

Mom2Mom

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A Program of the New York Conference Women's Ministries Department

Mom2Mom is a connecting and mentoring ministry.

This introductory program is designed to bring mothers together in a non-threatening, relaxed atmosphere where they can begin the connecting process.

So often mothers hear words of criticism, rejection, and sermonizing, when what they really need is a hug, assurance that it will be okay, and a safe place to be who they are – imperfect, learning, growing, discouraged, tired, lonesome, and in need of a little support.

We want to place a picture in your mind –

Jesus, sitting under a tree resting after a long day of talking, walking, listening, healing, encouraging, and praying for others. The women have, because of the culture they live in, been pushed to the back or the side of the main crowd of men. But as the day draws to a close, mothers linger with their children; hoping that Jesus will have just one more blessing, one more smile to bestow on their little ones.

The disciples are tired too, and anxious for rest, and they quietly attempt to convince the mothers to take their children and go home.

But. Jesus sees.

And he commands his disciples to leave the mothers alone, to allow the little children to come crawl in his lap, touch his robes, and show him the tiny treasures they have spent the day collecting. His laughter mixes with that of the children gathered around him, and he smiles broadly at the proud, if exhausted and harried, group of mothers standing at a respectful distance. He has time for the little ones. And he has time to understand the mother's hearts and desires as they draw close to the Healer.

Their weary souls are seeking respite under the calming, loving, reassuring gaze of Jesus. He gathers their children, knowing how challenging it has been for them to keep their children behaving and out of the way all day. He knows the thirst these women have for acceptance and assurance that their lives matter, that what they do day-to-day is seen and is important.

We need to provide shelter and assurance for the mothers Abba places in our lives. Nurturing relationships that are intentional, vulnerable, authentic, and grace-filled. Just. Like. Jesus.

Refresh!

Ice Breaker

- What is the best advice you have ever received?
 - Accepting and believing what God says about you – share!

The five senses are a powerful, biblically based means for us to encounter God, not only as we practice our faith but also as we participate in the “messy splendor” of daily life.

What does/did your child do as he/she began exploring their world? Think of what a 6-month-old baby does when presented with a new toy: she grasps it, tastes it, turns it over in her hand, pounds it. She encounters it with all her senses, and in so doing, learns more than we might guess.

Young children do some of their most important learning through their senses. We will take time to slow down and experience life for the next hour with all five our senses.

Note: You may decide to extend each sense to cover an hour and offer a five-day meeting schedule.

Refreshing Touch

Healthy touch is an important part of thriving. A quick search of the internet turns up numerous scientific studies about the positive effects of touch, including stress reduction, easing pain, and lifting depression.

Select one or more of the following activities for your group to do, allowing enough time for the interaction to be calming.

Keep in mind that some people may be touch adverse. Creating safe relationships includes respecting individual needs for space and acknowledging their discomfort with certain activities. Encourage anyone not wishing to have someone touch them to do one of the following activities for themselves.

- deep breathing (proper breathing) – learning to be still
- relaxation techniques - slow down to be present in your body
- Feel - self-hand massage w/lavender lotion (soothe)
- Hugs-really hug someone. Not 1 second hug, but hold-feel the other person

Notes

Refreshing Smell

Smell is often an overlooked sense. Aside from helping us determine if the baby needs changing and if last week's chili is still good, smell is forgotten. However, as with all of our sense, studies show that smell can be a potent weapon against stress, depression, and headaches. It can also boost our immune system, aid in digestion, reduce pain, and help us sleep better.

With so many benefits to smell – what better way to connect with moms who are likely experiencing stress, headaches, and exhaustion?

'Smell' activities can be fun or relaxing. Select one or more of the following activities and ideas for your group to enjoy. You may want to start by asking moms what their favorite scent was when they were a child and what their favorite scent is today. One study from Columbia University found that the most pleasurable scents include: orange, vanilla, cinnamon, crayons, and cookies.

You can set the scene by making sure you have a nice smelling room for your meeting. Using natural, organic ingredients... create a subtle scent for your meeting. Our favorite: place a cut up orange, several whole cloves, 3-4 cinnamon sticks in a pan of water and bring to a simmer. You could also bake a batch of cinnamon scones or cookies before everyone arrives.

Avoid synthetic sprays and perfumes as many people are allergic.

For a quick natural freshener – peel an orange, then squeeze the peels to release the oil.

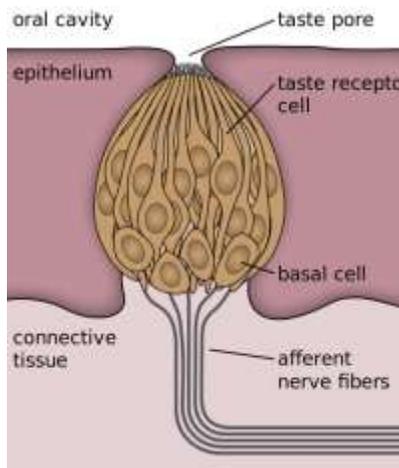
- Give women permission to relax – sit and quietly enjoy a natural scent
- Mindfulness – ask women to sit quietly and do deep breathing while focusing on what they smell.
- Smell in nature – take a nature walk and do a smell map – write down everything you smell (the human nose can detect one trillion distinct scents)
- Give each mom a flower – and encourage her to 'sit and smell the roses'

Notes

Refreshing Taste

We have saved taste for last as this is a great time to include a bit of socializing before ending your meeting. If you have chosen to complete this series in five separate sessions – one for each sense – try to incorporate a beverage and snack into each session. Sharing food together has the magical effect of bonding and bringing people closer together in a non-threatening, relaxed way.

Have you ever seen a taste bud? Not on the top of your tongue, but down inside...? Here it is:



Pretty neat, huh?

There are 50-100 taste receptor cells in each taste bud.

Way more complicated than what is typically envisioned!

Makes me wonder if my kids actually taste their food as they shovel it in as quickly as possible!

Moms likely have forgotten what it feels like to relax and savor the food they eat as screaming toddlers, fighting middle schoolers, and a host of mini 'emergencies' crop up exactly as that fork of salad is scooped up!

This is a great time to offer moms a chance to 'be still' and 'taste and see that Abba is good'.

Offer your moms any or all of the following discussions and activities, and encourage them to slow down and really taste what they are putting in their mouths and in their minds.

- Palate cleansers (forgiveness) – a change in perspective can put a whole new taste in your mouth!
- Thirsting for relationship (Vulnerability)
- Offer a variety of fresh fruit slices – discuss the flavors as each mom samples
- Chocolate - offer a piece of good quality, nut-free, chocolate to each mom. Encourage them to savor the chocolate with eyes closed, thinking about how the chocolate feels in their mouths as it melts. Bring it around to 'taste and see that the Lord is good'.
- Provide a pampering tea, a picnic lunch, or some other food event as an ending activity. Encourage women to linger over their food. This is a great time to bring together all of the senses by incorporating elements of each – highly scented foods, quiet music, visually appealing arrangement of food and flowers, offering a variety of textured foods.

Notes
