



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?

2. What are we to not stop doing?



3. What is the purpose of meeting together?

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

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?

2. What will save people?



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

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

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?

2. How can this be a witness to outsiders?

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



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

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

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 challenges ?	what are some ideas for facing these challenges?
what are some of the opportunities ?	what are some ideas for making the most 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

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

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.

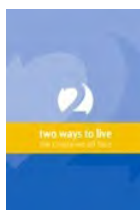
training resources

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.

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

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).