



AN INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP RESOURCE for Mothers Day

In Australia, Mothers Day is observed on the second Sunday in May.
The chrysanthemum has become the 'official' flower of Mothers Day.

Mothers Day is a secular holiday, driven to a large extent by commercial interests.
As Christians we are commanded to honour our mothers at all times — including Mothers Day.

This service is a celebration of God's gift of mothers.

The lectionary texts for 8 May 2011 include this key verse:

I worship you as my mother did. Psalm 116:16

ALL AGE WORSHIP

All-age (intergenerational) worship is, first and foremost, worship. Worship is 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
- focuses on a simple 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
- involves several of the senses
- includes some surprises and fun
- takes seriously the understanding that people of all ages worship together in the body of Christ. People of all ages can also plan worship, invite people to worship, and lead worship
- recognises and values the children present in the worshipping congregation and 'the child within' each adult.

Mothers Day is by definition intergenerational. Worship on Mothers Day can be an opportunity for conversation with God on the topic of mothers and motherhood.

USING THIS RESOURCE

These notes have been prepared by the Children and Family Ministry team of the Uniting Church SA to help congregations plan a special all-age worship service for Mothers Day.

You may make as many copies of the notes as you need for your worship planners and leaders.

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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 you may use 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

For other intergenerational worship ideas see <http://mrn.sa.uca.org.au/> Click on 'Children's Ministry', then 'All-Age Worship'.

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Planning notes

THEME

The theme for this Mothers Day worship is Psalm 116:16: 'I worship you as my Mother did.'

We consider the ways mothers can influence their children's faith as we celebrate God's gift of mothers. As we honour mothers, we honour God who gives us mothers.

We also use the image of chrysanthemum flowers (mums) as we talk about our mums.

BIBLE READINGS

The Revised Common Lectionary readings for 8 May (Third Sunday of Easter – A) are:

- Acts 2:14a, 36-41 (Peter's Pentecost Sermon)
- Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19 (Song of praise)
- 1 Peter 1:17-23 (Peter's call to Godliness)
- Luke 24:13-35 (The walk to Emmaus)

Although, at first glance they do not appear to be 'Mothers Day' texts, these lectionary readings informed the sample service.

WORSHIP PLANNING

It's a good idea to plan an all-age worship service with an all-age team. Planning as an intergenerational team can be a valuable experience for all involved.

If women ordinarily take the main role in organising worship, this service mothers may be an excellent time for men and children to take on these roles, giving mums a break.

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

SUGGESTED PLANNING STEPS:

- Begin with prayer, and trust God's Spirit to guide your planning.
- Consider how the theme relates to people in your congregation and community.
- Look through these notes to see how they can help in planning your service.
- Use these notes together with your regular worship format to develop a worship outline.
- Flesh out the outline; consider your own people and facilities.
- Work with worship leaders to plan details: who does what, when and how.

In planning this service be particularly careful you don't make inaccurate assumptions about the families and mothers who will be worshipping

with you. And be sensitive to people who may feel marginalised on Mothers Day, eg

- people whose mothers are not with them at this time
- people who have recently lost mothers through death or another circumstance
- mothers who have lost children through death or other circumstances
- women (couples) who would like to have children but have been unable to do so
- people who have been hurt or abused by, or who are experiencing strained relationships with their mother
- people who live alone either by choice or by circumstances and will feel excluded by any emphasis on family relationships.

INVITATION AND ADVERTISING

Help members of your congregation catch the vision of an all age worship experience for Mothers Day.

Encourage grandparents and godparents of children (including adult children) who do not worship regularly to see this as a special way to observe Mothers Day.

Encourage children and young families whose mothers do not worship regularly to see this as an opportunity to invite mothers (and other female carers) to share a worship experience with them.

Invite families involved in your church's children's programs: playgroup, Sunday school, kids club, day care, etc. Invite people from organizations that use your church's facilities.

Be sure to include the date, time and location of the service in all of your promotional material.

WORSHIP SPACE & VISUALS

A clean, tidy worship area underlies any special decoration.

Call on people with technical and artistic skills to create an atmosphere that supports the theme of the service.



Chrysanthemums are abundant at this time of the year. The Chrysanthemum has become *the* Mothers Day flower in Australia.

Decorate your worship space with potted live chrysanthemums or cut flowers — the more the better!

Each family could be asked to bring a potted plant for the service and take it home afterward. Alternatively, the flowers could be given to women in a nursing home or in your community with greetings from the congregation.

Give each mother — or, better still, every worshiper — a chrysanthemum to wear.

In some communities, white chrysanthemums honour a deceased mother and coloured chrysanthemums honour a living mother.

Consider showing a PowerPoint slide show as people arrive.

- Photos of chrysanthemums.
www.slideshare.net/twincreekmedia/chrysanthemum-festival-lahr-germany-3470349 has a series of slides of the October Chrysanthemum Festival in Lahr, Germany.
- photos of a range of mothers
- photos of kids from your congregation with their mums, grandmothers or other female carers
-
- kids' drawings of their mums.

MUSIC

Most of the music in the service will be congregational singing. All worshipers are invited to participate. You may also use some instrumental or sung performance or recorded music in the service.

Remember that some people may not happily join in with congregational singing. Make it clear that it is OK just to sit and listen to the music.

Your regular instrumentalists (organist, band) lead/accompany the singing. Display song words in your usual manner.

For an all-age service Include traditional hymns as well as more contemporary songs and songs for children.

For the benefit of children and visitors, explain briefly any obscure images or unfamiliar language in the songs.

Consider ways of involving children who are too young to read the words, eg

- teach Auslan symbols or other actions for some key words in the song and ask everyone to do the actions when they come to the words in the song (See www.auslan.org.au for a dictionary of signs)
- teach one or two lines that are repeated in the chorus and give a cue when everyone can join in singing these lines
- give children a percussion instrument to play during some songs.

Small congregations, or congregations that do not have strong musical leadership, may sing with CDs or other electronic music.

SONG SUGGESTIONS

Songs my mother taught me: Consult with a number of congregation members. Compile a list of 'songs/hymns my mother taught me'. Choose songs for this service from your list. The person who nominated each song can introduce it in the service and explain any special meaning it has for them.

Otherwise use some of these or other songs that are familiar to your congregation and that they can sing comfortably.

Traditional hymns

- *Fairest Lord Jesus* (Munster Gesangbuch; trans. Various)
- *Praise and thanksgiving, Father we offer* (Bayly)
- *Faith of our Fathers* (Faber)
A. B. Patton has written a rather sentimental Mothers version. See [users.staragate.net/~bmames/ht0088 .htm](http://users.staragate.net/~bmames/ht0088.htm)

Contemporary songs:

- *Bind us together* (Gillman)
- *God loves you and I love you* (Mann)
- *God of Abraham* (Farrell)
Choose some of the mother verses
- *One family* (Strelan)
- *May the Lord bless you today* (Russell-Schlenker)
- *Open the eyes of my heart, Lord* (Smith)
- *Thank you Father for everything* (Boucher)

Some songs for children:

- *He's got the whole world in his hands*
include verses 'fathers and mothers', 'sons and daughters'
- *God gives* (Boucher)
- *All things bright and beautiful, there is an Australian version of this traditional song. For this service, weave in the word chrysanthemum*

Mothers Day song

Tom Chapin's song 'Mothers' Day' is a humorous secular song about family observation of Mothers Day. A recording of the song could be played as people assemble in the worship area. You could make a feature of the song by having children present it (singing with the recording) or having a family do a skit, miming the activities mentioned in the song. 'Mothers' Day' is on the album *Moonboat*. You can download it as MP3 through Amazon. Google 'Mothers Day + Tom Chapin' to find a couple of versions on youtube.

CHILDREN'S CONTRIBUTION

A children's contribution to this service could take almost any form; eg

- make invitations and give them to mums and nanas

- greet worshipers and hand out chrysanthemums for people to wear
- pray for mums and grandmas
- sing a song for/about mothers
- bless mums
- perform a dance or skit about mums

Ideally the children's contribution will come from the children. Ask them what they might contribute to a special Mothers Day service.

As much as possible, use the children's suggestions and involve the children in planning and carrying out the details.

A performance by children can be a drawing card for parents and grandparents. But it should be more than this. A children's performance will honour mothers and honour God who gives us mothers.

Be sensitive to children who do not have mothers or whose mothers are unlikely to participate in a church event.

HOSPITALITY

Hospitality is the responsibility of all members of the congregation. People who invite and bring people to the service have the primary responsibility for looking after their special guests.

A designated **HOSPITALITY TEAM** may have responsibilities that include:

- being aware of the safety aspects of the worship space, eg location of alternate exits, fire extinguishers and 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 handicaps. 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.

You may make Mothers Day a day-off for those mothers who regularly serve as worship hosts and have other duties in worship. Consider challenging single adults to honour mothers by allowing your usual hospitality folks to sit with their families for this worship service.

Alternatively, you may arrange to have family groups perform hospitality duties together.

Be sure to give every mother attending the service a special welcome.

WORSHIP LEADERS

Your minister/pastor/priest or your regular worship leader may lead intergenerational worship. Alternatively, the worship can be led by another

person or several people representing different generations (genders or ethnic backgrounds).

The sample service involves leadership roles for:

- A WORSHIP LEADER
- MUSIC TEAM/SONG LEADER
- HOSPITALITY TEAM
- TECH TEAM
- PRAYER LEADER/s,
- PREACHER
- TEENS who lead a pre-service activity.

SERMON

A sermon in an all-age worship service should be an all-age sermon. This means it's short and simple — generally no more than three points. Stories, illustrations and interactive dialogue can be helpful.

If an adults-only sermon is used, you will need to organize an activity for children to do during the sermon.

It's good to follow the adage: first tell people what you are going to say, say it, and then tell them what you said. If you do each step in a different, engaging way, people of all ages are likely to remember the message.

UPSIZING & DOWNSIZING

These Mothers Day worship ideas can be used in large or small congregations. They can also be used in a home setting.

Each planning group will need to adapt the ideas to suit their own particular situation: people, traditions and facilities.

REHEARSAL

Because this service will be different from your usual service, it requires careful planning. It also requires rehearsal. A complete walk-through will pinpoint any logistical problems, allow the worship leader/s to fine-tune instructions for the worshipers and ensure that the service itself runs smoothly.

Use rehearsal time as an opportunity to pray together.

- Praise God for his love and care.
- Thank God that you, as a team, have the privilege of leading people in worship.
- Ask God to bring people to worship who need to hear the good news.
- Ask God to be with all who worship with you — especially the mothers and grandmothers.
- Ask God to accept your planning and worship leading as acts of love and service to him.
- Ask God to bless your efforts and to work through what you do and say — to his glory and the benefit of all worshipers.



GOD'S COMMAND ABOUT HIS GIFT OF MOTHERS

Honour your father and your mother so that you will live a long time in the land that the Lord your God is going to give you. (Exodus 20:12)

The Ten Commandments are listed in Exodus 20 as part of the account of the tribes of Israel becoming a unified people through forty years wandering in the wilderness. To this day, God's people see the Ten Commandments as a summary of God's law — the way he directs and expects us to live in relationship with him and with one another.

The Ten Commandments are the basis of secular law in this and many other countries.

One of these commandments is particularly significant to us on Mothers Day: Honour your father and your mother.

Why should we honour parents?

(1) God tells us to honour them. So honouring them is obeying and honouring God.

Children, obey your parents as the Lord wants, because this is the right thing to do. (Ephesians 6:1)

(2) God promises good things to those who honour their parents.

This is the first command that has a promise with it — then everything will be well with you, and you will have a long life on the earth. (Ephesians 6:2,3)

Obeying God by honouring parents brings not so much living to a ripe old age, but enjoying the blessings of happiness, health, family, peace, good government, etc. for several generations.

(3) Parents represent God in our lives.

It is our duty to show the world that we are grateful for all the good things we have received from our parents. They are the ones through whom God has given us so much — physically, materially and spiritually.

How should we honour our parents?

We should show by our attitude that we look on them as having the highest status after God — no matter what their failings may be.

Honouring parents involves such things as:

- loving them
- being of service to them

- speaking kindly to them and about them
- doing cheerfully what they ask us to do
- looking after them when they are old, sick, frail or poor.

We do this respectfully and enjoy doing it.

Nothing is to count more than the will and word of parents. However, while still honouring our parents, we are to refuse to obey them when they tell us to do what is sinful.

We must obey God, not human authority! (Acts 5:29)

What does God require of parents?

God requires that parents be worthy of love and respect.

Every parent is to bring up his children above all to respect and know God.

Such parents do not make their children angry, but raise them with the training and teaching of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)

Who are the parents we honour?

We honour four kinds of parents:

- parents by blood relationships,
- parents in charge of a household,
- parents of their people, eg teachers, employers, government leaders,
- spiritual parents who encourage and guide us by God's word. Paul wrote: *'Through the Good News I became your father in Christ Jesus.'* (1 Corinthians 4:15)

... and the good news

No human parent can, by himself or herself, completely fulfil their God-given role.

No child can, by himself or herself, completely fulfil their duty as a child.

Jesus was the perfect Son of the perfect Father. Yet he chose to pay the penalty for our shortcomings and our wilful disobedience.

Because of this, we are restored to the roles God intended for us in our relationship with God and with one another.



The term 'Mother' is used over 300 times in the Bible. Sometimes it refers to animal mothers. When it refers to human mothers it sometimes identifies individuals and sometimes to motherhood and characteristics of mothers in general.

Bible mothers represent the whole range of status, personality and character. There are few if any traits, flaws, weaknesses, virtues or strengths of mothers today that won't find a parallel in the Bible.

MOTHERHOOD IN GENERAL

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)

If anyone attacks his father or mother, he will be put to death. (Exodus 21:15)

He gives children to the woman who doesn't have any children. He makes her a happy mother in her own home. Praise the Lord. (Psalms 113:9)

A foolish child makes his father sad and his mother sorry. (Proverbs 17:25)

While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside. They wanted to speak to him. Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside. They want to speak to you."

Jesus replied to him, "Who is my mother? And who are my brothers?" Jesus pointed to his disciples. He said, "Here is my mother! Here are my brothers! Anyone who does what my Father in heaven wants is my brother or sister or mother." (Matthew 12:46-50)

INDIVIDUAL MOTHERS

Mothers mentioned by name in the Old Testament include Eve, Sarah, Rebekah, Leah, Hagar, Naomi, Hannah, Abigail, Jochebed, Zippora.

Adam named his wife Eve. She would become the mother of every living person. (Genesis 3:20)

In the New Testament: Elizabeth, Mary, Claudia, Drusilla, and Eunice and Lois:

I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also . . . from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 1:5, 3:15). Some women were identified by some characteristic, eg the widow of Zarephath, the widow of Nain, the wise woman of Tekoah.

Many others are known simply as the mother of Jeremiah, Elisha, Micah, etc.

GOD AS MOTHER

Today some people speak of God as Mother. They have noted that the Bible contains many images and metaphors illustrating God's maternal care for all creation. See, for example:

My father and mother may desert me, but the Lord will accept me. (Psalm 27:10)

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)

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)

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! (Luke 13:34)

The issue is not so much the gender of God, but how the love of God transcends differences of gender, and everything else that divides us and brings us into conflict — as individuals, in families and in societies.



There are some valid arguments against celebrating Mothers Day in church. These cluster around two ideas:

- this is the time of year to celebrate the resurrected Lord Jesus, not our mothers
- the celebration exacerbates the problems of people who are conflicted in their family relations.

On the other side of the coin, secular Mothers Day is a reality in our culture. It can be a point where churches meet people where they live. A church's observation of Mothers Day can emphasise healing and reconciliation in real families, rather than glorify the 'Hallmark-cards' image of motherhood.

Some suggest that it would be more appropriate for churches to observe a 'Christian Family Sunday' or a 'Women of Faith Day'.

BACKGROUND

The woman credited with founding Mothers Day is **Anna Jarvis**.

Anna's mother, Mrs Anna Reeves Jarvis, an active member of the Methodist Church, organized 'Mothers' Work Day Clubs' in the 1850's in and around Grafton, West Virginia, USA. The clubs provided medicines for the poor, inspected milk for children, provided nursing care for the sick, and shelters for children with tuberculosis.

When the Civil War broke out Mrs Reeves called together four of her clubs and asked them to make a pledge that friendship and good will would not be a casualty of the war. In a remarkable display of courage and compassion the women nursed soldiers from both sides and saved many lives from both sides.

After the war, she organized 'Mothers' Friendship Days' to bring together families across the Mason Dixon line.

In 1907, two years after her mother's death Anna Jarvis organized the first 'Mothers Day' in Grafton, so that her mother's work of peacemaking and war against poverty would not be forgotten.

Within the next few years, the idea of a day to honour mothers gained popularity. On 9 May, 1914, by an act of Congress, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed the second Sunday in May as Mothers Day — a time for 'public expression of our love and reverence for the mothers of our country'.

Since then the idea of Mothers Day has spread to Australia and many other countries.

With or without Mothers Day, per se, modern mothers, in fact all of us, owe a debt to these early Mothers Day pioneers.



'All I am or can be I owe to my angel Mother.'
— Abraham Lincoln

'A mother understands what a child does not say.'
— Jewish Proverb

'By and large, mothers and housewives are the only workers who do not have regular time off. They are the great vacationless class.'
— Anne Morrow Lindbergh

'The mother's heart is the child's schoolroom.'
— Henry Ward Beecher

'Youth fades, love droops, the leaves of friendship fall; a mother's secret hope outlives them all.'
— Oliver Wendell Holmes

'The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother.'
— 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

'A suburban mother's role is to deliver children obstetrically once, and by car forever after.'
— Peter De Vries

'The phrase "working mother" is redundant.'
— Jane Sellman

'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

'I love my mother as the trees love water and sunshine; she helps me grow, prosper, and reach great heights.'
— Adabella Radici

'There's nothing like a mama-hug.'
— Adabella Radici

'Mother is the name for God in the lips and hearts of little children.'
— William Makepeace Thackeray

'Mother's love grows by giving.'
— Charles Lamb

'I cannot forget my mother. She is my bridge. When I needed to get across, she steadied herself long enough for me to run across safely.'
— Renita Weems

'A little girl, asked where her home was, replied, "where mother is".'
— Keith L. Brooks

'Every beetle is a gazelle in the eyes of its mother.'
— Moorish Proverb

'No one in the world can take the place of your mother. Right or wrong, from her viewpoint you are always right. She may scold you for little things, but never for the big ones.'
— Harry Truman

'Biology is the least of what makes someone a mother.'
— Oprah Winfrey

'When mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy.'
— Author Unknown

'Who ran to help me when I fell, and would some pretty story tell, or kiss the place to make it well? My Mother.'
— Ann Taylor

'To the world you might just be one person, but to one person you might just be the world.'
— Author Unknown

'My mother had a great deal of trouble with me, but I think she enjoyed it.'
— Mark Twain

'My mother's menu consisted of two choices: Take it or leave it.'
— Buddy Hackett

'Mothers can look through a child's eyes and see tomorrow. Mothers deserve the credit for raising value-based leaders who accept responsibility; who possess physical, mental, and spiritual strength; who possess courage and confidence; and look with optimism to the future. Great mothers help their children to recognize that they can achieve the impossible. Great mothers bring the arms of comfort to an insecure child in a world of uncertainty.'
— Reed Markham, Educator



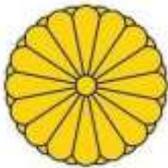
Chrysanthemums are a symbol of joy, cheerfulness, sunshine, orderliness and perfection.

If you would be happy for a lifetime, grow Chrysanthemums
— a Chinese proverb

Chrysanthemums are the most widely grown pot plant worldwide and are one of the longest lasting of all cut flowers.

The chrysanthemum was first cultivated in China as a flowering herb. It was believed to have the power of life. Boiled roots were used as a headache remedy; young sprouts and petals were eaten in salads; and leaves were brewed for a festive drink.

The golden chrysanthemum was taken to Japan by Buddhist monks. A 16 petal chrysanthemum became the crest and official seal of the Emperor. In Japan, the Imperial Order of the Chrysanthemum is the highest Order of Chivalry. Japan also has a National Chrysanthemum Day, known as the Festival of Happiness.



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The chrysanthemum was first introduced into the Western world during the 17th Century. Swedish botanist Karl Linnaeus named it, combining the Greek words *chrysos*, meaning gold with *antheion*, meaning flower.

Since then, growers have hybridised the plant developing a wide range of floral colours, shapes, and sizes. Today, its colours include various shades of pink, purple, red, yellow, bronze or orange, and white.

MAKE A CHRYSANTHEMUM

Paper or cloth flower: Choose scrap cloth or paper in 'chrysanthemum colours'.

For each flower, cut three or more circles of the cloth or paper (use craft paper or crepe paper) in different diameters, eg 10cm, 8cm and 6cm.

Cut slashes around the edge of the circles, about halfway to the centre.

Stack the circles with the largest on the bottom. Fasten them together in the centre. For cloth, use a couple of stitches. For paper, a staple or split pin.



Paper clip flower: Use coloured, plastic covered glide-on paper clips. Insert at least 16 clips into a base of hardening play dough.

You can glue an artificial flower to a magnet to make a fridge magnet, or fasten with a safety pin for wearing, or attach to green garden stakes cut to appropriate lengths to display in a pot or vase.

CHRYSANTHEMUMS AND MOTHERS



With a little imagination, you can see how appropriate chrysanthemums are as a Mothers Day flower, eg

- ✿ There's the name: both 'chrysanthemum' and 'mother' can be shortened to 'mum'.
- ✿ Chrysanthemums are associated with attributes we like to think of as also connected with mothers: joy, cheerfulness, orderliness and (near) perfection.
- ✿ Chrysanthemums and mothers come in many different varieties, colours and sizes.
- ✿ Chrysanthemums and mothers are beautiful and highly valued.



Someone has said that the front door of a Christian family home is the true front door to the church. In other words: 'Home is church, too'.

The home of Christian friends may be the place where people see and hear about God at work.

Home is the 'church' where people learn, develop, and live out faith and values in real, practical ways. It's the place where people care for one another; where they can express (and question) their faith honestly.

Parents — often mothers — are leaders in the church that is their home.

Most faith that is passed on to children in homes is caught rather than taught. It is caught from parents who are sincere in their faith; whose faith shapes their actions and their conversation.

There are also some practical ways parents can guide the faith development of their children.

The Child in Our Hands model (Child and Family Institute) suggests four key faith-nurturing activities that can be done in homes/families:

1. Caring conversation
2. Family traditions (faith practices, eg celebrating Mothers Day by attending church together)
3. Family service (to one another and as families to other people)
4. Family devotions (worship)

Faith Five (developed by Faith Inkubators) provides a really simple, effective and enjoyable way of doing family devotions (4). *Faith Five* is also a way of serving one another (3); it incorporates caring conversation (1) and may become a family tradition (2).

FAITH FIVE

Here's what Rich Melheim says about Faith Five:

Care to have some fun, keep your family communicating every night, and grow in your understanding of yourself and God?

Here's how you can do it:

Whoever is going to bed first in your home calls "FAITH 5" or "Huddle!" (or whatever signal you choose to use). Everyone must drop what they're doing, turn off the television, put down the newspaper or their homework, set the cell phone on silence and gather in a room of the convener's choice. Then take turns going through these five simple steps:

1. *SHARE HIGHS & LOWS of the day (the best and worst thing that happened)*
2. *READ and highlight a verse of Scripture in your Bible (or read a Bible story, or use a Bible-based song. This plan can be used with any Bible-reading programme.)*
3. *TALK about how the verse relates to your highs and lows*
4. *PRAY about your highs and lows, for your family, and for the world*
5. *BLESS one another*

... The investment is the most expensive currency you own – your TIME – aimed at that most precious young person in your life.

Be intentional. Be consistent. Be caring. Be the parent. Every night. No one else can do that for you.

(from: www.faithink.com)

Our sample all age worship plan for Mothers Day is organised around the *Faith Five*.



Bookmarks showing the *Faith Five* steps are available from.

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A SAMPLE WORSHIP PLAN

This worship plan models the *Faith Five* approach to daily faith talk and worship in homes (see page 10). Suggested wording for worship leaders is in *italic print*

Decorate the worship space with as many potted chrysanthemums as possible.

1. ARRIVAL ACTIVITY

As people arrive they go to the hall. **YOUTH** of the congregation give each person a single chrysanthemum flower.

They direct people to a workspace where they can make a posy by tying a ribbon on the flower.

Provide lots of scrap ribbons and laces, scissors and large safety pins. **YOUTH** suggest that people choose a ribbon that reminds them of their mother. Ask why they chose that particular ribbon.

Family groups can help one another pin on the posies. Talk about ways mums (people) are like mums (flowers).

2. ENTRY

After worshipers have done the arrival activity, they move into the worship space.

- **HOSPITALITY TEAM** welcomes people to the service and helps them settle into seats.
- **TECH TEAM** shows PowerPoint slides of chrysanthemums.
- **MUSIC TEAM** plays some of the music that will be used in the service.

3. WELCOME / INVOCATION

WORSHIP LEADER: *Welcome to (name of church) — a very special welcome to each Mum here to celebrate Mothers Day with us.*

It's great to be surrounded with all these beautiful mums — the mothers, and all these beautiful mums — the flowers!

It's even better to know we are surrounded by God's love.

We are here on this special day to worship God, who has made himself known to us as our Father — our all-powerful, perfect, loving, forgiving heavenly Parent,

as Jesus Christ — our Brother, Lord and Saviour and as the Spirit who brings us together in faith.

We'll begin our worship with a song. Please stand and join the music team.

4. OPENING SONG

MUSIC TEAM leads people in singing: *Part of the family* (James K. Manley) or another welcoming song.

TECH TEAM displays the word of the song.

5. MOTHERS DAY STORY

WORSHIP LEADER: *I wonder if Mothers Day in your household is anything like this:*

TECH TEAM play 'Mother's Day' by Tom Chapin. OR

READER reads a children's book about Mothers Day, eg

- *Mother's Day*, by Anne Rockwell (illustrated by Lizzy Rockwell)
- *The Night Before Mother's Day*, by Natasha Wing (illustrated by Amy Wummer)
- *Biscuit Loves Mother's Day*, by Alyssa Satin Capucilli (illustrated by Pat Schories)

FAITH FIVE — STEP 1 SHARE HIGHS AND LOWS

6. GROUP HUDDLES: HIGHS AND LOWS

WORSHIP LEADER: *For most of us Mothers Day has some highs and lows; some good times and good memories and some bad times and bad memories.*

TECH TEAM may show a Highs/Lows slide:



WORSHIP LEADER: *Please huddle together in your family group or with someone sitting near you. Take a few minutes for each person to share one high and one low about their Mothers Day.*

Allow time for people to chat. Cut off the time when some people become restless.

WORSHIP LEADER: Thank you. It can be good to share our stories. Sharing makes good things better and bad things feel less bad.

FAITH FIVE — STEP 2 READ/ HEAR SCRIPTURE



7. GOOD NEWS CHRYSANTHEMUM

WORSHIP LEADER: It can also be good to bring God into our conversation.

Since this is Mums Day, we're going to do this in a special way.

I need some mums up here, please, to help me read some good news from the Bible.

With the help of your hospitality team (ushers) bring 16 mums (and grand mums) to the front of the church. If you have less than 16, invite mums and children to come forward.

Move to the displayed Good News Chrysanthemum (see pages 15-17).

WORSHIP LEADER: Thanks for being brave enough to come up here, mums.

Did any of you ever play the game 'He loves me; he loves me not' by pulling petals from a daisy?

Today we're going to do something like that.

We don't actually have to wonder if God loves us or not. He does!

This chrysanthemum has some passages from the Bible — things God wants us to know because he loves us.

I'd like each of you mother mums to take a petal from this chrysanthe-mum. Then go to the microphone and read out the good news on your petal.

Some of these messages are from a speech made by Peter, one of Jesus followers.

Here's a bit of Mothers Day trivia: once when Jesus was at Peter's house, Peter's mother-in-law was sick and Jesus healed her.

Help the mums. Start with the petal numbered 1.

Go through number 5.

The rest of these messages are from a letter written by the same man, Peter.

Go through Petals 6–16.

WORSHIP LEADER: Thanks, Mums. Well done. You can go back to your seats. Take your petals with you.

FAITH FIVE — STEP 3 LINK SCRIPTURE WITH HIGHS AND LOWS

8. GROUP HUDDLES: REFLECT

WORSHIP LEADER: Please huddle together again in your family group or with someone sitting near you.

HOSPITALITY TEAM/USHERS: distribute spare petals to any groups that do not have them.

WORSHIP LEADER: Take a few minutes to talk about your scripture passage and how it relates to the highs and lows you talked about before.

For some of you this may be harder or easier than for others. But please give it a go.

There are no right or wrong responses. What you are doing is bringing God into your conversation and reflecting on what he is saying to you. He won't say the same thing to everyone.

Allow time for people to chat. Cut off the time when some people become restless.

WORSHIP LEADER: Thanks, everyone. That may have taken you out of your comfort zone. You can relax a bit now and sing along with the band.

9. SONG

MUSIC TEAM leads people in singing: *One Family* (Geoff Strelan) or another song about Christian family.

TECH TEAM displays the word of the song.

FAITH FIVE — STEP 4 PRAYER

10. GROUP HUDDLES: PRAYER

WORSHIP LEADER: Please huddle together again in your family group or with someone sitting near you.

You've talked about the highs and lows of Mothers Day. You've listened to God's message from Peter's speech or his letter, and reflected on it. Now it's time to go one step further in this conversation with God. I invite you to talk to God directly in prayer.

In the next few minutes each person in your group may say a one-sentence prayer for someone else in the group. Think of their highs

and lows. Just talk to God about them. You don't need any special words. You may begin your sentence with 'Thank you', or 'Please', or 'I'm sorry', or 'Wow' or any words you want to use.

Allow time for people to pray. Cut off the time when some people become restless.

FAITH FIVE — STEP 5 BLESSING

11. GROUP HUDDLE: BLESSING

WORSHIP LEADER: *while you're still in your huddle, there's one thing more I'm going to ask you to do: Bless one another.*

Put your hand on the shoulder of the person you prayed for. Say, God loves you, and I do too. May our heavenly Father bless you in a special way this Mothers Day.

TECH TEAM: displays the words of the blessing:

God loves you, and I do too.
May our heavenly Father bless you in a
special way this Mothers Day.

Allow time for the blessing.

WORSHIP LEADER: Thanks, everyone. That was a great experience.

END FAITH FIVE

12. MESSAGE (PART 1)

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MOTHERS

READER: holds an open Bible while reading.

We've heard some things God said through the apostle Peter. Now let's look at some things he said through the King and songwriter David.

TECH TEAM displays text while the **READER** reads:

I worship you as my mother did.
(Psalm 116:16)

WORSHIP LEADER/PREACHER: briefly discuss the text, and the importance of mothers in the faith development of children.

Acknowledge that this may not have been part of the experience of everyone in the congregation. God works in other ways.

Possibly refer to more contemporary expressions, eg the Kingsmen song: Teach me to pray, just like my mama did or the Johnny Cash album 'My Mother's Hymn Book'.

13. SONG

MUSIC TEAM leads people in singing *Day by Day* (G Bullock) or another song about worship.

TECH TEAM displays the word of the song.

14. MESSAGE PART 2

INTRODUCING FAITH FIVE

WORSHIP LEADER/PREACHER: introduces the Faith Five approach to home devotions (See page 10).

This is a practice many mums and dads are finding to be an easy and effective way of nurturing faith in their homes.

HOSPITALITY TEAM Distributes *Faith Five* bookmarks — one for each household.

Alternately, the **TECH TEAM** displays a slide with the Faith Five steps.

WORSHIP LEADER: *What we've done this morning is actually a model of something you can do at home whether you're a mum or not.*

Review the *Faith Five* steps, while people follow on the bookmarks.

15. PRAYER

READER: holds an open Bible while reading.

Here's something else from King David.

TECH TEAM displays text while the **READER** reads:

I love you, LORD!
You answered my prayers.
You paid attention to me,
and so I will pray to you as long as I live.
(Psalm 116:1,2)

PRAYER LEADER (one person or several people) leads the congregation in prayer:

Let's pray.

God our Creator, we thank you for all the beautiful mums in our world:

- *for expectant mothers, wondering and waiting*
- *for new mothers, coming to terms with new responsibility*
- *for mothers who are tired, stressed or depressed*
- *for mothers who struggle to balance the tasks of work and family*
- *for mothers who are unable to feed their children due to poverty*
- *for mothers whose children have special physical, mental or emotional needs*
- *for mothers who have children they do not want and those suffering the results of an abortion*
- *for mothers who raise children on their own*
- *for mothers who have lost a child*
- *for those who 'mother' the children of others: step mothers and mothers in blended families*
- *for mothers whose children have left home*

- and for those whose desire to be a mother has not been fulfilled.

Bless all mothers, that their love may be deep and tender, and that they may lead their children to know and do what is good — living not for themselves alone, but for you and for others.

Help us to honour our mothers as a gift from you. And help us to let them know that to us they are truly beautiful.

We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

PRAYER LEADER may add other petitions.

CONGREGATION may pray the Lord's Prayer.

16. ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORSHIP LEADER or **CONGREGATIONAL REP** makes any necessary brief announcements.

1. Explain and invite people to any fellowship activities planned for after the service.
2. Explain that prayer counselling will be available after the service. Invite anyone for whom the day's worship has raised issues they need to talk about or pray about to take advantage of the opportunity to talk with someone.
3. Invite family groups to take one of the potted chrysanthemums that are decorating the worship space and
 - give it to a mother in your neighbourhood who is alone today or
 - take it to a local cemetery and put it on the grave of a mother who raised her children long ago.
4. Encourage people to take home their Faith Five bookmarks and try using the plan at home.
[Note: it can be helpful if several families support one another as they undertake doing Faith Five regularly.]

17. OFFERING

READER: holds an open Bible while reading.

Here's something else from King David. He asks a question and gives three answers. Listen for them.

TECH TEAM displays text while the **READER** reads:

What must I give you, LORD,
for being so good to me?

I will pour out an offering of wine to you,
and I will pray in your name
because you have saved me.

I will keep my promise to you
(Psalm 116:12–14)

WORSHIP LEADER *What do we do because God is so good to us? Give an offering, pray and keep our promises.*

Now is a chance to give an offering — not wine, please — but of money that our church can use for . . .

Explain how the offering money will be used. Then how it will be collected. Also give guests permission to refrain from giving an offering.

As the offering is collected:

MUSIC TEAM may play instrumental music

TECH TEAM shows PowerPoint slides of mums and grandmothers from the congregation and community interacting with their children in various ways.

18. FINAL BLESSING

READER: holds an open Bible while reading.

Here's one last thought from Peter, a blessing:

Dear friends . . .

Grow in the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Get to know him better.

Give him glory both now and forever. Amen.

(2 Peter 3:14, 18)

19 FINAL SONG.

WORSHIP LEADER: Let's finish with a song.

MUSIC TEAM leads people in singing *He's got the whole world in his hands*. Have fun with this song. Use actions; point to people mentioned. Create your own verses, eg

He's got the whole world in his hands

. . . mothers and the fathers . . .

. . . sons and daughters . . .

. . . grandmas and grandpas . . .

. . . mums and other flowers

. . . everybody here . . .

. . . the whole world . . .

TECH TEAM displays the word of the song.

20. LEAVING AND HOSPITALITY

YOUTH, MEN or **CHILDREN** serve a special morning tea for all the women present.

GOOD NEWS CHRYSANTHEMUM

For the Bible readings

- Copy the sheets onto chrysanthemum-coloured light card or paper, use two colours: one for the first five petals; another colour for petals 6-16.
- Cut the petals apart.
- Assemble the petals to form a chrysanthemum. Use a block of florist foam polystyrene as a base.
- Pleat the flat end of the petals and insert them into the foam. You may need to cut slits in the foam to make this easier.
- Beginning with #16, make circles of petals from the outside to the centre, ending with #1 as the easiest to find and remove.
- You may add leaves and extra petals of different colours.
- Anchor your chrysanthemum on a pedestal or music stand for use in the service.
- For congregations of more than 50 people, make extra copies of the petals on page 17, about one petal for each three expected worshipers.



God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ.
(Peter's Speech, Acts 2:36)

1

All of you must turn away from your sins.
(Peter's Speech, Acts 2:38)

2

Your sins will be forgiven.
(Peter's Speech, Acts 2:38)

3

You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
(Peter's Speech, Acts 2:38)

4

God's promise is for you
and your children.
(Peter's Speech, Acts 2:38)

5

You have been born again
by means of the living word of God.
(Peter's letter, 1 Peter 1:23)

15

Have the highest respect for God
(Peter's letter, 1 Peter 1:17)

7

The blood of Christ set you free
from an empty way of life.
(Peter's letter, 1 Peter 1:18)

8

You were not bought with things
that can pass away, like silver or gold. Instead,
you were bought by the priceless blood of Christ.
(Peter's letter, 1 Peter 1:18,19)

9

Because of what Christ has done,
you believe in God.
(Peter's letter, 1 Peter 1:21)

10

It was God who raised Jesus from the dead.
And it was God who gave him glory.
So your faith and hope are in God.
(Peter's letter, 1 Peter 1:21)

11

You have made yourselves pure
by obeying the truth.
(Peter's letter, 1 Peter 1:22)

12

Make extra copies of the petals on this page if you have more than sixteen families/households in your worshipping congregation.

You have an honest and true love
for your brothers and sisters.
(Peter's letter, 1 Peter 1:22)

13

Love each other deeply, from the heart.
(Peter's letter, 1 Peter 1:22)

14

You call on a Father who does not
favour one over another.
(Peter's letter, 1 Peter 1: 17)

6

God's word lasts forever.
(Peter's letter, 1 Peter 1:23)

16