; now I have six children, and no theories. ~John Wilmot
- Biology is the least of what makes someone a mother. ~ Oprah Winfrey
- Now that... my kids are grown, I understand how much work and love it takes to raise and to keep a family together. The example of your strength, devotion, and patience is now rippling through the generations. Thank you! ~Forest Houtenschil
- A mom's hug lasts long after she lets go. ~Author Unknown
- A mother's heart is a patchwork of love. ~ Author Unknown
- On Mother's Day I have written a poem for you. In the interest of poetic economy and truth, I have succeeded in concentrating my deepest feelings and beliefs into two perfectly crafted lines: You're my mother, I would have no other! ~ Forest Houtenschil
- Children are a great comfort in your old age - and they help you reach it faster, too. ~ Lionel Kauffman
- Mother is the name for God in the lips and hearts of little children. ~ William Makepeace Thackeray
- Most mothers are instinctive philosophers. ~ Harriet Beecher Stowe
- I don't care how poor a man is; if he has family, he's rich. ~Dan Wilcox and Thad Mumford
- If I had a single flower for every time I think about you, I could walk forever in my garden. ~ Attributed to Claudia Ghandi
- Sweater, n.: garment worn by child when its mother is feeling chilly. ~Ambrose Bierce
- A man's work is from sun to sun, but a mother's work is never done. ~ Author Unknown
- Making the decision to have a child is momentous. It is to decide forever to have your heart go walking around outside your body. ~ Elizabeth Stone
- Each day of our lives we make deposits in the memory banks of our children. ~Charles R. Swindoll
- There is only one pretty child in the world, and every mother has it. ~Chinese Proverb
- Mother's love is the fuel that enables a normal human being to do the impossible. ~ Marion Garretty

FIVE KEYS FOR NURTURING FAITH

Faith is formed by the Holy Spirit through caring personal relationships, most often in the home.

Faith is a gift of God. We cannot give our children faith. It is not an heirloom that can be handed from one generation to another. But mothers and fathers can create a home environment that nurtures faith and provides a fertile environment for growing and shaping faith. Parents — mothers and fathers — are the primary nurturers of children's faith.



Here are five key practices that have proved to be important in faith-nurturing homes.

Example

The way a parent's faith is lived out is a critical factor in nourishing and shaping faith. Children learn from experience. They follow their parents' example more readily than their words.

Pastor and teacher Brian D McLaren dedicated his book *More Ready Than You Realise* to his parents. He wrote: 'They have lived the gospel in beautiful and sacrificial ways. . . Most of what I know about being a Christian they showed me, without words, by the "conversation" of their lives.'

Caring conversation

Conversation using words is important, too. Conversation is a two-way thing: listening and speaking. As parents we demonstrate our care when we really listen to what our children tell us and respond to their concerns with words that reflect God's love and wisdom as well as our own love and wisdom.

It is worth the effort of scheduling a daily, dedicated 'talk time'— after school, during a meal or at bedtime. But our most significant conversations may come at unscheduled times when the children initiate it.

Family devotions

We can worship God together as a family at home as well as in church. We need to do so.

This worship time can take different forms in different families and different situations. It is, in essence, making God part of your caring conversation. That can be done through listening to God as we read parts of the Bible and consider what God is saying to us. It also involves talking with God in prayer.

Many families find it useful to schedule daily 'huddles' when they

- Share together the highs and lows of each person's day
- Read a passage of Scripture
- Talk about the Scripture and it's relation to their highs and lows
- Pray for one another
- Bless one another.

Prayer and informal worship, like other conversation, may come at unscheduled moments and in unanticipated situations.

Family service and hospitality

Faith sees our abilities and our possessions as gifts from God and leads us to use these abilities in unselfish ways. Service of one another and of other people is one of the most significant ways of living out faith.

From their earliest days, children can be a part of the hospitality their parents offer in their home and the service they provide in the community.

Some service is formal and happens through organisations, but equally important is the informal 'lending a hand' when you see someone struggling. Children can be taught to spot others who need their help and to offer it.

Family traditions

Traditions are repeated ways of doing things. Traditions can be a way of shaping a sense of family and belonging — this is the way we do things; I do this because I'm part of the family that does it.

Families develop traditions about a whole range of things. These traditions can have a deliberate faith nurturing aspect, eg

- going to church with mum on Mothers Day
- having a family huddle every night
- asking for God's protection every time you fasten your car seat belt
- ringing up an elderly relative every week
- going to church camp every year
- praying for each person to whom you send a birthday card as you sign the card
- going carolling every Christmas
- taking a gift and an invitation to your home whenever someone moves into the neighbourhood
- saving money by giving up chocolates during Lent and donating the money to a charity
- hugging and saying 'God bless you' as you go off to work or school each day.

A MOTHER'S DAY CONCERN



The lectionary reading for the 7th Sunday in Easter talks about Paul and Silas' mission visit to Philippi. They encounter a young woman who is owned as a slave. The young woman is a fortune teller and recognises the missionaries as people who know about saving people. They, in turn, through the power of the Spirit, save her from her life of slavery.

Slavery is not just past history. It is still a concern at the start of the 20th century. And it's growing at an alarming rate.

It is estimated that 9.1 million men, women and children are trafficked across borders and within their own country at any given moment in time. It is the world's fastest growing global crime.

UNITED NATIONS DEFINITION OF HUMAN TRAFFIKING

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation."
(from Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, supplementing the United Nations convention against transnational organised crime.)

STOP THE TRAFFIK is a global movement of individuals, communities and organisations fighting to prevent human trafficking around the world through local and global action.



STOP THE TRAFFIK,

PEOPLE SHOULDN'T BE BOUGHT & SOLD

WWW.STOPHETRAFFIK.ORG

Local action

STOP THE TRAFFIK aims to turn communities into places where it is harder for traffickers to hide their activities and their victims.

They inform, equip and mobilise people in communities to:

- work together to prevent human trafficking
- know what trafficking is and how to identify it
- know how to protect themselves and others
- know how to respond

Global Action

STOP THE TRAFFIK believes that we are stronger and can create greater change when we work together.

They work through global campaigns to:

- target decision makers to exert their influence to prevent human trafficking
- build the global movement by continually reaching out to new people
- raise money for projects that protect those who are most vulnerable
- gather information from the community to develop up-to-date information to rival the trafficker's network

For more information about what you can do to stop the traffick, see

<http://www.stopthetraffic.org/>

MOTHERS DAY PRAYERS

PRAYERS FOR MOTHERS

1 Loving God, we give thanks today for mothers!
Thank you for mothers who gave birth to us,
and women who have treated us as their own children.

We need your comfort here today, Lord,
because some are missing mothers, some are missing children,
some are parted by distance or death.
Comfort those who have given up their child for adoption,
or who chose not to give birth, and had an abortion.

Teach us all to be good mothers,
cherishing and protecting the children among us — lovingly, fairly, wisely and with great joy.
Help us raise our children to be the people they are born to be. Amen.

2 God our Father, Life-giver,
you cannot forget the child you created.
God our Mother, Life-sustainer,
you cannot forget the child you nurse.
God our Parent, our Protector,
you are an ever present help in times of trouble.
You are the champion of the orphan,
you seek out the lost and the lonely;
the smallest lamb will not escape your notice.
You carry us in your arms,
you speak tenderly,
you seek justice for us.
You provide a place for us,
people who shepherd us and take us into their own flock.
You raise up communities of nurturers,
groups of people who will not let a single little one be lost.
Guardian of us all,
we give you thanks for mothers, fathers
and all who foster us;
gifts from your tender hands. Amen.

CHILDREN'S PRAYER FOR MUMS

Dear heavenly Father, thank you for giving me my mum. I love her and I know she loves me.
Please help my mum put up with me when I make her life hard, when I don't always listen to her and obey her.
Please help her to be strong, smart, patient and kind and happy.
I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Find more Mothers Day prayers at:
www.mothersdaycelebration.com/mothers-day-prayers.html and
www.godweb.org/mothersdayprayer.htm

MUMS' PRAYER FOR THEIR CHILDREN

Heavenly Father,
Thank you for giving me a child to love and care for. It is such an awesome responsibility. I can't begin to cope without your help each and every day.
Please watch over my child when I can't be with them — and when I can. Keep them safe.
Give them joy and peace, confidence in themselves and trust in you.
I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

GRANDMOTHERS' PRAYER FOR THEIR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN

Our Heavenly Father,
Thank you for the privilege of having children and grandchildren in my life.
The love you have given me for these people has helped me understand, in part, the great love you have for all your children.
May they, too, know and trust your love and power. Please keep them safe. Give them joy and peace and love.
I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

VIDEO PRAYERS

<http://www.andiesisle.com/amothersdayprayer.html>

FIVE KEY FAITH THOUGHTS AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

We believe that God is in charge of everything — in heaven and on earth, so we pray:

Our Father in Heaven,
Hallowed by your name

We believe that God is right and fair, and we want God to help us to be right and fair ourselves, so we pray:

Your kingdom come
Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

We believe that God takes care of us, guards and saves us. So we pray:

Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Do not bring us to the time of trial
but deliver us from evil.

We are glad that God listens to our prayer and we praise God as we pray:

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
Now and forever. Amen.

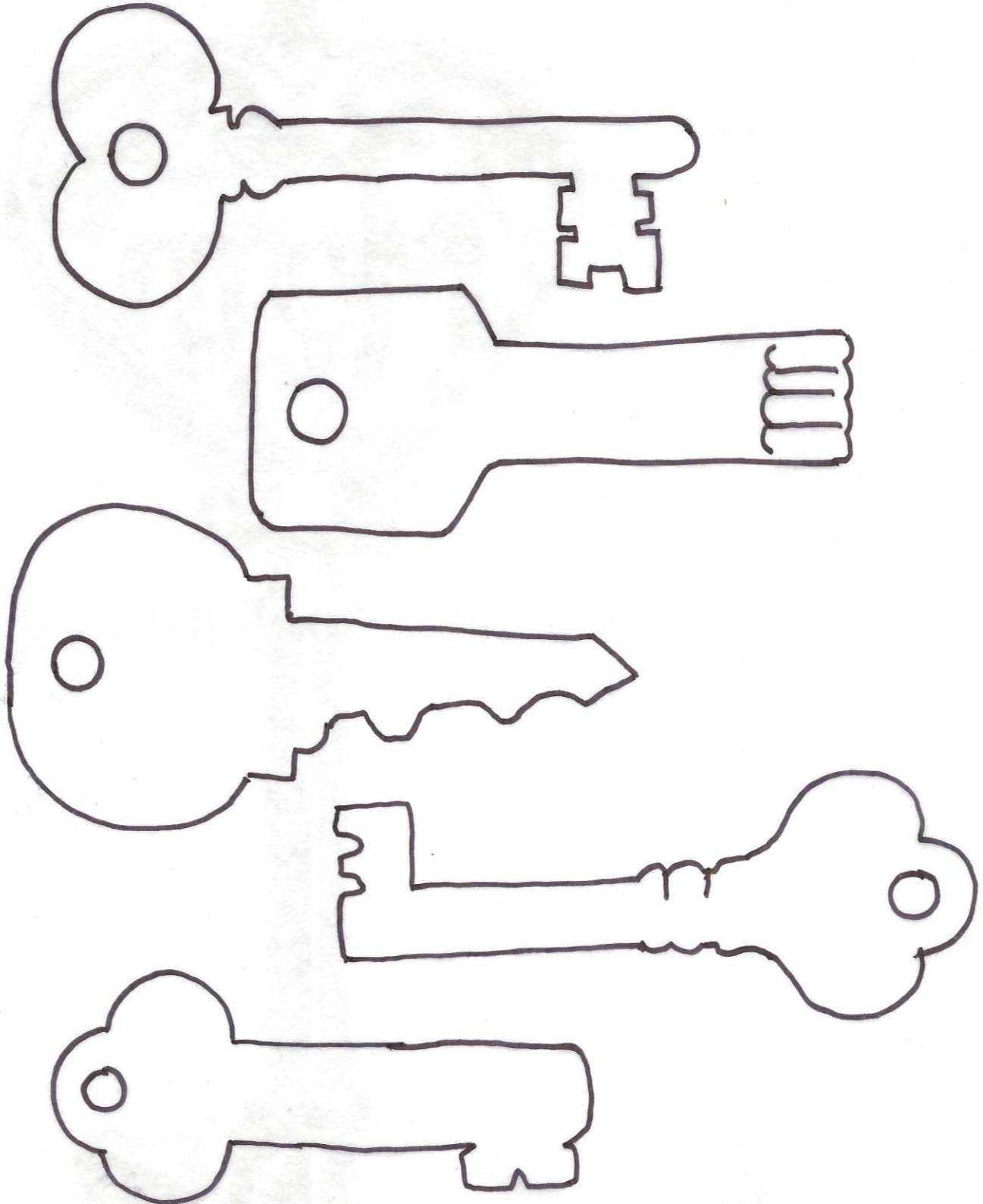


KEY TEMPLATES

Enlarge and copy the keys pattern onto card and provide a key outline for each person. You may use the same shape for everyone or provide a variety (some are easier to cut than others).

People cut out the key and punch a hole where indicated (reinforce the hole) and thread it on a ribbon (lanyard) to wear around their necks during worship.

Decorate one side of the key, if you wish, but leave the other side for writing on.



GOD AND MUMS

A MOTHERS DAY BIBLE STUDY FOR TEENS AND ADULTS

GETTING STARTED

Each person thinks of 3-5 words you would use to describe your own mother (or a person you think of as 'mum'). Compile a list of these words and display the list so everyone can see it during the study.

SOME BACKGROUND

Read and discuss briefly the following statements:

- God is neither male nor female. God is God.
- Our language reflects a human inability to comprehend a living being as genderless.
- For God's own good reason God has revealed himself using the term 'Father'.
- In the Bible the title 'Mother' is never used for God. However there are in the Bible some passages that invite us to think of God with some of the characteristics we associate with a mother.

GETTING INTO THE BIBLE

Each person chooses one of these passages. Work independently to read the passage in context: check out the book, its author, its intended audience in the notes and read the verses before and after your passage.

Be prepared to tell the group how you think combined with helps you to understand some aspect of God.

Psalm 27:10

Psalm 131:2

Isaiah 1:2

Isaiah 49:15

Isaiah 66:12,13

Matthew 7:11

Matthew 23:37

Luke 15:8

When you have completed your independent research, each person reports to the whole group. For each passage, look at your list of 'mother words' and pick the words that best relate to the passage. If necessary, add words to your list.

PRAYER

Join in prayer with each person (if you are willing to do so) saying a praise prayer to God that incorporates one of your 'mother words'.

MOTHERS' DIALOGUE

(based on Acts 16:16-34)

Two women are sitting on stools. They are shelling peas, knitting or doing something else to keep their hands busy as they chat together.

Anna is the mother of a slave girl (Judith) and **Barbara** is the wife of a jailer (Jonas).

The dialogue may be presented live in the worship service; however it may be easier and less stressful for the actors to video-tape a performance that can be shown during worship.

A: (*Big sigh*) Did you ever notice how all the stories in the Bible get told from a man's point of view.

B: Isn't it the truth! You'd almost think we weren't there at all.

A: But we were.

B: Your daughter Judith did get a mention in the Book of Acts though. But not by name.

A: Well, to be fair. The story was actually about Paul and Silas — and God.

B: But it was your story too. How do you recall it?

A: Back in those days, I thought my heart would break. My girl was in trouble and there was nothing I could do to help. We were dirt poor, you know. The only way the family could survive was to sell one of us into slavery.

A: We chose Judith because she had a special gift. She could tell ahead of time what was going to happen. That made her worth more money than the rest of us.

B: How awful! She was worth more than money to you.

A: (*on the verge of tears*) We had to do it.

B: Do you want to go on?

A: Yes. Just a moment.

(She wipes her eyes. And works with her hands for a few moments, then continues):
Then came the day — the worst of days and the best of days in the same day — a day the missionaries Paul and Silas were here in Philippi.
The moment Judith saw them, she knew.

B: What did she know?

A: That they were special men of God. She followed them wherever they went preaching to the crowds. She shouted 'These men serve the Most High God. They are telling you how to be saved.'

She kept this up for many days.

I got really worried. Maybe she was losing her mind.

One day Paul became upset. He turned to the spirit that gave her her special ability.

He said: 'In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you to come out of her!'

And at that very moment the spirit left her.

B: Really?

A: Yes. I was more afraid for her then than I had ever been. What would her owners do when they realised that their hope of making money was gone? Would they beat her, kill her?

B: But they didn't. Did they?

A: No. They didn't turn against her, but against Paul and Silas.

They left Judith to come home with me. She was free and I was overjoyed. Her prediction was true. Paul and Silas really did know about saving people.

That's when your story begins.

B: My worst of nights and best of nights.

A: Funny how that often happens, isn't it!

B: Oh yes. Bests and worsts coming together.

I used to think that being the jailer's wife was the worst possible situation a woman could be in. I hated it. I felt like I was a slave as much as Judith was. I not only had to take care of my husband and children, I had to look after the prisoners' meals too.

Jonas was pretty fed up with his job, but it was the only thing he could find to do. People looked at him as if he was just like his prisoners.

And they looked at me as if . . .

A: (Puts out a hand to touch B's arm): Yes dear, I know. People can be awful.

B: That's OK. I did a lot of feeling sorry for myself those days. Jonas got more and more depressed and hard to live with. I was worried about the kids living right there by the jail. It was a bad time.

A: But then . . .?

B: Those men who had owned your Judith dragged Paul and Silas to the authorities in the market place and brought charges against them: 'These men are Jews. They are making trouble in our city. They are suggesting practices that are against Roman law.'

A: But they weren't doing that!

B: Well, that's what the charges were when they brought Paul and Silas to the prison — after they stripped and whipped them. They told Jonas that Paul and Silas were dangerous and he must guard them carefully.

Jonas put them in the most secure part of the prison and fastened their feet. He was worried what might happen to him if they escaped.

A: And because he was worried, you were too.

B: Of course. But eventually we all settled down for the night. I couldn't sleep. I imagined I heard singing coming from the prison. But it wasn't my imagination. There was singing.

A: Really!

B: We often heard noises from the prison — awful noises. But this was different. Suddenly there was an earthquake.

A: I remember the earthquake! It shook the whole area.

B: It shook the prison from top to bottom. The prison doors flew open. All the prisoners' chains came loose.

Jonas woke up. He saw that the prison doors were open. He assumed the prisoners had escaped. He pulled out his sword and was going to kill himself.

Ohhhh. I had no idea what to do.

A: That's when your worst night started turning into your best night.

B: We heard a voice shouting: 'Don't harm yourself! We are all here!'

Jonas put down his sword and got a light. He rushed into the prison, shaking with fear.

It was Paul who had shouted. And he was right. The prisoners were all there.

Something happened to Jonas then. He brought Paul and Silas over to the house and asked them what he had to do to be saved.

A: He recognised what Judith did. These men knew about saving people — from slavery

B: And from fear and other things. I'm not really sure what Jonas actually wanted to be saved from.

Paul simply said: 'Believe in the Lord Jesus. Then you and your family will be saved.'

A: 'Your family.' Aha. You got a mention in the story too.

B: Yes. We were all saved. Not by Paul and Silas. By Jesus. They told us all about Jesus that night while Jonas washed their wounds and I gave them something to eat.

Paul and Silas baptised us — all of us. It was the start of better times for us. We believe in God. We were saved from the bad habits of selfishness and not considering one another. I can only say that we actually were 'filled with joy'.

A: There's not a day goes by that I don't praise God for what Jesus did — especially giving me back my child.

B: And that joy my family felt on our best day is in our hearts every day.

A: (to the audience) That's the way the mums might have told the story.



Mothers Day Keys

SAMPLE WORSHIP PLAN

Suggested wording for some sections is printed in *italics*.

1. ARRIVAL

As people arrive, each one makes a cardboard key to have with them during worship. See patterns and instructions on page 11 and additional suggestions on page 4.

HOSPITALITY TEAM greets people as they arrive.

- say 'Happy Mothers Day'
- help people find appropriate seats
- give them any materials they need for worship (including a pencil to write on their key) and generally help them get settled.

MUSIC TEAM may play quietly tunes of songs that will be used in worship or a familiar 'mother' song (not necessarily Christian).

TECH TEAM: may show photos of mums from your congregation with their children (all ages).

2. WELCOME

WORSHIP LEADER: *Welcome to our Mothers Day celebration.*

We're here to honour mums. More than that, we are here to worship God who starded the idea of mothers and families.

During this service you're going to be doing some things in small groups — your family or the people sitting close to you. Be sure to invite anyone who seems to be alone into your family. Look around you and see who will be in your 'family' this morning.

You may be wondering why you all have keys around your neck. All will be revealed as we go along.

For now, I have a job for the kids. Kids, I want you to be listening carefully to everything we say. When you hear the word 'key' — and you will hear it lots of times — just touch your key.

I just said 'key'. Did you touch your key?

Oops I said it again. Did you touch it this time?

3. OPENING SONG

TECH TEAM may display the words of the song

MUSIC TEAM leads the congregation in singing 'As we lift our hands to worship you' or another 'start of worship' song.

4. INTRODUCING KEY THEME

WORSHIP LEADER: *Did you know that a long time ago, a mum would wear a chain of keys on her belt. It showed that she was the 'lady of the house'.*

Today most mums still carry keys. Some carry them on their belt loops; some carry them in their handbags.

For a few minutes, gather in your family group. Mums, please show the others the keys that you are carrying and talk about what each key does and why it's important that you have it with you.

Allow time. After (3) minutes the **MUSIC or TECH TEAM** can give a key jangling (or another sound) signal for people to return their attention to the worship leader.

WORSHIP LEADER: *Thank you.*

There are other kinds of keys, aren't there. There are keys on a computer or phone. And we sometimes call the main ideas of something the 'key' thoughts.

Today we're going to look at five key thoughts about God. For many of you they may be key ideas that were first told to you by your mother. They come from the Bible.

Did you know that a long time ago, Bibles used to be kept locked up. Only people who had the keys could read them.

Today, Bibles are easy to get, almost everyone can have one. We don't need keys to open a Bible, but sometimes having some key ideas in mind can help us understand what we read in the Bible.

5. FIRST BIBLE READING (PSALM 97)

BIBLE READER: *I think it's neat that five of those **keys** to understanding the Bible are right here in the middle of the Bible — in Psalm 97.*

(Show the location of Psalms in a Bible.)

Let me read them to you.

BIBLE READER reads as follows. **TECH TEAM** displays the five **key** ideas as shown.

¹ *The LORD rules. Let the earth be glad.*

⁵ *He is the Lord of the whole earth.*

➔ **1: God is in charge.**

His rule is built on what is right and fair.

⁶ *The heavens announce that what he does is right.*

➔ **2: God's ways are right and fair.**

¹⁰ *He guards the lives of those who are faithful to him.*

He saves them from the power of sinful people.

➔ **3: God protects us and saves us.**

¹² *You who are godly, be glad because of what the LORD has done.*

➔ **4: We are glad about what God does.**

Praise him, because his name is holy. (5)

➔ **5: We praise God for what he is and does.**

6. SONG

TECH TEAM may display the words of the song, while

MUSIC TEAM leads the congregation in singing the hymn 'All people that on earth do dwell' or another song that reflects one or more of the key faith statements.

In sections 7-11, the five key faith ideas are dealt with individually.

The same pattern is used for each key.

But the speakers and their stories in each section are different.

Speakers should represent a cross section of ages and both genders. In some cases the 'speaker' could be two people from a family. Speakers may give

- a 'My mamma always told us . . .' kind of statement
- a 'I try to help my children by . . .' statement
- the story of an event in their family
- a favourite family song or Bible story/verse that reflects the idea . . .
- or something else from their own experience.
- If it makes speakers more comfortable, the worship leader may interview them with some leading questions (agreed on before hand).

7. KEY 1: GOD IS IN CHARGE

TECH TEAM displays the key idea.

WORSHIP LEADER: *I wonder what it means in our families and especially today on Mothers Day that God is in charge.*

WORSHIP LEADER introduces a speaker who tells briefly (3-4 minutes) in their own words what it means in their family to know that God is in charge.

SPEAKER 1

WORSHIP LEADER: *Thanks, [name].*

*Remember those **keys** around your neck. Now is the time when you can write the first **key** idea on the back of your paper **key**.*

8. KEY 2: GOD'S WAYS ARE RIGHT AND FAIR

TECH TEAM displays the key idea.

WORSHIP LEADER: *I wonder what it means in our families and especially today on Mothers Day that God's ways are right and fair.*

WORSHIP LEADER introduces a speaker who tells briefly (3-4 minutes) in their own words what it means in their family to know that God's ways are right and fair.

SPEAKER 2

WORSHIP LEADER: *Thanks, [name].*

*Now is the time when you can write the second **key** idea on the back of your paper **key**.*

9. KEY 3: GOD GUARDS AND SAVES US

TECH TEAM displays the key idea.

WORSHIP LEADER: *I wonder what it means in our families and especially today on Mothers Day that God guards and saves us.*

WORSHIP LEADER introduces a speaker who tells briefly (3-4 minutes) in their own words what it means in their family to know that guards and saves them.

This speaker may want to talk about Jesus as their Saviour through what Jesus did at Easter time.

SPEAKER 3

WORSHIP LEADER: *Thanks, [name].*

*You can write the next **key** idea on the back of your paper **key**.*

10. KEY 4: WE ARE GLAD ABOUT WHAT GOD DOES

TECH TEAM displays the key idea.

WORSHIP LEADER: *I wonder what it means in our families and especially today on Mothers Day that we are glad about what God does.*

WORSHIP LEADER introduces a speaker who tells briefly (3-4 minutes) in their own words what it means in their family to be glad about what God does.

SPEAKER

WORSHIP LEADER: *Thanks, [name].*

*You can write this **key** idea on the back of your paper **key**.*

11. KEY 5: WE PRAISE GOD

TECH TEAM displays the key idea.

WORSHIP LEADER *I wonder what it means in our families and especially today on Mothers Day that we praise God.*

WORSHIP LEADER introduces a speaker who tells briefly (3-4 minutes) in their own words what it means in their family to praise God.

SPEAKER

WORSHIP LEADER: *Thanks, [name].*

*Now you can write the last of our **key** ideas on the back of your paper **key**.*

12. SONG

TECH TEAM may display the words of the song, while

MUSIC TEAM leads the congregation in singing 'Shout to the Lord' or another song that reflects one or more of the key faith statements.

13. GOSPEL STORY

BIBLE READER: *Listen to a story from the Bible — Acts chapter 16. These are not the exact words from the Bible, but . . .*

TWO ACTORS present the Mothers Day Dialogue (page 13,14).

14. SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION or SERMON

TECH TEAM displays the five key faith ideas and the questions below.

WORSHIP LEADER: *It's time for you to work in your small groups again. One person in the group will need to be 'mother' and keep the discussion on track. Mothers should give everyone a chance to contribute to the conversation.*

*Look at the list of **key** ideas that you have written on your **keys**. Think of the story and think how each **key** helps you understand the story. How does the story show that God is in charge? That God is just? That God saves people? That people are glad and praise God?*

*You may tick off the **key** ideas as you discuss them.*

Allow time. After (5-6) minutes the **MUSIC or TECH TEAM** can give a **key** jangling (or another) signal for people to return their attention to the worship leader.

OR Instead of the discussion a

PREACHER may present an interpretation of the story based on the five key ideas.

15. SONG:

WORSHIP LEADER: *One of the ways we can show our joy and praise God is with a song.*

Let's sing a song now that many of you have known for a long time.

MUSIC TEAM leads the congregation in singing 'He's got the whole world in his hands'. Encourage people to move/dance to the music and to make up verses about mothers and grandmothers).

TECH TEAM displays words of the song.

16. PRAYERS

PRAYER LEADER/s lead worshipers in general prayers for themselves and others

and/or a special Mothers Day prayer (see page 10 for suggestions)

and/or The Lord's Prayer.

TECH TEAM displays words of any prayers people are to join in.

17. OFFERING

WORSHIP LEADER Another way we can praise God is by joyfully giving gifts to God. What God really wants from us is our hearts — our faith and our love.

God accepts our gifts of money as a sign of our faith and love.

WORSHIP LEADER (or a congregational leader) explains briefly how the offerings are used to help people. If there is a special cause supported through a Mothers Day offering, explain it.

You have an opportunity to give an offering now, if you wish to do so.

The offering is collected in your usual manner.

18. MUSIC DURING OFFERING

As the offering is collected (or afterward) the **MUSIC TEAM** may perform a musical item of their choice.

19. SENDING AND BLESSING

WORSHIP LEADER: *On Mothers Day we thank God for Mothers; particularly for mothers who help us understand that God is in charge, God is right and fair, God protects and saves us; mothers who show us how to be glad about God and to praise him.*

*Please take your paper **key** home with you. Keep it as a reminder of our five really important Mothers Day **keys**.*

Now, may the love of God the father, the grace of Jesus Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you this Mothers Day and always. Amen.

20. CLOSING SONG

TECH TEAM displays the words of the song, while

MUSIC TEAM leads the congregation in singing 'May our homes be filled with dancing'.

21. AFTER WORSHIP

Worshippers are invited to the space where tea, coffee and fruit cordial are available along with other Mothers Day treats (possibly made by children or teens).

You may also have displays and information that members and guests can access about

- justice issues and projects, eg Stop the Traffik (see page 9)
- activities of your congregation that impact on women, particularly mothers and grandmothers
- faith nurturing in homes (see page 8).

