



# pre-school mums ministry

the MINISTRY PAPERS

## missed opportunities...

Raelene arrives for the first time at mums group. She has 3 kids under 5 and had 4 hours sleep last night (and the night before that and...).

As Raelene walks in to the hall, her 2 month old baby is hungry and crying in the pram. Her 2 year old is plastered to her leg. And her 4 year old rushes in and pushes a younger child off the trampoline.

Raelene looks around for help. There are about 12 mums there standing in groups of 3-4 drinking coffee while their kids play happily at their feet. The only mum that talks to Raelene is the mum of the child who was pushed off the trampoline – “can’t you control your child?”.

Raelene had been desperate. She knew there had to be more to life than nappies, scraped knees, time outs and feeling tired all the time. Someone had told her to read the bible but she didn’t have one. She thought the local church might be a good place to start looking for answers. Raelene didn’t come back.

LEADERS:...before taking someone through this paper, review the two key introductory MINISTRY PAPERS: ‘the ministry training church’ and ‘meeting one to one’.

Connect. Grow. Serve. After **connecting** to God through trusting in Christ, a vital way we can **grow** is through a growth group and a vital way we can **serve** is through a ministry team.

This MINISTRY PAPER is designed to help your ministry team leader introduce you to what it means to be part of serving in the **pre-school mums team** at our church. It’s much more than a training tool, it’s all about relationships.

the 3 **AIMS** of pre-school mums ministry are:

- to **ENCOURAGE** church mums in their Christian life
- to **SHARE** the gospel with community mums and their kids
- to **MODEL** loving our children

**ENCOURAGE:** It is an important aim of this ministry to encourage church mums as being at home with pre-school children can be a very difficult time of life. This ministry should be a great support for church mums and should help them use the challenges of this stage of life as an opportunity for growth in their Christian life.



read **Hebrews 10:19-25**

1. What things can we celebrate?

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2. What are we to not stop doing?

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3. What is the purpose of meeting together?

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4. How can you use this ministry to encourage mums?

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**SHARE:** The second aim of ministry to pre-school mums is to reach mums outside the church with the great news of salvation through Jesus.



read **Romans 1:16-20**

1. Why are we not to be ashamed of the gospel?

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2. What will save people?

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3. How can we be ashamed of the gospel in this ministry?

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4. How is the gospel always the focus of this ministry?

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**MODEL:** the third aim of ministry to pre-school mums is to model loving our children. Christian mums won't be perfect but we want to have godly attitudes about our role as mothers and our children.



read **Titus 2:3-5**

1. Does loving our children come naturally?

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2. How can this be a witness to outsiders?

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3. What does the passage say about the role of older women in this ministry?

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4. Thinking through all these passages, what personal challenges are you aware of in terms of playing your part in this ministry team?

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5. What role will being actively involved in your growth group play in enabling you to carry out this ministry well?

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## profile of a pre-school mum

Pre-school mums come in all shapes and sizes: Christian mums of varying maturity; mums with their first baby—don't be too quick to judge them, remember how protective you were!; mums with several kids under 5— you know how tired you get, it's impossible for them to be watching all their kids all the time; there may be mums from violent relationships— be sensitive to this, it may be very difficult for them to be open about themselves or give you their contact details; persevere with shy mums—they have the same emotional needs as other mums but it can be hard to get close to them; some groups have overpowering mums and you'll need to exercise wise and godly leadership. Remember this is a ministry of your church not a community playgroup.

## press on mums

a song by Colin Buchanan ©1999

Press on, Mums,  
In all the chaos  
Look to Jesus  
through the tears  
Press on, Mums  
God will guide you  
Through those precious,  
tender years

chorus:

And in all you do, do it for Jesus  
Who won you life  
and free forgiveness  
Yesterday, today he is the same  
All you do do it in Jesus' name

Press on, Dads  
Love your wife  
Serve your children  
set the pace  
Press on, Dads  
Seize the moment  
Show them Jesus  
Run the race... chorus

Press on, Kids  
God adores you  
He will hear you  
when you pray  
Press on, Kids  
Love your family  
Honour, serve  
forgive, obey... chorus

...and when all your human  
energy is gone

Look towards your Jesus and  
press on.

# flexible & fixed

Many of our ministry teams are focused on a particular age group or demographic, e.g. kids club, youth group, university ministry. That makes sense because each of these groups has its own particular needs. Each group has its own special challenges and opportunities. However, it's sometimes easy to recognise only what's **unique** about each group. It's easy to forget what **all people**, whatever age or stage, have in common. This section of the paper helps us think through what's **flexible** and what's **fixed** in our ministry to pre-school mums ...



## challenges and opportunities

Thinking about Raelene's experience (pg1), complete this table:

what are some of the <b>challenges</b> ?	what are some ideas for <b>facing</b> these challenges?
what are some of the <b>opportunities</b> ?	what are some ideas for <b>making the most</b> of these opportunities?

### be real...

Remember to be open and honest about your struggles as a mum. Don't keep away on days you feel fragile – come and allow the church mums to care for you and show the community mums that Christians struggle in the same ways they do.

Don't keep away if your kids act up. Instead come and model responsible parenting and discipline. Mums need to see others struggling before they'll be willing to be open and honest about their own lives.

### pathways

remember the pathways to maturity (ministry training church paper). One of the mums having a gospel conversation is just the beginning...

### you need help...

You may have identified as a challenge that mums are busy looking after their own kids and have little capacity for helping women like Raelene. That's where women from the church without pre-schoolers are a priceless resource. Try to get grandmas or women with kids in school to come each week to help out and build relationships with the mums.

You need the support of your whole church. Keep your leadership team and growth group leaders informed about your ministry. Seek their help to create pathways to get women from your group to church and into a growth group (and of course converted!). Keep the whole church informed so that they can support you by praying. Have representatives on your welcoming team so that all new mums with pre-schoolers meet someone from your ministry on their first visit to church.

### the nuts and bolts...

There are many ways of structuring your group & you'll need to be flexible to meet the needs of your mums/kids at various times. Here's one sample:

- 9.30am church mums arrive for prayer and set up
- 10am mums arrive, have craft set up already so kids join in as they arrive
- 10.40 wash hands, sing grace, morning tea (pack up craft)
- 11.00 set up playdough
- 11.30 energetic activity for older kids who may be getting bored and destructive
- 11.40 songs and story time
- 12.00 pack up and leave

Remember this is an outreach ministry and not a community playgroup. Don't be scared to have kids crafts teaching basic truths about God or singing easy Christian kids songs.

It is great to have days (as many as you can) when the kids get looked after by volunteers from the church so the mums can get some time out. This can be a real attraction for community mums and make them choose your group over another playgroup. It is also a great opportunity to deepen relationships between the mums. Often groups have a talk, discussion time and a craft. Colossians 4:2-6 encourages us to make the most of every opportunity and let our conversations be full of grace. Make sure this is reflected in your talks and discussion time.

stage	strategy
<b>Christian?</b>	personal evangelism
<b>initial church contact</b>	welcoming team
<b>maintaining contact</b>	hospitality
<b>getting acquainted</b>	newcomers lunch/group
<b>getting involved</b>	joining/linked to a growth group
<b>getting equipped</b>	active in growth group
<b>trained for ministry</b>	taken through ministry paper
<b>training others</b>	take others through paper
<b>leading growth group</b>	apprentice leader

# training resources

Just as in many other areas of life need training to develop skills, sharing the gospel is something that we need to prepare our selves for. There are some great gospel-sharing resources around—a few are reviewed further below. But first have a go at the exercise below. Whatever resources we might make use of, it's really important to be ready to 'give an answer' about your **faith in Jesus**—something you can say in **your own words**.

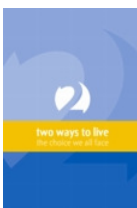
*But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. 1 Peter 3:15a*

Imagine one of the mums asked you, "So what is Christianity all about?" Jot down a brief answer.

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How did you go? This is the type of conversations we should be praying for. Make sure all the church mums are equipped to share the gospel one to one. Below are some examples of evangelism training resources you could do as a group – maybe on a weekend retreat?



## two ways to live (Matthias Media)

This is a well-known evangelistic tool. It clearly outlines what the gospel is, in six easy points. This is a great gospel outline to take mums through. It also leads to a clear challenge about 'the choice we all face' - whether we will trust in Jesus for salvation or not.



## bridge to life (Navigators)

This is another helpful gospel presentation. It's even simpler in approach than two ways to live and so is ideal if you have the opportunity to share the gospel when time is limited or distractions abound... like most situations for mums! It vividly depicts Jesus' death as the only way to bridge the gap between sinful people and a holy God.



## how can you practically love the mums in your group?

Gospel talks have their place but you are most likely to see fruit when the gospel is shared in a one to one relationship with sincere love. Invite the mums into your home, have mums' nights out and care practically for each other. e.g. meals when a new baby arrives, passing on kids' clothes or a phone call if someone is absent a few weeks. And most importantly share the gospel in these relationships as the opportunity arises.



For further equipping, other ministry papers you may find useful include:

**\*daily time with God**    **\*personal evangelism**    **\*personal apologetics**



## Stacey's story

I started coming to mum's group at the local church 3 years ago. I made some fantastic friends here and was introduced to God's Word. At first I wasn't ready to listen. After I went through a really tough time in my life I was ready to hear about God. Through the friends I had made at mums group I started to accept God into my life. I am now in a growth group and enjoying learning more from God's Word.

## promotion...

Promote your group in the community by putting flyers in:

- early childhood centres
- day care centres
- hospitals
- shopping centre feeding rooms etc.

Encourage the church mums to invite mums they meet at ante-natal groups, parks or indoor play centres.

As a mums' group open to the community your group may be eligible for monetary grants from councils or other organisations. Contact your local council to see what's available & visit: [www.grantslink.gov.au](http://www.grantslink.gov.au)

## privacy...

You need to ensure the privacy of people's personal information is maintained (e.g. only use contact details for the purposes of your ministry).