



Creating intentional safe space at church for affirming and authentic mentoring relationships between mothers.

New York Conference Department of Women's Ministries

Logo Credit: Dustin Hall

Concept Credit and Collaboration: Kelly Hall

Author: Tina Shorey

Being a mom is tough. It doesn't matter if one was born before the 'Great Depression', in the middle of the Vietnam War, or at the beginning of the 'Great Disconnect' we know as the internet/cell phone age... raising children is a daunting task!

As a mother of four spectacular children, I can honestly say that I wouldn't trade being a mother for the world! But. Let's be real and vulnerable here. There were a lot of times when I felt utterly alone, helpless, hopeless, at my wit's end, or confounded by the whole mothering process!

Being a mother takes all you have, and then requires more, usually at your personal physical, emotional, social, and spiritual expense. Frequently this triggers shame, comparison, and guilt which further alienates a mom from healthy emotional and spiritual growth.

As a young mother, I often wondered what the point of church was. Just getting a child ready to go was a full-time job! I remember one beautiful summer Sabbath morning. I was so proud of myself. I had my toddler's outfit ready in advance, complete with both shoes and matching socks! He was bathed and dressed and ready to go. All that remained was for me to get dressed and we would be out the door, and on time for church! As I pulled on shoes I asked my husband where our son was. He said 'outdoors'. No problem. We had a fenced yard and all was well. Until I went out and found our darling boy making mud pies! He was drenched and of course muddy from head to toe! I felt like sitting down on the lawn and having a good cry.

After the battle of feeding, cleaning, dressing children, forcing kids into outerwear and car seats, listening to the latest round of sibling squabbles from the back seat... you would think church would be a welcome respite! But we don't just arrive at church with our children! We also bring the frustration, anger, upset, worries, and cares in with us. And that is a lot to haul in the door!

Child care doesn't end when we arrive at church either, and the same battles that occur at home, show up in the mother's room or Sabbath School classroom. Increasingly, I found myself wondering why I even bothered going to church each week with four very young children in tow. It would have been easier to stay home, and the reality was, it was difficult to hear the sermon let alone get a blessing from it!

If the story sounds familiar – welcome! You are in good company! Every mother. No matter what her socioeconomic status is, what job she does (or doesn't) hold, how long she has been a Christian, how smartly she dresses, and whether her child's socks match or not. Every. Single. Mother. Experiences shame, guilt, and negative messaging from comparing her walk with those around her. Every. Single. Mother. Needs to know that what is happening now isn't permanent, and most certainly is not the defining factor of her worth. And every mom deserves to know and experience motherhood, womanhood, life in a safe, nurturing, authentic community that focuses on presenting God's truth of who He is and who He says each mom is (her true worth).

It is my prayer that this program will be a blessing to the mom's you mentor, and to you – no matter what stage of life you are walking in. "What marvelous love the Father has extended to us! Just look at it — we're called children of God! That's who we really are." 1 John 3:1, (MSG)

What 3 A.M. Is

3 a.m. Moms Mentoring Moms is a program designed to make intentional safe space at church to embrace and emotionally and spiritually nurture mothers and other caregivers of young children.

This program incorporates an adult Bible study period designed for mothers into the regular children's Sabbath School programming.

What It Isn't

- This is not a place to preach at, invalidate, shame women; or push personal agendas.
- It is not an intervention or counseling group.
- It is not a replacement for regular adult Sabbath School classes (this is designed to meet the needs of women who normally find themselves attending children's SS each week).

How it Works

During the Sabbath School period each week, class time is divided into two segments. Both adults and children remain in the same room. Segment one is the regular children's Sabbath School program. Segment two is directed/supervised activities for children while adults meet in the classroom for a small group Bible Study/sharing time.

A Note on Leadership

This program is meant to be a welcoming, nurturing, gentle mentoring program. This is not the place to debate church policy or push liturgical philosophy. Women, especially new and young mothers, need to know they do not walk alone on the path of parenting. The mentoring done with this program requires authentic relationship building. Nobody has all the answers, and none of us is perfect!

If possible, have a team of older mothers and grandmothers lead out rather than utilizing a single leader. Sharing in the organizing and facilitating reduces strain on any one individual and guarantees that different life views and approaches are presented.

Who It's For

Mothers, grandmothers, women who have young children.

The program is designed to be a part of Cradle Roll and Kindergarten Sabbath School classes.

Bible Study is the Focus

- Encourage women to bring their Bibles. Have extra for those who might not have one.
- Use several different versions
- Study collaboratively – this is not a typical Sabbath School class. Encourage discussion and participation. As the group leader, you are not there to preach or lecture. You are the facilitator – keeping the group focused, the conversation flowing, modeling healthy relationship skills, and organizing the study.
- Dig into the Word. Rather than treating each scripture passage as something to be gotten through, take it verse by verse, looking at the words used, what is being said, why is it included, how does it speak to the hearts of each woman.
- Make it come alive. Contemplate the cultural landscape of the stories: family, community, religious ideas, rules, and practices. When reading about a particular person: how do you think they felt, what might they have been experiencing during this period in their life, etc.

Format

Each meeting will have the following components

Welcome & Prayer

- Give women time to express something they are grateful for. Praise is an excellent mood lifter and draws thoughts toward the love and provision God pours over each one.

Introduction

- These activities are designed to help women relax and refocus and will help you draw everyone in to the scripture passage to be studied.

Bible Study & Discussion

- A careful study of God's Word reveals His character and His view of each woman. Take time to explore key words and how they apply to life today. Be sure to help the passage come to life by studying in advance the culture and practices of Bible authors and characters. Strong's Concordance illuminates the meaning of words and is very useful in helping to discern new meanings for common passages. See the 'Tools' section below for helpful resources.

Make it Real: Rewriting Scripture

- Have women summarize the passage studied or a particular verse that spoke to them personally, then rewrite the passage in their own words in their scripture journal. If there is time, ask if anyone would like to share what they have written.
- If you have women who feel uncomfortable writing – ask them to draw something that represents what the verse means to them and encourage them to copy down the scripture in their journal during the week.

Prayer

- Before closing with prayer, have squares of paper available for each woman to write down a prayer request they have. They do not have to write their name. Place all papers in a pile and mix up, then ask each woman to select a paper and commit to praying over that request during the coming week.
- End with a prayer for the group.

Tools

The Blue Letter Bible

www.blueletterbible.org

Next to each verse is a 'tools' tab – click on it then click on 'interlinear' to access the Strong's Concordance definitions for each word in that verse. Click on the Strong's number next to the word you are studying to go to the word usage and definition.

Bible Study Tools

www.biblestudytools.com

Many resources for Bible study, as well as a newsletter, notes, videos, Bible history, and more!

Life Application Study Bible

Character sketches, charts, time lines, concordance, study helps, and in-text application notes.

What Mothers Need

(adapted, *Transformed Lives: Taking Women's Ministry to the Next Level*, Chris Adams, Lifeway Publishing)

Significance

Sometimes I wonder if mothering matters.

Moms need to know their role has value and makes a difference in the lives of their children. But ultimately, they need to realize that their work as a mom will never be enough to earn the consistent significance they're looking for – God alone provides true purpose and significance.

Identity

Sometimes I'm not sure who I am.

Because mothers' attention is focused primarily on their children, they may feel they've lost touch with who they are. But when they see themselves as God sees them, they can drop the burden of feeling they aren't good enough and focus on being all God created them to be.

Growth

Sometimes I long to develop who I am.

Mothers often convince themselves that now is the time for them to nurture their children and they must put their own lives on hold. But they are better moms when they find time and energy to keep themselves as well as their kids growing.

Intimacy

Sometimes I long to be understood.

Intimacy in relationships can't be put on hold while kids grow, even though relationships must adapt. Moms need to pursue intimacy in their marriages, friendships, and with God.

Instruction

Sometimes I don't know what to do.

Mothers aren't born knowing everything about mothering! They need information and practical wisdom regarding parenting, relationships, finances, personal development, and appropriate choices. As a women's leader, you can be a trustworthy provider of this help by pointing to Scripture for the truth and guidance they'll need.

Getting Started

(Optional Kick Off Event)

Scripture Journal Social

A week before you begin your 3 a.m. program, invite women to gather and create a Scripture Journal that will be used throughout the program. This can be a Saturday night, Sabbath afternoon, or vespers event.

If possible, make this a child-free event, or provide childcare so moms can have a break from mothering duties.

You may wish to provide snacks or center the event around a planned meal or potluck. Breaking bread together is one of the easiest ways to help people relax and connect.

Suggested Schedule

Welcome and Introductions

Devotional (see below for an idea)

Prayer & Praise

Scripture Journal Creation

Review of Upcoming Program

Close with Prayer

What You Will Need

- Composition or small notebooks – one per person
- Copy of scripture verses to be used in program (at end of this section)
- Scrapbook paper
- Markers, pens, colored pencils
- Blank paper
- Embellishments, decorative cutters, glue, etc.
- Sample Scripture Journal

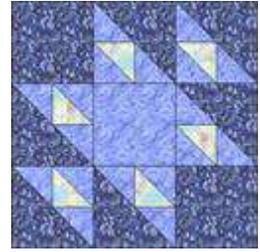
Women will be decorating and personalizing the cover of the scripture journal.

On the inside cover, have women glue a copy of the scripture verses to be used throughout the program. This ensures that even if they miss a session they will have the scripture to study on their own.

Devotional Activity

Quilted Together in Prayer

Adapted from 'Month-by-Month Women's Ministries Programs' Tina Shorey, Elizabeth Timmins, authors



March is a blustery kind of month for northerners. Snow is still around but tantalizing signs of spring tempt and remind that winter won't last forever!

Like the ending winter, as protective walls are torn down, as women dare to reveal the scars, and battles, and trials, things seem to look less lovely. But. Abba has a plan for beauty, life, renewal. No matter how deep the injury. No matter how fierce the battle. No matter how difficult the trial. God is re-creating each of His precious daughters into His image. He is making everything beautiful in its time!

Decorations (optional)

Use quilts for tablecloths or use different fabric pieces as table toppers over white tablecloths. For centerpieces: collect a variety of sewing baskets and fill with cloth, various sewing items, and a plant or vase of flowers.

Scripture Focus

Ecclesiastes 3:11

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

Ice Breaker

Choose one of these activities to get women laughing and chatting.

- 1.) Hand out a piece of paper and pen to each lady. Give them one minute to list as many things as they can that belong in a sewing basket. The women with the most items win. Offer a small prize.
- 2.) Give each lady an envelope with bits of colored paper in it, a square piece of cardstock, and a glue stick. Challenge participants to create a paper quilt square in 5 minutes. Place all the squares together to create a group 'quilt'.

Devotional Thought

God Makes All Things Beautiful in HIS Time

Many things appear ugly and useless to us. In fact, often we discard the ugly and consider it a bonus to finally have it gone. One too many pumpkins (or tomatoes, or cucumbers) from the garden, trash, old furniture, over-ripe fruit. All can be considered useless and without beauty. And yet, those same items can be used to create objects of beauty and desire - a pie, a handy item, a refurbished piece of furniture, or a loaf of bread. One needs only to see the potential.

How often we also apply this same thinking to people! Perhaps there is someone in church that doesn't talk or look 'normal'. A neighbor that irritates beyond belief. A family member so unlovable you wonder how they can live with themselves. Whether we like to admit it or not, we are all guilty of 'judging the book by its cover'! It is so easy for us to reject the potential in others.

As I contemplated these thoughts I was reminded of quilting.

Quilting is such an enjoyable craft. Selecting a quilt style, hunting for patterns and colors of cloth that will look just right, snipping and sewing. Creating a thing of beauty and usefulness which reflects the creator's love and care.

Often, quilts tell stories. The blue denim squares were from Aunt Sally's favorite skirt. That yellow check was Grandmother's best tablecloth. And that delicate flowery square was the dress I wore when... Scraps of cloth no longer useful as dresses or tablecloths – every piece bringing a different quality to the completed work. Some are shiny and beautiful, others are richly textured, and some are homey and worn. All come together beautifully!

I like to imagine that God is quilting us together with his Love. Romans 8:28 – And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Each life is full of scraps - the experiences we have had, successes, failures, disappointments, loss, love, happiness, and dreams. For some people – the darker fabric seems overwhelming – too many disappointments, failed relationships, lost dreams. Things that make them bitter or difficult to love.

For others, the sunny fabric of contentment and happiness show through. Highly polished professionals and simple, worn-at-the-edge moms. Brand new babies and aging parents. All are viewed as beauty and usefulness by God.

On a personal level- God wants to gather together all of our 'scraps' and create something beautiful. We can't do it on our own. We have to rely on the Master to accomplish this work in us, keeping an eye out for the beauty that He will create with our varied experiences.

On a larger scale-God brings people together for a purpose. He knows the sunny, happy person can bring cheer to the downcast. Young vibrant youth can shoulder the burden of wiser, older persons. And all together – like a quilt – people come together and become a colorful living masterpiece of God's patience, kindness, and love.

Let's spend time now in prayer - asking the Lord to reveal to us what He wants us to become, and to accept His definition of beauty as it plays out in our lives.

YOU WILL
KEEP HER IN
Perfect PEACE
...because
SHE TRUSTS
IN YOU.

— ISAIAH 26:3 —

Week 1	Psalms 139: 1-18
Week 2	Jeremiah 29: 11-13
Week 3	1 Samuel 17: 1-50
Week 4	Isaiah 49: 15, 16
Week 5	Proverbs 31
Week 6	1 Peter 4: 8
Week 7	Isaiah 66: 134
Week 8	Deuteronomy 4: 9
Week 9	Ephesians 2: 10
Week 10	Isaiah 40: 31
Week 11	Galatians 6: 9
Week 12	Isaiah 41: 13
Week 13	Psalms 128: 1-2, 5-6

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Getting Started (Weekly Program)

Room Set Up

- Set aside an area in the room for the study. Have a table and chairs, or place chairs in a circle. Your layout should encourage the feel of women coming together as equals.
- Have extra Bibles, blank paper, pens, Kleenex, and bottled water on hand.
- If possible, have a separate area only used for the quiet/activity time for the children during the study. This helps children transition from regular more active activities to quieter calmer ones.

Sample Schedule

9:30 a.m.	Welcome Regular Children's Programming
10:00	Designated staff gathers children for lesson-related activities (craft, quiet activity, hands-on activity, coloring, etc.)
10:00	Adults gather in pre-determined area of room with group leader Welcome & Prayer Introduction Activity & Discussion Scripture Study
10:30	Closing and Prayer

Group Make Up

This program is all about mentoring through relationship building. Include several older moms and grandmothers in the group in addition to women with young children. If your church is small, don't worry if you don't have extra people to attend! Any intentional community building is going to be a positive and affirmative endeavor. You may also want to consider reaching out to others in your faith-based community. This is an excellent opportunity to reach out to the community! As your group grows cohesive, encourage moms to invite their friends to attend.

Conversation

Women like to talk. It is important for us to connect with those around us. While it is easy to have the class hijacked with chatter, it is vital to keep to the schedule you design and keep the purpose of meeting a priority. Bible study and spiritual nurturing must be the focus of this time. There are ice breakers at the beginning, and as women connect, the conversation can continue into socializing after class ends.

Model Safe Relationships

As women become more comfortable sharing, it is inevitable that personal issues will surface. It is vital to model safe relationships by practicing the following behaviors:

- Maintain Confidentiality
- Use Active Listening Skills
- Know When to Suggest Professional Help
- Don't Judge, Preach, or Lecture
- Be Authentic, Intentional, Vulnerable, and Above All – Grace Filled
- Be Self-Aware
- Practice Spiritual Self-Care

1. **Maintain Confidentiality**

Given the close-knit nature of faith-based communities, it is common to have contents of conversations in one setting to pop up in another – say at a board meeting or in a friend group. Being a safe church, nurturing safe relationships means that when women open up during Bible study (and after), they are certain that their words won't be showing up in another place.

Unless there is a safety issue that requires reporting by law (such as child abuse, abuse of a minor), keep conversations private. Even when reporting is required, be careful and sensitive – and report to the appropriate officials.

2. **Use Active Listening Skills**

- Listen with your whole brain! Don't start formulating opinions, come-backs, answers, and solutions as soon as someone starts talking to you!
- Look at the person -put your phone down, reduce distractions, and make eye contact.
- Use verbal and non-verbal indications that you are engaged in the conversation (saying 'yes' or 'uh-huh'; turning your body toward the speaker, mirroring emotions)
- When you do respond – let the person know you are hearing them by reflecting back what they are saying ('so you get frustrated by your work load'). Don't be afraid to ask for clarification.

3. **Know When to Suggest Professional Help**

Most conversations will not fall into the realm of requiring professional help. However, you may encounter people who have problems or situations that need professional help to work through. These typically involve areas such as mental health, abuse, intimate relationships, and physical health.

If you feel you have encountered a situation needing professional help, ask your pastor for referral suggestions, utilize the New York Conference Women's Ministries Website (Help for the Hurting has many hotlines, resource suggestions and articles on a variety of topics) www.sdawm.org, or search the internet for local, state, and national hotlines and resources.

4. **Don't Judge, Preach, or Lecture**

Safe relationships are free from judgement. We all have issues. Even scripture acknowledges that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" Romans 3:23.

When looking for support, hope, help...the last thing we want is to be told how wrong we have been, what we should have done, or how we should be living. As we reach out to walk with others it is important to remember they are just like us. It is so easy to trigger shame and guilt. This in turn has the opposite effect of what our groups are intending to do.

Everyone enjoys a fitting reply; it is wonderful to say the right thing at the right time! Prov. 15:23

Wise words satisfy like a good meal; the right words bring satisfaction. Proverbs 18:20

Kind words are like honey sweet to the soul and healthy for the body. Proverbs 16:24

5. **Be Authentic, Intentional, Vulnerable, and Grace Filled**

Relationships are an investment. While not every person you meet will become your best friend, each deserves your authenticity, intentionality, and grace. Being authentic (or, if you prefer, being real) is something most people pick up on. Hiding behind a perfect persona, refusing to admit you have issues, and always having an answer for others

problem areas are strong signals that you may be having difficulty with authenticity in relationships. Need to work on being real? Dig in to your Bible! Go read what God thinks about you! Then apply that same view to everyone you meet! We are ALL called HIS children. *“nothing can ever separate us from God’s love.”* Romans 8:38. NOTHING!!

Being intentional looks different for each level of knowing someone. The person behind the café counter can be treated with intentionality by your choosing to look her in the eye, thanking her by name, and wishing her a good day (and meaning it). Intentionality with your moms group may include remembering names, special dates, important events. Yes, it takes a bit of effort but it shows that you care, that you are listening, that this person truly matters to you.

Vulnerability is a sticky word that many are uncomfortable with. In the context of small groups, as a leader, if you expect the group to grow and relationships to deepen, you need to model vulnerability. Again, there are different levels depending on who you are with and the purpose of the group. Being willing to share your story or experiences, or struggles makes you real to those you minister to and is a source of encouragement as others face similar difficulties.

Above all. Extend grace to those you encounter. Jesus provides countless examples of grace in action while He walked this earth. He knew that the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of humans is intertwined. He never required people to heal themselves in one realm (who could do it anyway?) before having their needs in the other realms healed. It is a journey of many single steps.

“But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.” Ephesians 4:7

6. **Be Self Aware**

We each bring our own story, our own baggage, our own handicaps to the table of relationships. Each of our experiences colors how we see, interpret, and respond to others. While we can’t change those factors, we can be aware of them. This is the place where we must also practice extending grace to ourselves. It is vital to dive into God’s Word and stand firmly on the foundation of what He says about who you are.

Another aspect of self-awareness involves establishing and maintaining safe and appropriate boundaries. You are not called to be everything to everyone. You must be mindful of your limitations and discomforts; establishing what you are able to do and not allowing guilt or shame to cause you to compromise your own well-being.

7. **Practice Spiritual Self-Care**

Leading a small group takes commitment and energy. And I’m willing to bet that you have many other responsibilities in your church, at home, and in the community. To be an effective mentor it is important for you to care for yourself physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Prioritizing ‘you’ may be difficult, but it is essential! You give from the overflow of your heart – and being filled to overflowing requires that you prioritize your time with God as a vital part of life and ministry!

Lesson 1

Remembering Who (and Whose) I Am

Becoming a mother is an amazing, life-changing, confusing, frustrating, and down-right tiring experience! Amid midnight feedings, diapers, laundry and more laundry, it is easy to feel your identity slipping away as you morph into (insert child's name here) mom.

- **Introductions**

- **What you will need:**

- One copy of glasses sheet per person (see end of this study for pattern)

- One pen per person

- Small squares of paper for prayer requests

- Hand out glasses sheets and pens
 - Have each woman quickly write down 4 or 5 words for each section of the page. Don't overthink this! Just write the first words that come to mind.
 - Ask if anyone would like to share a word or two from each section. No pressure!

- **Discussion**

- Use the following questions to continue the conversation

- How has your identity changed since becoming a mom?
 - How do you think that identity will change over time?
 - How does this make you feel?
 - Is it wrong to want more? What is one personal dream you have for your future?

- **Study**

- Prayer
 - Psalm 139: 1-18
 - After reading in your version of Bible, read this again using the Message Bible.
 - Ask if anyone would like to share what they are hearing in this passage.
 - Using one of the tools listed in the *Getting Started* section – delve into what it means to be searched and known by God (verse 1)
 - Discuss how that makes everyone feel. Keep in mind that each person brings their own story to the table – be careful to avoid invalidating remarks or body language. There are no right or wrong answers.
 - Be prepared to share what this passage means to you.
 - Isolation, exhaustion, and loneliness are common when mothering. How does this chapter offer hope during difficult or uncertain periods?

- Key Thoughts to Emphasize

- The God who gave you children knows you intimately
 - He wants a relationship with you as you not as a role you fill
 - Seasons of life change but Abba is the author of, in the middle of everything. He sees you. He is walking with you on this journey.

- **Make it Real!**

- Ask women to rewrite a summary of the scripture passage placing their name and interpretation into the words.

- **Prayer**

- Ask each woman to write something they would like to have lifted in prayer during the next week. They do not have to write their name if they don't feel comfortable. Place all papers in a pile, mix them up, and have each woman select a paper.
- Encourage women to add the request they selected to their daily prayer time. Knowing someone is praying specifically for you is a great way to break the isolation.
- During subsequent sessions, make time for women to share how prayers have been answered.

Pre-Baby



How would you describe yourself before there was a baby in your life? What did you like to do? Who did you hang out with? How did you spend your free time?

How do you describe yourself now? What do you like to do? What do you do in your free time? How have your relationships changed?

Post-Baby



Messages



Who do you think others think you are? What impressions or ideas have you gotten from family, friends, co-workers, and church members about who you are or who you should be?

Lesson 2

Storytelling 101

Parenting can be an isolating experience at times. Our desire to do things ‘right’ often leads us to compare ourselves, our children, our homes, our lives with those around us – or worse – with the things shown in media.

Creating a safe place for women to gather and share the real aspects of life is an important part of the ministry of encouragement and imparting hope. As Jesus walked beside people, he focused on stories to teach about God’s love, character, and desire for His children to be free from shame, guilt, and comparison.

- **Introductions**

- **What you will need:**

- Large ball of yarn – any color. If your group is big, have two or more balls

- **Common Thread**

- Hold end of yarn – tell something about yourself (a like, dislike, activity you enjoy, something you want to do, etc.). Anyone having the same characteristic, like, or dislike raises their hand.
 - When done, keep holding your end and throw yarn ball to someone who has raised their hand – have that person tell something about themselves then keeping hold of the thread of yarn throw the ball to someone else. Repeat until every woman is holding at least one thread of yard.
 - Each person should be holding onto the string as they tell then throw.
 - In the end you have a tangled mess – BUT the point is – we are all connected!

- **Discussion**

- Use the following questions to continue the conversation

- How easy is it to find something in common with others?
 - How would life look if we chose to search out things in common with everyone we meet?
 - Talk about how easy it is to find surface things in common with others and present the idea that when we choose to have courage to share deeper, we will also find parts of our stories in common with other women.

- **Study**

- Jeremiah 29:11-13
 - Ask if anyone would like to share what they are hearing in this passage.
 - Using one of the tools listed in the *Getting Started* section – delve into what the words *seek*, *find*, *peace*, and *expected end* mean.
 - Discuss how that makes everyone feel. Keep in mind that each person brings their own story to the table – be careful to avoid invalidating remarks or body language. There are no right or wrong answers.
 - Be prepared to share what this passage means to you.
 - If you have time – encourage women to think of Biblical mothers and the issues they faced. Below are some examples:
 - Unplanned pregnancy: Mary learning that she was carrying the Son of God –social backlash

- Infertility: Hannah pleading to be blessed with a son.
- Loss: Eve holding her dead son-the earth and a mother experiencing human death for the very first time.
- Longing: Canaanite Woman (Matthew 15:28)
- Single Parenting/Desperate Need: Zarephath Widow (2 Samuel 24:24)

Key Thoughts to Emphasize

- Stories...No matter what your story is, God can use it for good. His plans for you are good. He wants you to have hope and a future.
 - God can redeem your story – no matter what it looks like.
 - You are not alone. Every woman has her own story. Every story has common elements – successes, failures, hopes, dreams, losses, and fears.
- **Make it Real!**
 - Ask women to rewrite a summary of the scripture passage placing their name and interpretation into the words.
 - **Prayer**
 - Ask each woman to write something they would like to have lifted in prayer during the next week. They do not have to write their name if they don't feel comfortable. Place all papers in a pile, mix them up, and have each woman select a paper.
 - Encourage women to add the request they selected to their daily prayer time. Knowing someone is praying specifically for you is a great way to break the isolation.
 - During subsequent sessions, make time for women to share how prayers have been answered.

Lesson 3

Facing Giants

The challenges in life are innumerable and sometime unpredictable. Certainly, it is easy to become overwhelmed by them! Nurturing healthy relationships and engaging in quiet time with God are excellent tools to help keep things in perspective and can be a source of encouragement and strength.

• Introductions

What you will need:

- 4 small flat rocks for each person
- Paint pens, permanent thin-line markers

Alternatively:

- One blank sheet of paper
- Markers, pens, or crayons

- Ask each woman to draw a simple picture or symbol or word that represents the following (one per rock):
 - What is the biggest challenge you face raising a child?
 - What is the biggest challenge you face as a mom?
 - What is the biggest challenge you face as a woman?
 - What is the biggest challenge to your spiritual growth?
- Allow time for women to share what they drew if they so desire.
- If you have time (or assign as homework) explore scripture passages that will give strength to defeat these challenges. Encourage women to place their rocks where they can daily see them and be reminded to place each challenge in God's hands.

• Discussion

Use the following questions to continue the conversation

- Have you witnessed other women battling with the same challenges you have?
- How do you deal with overwhelm and doubt?
- How do you think your challenges have impacted your parenting style?

• Study

- Prayer
- 1 Samuel 17: 1-50
- David and Goliath
- Ask if anyone would like to share what they are hearing in this passage.
- Using one of the tools listed in the *Getting Started* section – delve into the names for God and meanings.
- Discuss how that makes everyone feel. Keep in mind that each person brings their own story to the table – be careful to avoid invalidating remarks or body language. There are no right or wrong answers.
- Be prepared to share what this passage means to you.

Key Thoughts to Emphasize

- God doesn't view life and its challenges the same way you do
- Your impossible mountains are His pathways to great blessings

- David – not a small, weak child. The man who killed bears and lions with his bare hands certainly had confidence in his ability to conquer whatever came his way! He also had the humbleness required to hear and follow God’s lead.
 - You have a Father who wants you to come to Him claiming the blessings, power, strength, and wisdom He promises to provide.
 - Abba gives strength to fight through our daily battles
 - Sometimes we need to pick up something tangible – our rocks – to help us remember
- **Make it Real!**
 - Ask women to rewrite a summary of the 1 Samuel 17:45,46 placing their name and interpretation into the words.
- **Prayer**
 - Ask each woman to write something they would like to have lifted in prayer during the next week. They do not have to write their name if they don’t feel comfortable. Place all papers in a pile, mix them up, and have each woman select a paper.
 - Encourage women to add the request they selected to their daily prayer time. Knowing someone is praying specifically for you is a great way to break the isolation.
 - During subsequent sessions, make time for women to share how prayers have been answered.

Lesson 4

Not Forgotten

Often when we transition into motherhood, it feels as if we leave our identity behind as we pick up the mantle of ‘mom’. It is vital for women to remember that their identity and worth is not defined by the roles filled, the outcomes of situations, or the words others use to describe them. God is the only One qualified to inform us of our worth! And HE will never forget who we are!

- **Introductions**

- **What you will need:**

- 10 objects set on a tray or the table and covered (such as: pen, bell, mint, scrunchie, acorn, small dog treat, crayon, lip balm, plastic spoon, sticky note, etc.)

- Blank paper and pen – one per person

- Instruct women that you will be uncovering objects and giving them 30 seconds to memorize everything on the table. Then cover up the items and ask women to write down as many things as they can remember.

- **Discussion**

- Use the following questions to continue the conversation

- How easy is it for you to remember things?
 - Has remembering gotten more challenging since becoming a mother? Why or why not?
 - What are three of the most important things that you feel every woman should remember?

- **Study**

- Prayer
 - Isaiah 49: 15, 16
 - Ask if anyone would like to share what they are hearing in this passage.
 - Using one of the tools listed in the *Getting Started* section – delve into what the words *engraved*, *palms*, *walls* mean.
 - Discuss how that makes everyone feel. Keep in mind that each person brings their own story to the table – be careful to avoid invalidating remarks or body language. There are no right or wrong answers.
 - Be prepared to share what this passage means to you.

- **Key Thoughts to Emphasize**

- Your name is written on His hand – He NEVER forgets you!
 - If you are important enough to God for Him to carve your name on His hand, what does that say about your worth? What He thinks of YOU?
 - How should this verse inform you about God’s intentions, His desires, and His plans for you?
 - Does this change how you view yourself?
 - Does it change how you view your children.... their names are written in the same place!

- **Make it Real!**
 - Ask women to rewrite a summary of the scripture passage placing their name and interpretation into the words.
- **Prayer**
 - Ask each woman to write something they would like to have lifted in prayer during the next week. They do not have to write their name if they don't feel comfortable. Place all papers in a pile, mix them up, and have each woman select a paper.
 - Encourage women to add the request they selected to their daily prayer time. Knowing someone is praying specifically for you is a great way to break the isolation.
 - During subsequent sessions, make time for women to share how prayers have been answered.

Lesson 5

Wonder Woman!

Somewhere between birth and adulthood many women internalize an impossible message. That of being perfect. Of being all things to all people. And sadly, scripture is sometimes used to justify that ideology. We develop internal messaging that unless we hit every item on the to-do list we just aren't going to be worthy.

Scripture points out that we cannot self-save, cannot attain perfection as the world defines it. And God is also liberal in His assurance that HIS view, His definition of worth, His saving grace is sufficient for each of us.

- **Introductions**

- **What you will need:**

- Blank sheet of paper per person

- Pen per person

- Fold a piece of paper in half long ways
 - Tell women they will have one minute to complete this exercise
 - On one side – write as many things as you can think of that you do well or admire about yourself
 - On the other side write down as many things you can think of that you do wrong or dislike about yourself
 - Open the page – which column is longer – the good or bad?

- **Discussion**

- Use the following questions to continue the conversation

- Why do you think it is easier to think of things we do wrong or dislike about ourselves rather than is right or likeable?
 - How might this tendency play out in our parenting approaches?
 - What can we do to turn negative thinking to positive?

- **Study**

- Prayer
 - Scripture: Proverbs 31
 - Ask if anyone would like to share what they are hearing in this passage.
 - Discuss how that makes everyone feel. Keep in mind that each person brings their own story to the table – be careful to avoid invalidating remarks or body language. There are no right or wrong answers.
 - Be prepared to share what this passage means to you.
 - Break down the qualities this woman has:
 - Tends to her marriage
 - Isn't afraid to go the distance needed to provide well for her family
 - Cares for all under her roof, makes certain their needs are met
 - Has wisdom and is a shrewd business person
 - Is careful with her purchases
 - Isn't afraid of hard work
 - Is compassionate to those in need
 - Isn't worried about hard times as she has prepared

- Considers self-care important
 - Her workmanship is quality
 - Values strength, honor, wisdom, and kindness
 - Isn't idle
 - Invests in her children and husband
 - Most importantly – and making all of the above possible-she fears God.
 - Does not do things for favor or beauty
 - Her own works will praise her both at home and in the community
- Let's break it down even further
 - Values her family enough to make providing for their needs a priority
 - Does her work willingly and well
 - Values strength, honor, wisdom, kindness, compassion
 - Considers self-care important
 - Makes God the center of everything she does

Key Thoughts to Emphasize

- This is not a to-do list of the perfect wife and mother, nor is it a measuring stick!
 - Description of a noble character.
 - Breaking the chapter down reveals that this woman experiences life just like us: marriage, kids, housework, shopping, work, and providing for the inevitable storms that happen.
 - “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord and not for people” (Colossians 3:23 TEV).
- **Make it Real!**
 - Ask women to rewrite Proverbs 31:30 placing their name and interpretation into the words.
 - **Prayer**
 - Ask each woman to write something they would like to have lifted in prayer during the next week. They do not have to write their name if they don't feel comfortable. Place all papers in a pile, mix them up, and have each woman select a paper.
 - Encourage women to add the request they selected to their daily prayer time. Knowing someone is praying specifically for you is a great way to break the isolation.
 - During subsequent sessions, make time for women to share how prayers have been answered.

Lesson 6

Full Strength Love

Love is the cornerstone of God's relationship with humanity. It was the primary focus of Jesus' ministry. And it is to be the torch we carry into the dark places of this world. Accepting God's unconditional love then living it out to those encountered is the Christians primary calling, but remember that in our sin-stained lives, this love does not come naturally.

- **Introductions**

- **What you will need:**

- One heart shape per person (see end of this lesson for pattern)

- Pencils, Crayons or markers

- Give each woman a heart shape
 - Ask participants to write down in pencil something they did or said recently that they wish they could take back
 - Next, have them select a crayon or marker and color over what they have written.
 - Talk about how God's unconditional love never changes (Romans 8:31-39)

- **Discussion**

- Use the following questions to continue the conversation

- How has responding with love smoothed over a rough patch in your life?
 - Does showing love negate the need for accountability? Why or why not?

- **Study**

- Prayer
 - Scripture: 1 Peter 4:8
 - Ask if anyone would like to share what they are hearing in this passage.
 - Using one of the tools listed in the *Getting Started* section – delve into what each of the words in the verse means.
 - Discuss how that makes everyone feel. Keep in mind that each person brings their own story to the table – be careful to avoid invalidating remarks or body language. There are no right or wrong answers.
 - Be prepared to share what this passage means to you.

- Key Thoughts to Emphasize

- The word for love in this scripture is agape love – unconditional. The love God Himself has toward His children.
 - This verse is not negating the need for accountability, consequences for actions resulting in harm, nor is it telling us to get rid of our boundaries.
 - Keeping a little black book of wrongs is never to be our approach to life.

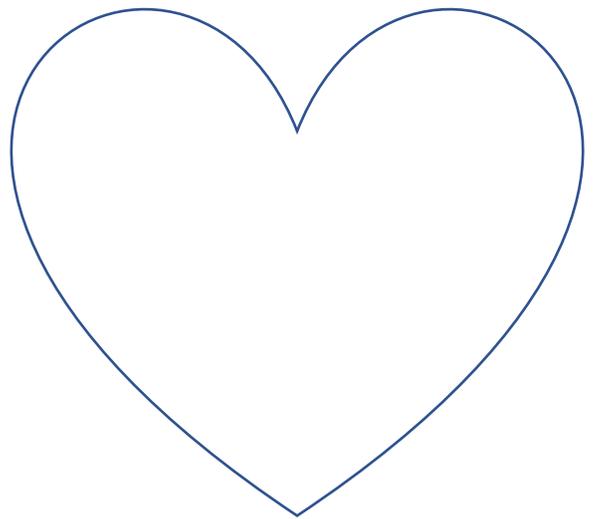
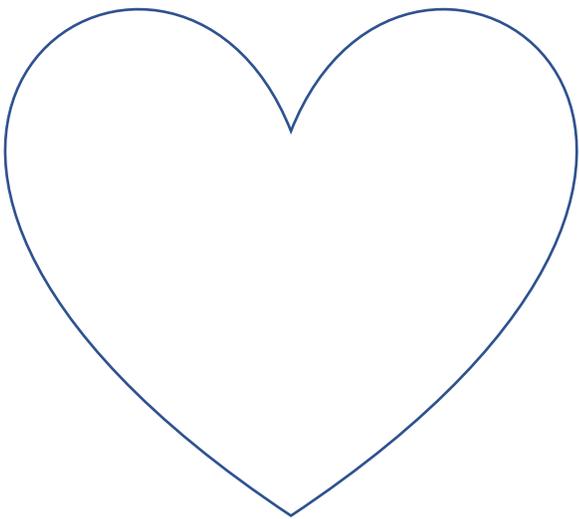
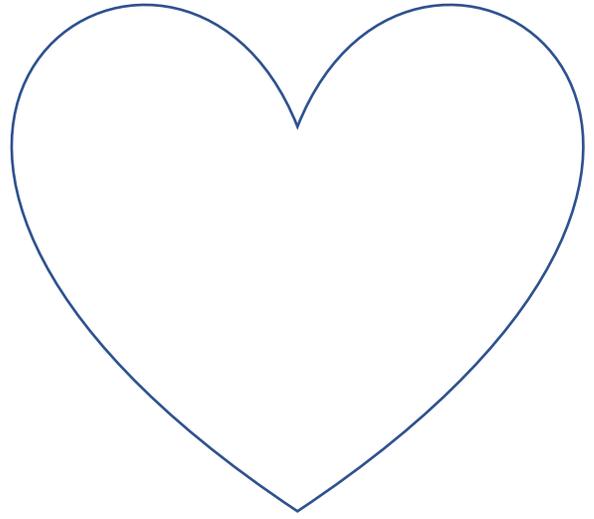
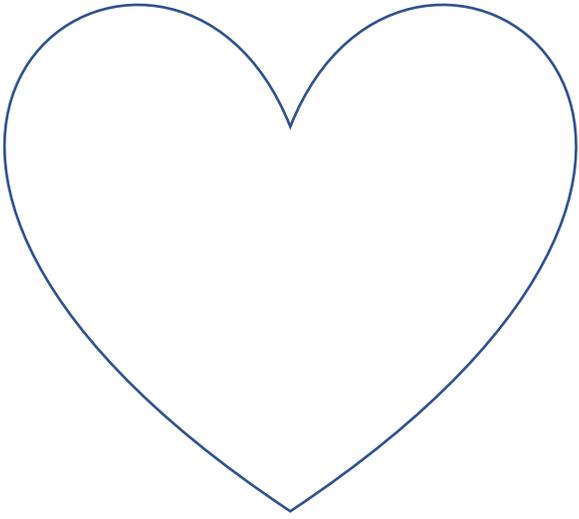
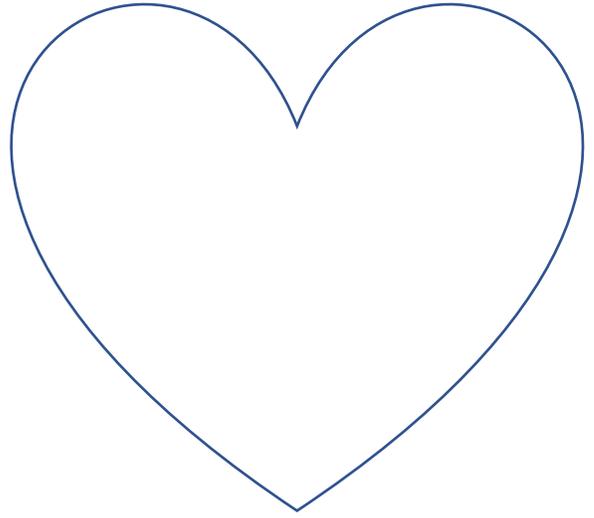
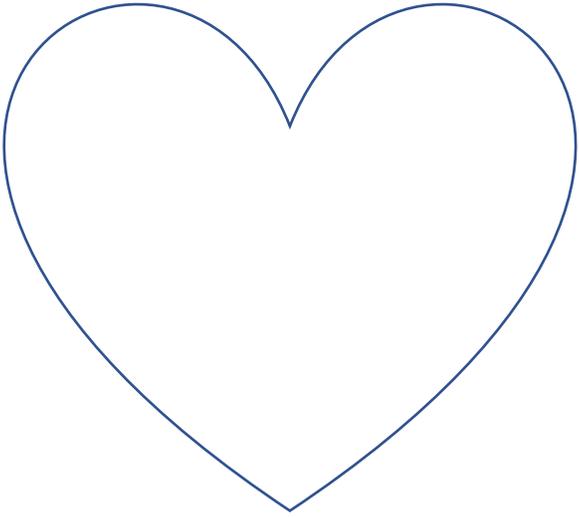
- **Make it Real!**

- Ask women to rewrite a summary of the scripture passage placing their name and interpretation into the words.

- **Prayer**

- Ask each woman to write something they would like to have lifted in prayer during the next week. They do not have to write their name if they don't feel comfortable. Place all papers in a pile, mix them up, and have each woman select a paper.

- Encourage women to add the request they selected to their daily prayer time. Knowing someone is praying specifically for you is a great way to break the isolation.
- During subsequent sessions, make time for women to share how prayers have been answered.



Lesson 7

Finding Comfort

It is common to approach God as strict disciplinarian. He laid down the rules, we must keep them. There are consequences when we disobey. But a close reading of scripture reveals quite a different picture! The Creator and God of the Universe bids us to approach Him as a child would to a loving Father.

• Introduction

What you will need:

Copy of quilt square (see patterns 1 & 2 at end of lesson)

Markers and pens

Large poster board, hole punch, yarn or ribbon, scissors, glue (optional)

- Give each woman a quilt square (or colored shapes if doing square #2)
- Ask them to write on each section something they find comforting when stressed, tired, sick, or plain frazzled.
- If you wish to make a class ‘quilt’ collect all the completed pieces and either glue to a large poster board, or punch holes on all sides of each square and tie the squares together with yarn or ribbon.

• Discussion

Use the following questions to continue the conversation

- What are some common comfort items the group shares?
- How does having/using these comfort items make life more doable?
- How many of these comfort items have their roots in childhood experiences?

• Study

- Prayer
- Scripture: Isaiah 66:134
- Ask if anyone would like to share what they are hearing in this passage.
- Using one of the tools listed in the *Getting Started* section – delve into what the word *comfort* means in its original language
- What does it mean to you to be comforted?
- What does it look and feel like to be comforted by God?
- What similarities are there between how God comforts us and how we comfort each other?
- Discuss how that makes everyone feel. Keep in mind that each person brings their own story to the table – be careful to avoid invalidating remarks or body language. There are no right or wrong answers.
- Be prepared to share what this passage means to you.

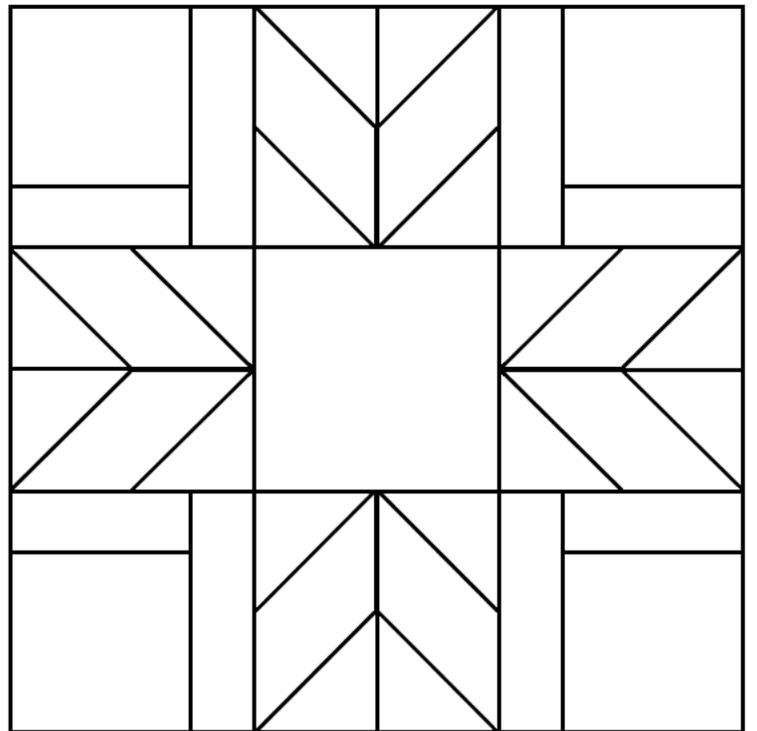
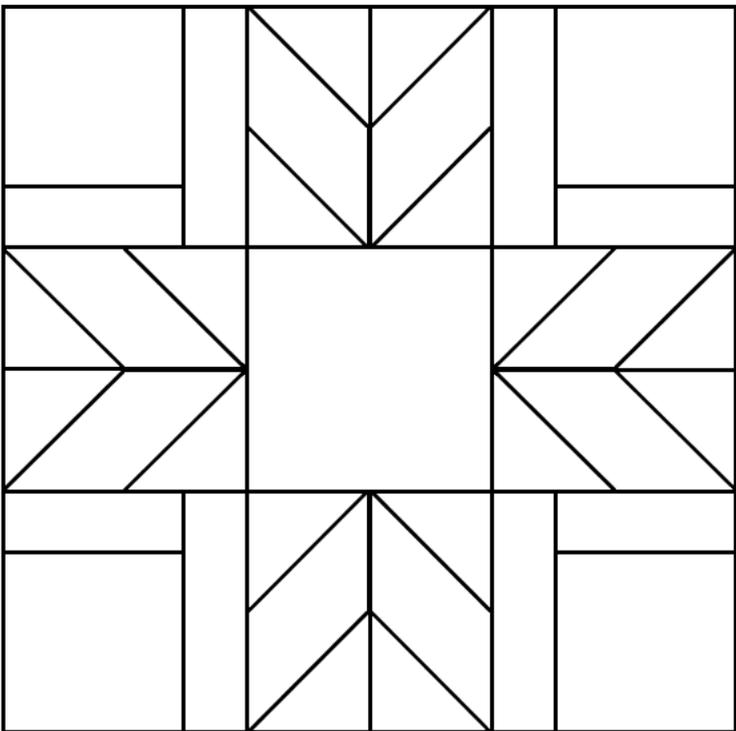
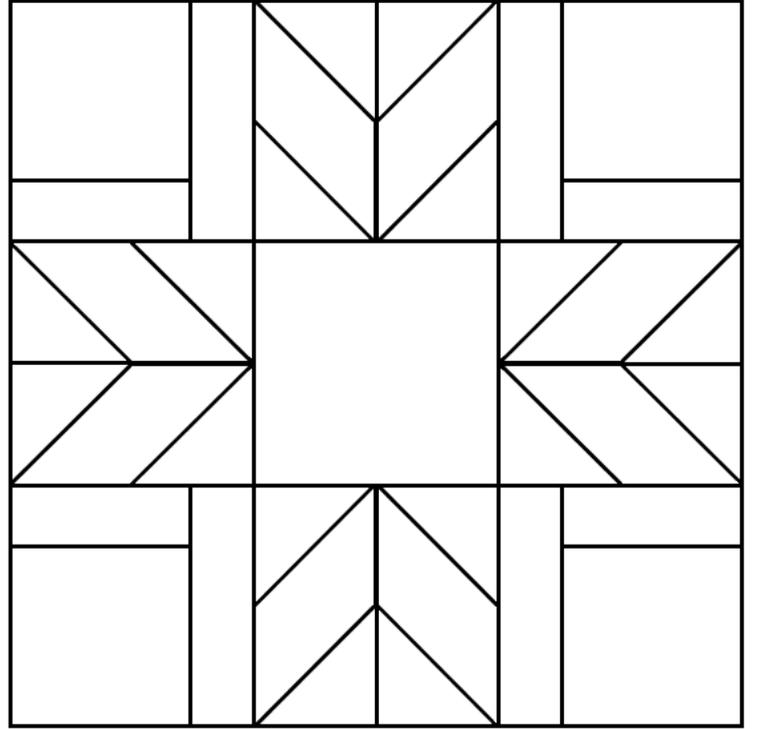
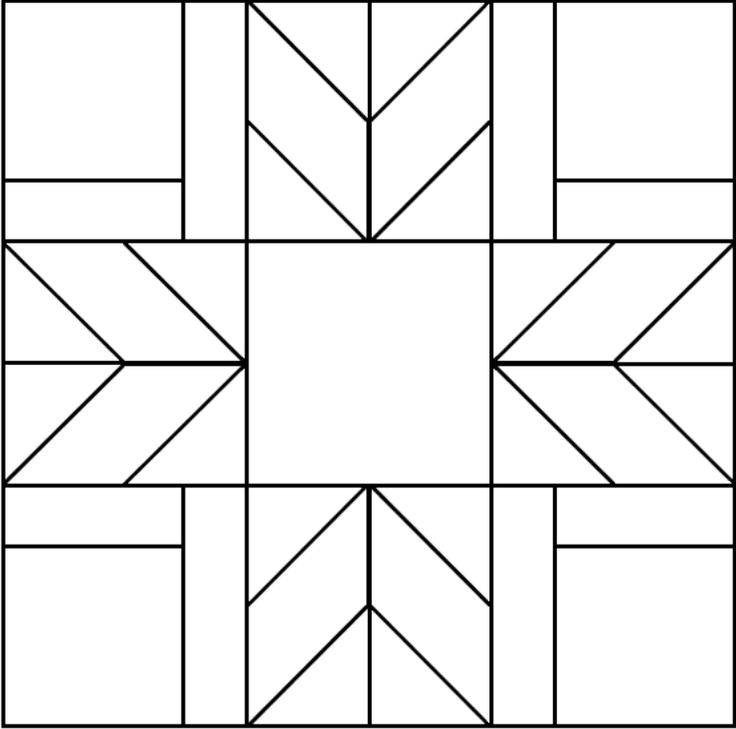
Key Thoughts to Emphasize

- God knows first-hand via Jesus what it feels like to be comforted and cared for by a mother. He is using a language He knows we will understand.
- God desires to comfort us.
- He bids us to call Him Abba – Daddy (Romans 8:15)

- For those whose relationship or childhood experience with parents has been strained or painful: God offers the opportunity to reparent and fill the empty and broken places.

- **Make it Real!**
 - Ask women to rewrite a summary of the scripture passage placing their name and interpretation into the words.

- **Prayer**
 - Ask each woman to write something they would like to have lifted in prayer during the next week. They do not have to write their name if they don't feel comfortable. Place all papers in a pile, mix them up, and have each woman select a paper.
 - Encourage women to add the request they selected to their daily prayer time. Knowing someone is praying specifically for you is a great way to break the isolation.
 - During subsequent sessions, make time for women to share how prayers have been answered.



Use this pattern if you would like to cut out colored squares.

Cut apart the pattern and use the pieces as patterns for cutting out squares using scrapbook paper, construction paper, or other colored paper.

You will need the following for each participant:

Different colored squares

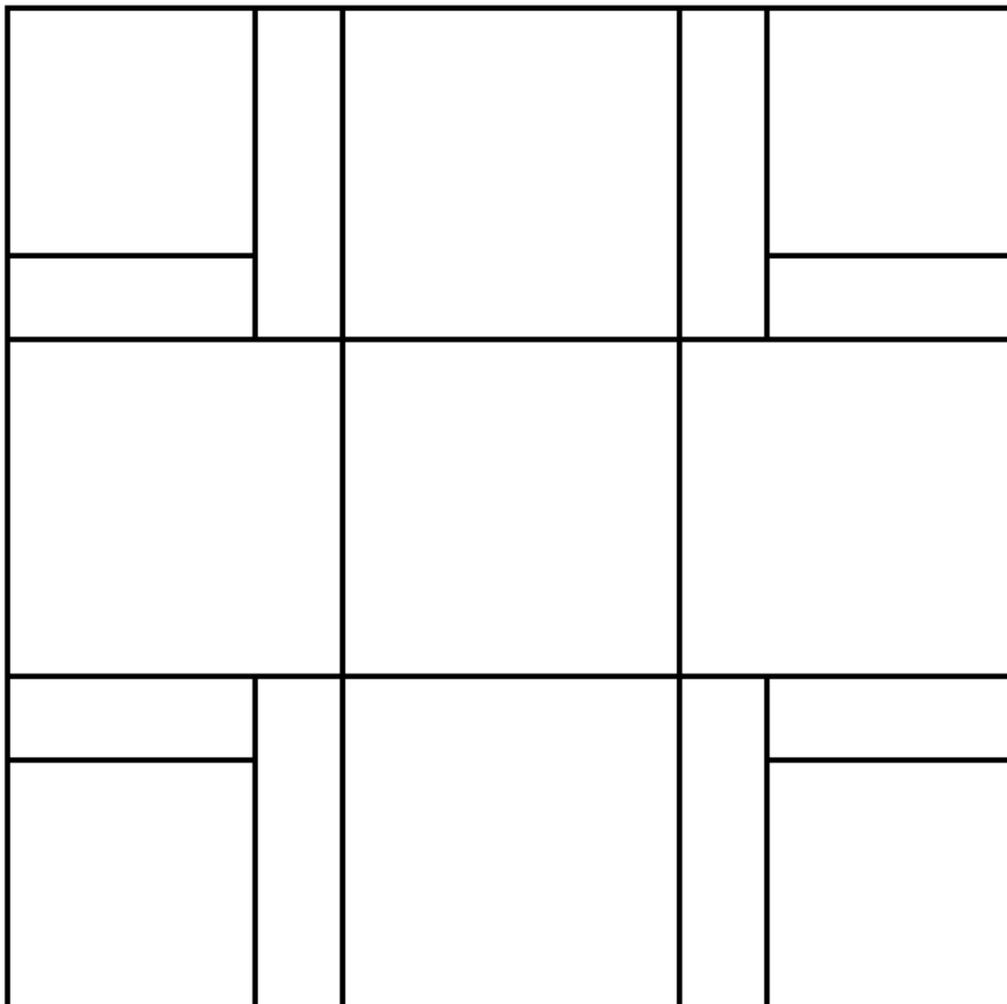
Glue sticks

Cardstock or stiff paper

Pens

Have women write down something that they find comforting on each square, then glue the squares on the cardstock.

For a class project – you can collect all of the squares made and glue them onto a large poster board.



Lesson 8

Stop, Look, & Listen!

Every day is filled with blessings, miracles, lessons, and reminders of how God works in our lives. Sharing what we experience and learn (first-hand) is an important ministry to the next generation.

- **Introductions**

- **What you will need:**

- Copy of DRAW THIS! Cards (see end of lesson).

- Sticky note pads – one per person, preferably a different color or shape per person

- Pens or pencils

- Copy and cut out the DRAW THIS! Cards. Place face down in the middle of the table. (Blank cards are provided to write in your own sentences).
 - Give each woman a sticky note pad and pen.
 - How it works: Each woman selects a card from the middle of table and reads it without showing anyone else the card, then places it face down on the table next to them.
 - Draw a picture of what is read on the first page of the sticky note pad.
 - Pass the pad to the person on the right. That person looks at picture, flips up the page, creasing it so it stays flipped up, and writes what they think the picture is. Pass the pad to the person on the right.
 - Now, read what is on the pad, flip up and crease the page – draw what was read.
 - Repeat this process until each person has their original sticky pad back.
 - Have each person show or read what the final picture is to be – then reveal what the original picture should have been.

- **Discussion**

- Use the following questions to continue the conversation

- How easy or difficult was it to read what others wrote and interpret it correctly?
 - What surprised you about how others interpreted your words or drawing?
 - What advice would you give to others playing this game for the first time?

- **Study**

- Prayer
 - Deuteronomy 4:9
 - Ask if anyone would like to share what they are hearing in this passage.
 - Using one of the tools listed in the *Getting Started* section – delve into what the words “careful”, “watch”, and “teach” mean in the original language.
 - Discuss how that makes everyone feel. Keep in mind that each person brings their own story to the table – be careful to avoid invalidating remarks or body language. There are no right or wrong answers.
 - Be prepared to share what this passage means to you.
 - If comfortable, share something that you have learned that you want to pass on to your children.
 - What things are difficult to remember especially when you are stressed or tired?

Key Thoughts to Emphasize

- Seeking out, talking about, and remembering the ways God has provided and cared for us is an important part of raising spiritually strong and confident children (and grandchildren!).
 - As parents, we have the distinct honor of passing along the life and spiritual wisdom we have gained in our personal journey
 - We must be willing to be authentic and honest as we share with others
 - No lesson is too small, no blessing is inconsequential to share.
- **Make it Real!**
 - Ask women to rewrite a summary of the scripture passage placing their name and interpretation into the words.
 - **Prayer**
 - Ask each woman to write something they would like to have lifted in prayer during the next week. They do not have to write their name if they don't feel comfortable. Place all papers in a pile, mix them up, and have each woman select a paper.
 - Encourage women to add the request they selected to their daily prayer time. Knowing someone is praying specifically for you is a great way to break the isolation.
 - During subsequent sessions, make time for women to share how prayers have been answered.

DRAW THIS!

The cat hopped into
the box

DRAW THIS!

The children are
playing ball

DRAW THIS!

The birds are eating
food

DRAW THIS!

The girl is
scuba diving

DRAW THIS!

Mom is making a
sandwich

DRAW THIS!

The mailman
delivered the mail

DRAW THIS!

The man is raking
leaves

DRAW THIS!

We are going to fly a
kite

DRAW THIS!

The family is camping
in the mountains

DRAW THIS!

DRAW THIS!

DRAW THIS!

Lesson 9

God's Masterpiece

Our daily lives are filled with man-made reminders that we are not enough – not thin enough, rich enough, good enough, pretty enough, accomplished enough... But these messages do not originate from our Heavenly Father! We must daily soak in the only true recounting of our worth – God's Word. 'But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' 2 Corinthians 3:18

- **Introduction**

- **What you will need:**

- One coloring bookmark per person (see end of this lesson) – copy onto cardstock

- Markers

- Hand out coloring bookmarks and markers.
 - Enjoy a time of creating masterpieces

- **Discussion**

- Use the following questions to continue the conversation

- What are the requirements for something to be a masterpiece?
 - How are masterpieces treated? (storage, display, cleaning, care, etc.)

- **Study**

- Prayer
 - Scriptures: Ephesians 2:10
 - Ask if anyone would like to share what they are hearing in this passage.
 - Using one of the tools listed in the *Getting Started* section – delve into what the words “*workmanship*”, “*prepared*”, and “*walk*” mean in the original language.
 - Discuss how that makes everyone feel. Keep in mind that each person brings their own story to the table – be careful to avoid invalidating remarks or body language. There are no right or wrong answers.
 - Be prepared to share what this passage means to you.
 - How does being God's masterpiece change how you view yourself?
 - We are often our own worst critics, aware of every flaw, every area where we feel we don't measure up to those around us.
 - How has comparison to others impacted your life?
 - How does knowing that God sees you as a masterpiece change your self-view?

- Key Thoughts to Emphasize

- God is our creator and the author of our lives
 - Our self-worth needs to be securely fastened on who God says we are
 - We serve from the overflow of our hearts – when we remain connected daily with God, our ministry and service take on a new purpose and focus.

- **Make it Real!**

- Ask women to rewrite a summary of the scripture passage placing their name and interpretation into the words.

- **Prayer**

- Ask each woman to write something they would like to have lifted in prayer during the next week. They do not have to write their name if they don't feel comfortable. Place all papers in a pile, mix them up, and have each woman select a paper.
- Encourage women to add the request they selected to their daily prayer time. Knowing someone is praying specifically for you is a great way to break the isolation.
- During subsequent sessions, make time for women to share how prayers have been answered.



Lesson 10

Courage to Fly!

Parenting (and life) can get downright discouraging. Issues, problems, and challenges seem to happen quicker than solutions can be found. Walking through some days can feel downright impossible. But God is faithful! For every difficulty, Abba offers hope and a promise that we will not ever walk alone.

- **Introductions**

- **What you will need:**

- Blank paper – one per person OR
 - Copy of shoe prints (see end of lesson)
 - Pens

- Have women trace around one of their feet.
 - Think about the biggest energy sappers, discouragement causers, weariness inducers in your life. Write these items around the outline of your foot tracing.
 - On the inside of your foot tracing, write today's scripture in your own words.
 - Alternatively: copy, cut apart, and hand out the footprint page. Have women write items around each of the footprints, then write out the scripture on the page.

- **Discussion**

- Use the following questions to continue the conversation

- What are the biggest things that sap your energy or discourage you?
 - What ways do you find most beneficial to rejuvenate and combat weariness?
 - What creative ways can be brainstormed to incorporate encouragement scripture into daily life so that we are reminded that we don't walk alone?

- **Study**

- Prayer
 - Scripture: Isaiah 40:31
 - Ask if anyone would like to share what they are hearing in this passage.
 - Using one of the tools listed in the *Getting Started* section – delve into the individual word meanings for this scripture passage.
 - Discuss how that makes everyone feel. Keep in mind that each person brings their own story to the table – be careful to avoid invalidating remarks or body language. There are no right or wrong answers.
 - Be prepared to share what this passage means to you.
 - What does it mean to 'wait for (or hope in) the Lord? How does that look in real life?
 - How does an eagle in flight teach us about God and His provision?
 - What ways can be used to combat feelings of discouragement or failure when we DO become weary and faint?

- Key Thoughts to Emphasize

- Being tired, weary, faint, discouraged, and downright exhausted are all a natural part of mothering. And living.
 - There is power in presenting all of our burdens, cares, and frustrations to Jesus.

- Scripture is filled with stories and words meant to encourage and strengthen us in our daily journey.

- **Make it Real!**
 - Ask women to rewrite a summary of the scripture passage placing their name and interpretation into the words.

- **Prayer**
 - Ask each woman to write something they would like to have lifted in prayer during the next week. They do not have to write their name if they don't feel comfortable. Place all papers in a pile, mix them up, and have each woman select a paper.
 - Encourage women to add the request they selected to their daily prayer time. Knowing someone is praying specifically for you is a great way to break the isolation.
 - During subsequent sessions, make time for women to share how prayers have been answered.



Lesson 11

Don't Give Up!

Raising children can get downright discouraging at times. It is tempting to ask 'does what I am doing even matter?' God reminds us that even when it gets hard, we must not give up doing good. It has an impact. It matters.

- **Introductions**

- **What you will need:**

- A copy of *All Things* worksheet at end of this lesson for each woman

- Pens

- Give each woman a copy of the *All Things* worksheet and a pen
 - Allow time for writing down several situations, relationships, or issues that each woman feels most challenging to them.
 - Encourage them to continue the exercise at home as part of their time with God.

- **Discussion**

- Use the following questions to continue the conversation

- What issues seem to be common to everyone in the group?
 - What Bible promises can you think of to speak to each issue?

- **Study**

- Prayer
 - Scripture: Galatians 6:9
 - Ask if anyone would like to share what they are hearing in this passage.
 - Using one of the tools listed in the *Getting Started* section – delve into the individual word meanings for this scripture passage.
 - Discuss how that makes everyone feel. Keep in mind that each person brings their own story to the table – be careful to avoid invalidating remarks or body language. There are no right or wrong answers.
 - Be prepared to share what this passage means to you.
 - What does growing weary look like? How can we combat that?
 - What do you think you will reap from doing good? How does this apply your children specifically?
 - Is giving up an option? What does giving up look like in our daily lives?

- Key Thoughts to Emphasize

- God understands that getting weary is part of the human equation.
 - Scripture is filled with encouragement, practical advice, and reminders that rest is an important part of the journey.
 - Part of growing weary with doing good is having an expectation that we will be recognized and rewarded immediately. God reminds us that we may not see the full impact of our deeds in this life, but we can be confident that He knows all.

- **Make it Real!**

- Ask women to rewrite a summary of the scripture passage placing their name and interpretation into the words.

- **Prayer**

- Ask each woman to write something they would like to have lifted in prayer during the next week. They do not have to write their name if they don't feel comfortable. Place all papers in a pile, mix them up, and have each woman select a paper.
- Encourage women to add the request they selected to their daily prayer time. Knowing someone is praying specifically for you is a great way to break the isolation.
- During subsequent sessions, make time for women to share how prayers have been answered.

Lesson 12

Living Fearless

Nothing brings out fear quicker than raising children. Are we feeding them correctly? Is everything safe? How do I know I'm doing this right? What if I fail? God understands human fear and offers the promise of his close presence and help in the middle of our fear-inducing situations.

- **Introductions**

- **What you will need:**

- Copy of Hopes/Fears Worksheet (see end of lesson)
 - Copy of Hope & Fear Action Plan Sheets (see end of lesson)
 - Copy of Hope & Fear Quotes (see end of lesson)
 - Pens

- Give each woman a worksheet and pen
 - Ask women to write down in the hopes column the dreams, aspirations, and hopes they have.
 - Allow time for sharing if desired.
 - Ask the women to read through their list of hopes and star the ones that pertain to them personally – rather than the ones pertaining to their children, family, or others.
 - Repeat with the 'Fears' column.
 - Encourage women to use the Fear and Hope Action Plan worksheets to explore further at home.
 - Give each woman a copy of the quotes on Hope and Fear, encouraging them to place scripture where it is seen daily as a reminder that they do not walk alone.

- **Discussion**

- Use the following questions to continue the conversation

- Which category was easier to fill in?
 - Which category has more items in it?
 - How does being a parent change the fears and hopes you have?
 - What is the most common fear mentioned in your group?

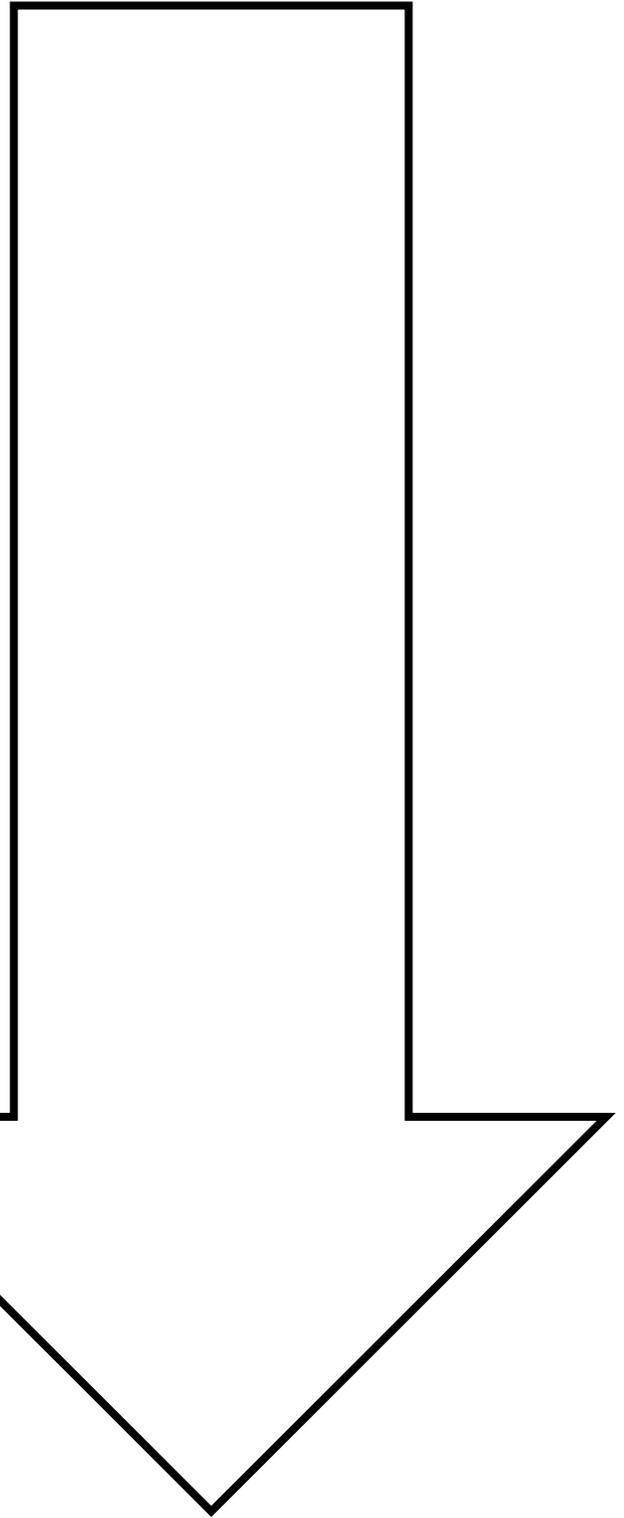
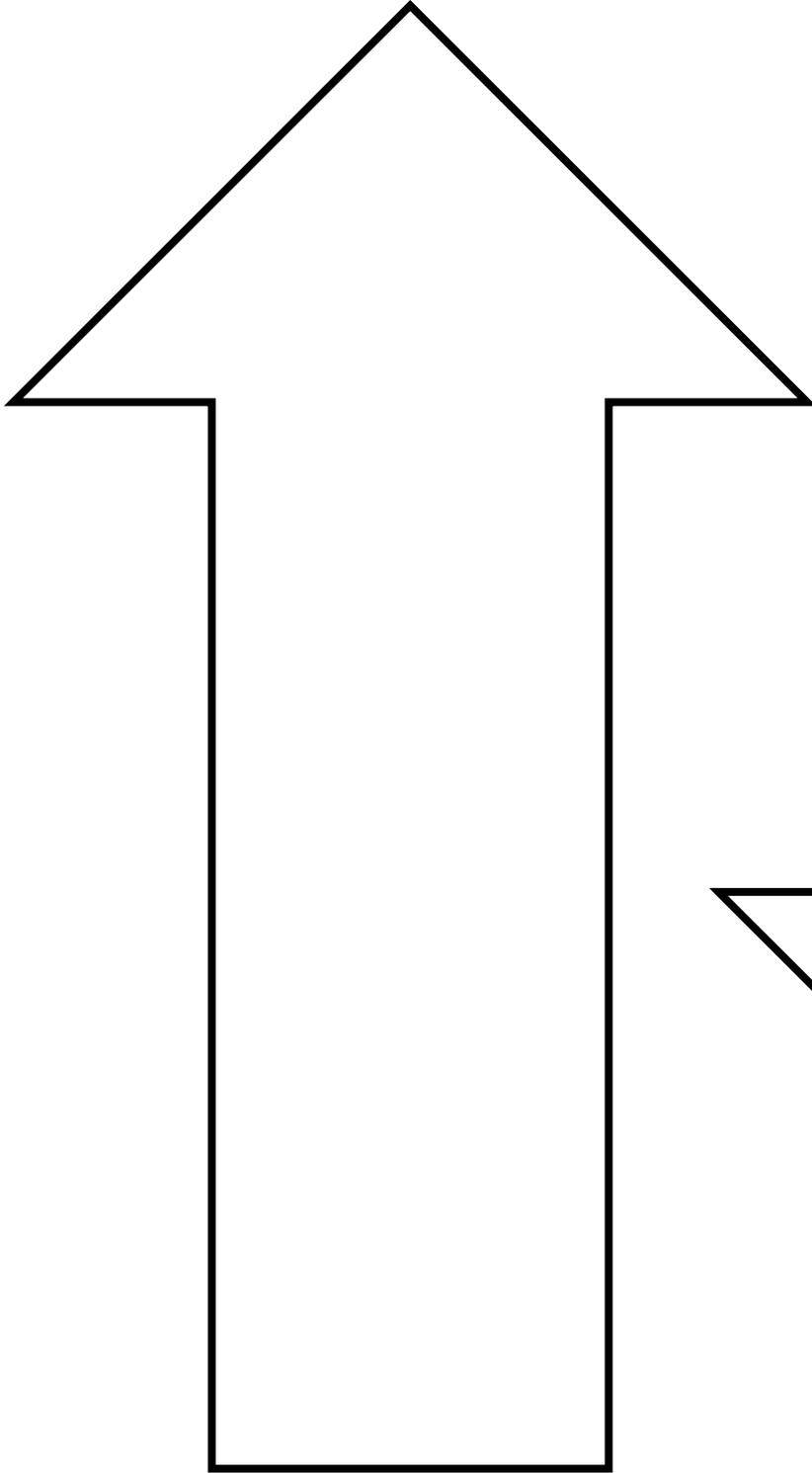
- **Study**

- Prayer
 - Scripture: Isaiah 41:13
 - Ask if anyone would like to share what they are hearing in this passage.
 - Using one of the tools listed in the Getting Started section – delve into the individual word meanings for this scripture passage.
 - Discuss how that makes everyone feel. Keep in mind that each person brings their own story to the table – be careful to avoid invalidating remarks or body language. There are no right or wrong answers.
 - Be prepared to share what this passage means to you.
 - What does it mean to have God holding your right hand?
 - Why should we find comfort in God telling us not to fear?
 - What does God helping us look like?

Key Thoughts to Emphasize

- God understands and acknowledges that we experience fear. This is not a verse telling us that it is sinful to feel fear.
 - God isn't somewhere far off observing our lives. He is up close and personal – He is 'holding your right hand'
 - God uses all of His power to meet your needs
- **Make it Real!**
 - Ask women to rewrite a summary of the scripture passage placing their name and interpretation into the words.
 - **Prayer**
 - Ask each woman to write something they would like to have lifted in prayer during the next week. They do not have to write their name if they don't feel comfortable. Place all papers in a pile, mix them up, and have each woman select a paper.
 - Encourage women to add the request they selected to their daily prayer time. Knowing someone is praying specifically for you is a great way to break the isolation.
 - During subsequent sessions, make time for women to share how prayers have been answered.

Hopes



Fears

Hope Action Plan

MY HOPE _____

What steps can I take to make this hope a reality?

Scripture Promises to focus on when hope seems lost



Fear Action Plan

MY FEAR _____

Steps I can take to reduce or manage this fear

Scripture Promises that reduce the power of this fear

For I am the Lord, your God, who takes

hold *of your*
right hand

and says to you,

Do not fear;
I will help *you.*

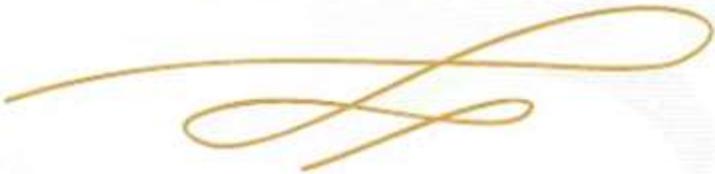
Isaiah 41:13

He has always been with you and He will always be with you.



SHE HOLDS
ONTO HOPE,
FOR HE IS
FOREVER
FAITHFUL.

1 CORINTHIANS 1:9



Love and Grace Co.

Lesson 13

Walking with God

History is filled with memorable people. We remember the stories of the famous, the rich, the daring, the life-changers At least some of them. Leaving a legacy of giving, doing, or being isn't a guarantee that the world will remember us. God calls us to leave a spiritual legacy for our children and those we encounter even briefly.

- **Introductions**

- **What you will need:**

- Legacy worksheet (see end of lesson)

- Pens

- Give each woman a copy of the worksheet and a pen.
 - Instruct each woman to write on the top section the names of people who have impacted their life in a positive way – no matter how small!
 - On the bottom section women should write people they want to impact.

- **Discussion**

- Use the following questions to continue the conversation

- What ways have people impacted you? What makes them memorable to you?
 - What ways are you impacting the people on your list?
 - What does leaving a spiritual legacy look like to you?

- **Study**

- Prayer
 - Scripture: Psalm 128:1-2, 5-6
 - Ask if anyone would like to share what they are hearing in this passage.
 - Using one of the tools listed in the *Getting Started* section – delve into the individual word meanings for this scripture passage.
 - Discuss how that makes everyone feel. Keep in mind that each person brings their own story to the table – be careful to avoid invalidating remarks or body language. There are no right or wrong answers.
 - Be prepared to share what this passage means to you.
 - What does it mean to fear the Lord?
 - How does walking in God's way make us happy? Isn't it restrictive?
 - What does it mean for things to go well for you?
 - What is the significance of seeing your grandchildren?
 - Think about the faith legacy you wish to leave for your children and grandchildren.

- Key Thoughts to Emphasize

- God knows what it takes to walk well through life and has provided a guideline to assist us in our journey
 - God is concerned for our happiness and success.
 - We impact the generations coming after us.

- **Make it Real!**

- Ask women to rewrite a summary of the scripture passage placing their name and interpretation into the words.

- **Prayer**

- Ask each woman to write something they would like to have lifted in prayer during the next week. They do not have to write their name if they don't feel comfortable. Place all papers in a pile, mix them up, and have each woman select a paper.
- Encourage women to add the request they selected to their daily prayer time. Knowing someone is praying specifically for you is a great way to break the isolation.
- During subsequent sessions, make time for women to share how prayers have been answered.

PEOPLE WHO POSITIVELY IMPACTED MY LIFE

Legacy

PEOPLE I AM IMPACTING



May the

God

OF

hope

Fill you with all

joy AND peace

AS you

trust in Him

Romans 15:13

win high

