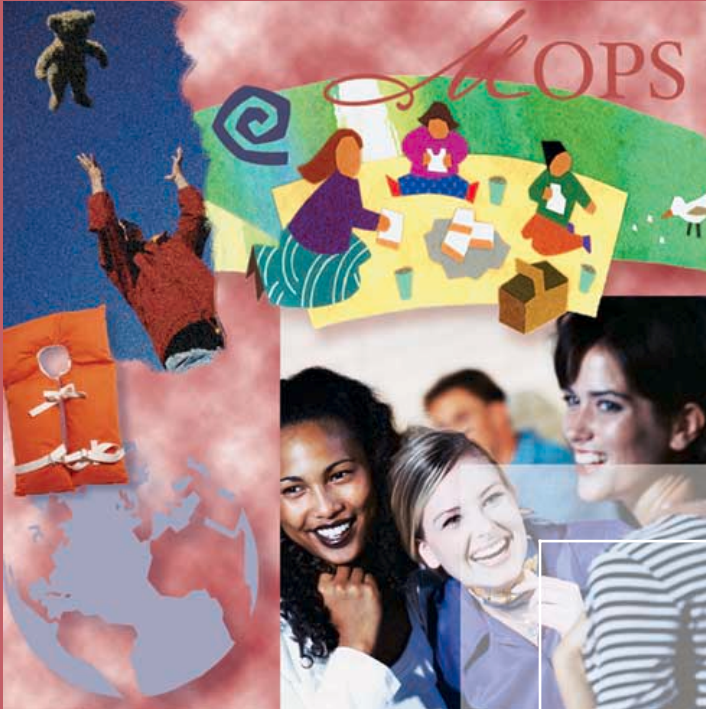


MOTHERS OF
MOPS
PRESCHOOLERS



MOPS INTERNATIONAL
...because mothering matters

..... *Creative Activities*

The Purpose of Creative Activities

God, the Creator, made us in his image. That means he created us to be creative. During the years of raising young children, mothers of preschoolers hunger for creative opportunities where individuality can be expressed. In this season when sentences are rarely completed, moms enjoy the opportunity to learn a new activity or finish something that becomes a visual aid for their invested efforts.

Creative Activities:

- ☞ Provide opportunities to learn or develop creative skills and complete projects in a non-threatening, friendly atmosphere.
- ☞ Provide alternative areas of creativity and learning a mother may not otherwise explore.
- ☞ Provide time for women to socialize and get to know other MOPS moms in an unstructured setting.
- ☞ Initially attracts some women to MOPS because of their interest in Creative Activities.

The Creative Activities Team Leader encourages mothers of preschoolers, especially those women on her team, by showing them that they can do or learn an activity, can create, and can enjoy the process of completing something.

We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Ephesians 2:10








Creative Activities Team Leader Job Description



Personal Characteristics:

- ④ Demonstrates a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Members of her team may not have committed their lives to Christ, so she is in an excellent position to encourage each member to make this decision.
 - ④ Possesses a special God-given creative ability that can be an encouragement to others and will bring new ideas for developing creativity.
 - ④ Leads in a dedicated, flexible, patient, and creative way, recognizing and planning for different levels of ability and interest in Creative Activities.
 - ④ Organizes with a sense of humor. These two gifts together will help her prepare her team for the many details of each Creative Activity, from planning to dealing with the unexpected surprises.
 - ④ Delegates well and enjoys having many women involved in the completion of her team's responsibilities.
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Position Responsibilities:


- ☉ Guides her team in the Creative Activity selection and preparation.
- ☉ Organizes materials, instructions, demonstrators, and samples of each Creative Activity before the MOPS meeting. She plans within the time and budget limits of her group, and understands the needed skills for each activity.
- ☉ Recognizes women who enjoy Creative Activities and provides opportunities for their growth.
- ☉ Appropriately utilizes the ideas and abilities of each team member, wisely delegating responsibility.
- ☉ Teaches skills and activities effectively, inspiring MOPS women to develop their skills in creative projects and encouraging women who do not feel particularly successful in this area.
- ☉ Arranges for guest demonstrators and experts to visit MOPS to share various skills or other activities.
- ☉ Serves on the Steering Team and attends meetings.
- ☉ Reads the *MOPS Handbook* and *Creative Activities Handbook* and understands the vision of MOPS and her relationship to the MOPS group.
- ☉ Disciplines her team members and encourages each woman to grow in her relationship to Christ.



The Creative Activities Team

Creative Activities is a large project in MOPS, and not something to be undertaken alone. A group of dedicated, creative women will help with both planning and teaching Creative Activities. Working with a team also provides a way for women who enjoy creative thinking to get involved and develop their talents.

The organization and responsibilities of women on your team will vary according to your needs and group size, but here are some general suggestions:





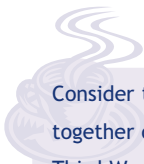

Members of the Creative Activities Team should be creative, talented, and flexible women who enjoy encouraging others to try new things. It is not necessary that a Creative Activities Team member has made a personal commitment to Christ, since her participation and relationship with the Creative Activities Team Leader may provide an excellent opportunity for her to hear the gospel message.



 **Meet regularly.** Build relationships with one another through your common interest in exploring creativity. This will provide you with an opportunity to reach out to non-Christian women on your team, to build friendships based on common interests, and to challenge each team member to develop her own creative talents and interests.


 **Share ideas.** The variety and uniqueness of your Creative Activity schedule will be enhanced by listening to ideas from a variety of people. Assign each team member to research ideas in your community, a magazine, book, and/or Web site, and report back to the team what will work for your MOPS group.

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- ④ **Plan ahead.** As soon as you know the themes and teaching topics for the year, brainstorm together a proposed schedule of activities. This will help you to plan ahead financially, schedule presenters, organize and delegate the necessary work, and give you the opportunity to see your entire schedule in advance to make sure it is balanced.
 - ④ **Divide responsibilities.** Assign each team member a part of the preparation work like purchasing supplies, contacting presenters, assembling packets, etc. depending on what your meeting schedule requires. Or get together as a team to prepare, providing a chance to socialize while you work.
 - ④ **Make sample crafts together.** This not only provides examples for the MOPS women who will be doing the activity later, but it helps your team anticipate questions and avoid potential problems.
 - ④ **Mingle during the meeting.** Assign each team member to help a table or several women, especially if you are working on a craft project. Encourage team members to notice, compliment, and affirm the work of each MOPS woman. This gives them a feeling of accomplishment.



Consider the importance of working together on a project. Women in Third World countries wash clothes at the river together; in the same sense, the Creative Activities time brings each of us to a common level – we can all do something. It builds camaraderie. Working together brings women together and creates opportunities to share openly and honestly.



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- ② **Arrange for set-up and takedown** at MOPS meetings. Ask for team volunteers who can arrive early to organize the Creative Activities area or stay later to clean and put away supplies.
 - ② **Critique what your group has done.** At least once a year, get together as a team to evaluate the activities your group has tried. No matter what your opinion of a particular craft or presentation was, listen to what each team member thought. They may give a broader perspective regarding the difficulty, or the response from MOPS moms.

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Each member of our Creative Activities Team is different. We aren't all 'crafty' types, but we all enjoy expressing ourselves in new ways. God has worked through our passions and our differences to make a Creative Activities schedule that will reach out to every mom.

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General Guidelines for Creative Activities



- ④ Get to know the moms in your group and learn their preferences for crafts and/or other activities that allow them to grow and experiment with their talents. Some MOPS groups do a different craft at each meeting, or one year-long project. Some groups rarely do crafts and prefer to develop their creativity in other ways. Others prefer a combination of crafts and other activities. Learn the needs and preferences of women in your group and use this time to bring out creativity while building relationships, but remember that the goal of Creative Activities is to be active, allowing women to do something hands-on.
 - ④ Work closely with the Finance Team Leader to set and follow a budget. Stay within the preset guidelines for the MOPS year.
 - ④ Do your homework. Stay in touch with other MOPS groups and swap ideas.
 - ④ Try organizing Creative Activities that match the theme of each meeting. For example, making family trees when the topic is birth order or genealogy, a self defense demonstration for a talk about safety, or mixing bath salts for a self-care presentation.
 - ④ Crafts should be something of value when finished. A mom's self-esteem isn't given nearly the same boost when she brings home something that she doesn't want anyone to see.
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- ④ If you are using appliances like glue guns, staple guns, irons, or sewing machines, make sure in advance that there are enough electrical outlets in your meeting room.
- ④ Make sure selected crafts allow for some variety and options in finishing (i.e. paints, glue and glitter, bows, flowers) and offer plenty of samples and ideas, as some women will need more inspiration than others.
- ④ Be sure to leave sufficient time for the Creative Activity. This is a time not only to learn and create, but also to talk with each other and develop relationships. Few women will have the chance to complete something at home, and feel discouraged to see something that's not done.
- ④ Have multiple examples of a project available if you have a large group.
- ④ Explain the purpose of each Creative Activity and demonstrate how to go about completing each one. Provide written instructions if there are many steps.
- ④ Encourage every mom, no matter how she sees her creative abilities. Find something genuinely unique and special about her project. Provide suggestions or help only if asked.
- ④ Don't repeat the same activities each year. In general, women don't want two of the same thing or to hear the same speaker twice.

You may find some crafts or activities, especially gift ideas, which moms will request to do over and over. These should be the exceptions in your schedule rather than the rule.





Creative Presentations




Many women appreciate the chance to learn skills or activities they don't have time to learn on their own. This training time can be fun, inspiring, and can give mothers a sense of accomplishment.



When finances are low, creative presentations also provide an alternative to a craft and may help mothers on a tight budget. Experts and/or demonstrators for these types of Creative Activities may be recruited from your MOPS group or Chartering Ministry, health and home care fields, local businesses, and other areas of expertise.



Following are some ideas for Creative Activities that may enrich and enhance basic life skills:

Creative Cooking:

- ☉ Baking
 - ☉ Bread making
 - ☉ Cake decorating
 - ☉ Candy making
 - ☉ Canning and freezing food
 - ☉ Children's nutrition (snack ideas)
 - ☉ Ethnic cooking
 - ☉ Meal planning
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A finished project provides a feeling of accomplishment and instills confidence in our creative abilities. As mothers, we need to develop creativity – above the usual coloring, cutting, and pasting with our children. We need the encouragement of doing something for the sheer enjoyment and pleasure of doing it and getting it done.





Creative Expression:

- 🌀 Creative writing and journaling
- 🌀 Graphic design
- 🌀 Interior design
- 🌀 Music performance
- 🌀 Painting



Health and safety:

- 🌀 CPR and infant CPR
- 🌀 Eye care
- 🌀 First aid
- 🌀 Fitness: aerobics, tae kwon do, stretching
- 🌀 Self defense



Artistic skills:

- 🌀 Basket weaving
- 🌀 Ceramics
- 🌀 Crocheting
- 🌀 Cross stitch
- 🌀 Drawing
- 🌀 Flower arranging
- 🌀 Painting
- 🌀 Quilting
- 🌀 Stenciling
- 🌀 T-shirt design



Be sure to incorporate time for socializing and expression in creative presentations. These are important aspects of the Creative Activities time.



Life skills

- 🌀 Budgeting
- 🌀 Computer skills
- 🌀 Job preparation (interviewing, resume writing, etc)



Other Ideas:

- 🌀 Candle making
- 🌀 Children's birthday parties
- 🌀 Designing perennial gardens
- 🌀 Gift wrapping
- 🌀 Hair cutting
- 🌀 Hair braiding
- 🌀 Original wrapping paper
- 🌀 Photo care and photo keeping
- 🌀 Rainy-day entertainment
- 🌀 Wallpapering

Ask presenters to bring a short summary of their presentation for moms to take home, or ask if there are any easy "application" activities that you could try during MOPS.



Our MOPS group spends one or two meetings a year making crafts and gifts to give away to the children's hospital or a senior citizen's center. Even women who describe themselves as 'non-crafty' enjoy spending time making things for others, and the organizations we support appreciate it so much!







Where To Find Ideas:

Creative Activities ideas can be found in abundance! Once you start researching, your challenge will most likely be narrowing down what your group can do in a year, rather than finding ideas.


Where should you look?

- ④ **Your group.** Is there a woman who has a special skill in painting, music, or some other creative media? Ask her to share her talent with the group by providing an introductory lesson.
- ④ **Your community.** Explore your area with an open mind. Is there a florist who could teach the women in your group about flower-arranging or gardening? Is there a craft store employee who could teach a simple activity?
- ④ **MOPS International.** MOPS periodically publishes ideas from other MOPS groups and provides places for leaders to share ideas on the MOPS Leaders' Web site. Contact MOPS International to find out what is currently available.



Consider recruiting a member of your Chartering Ministry to come and share from his or her experiences and skills. This is also a great way to connect your MOPS group to your Chartering Ministry.



- ④ **The Internet.** The World Wide Web has a wide variety of ideas and resources. A recent Web search for “cheap craft ideas” came up with 28,000 different sites. You may be able to find inexpensive supplies on-line, as well.
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- ④ **Craft magazines.** Many of these are available in bookstores or your local library.
- ④ **Libraries.** Your local library may have collections of books that are full of creative and inexpensive activities.
- ④ **Craft stores.** Your local creative supply store may provide craft ideas (using supplies purchased from them, they hope).
- ④ **Other MOPS groups.** Almost every MOPS group is experimenting with new and exciting ways to approach Creative Activities. Attend Council meetings and ask for ideas.

By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures.

Proverbs 24:3-4



MOPS International Craft Packet,
MOPS International






Budget-Saving Tips

Creative Activities can be one of the most expensive parts of a MOPS program, and you will probably be asked to find amazing, worthwhile, attractive ideas for almost no money. It may sound overwhelming at first, but with preparation and creative thinking, you may be surprised what you can find.

Here are some tips for stretching your Creative Activities dollars:

- ② Schedule a mix of crafts and demonstrations, which are usually free. Some community business people may even bring give-aways or samples for moms to take home.
- ② Plan ahead. Setting a schedule before the MOPS year begins will help you know what supplies you will need in time to watch for bargains (sales after holidays, special promotions, clearances, etc.).
- ② Plan and purchase materials for several activities at the same time. Will you need cooking supplies, glue, or wood for more than one meeting this year? Buying a larger quantity once will probably be cheaper than purchasing what you need twice.
- ② Seek out wholesale stores, and find out if you can buy in bulk. (Hospital supply stores may have plain white pillowcases for only a few cents a piece if you buy a certain quantity; garden stores may offer a discount for buying dozens of flower pots or seeds.)



Trash to Treasure by Anne Van
Wagner Child, Leisure Arts



- ④ Look for stores that will make donations. Don't be afraid to ask what is available. Carpeting and wallpaper stores usually throw away their outdated sample books. Craft, fabric, or office supply stores may have overstock or out-of date products that they can offer your group.
- ④ Hold a craft sale with leftover supplies to raise additional funds. Put together individual project packets to sell to MOPS moms or to your Chartering Ministry.
- ④ Recycle. Part of saving money is being creative. Look at everything through different eyes, and don't consider anything trash at first glance. Save baby food jars; soda, beer, or unique bottles; paper towel and toilet paper rolls, mayonnaise and spaghetti sauce jars with lids. These are crafts waiting to happen.

Share a list of your needed "recycled" supplies with your MOPS group and Chartering Ministry and ask them to bring their leftovers, as well.





To Get You Started...


The possibilities for Creative Activities are endless, but many groups need some help getting started. Here are some general ideas of crafts and presentations from other MOPS groups:

In one year, a MOPS group completed the following activities. Their budget was \$1.50-\$2.00 per woman per meeting. They:

- ② Painted small terra cotta pots
- ② Made Christmas bows
- ② Made ornaments out of pine cones, walnuts, and sweet gum pods
- ② Had a scrapbooking lesson
- ② Learned CPR
- ② Had a flower arranging demo
- ② Melted chocolate and dipped cookies and fruit





Another MOPS group with a similar budget planned to:

- ② Stamp and paint canvas tote bags
 - ② Have a photography demonstration
 - ② Make paper ornaments
 - ② Make formula can luminaries
 - ② Etch glass ivy bowls
 - ② Have a cooking demo
 - ② Make terra cotta pot wind chimes
 - ② Have a demo in faux painting
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Some more ideas:

- ② Purchase infant “onesies” and have moms decorate them with paint, stencils, or fabric markers. Donate the completed garments to a hospital or Crisis Pregnancy Center.
- ② Ask an employee of a local health club to come and lead MOPS moms in a quick workout, explaining the importance of keeping fit.
- ② Stencil carpet samples with acrylic paint to make welcome mats.
- ② Use white school glue to “paint” designs on the inside of baby food jars. Add a votive candle to make a table centerpiece.
- ② Invite a member of the local Red Cross to come and teach CPR for children.
- ② Use clay pots to make wind chimes by hanging a smaller pot inside a larger one, and turning them both upside down. Decorate with paint or stencils.
- ② Provide sugar cookies for moms to decorate and exchange.
- ② Ask a local Creative Writing teacher (from a high school or community college) to come and share a basic writing exercise with your group.
- ② Paint wooden plant stakes, available in different shapes for less than a dollar apiece, for gardens or window boxes.
- ② Invite a professional photographer to share tips on picture taking.
- ② Layer dry ingredients of a cookie recipe in a decorated mason jar. Write the recipe on a card and attach to the jar with a ribbon for a great gift idea.



Do you have a great craft or creative activity? Use the Craft Sharing Form on the MOPS CD-ROM and on the MOPS Leaders’ Web site to send your idea to MOPS International and other MOPS groups.

