



Handbook

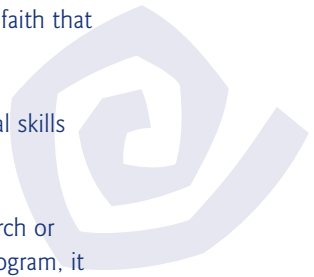


Welcome to MOPS!

Whether you are starting a MOPS group for the first time, or you are a new leader in a group that has existed for several years, you are in for an exciting adventure. MOPS is a ministry to mothers of preschoolers that has changed millions of lives. We're sure that it will change yours, too.

- ☉ You will be challenged as a *woman* by the relationships that you form, the conversations that you have, and the activities you try.
- ☉ You will be challenged as a *leader* as you work with a team to organize and facilitate meetings, activities, and community.
- ☉ You will be challenged as a *Christian* through your interactions with women who do not have a church background, or who have a faith that is expressed differently than your own.
- ☉ You will be challenged as a *mom* as you learn new and practical skills in parenting.

Your Chartering Ministry will be changed, as well. When your church or parachurch organization agrees to operate and support a MOPS program, it signifies a dedication to reaching young families. Churches and ministries have found new life, members, and support from the families who have found Christ through MOPS.





A Word About The *MOPS Handbook*...

MOPS International has been involved in ministering to mothers of preschoolers since 1973. In that time, we have gathered resources, information, and experience.

The *MOPS Handbook* and the Positional Handbooks are designed to be an introduction to the MOPS program. Read them carefully, and refer to them often. They will give you guidelines, suggestions, and ideas for a variety of situations that you may encounter.

These handbooks are not, however, a detailed blueprint. There are no step-by-step rules to follow to ensure a successful MOPS group, and there are very few things that you “must” do. Each group is different, taking on the characteristics of the community it serves and the Chartering Ministry and women who lead it. Our goal is to provide you with the resources to make your own decisions and to create a program that fits the needs of the women who will attend your group.

These books are also written to last. Certain resources, events, and activities may not be available to your MOPS group several years from now, and so are not explained here. For up-to-date information, please refer to the MOPS Leaders’ Web site or contact MOPS International.





In addition to the general text in these books, you will find information in the sidebars to help you “go deeper” with what you are reading. There are five different icons:



Application ideas and suggestions to help you use the ideas and concepts



Scripture verses or passages that correspond with the guidelines and ideas



Quotes from MOPS leaders and others to reinforce the text



Reflection ideas and questions to help you grow personally




Further reading for leaders who want to learn more about a particular topic.

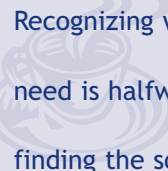


Getting Started Checklist

You have just chartered a MOPS group and are ready to get started. As you begin to plan, use this checklist. Discuss your priorities with your Steering Team and Chartering Ministry, committing to keeping “first things first.”

- ☐ Make sure you are chartered. (Most likely you are if you are reading this, but if you are starting an additional group, make sure each group has been chartered.)
- ☐ Read the entire *MOPS Handbook*. This is a top priority in getting a full picture of MOPS.
- ☐ Spend time in prayer, reflecting on the ministry you are undertaking and seeking God’s direction in how it will be carried out.
- ☐ Talk to your Council Coordinator if you have one. She can answer many of your questions about getting your group started and can connect you with other MOPS groups in your area for networking and ideas. (See page 22 for more information on Council Coordinators.)
- ☐ Visit an existing MOPS group if possible, to see how a group operates firsthand. Contact them ahead of time to be sure they can accommodate you. If visiting a group isn’t possible, call or e-mail them. Visit the MOPS Leaders’ Web site to find out what other groups are doing.
- ☐ Talk and pray with the leader of your Chartering Ministry. Make him or her a regular partner from the start. This relationship is vitally important to the success of your group.
- ☐ Meet with people interested in MOPS. Invite not only mothers of preschoolers, but also women who might serve as MOPS Mentors or individuals who could help in MOPPETS. Generate excitement about this new ministry and ask others to start spreading the word about MOPS.

- 
- ☐ Recruit women for leadership and support roles. Mothers of preschoolers who were involved in the startup of MOPS often serve on the initial Steering Team, and then recruit to meet remaining leadership needs. Do not build your MOPS group around a select group or individual. Spread out the responsibilities and jobs, allowing many to be involved in MOPS.
 - ☐ When each woman on Steering has read the *MOPS Handbook* and her appropriate Positional Handbook, take time to discuss each area of MOPS and how your group will operate.
 - ☐ Meet several times as a Steering Team to become acquainted with and supportive of each other. If possible, have a Steering retreat to plan the year. Share your stories and spend time in prayer, committing MOPS and the women involved to God. Pray for your Chartering Ministry. Discuss your understanding of lifestyle evangelism. Involve Discussion Group Leaders in these meetings, if you have already selected them.
 - ☐ Focus your efforts. Be willing to start small and simple. MOPS began with eight women who wanted to spend time together sharing and learning while others cared for their children.
 - ☐ Schedule your room and equipment needs, as well as dates and times on your calendar.
 - ☐ Formulate policies for your MOPS group. A policy is something “you never do” or “you always do.” Decide on policies ahead of time (for example, no mother of preschoolers will be excluded from a MOPS meeting on the basis of financial need, race, or marital status).



Recognizing what you
need is halfway to
finding the solution.

What does your MOPS
group need to get
started? What do you
need personally to help
with the group? How
can those needs be
met? Identify your
needs and don't be
afraid to ask for help.



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Part One: About MOPS

What is MOPS?

The purpose of MOPS is to nurture *every* mother of preschoolers by meeting her distinct needs to the glory of Jesus Christ.

MOPS exists for every mom—urban, suburban, and rural moms, stay-at-home and working moms, teen, single, and married moms—moms with different lifestyles who all share a similar desire to be the very best moms they can be!

MOPS is about...

- 
- 🌀 Celebrating motherhood
 - 🌀 Meeting needs
 - 🌀 Making connections
 - 🌀 Experiencing God's love

...through relationships and resources

MOPS accomplishes this purpose primarily through groups like yours, which provide a caring atmosphere for today's mothers of young children.



The MOPS Story


Eight women. The number was small, but the need was great. The first MOPS meeting took place in February 1973 in Wheat Ridge, Colorado. For two hours these mothers talked, laughed, ate, passed a basket for childcare expenses, had a craft demonstration, and ended with a short devotional. In this humble beginning, the seeds of the MOPS concept and format were planted. Through friendship, creative outlets, and instruction, the women began to understand that “mothering matters.” Today, the same needs for significance are met in much the same way in MOPS groups across the United States and around the world.

From the beginning, women in MOPS were not content to be spectators. Through MOPS, they found an opportunity to discover and cultivate their leadership gifts. As women moved around the country, they took the concept of MOPS with them, and new groups formed.

Growth began as word spread in churches, conventions, and magazine articles that explained this unique new program. Inquiries and requests for information became more frequent, and MOPS printed a handbook. Office space moved from a desk in a family room to a rented office.

In 1981, MOPS established a Board of Directors and incorporated first as MOPS Outreach, and later as MOPS, Inc. As interest mushroomed, leadership training began. One hundred and fifty women from five states gathered in 1982 for the first all-day MOPS leadership seminar.

In 1988, MOPS expanded beyond US borders and was renamed MOPS International, Inc. to reflect the international impact of the ministry. As MOPS grew, so did the need for a chartering process, additional resource materials, and a paid staff. The Board hired Elisa Morgan as the first president of the organization in 1989.



MOPS reached out to moms through the *MOMSense* newsletter (now *MOMSense* magazine) beginning in 1993. The newsletter joined the existing *MOMSense* radio program to help MOPS nurture every mother of preschoolers, whether or not she attended a MOPS group. In 1995, MOPS formed a partnership with Zondervan Publishing House, further expanding its outreach to mothers through books. Also that year, MOPS established Teen MOPS groups for teenage mothers. MOPS became even more available to moms when it went on-line in 1997, and in 2000 when it created the MOPS♥to♥Mom Connection to bring additional resources directly to a mom's home.



MOPS has come a long way over the years, and continues to adapt to meet the various needs of moms today. As we follow God's leading, MOPS follows a truth that will never change: God loves mothers of preschoolers, fully affirming the identity and value of each woman. While each MOPS group is different, the ministry is built on several foundational principles:

Community: MOPS provides an open, caring, and accepting atmosphere, where women can come together to share this important season of life.

Lifestyle Evangelism: Because MOPS is designed to be accessible and comfortable for both Christian and non-Christian women, MOPS leaders are trained to build relationships based on common experiences, and share their faith in a personal and non-threatening way.

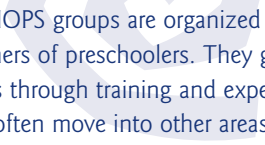
Mentoring: Through the relationships built in MOPS groups, mentors share wisdom from their experiences in practical and meaningful ways.

Practical Instruction: Teaching focuses on areas of common interest, presented from a biblical perspective. This style provides a practical Christianity that allows a non-Christian woman to feel comfortable in a MOPS group. MOPS is not a Bible study.



The MOPS Story is an excellent piece to share with your MOPS group during a meeting or in a newsletter, giving them the "bigger picture" of MOPS.





Leadership Development: MOPS groups are organized and run *by* mothers of preschoolers *for* mothers of preschoolers. They gain confidence and grow in their leadership skills through training and experience. After graduating from MOPS, women often move into other areas of leadership in their church or community.

The above principles may be carried out through different aspects of a MOPS group:

Discussion: The intimate and accepting atmosphere of a small group offers moms a chance to share their successes, failures, questions, and concerns. It is during these times that a mom realizes that she is not alone, and lifelong friendships are formed.

Teaching: Presenters offer inspiration and information that is relevant to the life of a mother. Topics celebrate motherhood and meet a mom's unique needs.

Creative Activities: Through creative projects and presentations, women are encouraged to experience the sense of accomplishment that comes with trying and finishing new things.

MOPPETS: During most MOPS meetings, children are cared for in a program called MOPPETS, where they experience Christ's love in a preschool-like setting.



“

I remember the first time I attended MOPS. I sat in the meeting wanting to cry because I felt love and a sense of being special because I am a mother.

”




MOPS International Faith Position Statement



MOPS International is a Christian non-profit organization that believes in working with local Christian churches/parachurches to maximize ministry opportunities to God's Kingdom. MOPS programs are chartered in churches of many different denominations and Christian traditions, but all share the common desire to reach out with the gospel of Jesus Christ and to bring glory to God in everything.

Churches/parachurches and individual MOPS ministry leaders must embrace and agree on the basic, orthodox truths of the Christian faith and the essential issues of salvation. We believe the Bible is the foundation for these truths. It is God's Word, uniquely and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, and is authoritative on all matters on which it speaks. MOPS International is committed to telling the truth of the saving work of Jesus Christ, of God's grace to mankind, of the reality of the Trinity, and the role of the Church in God's plan for the world. These foundational Christian beliefs are reflected in many of the historic church creeds.

By agreeing with this statement, a church is affirming that they too believe in and teach the foundational truths of the Christian gospel. Because these beliefs are foundational to the ministry of MOPS International, MOPS International reserves the right to have final authority on the granting of charters.





MOPS International Values

The MOPS International Faith Position Statement and Purpose Statement are reflected in the following values, which should be observable in each MOPS group:

Organizational Values:

🕒 **Excellence:** The achievement of organizational excellence by conducting all the affairs of the ministry in accordance with biblical principles, sound management, personal and organizational integrity, financial stewardship, and empowerment of the staff to accomplish organizational outcomes.


🕒 **Heritage:** The historical MOPS group structure serves as a model for ministry.

🕒 **Faith Position Statement:** A commitment to the MOPS International Faith Position Statement.

🕒 **Partnerships/Alliances:** Partnership/Alliances where individual strengths are shared for a common purpose.

🕒 **Local Church:** A relationship with the local church, embracing a spectrum of diverse denominations, which are in agreement with our Faith Position Statement.

🕒 **Governance:** The building of the board to model good governance, ensure the election of qualified and committed directors, constantly refine the Standing Policies Manual, and inform board members of major developments.



As a Steering Team,
review the MOPS
International Faith
Position Statement and
Values at the beginning
of each year, ensuring
that all leaders are in
agreement with the
fundamentals of MOPS.
As a team, discuss the
values of your own
group.



Ministry Values:

☪ **Dignity:** The dignity of each individual mother of preschoolers, no matter where she has been, what she has done, or how she is choosing to live her life today, embracing both believers and nonbelievers and all ethnic and socioeconomic groups.

☪ **Women:** The equipping of women to become all that God has designed them to be.

☪ **Mothering:** The value of mothering for its contribution to individuals, children, society at large, future generations, and eternity.

☪ **Relationships:** Relationships including the male/female marital relationship, the parent/child relationship, and the ultimate fulfillment of all needs through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

☪ **Lifestyle Evangelism:** Lifestyle evangelism as expressed through Christ-like relationships in an environment for growth and spiritual development as faith is shared through actions and words.

☪ **Leadership Development:** The equipping of women to gain confidence in their leadership skills and guide others through lifestyle evangelism.

The general MOPS group teaching topics are based on the Ministry Values of Women, Mothering, and Relationships. Examples of topic ideas can be found in the *MOPS*

Mentor Handbook.



Understanding the MOPS Mom: The Nine Needs of Every Mother

In order to meet the needs of the women who will be attending your MOPS group, first you must understand what those needs are. Here is an outline of the nine needs of mothers identified in the MOPS foundational book *What Every Mom Needs*. MOPS seeks to help meet these needs.

@ Significance:

"Sometimes I wonder if mothering matters."

Mothers do make a difference, but their importance can be easily forgotten in the day-to-day busyness of parenting.

@ Identity:

"Sometimes I'm not sure who I am."

Mothers sometimes lose sight of the fact that they are unique individuals of great value. Their attention is focused primarily on their children, leaving them feeling like they've lost touch with who they are.

@ Growth:

"Sometimes I long to develop who I am."

Mothers often convince themselves that their own lives must be put on hold while their kids grow. But they are better moms when they keep themselves, as well as their kids, growing.

@ Intimacy:

"Sometimes I long to be understood."

Mothers need close relationships and need to intentionally pursue intimacy in their marriages, their friendships, and with God.

@ Instruction:

"Sometimes I don't know what to do."

Mothers aren't born knowing everything about mothering. They need help in making appropriate choices, and they need trusted people to give them information and encouragement.

The nine needs of a mother are often used as outlines for a year of MOPS group teaching topics. The order of the book follows a pattern appropriate in lifestyle evangelism by meeting felt needs first and then moving to more spiritual topics.



Individually or with your Steering Team, review this list. What are your greatest needs? How can MOPS help meet your needs? What can your group do to meet the needs of other moms?



@ Help:

"Sometimes I need to share the load."

Mothers have many responsibilities every day. They are capable of doing a lot, but they are not meant to mother alone. They need to ask for help, and they need others who can give it.

@ Recreation:

"Sometimes I need a break."

Kids aren't the only ones who need to have fun. Moms need fun, too, and sometimes they need to play apart from the kids. Recreation is really re-creation.

@ Perspective:

"Sometimes I lose my focus."

In the busyness of family life, things that are most important can get lost in the daily urgencies. Moms need to be reminded of what matters most over the course of a lifetime and for eternity.

@ Hope:

"Sometimes I wonder if there's more to life."

Mothers may be busy, but they have moments when they ponder the deeper issues and questions of life. When they find Jesus Christ, they come to know the reason for living. They find a love like no other, and they can teach true hope to their children.

What Every Mom Needs by

Elisa Morgan and Carol

Kuykendall, Zondervan

Publishing





The MOPS Chartering Ministry

Each MOPS group is legally chartered through a local Christian organization, such as a church or parachurch ministry, which becomes both the legal and spiritual authority for that group. Your group is responsible to your Chartering Ministry in the same way that a church choir or Awana club might be.

MOPS International believes that partnering with local ministries in this way maximizes the strength of the local MOPS groups in the following ways:

☉ MOPS International is a recognized and respected international ministry that provides access to resources, experience, and training focused specifically on identifying the needs of and ministering to mothers of preschoolers.

☉ The Chartering Ministry is a local Christian authority that provides direction and spiritual growth, helping to adapt the MOPS concept to fit the needs of each community, and guiding leaders and new believers toward deeper relationships with Christ.

“

MOPS is our best ministry going.

We have more people in our church building for MOPS than at any time except Sunday morning worship.

The relevant ministry that is taking place is phenomenal. I can't get any work done while MOPS is meeting because the excitement and noise level is so great, but I'm not complaining. MOPS is what the church is supposed to be all about!

*The pastor of a MOPS
Chartering Ministry*

”

MOPS International and the Chartering Ministry agree that

MOPS International will:

- ☞ Provide materials on how to start and maintain a MOPS group
- ☞ Permit groups to use the MOPS name and MOPS logo as stipulated
- ☞ Provide ongoing training information and opportunities for local group leadership
- ☞ Be available for assistance, prayer, ideas, and resources

In special situations such as Workplace MOPS groups, an individual may charter a group through MOPS International. In these situations, the same principles will apply.



The Chartering Ministry will:

- ☞ Agree with the MOPS International Faith Position Statement
- ☞ Operate and support a MOPS program in accordance with the materials provided
- ☞ Be the legal and spiritual authority overseeing the MOPS group
- ☞ Pay the fees stipulated in the Charter on a timely basis
- ☞ Provide financial support to the MOPS group as needed




Resources for Chartered MOPS Groups

When a Charter is granted to a local MOPS group, MOPS International immediately begins to provide training, supplies, resources, and encouragement developed over the past several decades. From the initial Chartering Materials to the ongoing daily support of the MOPS Leaders' Web site, your MOPS group can expect to receive the support of an organization dedicated to your mission: reaching mothers of preschoolers.

Although the specifics are always being updated, here is a partial list of what you will receive from MOPS International as a chartered MOPS group:

- 🌀 Initial Chartering Materials, including handbooks
- 🌀 Access to the MOPS Leaders' Web site
- 🌀 Support from a Council Coordinator where available
- 🌀 *Connections Leadership Magazine*
- 🌀 Assistance from the MOPS International staff
- 🌀 Training at MOPS International events
- 🌀 Use of the federally registered MOPS name and logo
- 🌀 MOPShop resources specifically focused on MOPS leadership needs
- 🌀 Support for each mom through the MOPS♥to♥Mom Connection

Current information about these and other resources available to MOPS groups was included with your Chartering Materials and is available from MOPS International.



Resources from MOPS International will be useful not only to you, but to MOPS leaders who come after you. Be sure to save everything, including handbooks, letters, and magazines, and pass them on to your replacement.



MOPS International Field Leaders

MOPS began as a volunteer-led ministry, and we continue to depend on a dedicated group of women who provide a local connection to MOPS groups in their areas.

These volunteers are MOPS Field Leaders: Council Coordinators (CCs), Area Coordinators (ACs), and Ministry Advancement Coordinators (MACs). They are the first people you should contact with a question or concern.

Council Coordinators: CCs are the local link for most MOPS groups, strengthening communication between MOPS International and local groups by providing encouragement and training to local MOPS leaders. CCs are also responsible for planning and holding Council meetings, which gather local MOPS leaders together for networking and leadership training. They have had significant experience with MOPS on the local level and have a desire to meet the needs of women in leadership who are ministering to other moms of preschoolers through MOPS.

Council Coordinators are your local link to MOPS International. They can help with questions about policies, local speakers, and creative ideas from other groups in your area. Don't hesitate to call your CC, and try to attend all Council meetings!



Area Coordinators: ACs provide ongoing training and support to Council Coordinators. Each AC is responsible for a certain “zone,” which represents between 150-170 groups. Their first priority is to recruit Council Coordinators and assign groups to Councils, then to train, support, and provide MOPS International updates to their CCs.

Ministry Advancement Coordinators: MACs are responsible for spreading the vision of MOPS International to the general public. A MAC helps to plant new groups, acts as a public relations spokesperson, and develops relationships with current and future friends of MOPS.

Although the goal of MOPS International is to provide a Council Coordinator for every group, this is not always possible. Contact MOPS International to see if your group is currently assigned to a CC.

The MOPS♥to♥Mom Connection

The MOPS♥to♥Mom Connection is an exciting MOPS International program that provides direct ministry support to moms by putting tangible benefits and resources from MOPS International into their hands.

Registration for this program is required for all MOPS moms in groups, and is also available for women who do not attend MOPS groups. Remitting these funds to MOPS International is the responsibility of the Chartering Ministry, as specified in the Charter Agreement. The package of benefits available through the MOPS♥to♥Mom Connection changes every year.

As you welcome new women to MOPS throughout the year, introduce them to the MOPS♥to♥Mom Connection. You are not responsible for registering anyone until they become “regular attendees,” which your group may define. The MOPS♥to♥Mom Connection guideline is 2-4 visits. Remember, all moms can benefit from the MOPS♥to♥Mom Connection, so even if a mom is not able to attend a MOPS group or needs to be placed on a waiting list, receiving the MOPS♥to♥Mom Connection benefits may help meet her needs.

A limited number of scholarships may be available through MOPS International each year from designated funding efforts. Please contact MOPS International for specific information and application forms. Consider how your local group can help provide the valuable resources of the MOPS♥to♥Mom Connection to more moms through scholarships, fundraisers, and sponsorship programs. Talk to your Council Coordinator and/or other MOPS groups about creative ideas for fundraising.

If a mom moves or needs to leave your MOPS group for any reason, she will continue to be a part of the MOPS♥to♥Mom Connection. Each mom will receive an ID card, which she will need to show if she joins a different MOPS group. It is her responsibility to inform MOPS International of her new address (if applicable) in order for her to continue receiving her benefits at her new home throughout the current MOPS♥to♥Mom Connection year.

Registrants will need to renew their MOPS♥to♥Mom Connection registration each year that they attend MOPS. If they are not continuing in a group, they still have the option to renew if they would like to continue receiving benefits.

Information about the current year’s program was included in the Charter Box, and will be mailed to existing groups each spring for the upcoming MOPS year.



The MOPS Logo

The MOPS name—Mothers of Preschoolers—and logo are owned exclusively by MOPS International. MOPS is a federally registered trademark and can be used only with permission and authorization of this organization.

The MOPS logo can be downloaded from the MOPS CD-ROM or from the MOPS Leaders' Web site. MOPS groups may use the name and logo while a current Charter is in existence. Such use should be confined solely to the publicity for and identification of activities sponsored by the MOPS group, except as specifically authorized in writing by MOPS International.

You do not need authorization for logo use when producing publicity and non-tangible materials like:

- @ Posters, fliers, banners, Web sites, business cards, etc. to identify your group
- @ Advertising for group meetings
- @ Newsletters for the exclusive use of your MOPS women

You do need authorization for logo use when you want to put the MOPS logo on “proprietary materials” that could be distributed or sold, including the following items:

- @ Tote bags
- @ Clothing
- @ Cookbooks
- @ Handbooks
- @ Pins
- @ Promotional items
- @ Stationery



The preferred usage of the MOPS logo is to include the words “Mothers of Preschoolers” and the tag line “...because mothering matters.” This provides an easy-to-understand description of what MOPS is about for those not familiar with the organization. The standard colors for the MOPS logo are raspberry for the heart, with the balance of the logo printed in black.



Any exception to this policy must be pre-arranged through the MOPS International office by submitting the Request for Authorization form.

The logo should only be used as is, and not be altered in any artistic manner. Avoid distortions, embellishments, or other modifications of the logo or “word symbol.” These change the character of the design and diminish the consistent image the organization strives to project.

The Request for Authorization form is available on the MOPS CD-ROM and on the MOPS Leaders’ Web site.



“

We just moved to a new city,
and my family was looking
for a church. When I saw the
unmistakable MOPS logo on a
poster outside the church just
down the street, I knew we
had found a place that would
care about my family.

”



MOPS Language

There are many words that are unique to the MOPS program, and some words that have several possible correct spellings. If questions arise, here is a list of some common words in the MOPS International language:

- ☺ MOPS (always all capital letters)
- ☺ Mothers of Preschoolers (small s)
- ☺ MOPS International
- ☺ MOPPETS (all capital letters, always plural)
- ☺ Teen MOPS
- ☺ *Connections Leadership Magazine*
- ☺ MOMSense Magazine
- ☺ MOMSense Radio
- ☺ MOPShop
- ☺ MOPS♥to♥Mom Connection

For additional specific standards about capitalization, punctuation, or abbreviation, consult the *Christian Writer's Manual of Style*, by Bob Hudson and Shelley Townsend, Zondervan Publishing.



Frequently Asked Questions About MOPS:

Where do we go with questions?

You may wonder at times about whether to approach your Chartering Ministry or MOPS International when you have questions. Just as MOPS International and your Chartering Ministry provide different resources, they also help with different areas. Here are some examples of questions from MOPS groups and where they should be directed:

Your Chartering Ministry Should Answer...

- ☞ We want to do some fundraising projects in our community. May we?
- ☞ We have learned some concerning news about a MOPPETS worker. What do we do?
- ☞ A local storeowner told us that as a non-profit group, we don't have to pay sales tax if we have a special tax-free ID number. What is our number?
- ☞ One of our Steering Team leaders is involved in a personal situation that may make her unsuitable for MOPS leadership. What do we do?
- ☞ Other questions that relate to policies or situations affecting the Chartering Ministry, including tax and legal issues, insurance questions, inquiries about the facility, or childcare policies.

MOPS International Field Leaders and Staff Can Answer...

- ☞ How can we recruit more MOPPETS workers?
- ☞ We have a waiting list of moms and kids. What can we do?
- ☞ Our Steering Team members have never been in leadership. Do you have some tips?
- ☞ Our Steering Team is burned out. What can we do?
- ☞ Other questions that relate to the MOPS program in general, networking ideas, general encouragement, or leadership help.



Why is MOPS limited to mothers of preschoolers?

The “preschool years” are a phase of life. Since its beginning, MOPS International has believed strongly that the needs of this group of mothers are unique and deserve specific attention. As one woman humorously expressed, “No matter what kind of woman you are—working or stay-at-home, high school drop-out or PhD.—a two-year-old can bring you to your knees.” The challenges encountered during this season can be greatly assisted through the coming together of a community of women in the same season. Mothers of older children often have more freedom to enjoy a variety of programs. Even grandparents and fathers who raise preschoolers would change the dynamics of the MOPS meetings and possibly hinder the honest flow of communication. While we recognize the important needs of other groups, MOPS specifically reaches out to mothers of children in the preschool years.

What is MOPS International’s policy on fundraising, children’s immunizations, fees, Steering selection, etc.?

MOPS International does not set policies for local MOPS groups. The *MOPS Handbook* and other materials may provide assistance, guidance, and suggestions on many issues, but it is up to your Chartering Ministry and Steering Team to make the final decisions that work best for you. MOPS groups are chartered in a variety of locations and through many different organizations and denominations. Each MOPS group is a program of its Chartering Ministry, and groups should always ensure that what their MOPS group does is in line with the ministry’s guidelines and procedures.

Part Two: Getting Started

A MOPS Leader Is...

At the core of the local MOPS ministry is a team of committed MOPS leaders who set the tone for the MOPS group. As a member of that team, you are important!

MOPS leaders are mothers of preschoolers.

Built into the philosophy of MOPS is the development of leadership skills in mothers during this stage of life. MOPS moms know firsthand the joys and challenges of nurturing children and can relate to their peers in a unique way. An exception to this is the MOPS Mentor, who should be a woman past the preschool-parenting years. The MOPPETS Team Leader may or may not be a MOPS mom, and MOPPETS workers may not be in the preschool parenting years.

MOPS leaders are Christians. MOPS leaders are in agreement with the MOPS International Faith Position Statement. They recognize the Lordship of Christ in their own lives, and use that relationship to attract others to the Christian faith. They demonstrate an openness to listen to another's interpretation of biblical standards, while not compromising their own. They encourage genuine acceptance of all MOPS women, regardless of background, belief, or status, making MOPS a place where women can be vulnerable and honest.

MOPS leaders are called to leadership. The soul of a MOPS leader has been touched by something unique that God created within her: a passion for encouraging other moms, a heart for mothers and children, and a longing to bring moms the message of hope found only in Jesus. She recognizes that MOPS is a ministry aimed at changing lives and helping others find Jesus in the midst of daily challenges.

“

Answering the call is the way to find and fulfill the central purpose of your life.

Os Guinness, *The Call*

”



MOPS leaders are team players, accomplishing tasks together.

In the same way that moms should not do mothering alone, Steering Team members should not lead alone. MOPS leaders recognize each other's skills and understand that their combined efforts bring about a better result than their individual efforts. They empower and encourage each other to be the best they can be.

MOPS leaders, while capable of enormous efforts, recognize that they are women with limits. MOPS leaders recognize both their strengths and their limitations, and are realistic about their potential. They exercise balance as they set expectations, and put their families and their spiritual lives ahead of their MOPS responsibilities.

MOPS leaders are servant leaders. Each woman in leadership learns to be responsible and accountable to each of the other women in MOPS, under the philosophy that MOPS leadership is to minister to and serve others. A MOPS leader knows that the call to leadership sometimes involves sacrifice.

MOPS leaders are leaders in training. MOPS leaders know that they are still growing and take advantage of the opportunities to grow both personally and spiritually through the leadership development resources and training offered by MOPS International.

“

I can do what you can't
do, and you can do what I
can't do. Together, we can
do great things.

Mother Teresa

”

Six Steps to Clarify Your Calling

by Carol Kent and Karen

Lee-Thorp, NavPress





The MOPS Steering Team

The Steering Team provides leadership and direction for the MOPS group. Recruiting a committed Steering Team is important to the success of your MOPS ministry.

A Steering Team should be made up of several leaders, each responsible for a unique area of the MOPS program. MOPS International provides handbooks for the following eight positions:

Coordinator: Leads the Steering Team and acts as a liaison between MOPS International and the Chartering Ministry.

Discussion Group Team Leader: Leads a team of Discussion Group Leaders.

MOPS Mentor: A mature woman who mentors MOPS women by listening, encouraging, and offering godly perspectives. She often teaches or schedules guest speakers, and disciples the Steering Team.

Finance Team Leader: Manages the group's finances and budget.

Hospitality Team Leader: Creates a welcoming atmosphere, organizes refreshments for meetings, plans special events, and assists with special needs.

Publicity Team Leader: Promotes MOPS to the community and facilitates communication within the MOPS group through newsletters and other tools.

Creative Activities Team Leader: Leads a team that organizes, plans, and sometimes teaches activities that encourage creativity.


There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit.

There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.

There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7





MOPPETS Team Leader: Oversees the MOPPETS ministry—recruits, trains and supports MOPPETS workers.

While these positions are not required, you may find the distinctions helpful. In smaller groups, some duties can be combined. Some larger groups use co-team leaders or assistant leaders for each position.

Additional positions may be added to your Steering Team as growth or special needs arise. Some positions often added to MOPS groups include:

“

After seven years of marriage, three children, several jobs, and separating from my husband twice, I was losing touch with who I was! Someone asked me to teach a craft for a brand new MOPS group. It was something to do, and I jumped in with both feet. After two years as a Creative Activities Team Leader and another two years as a Coordinator...I can say that MOPS is a lifesaver! God has not only brought wonderful friends my way, but he has shown me the potential I have as an individual!

”

Speaking Coordinator: Prayerfully selects guest speakers and topics to be presented at MOPS meetings, with the input of the Steering Team; contacts guest speakers and makes necessary arrangements; follows up by paying honoraria and sending thank you notes after the meeting.

Community Team Leader: Helps MOPS make a difference in the community by coordinating the “adoption” of a local outreach project by the MOPS group. Recruits MOPS moms to volunteer, schedules times and makes appropriate arrangements, and helps moms and MOPPETS see the “bigger picture” of the world around them.

Care Team Leader: Coordinates the group’s ministry to MOPS moms going through difficult or busy times (illness, a new birth, family problems).

Prayer Team Leader: Keeps a current list of moms’ needs, reminds the Steering Team of issues that require prayer, and organizes prayer chains among Christian moms.



Selecting Steering

As your MOPS group gets started and as leaders come and go, you will be faced with the challenge of filling positions.

Consult with your Chartering Ministry before you begin the Steering Team selection process to find out if they have relevant policies or recommendations. Some churches require the leadership of all ministries to be members of their church. Some may have specific requirements for leaders outside of MOPS responsibilities (attending a Bible study, participating in training). Remember, your MOPS group is part of your Chartering Ministry, and you are responsible for adhering to their policies.

As you begin the Steering selection process, you may find it helpful to delegate a Steering Search Committee that includes women outside the Steering Team. This prevents a closed-attitude and conflict that may arise when only the Steering Team is involved in choosing new leaders. The committee usually consists of the Coordinator, Discussion Group Team Leader, MOPS Mentor, and two MOPS women who are not currently part of Steering.


Here are some suggestions for choosing Steering Team leaders:

Specify which positions need to be filled.

- 🕒 Prayerfully consider the positions recommended by MOPS International and determine the needs of your group. The number of women in leadership will depend on the size and character of your MOPS group.
- 🕒 Review the purpose of the position and how it contributes to the overall purpose of MOPS.
- 🕒 Identify specific responsibilities of each position.
- 🕒 Prepare a written job description.
 - List responsibilities.
 - Estimate the amount of time required for the position.
 - List helpful qualifications, abilities, talents, and gifts for this position.
 - Clarify that a personal commitment to Jesus Christ is essential.

Suggested job descriptions for the eight original MOPS Steering Team positions are found in the Positional Handbooks. These can be edited or modified depending on the specific responsibilities of your group.





Consider recruiting Steering members to serve two-year terms, with half beginning each year. Such a plan allows for overlapping periods and prevents the need for finding an entirely new Steering Team in a given year.




Compile a list of potential leaders.

- ☞ Ask for suggestions to be submitted anonymously from existing Discussion Group and Steering Team leaders throughout the year. Women who lead Discussion Groups, especially, have formed relationships with MOPS women and may suggest who would make a good addition to MOPS leadership. Confidentiality is important during the selection process.
- ☞ Seek the counsel of the Chartering Ministry's leader and other appropriate personnel.
- ☞ If a position cannot be filled by nomination, consider making the MOPS group aware of the available position during a "Steering Selection Open House." Invite anyone who is interested in joining Steering to a team member's home to learn more about leadership opportunities. Give a devotional and explain the Steering Team. Share how God has worked in your lives through MOPS, present openings, and explain responsibilities and time commitments. Describe the benefits of service, volunteering, and working on a Steering Team. Invite women to fill out an application expressing their interest in an area, and as a Steering or Selection Team, consider each applicant.

Seek consensus and present the position.

When there is consensus on who should be offered a position, approach the nominee to determine her interest. Explain that she has been nominated to be a part of MOPS leadership and discuss:

- ☞ Her relationship with Jesus
- ☞ The overall purpose and mission of MOPS
- ☞ The position you are asking her to consider. Give her a chance to read the Positional Handbook, and ask her to carefully consider this commitment
- ☞ The term length of this position
- ☞ Any questions, concerns, or ideas she has about the position. (You may find it helpful for both the Coordinator and the existing team leader to meet with her.)



A Volunteer Survey and MOPS Leadership Questionnaire for women interested in serving on Steering are available on the Forms CD-ROM.



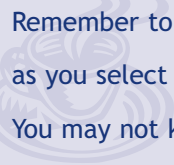


If there are doubts about a Steering applicant's interest or qualifications in a position:

- ☞ Clarify and correct any concerns at the outset, rather than hoping time will eliminate the concern. At the same time, focus on the value and needs of the individual.
- ☞ The Coordinator and/or the MOPS Mentor should discuss the area of concern with the applicant privately.
- ☞ If she cannot be considered for leadership at the time, talk to her about the reasons. Encourage her to serve in another area of MOPS, such as on a team where she could appropriately contribute, and let her know that she can re-submit her application at a later date. This situation requires sensitivity and grace.

Consider and confirm new leaders.

- ☞ Consider the suggested slate of leaders as a whole and prayerfully evaluate which women to confirm. Each confirmed leader should then be contacted regarding her selection and invited to the next Steering meeting. Make sure she has the tools to do her new job—*MOPS Handbook*, Positional Handbook, group policies, group ID number, etc.



Remember to keep an open mind as you select the Steering Team. You may not know a woman well, or her personality may not “click” with other members of your team, but she may be a perfect fit for the needs of your group, and she may challenge you to grow in new directions. MOPS is not about a single group of friends, but about meeting the needs of *every* mother of preschoolers and encouraging each other to become the best that you can be.



Training MOPS Leaders

Leaders often function under the myth that they are supposed to naturally know how to lead, yet all leaders need training. As a Steering Team, strive to reach your leadership potential and encourage others in the following ways:

☞ **Read all information you receive from MOPS International via mail, e-mail, and on the MOPS Leaders' Web site.** Share appropriate news and articles with your respective teams and other MOPS moms. MOPS International recognizes the needs that many Steering Teams have and produces resources specifically designed to help you grow.

☞ **Attend MOPS International leadership training events.** The face-to-face training provided to Steering Teams is essential to the effectiveness of your group. Publicize these opportunities and make it a priority to obtain the funds to attend.

☞ **Participate in your Council.** When a Council has been formed in your area, make it a priority to get involved. Attend Council meetings, call your Council Coordinator for help and information, and network with other leaders in your area.

☞ **Find out if your Chartering Ministry provides training or guidance for leaders.** Churches and non-profit organizations often offer classes in witnessing and Christian leadership to small group leaders or staff.

☞ **Participate in local seminars held by other Christian organizations.** Sunday School Conventions or training times sponsored by children's curriculum publishers are great ways to learn practical information about recruiting, working with volunteers, and ministering to families and children.

☞ **Be committed to growing personally in your relationship with Jesus.** Be involved in your local church. Read the Bible and pray.

Your particular needs for leadership training will depend on your vision for your MOPS group and reasons for leading. Spend some time considering your purpose for being involved in MOPS and what you hope to get out of your time in leadership, and pursue the training opportunities that will help you achieve your goals.



The Steering Meeting

Steering meetings provide a time for business, for committing the ministry to God, and for supporting one another.

The number and schedule of Steering meetings should be determined by your group. Steering meetings should be focused on several areas:

- 🕒 **Prayer:** Pray for the ministry of MOPS, for unity among Steering and the MOPS women, for wisdom in planning, for every area of the MOPS meeting, and for the needs of the MOPS women.
- 🕒 **Nurture:** Steering meetings can serve as “mini-MOPS” for the MOPS leaders, where the Steering Team can receive the encouragement and help they need as moms of preschoolers. Having their needs already met helps the Steering Team focus on the needs of other mothers attending MOPS meetings. Offer a brief devotional, perhaps by the MOPS Mentor or Coordinator, or by rotating this responsibility among all Steering members. Make time for discussion.
- 🕒 **Planning:** The Steering meeting is the place to plan the MOPS meetings, both short-term (meeting by meeting) and long-term (yearly, special themes and events, etc.). The Coordinator should serve as moderator, making sure team reports are concise and on schedule.
- 🕒 **Evaluation:** Consider setting aside Steering meetings at the end of each semester or year for evaluation and long-range planning. Review your goals and performance. Use evaluation forms to get feedback from MOPS women before you meet. Revise goals and make plans to implement changes.

Give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong.

1 Kings 3:9



A MOPS
Evaluation
form can
be found
on the
MOPS
CD-ROM.







Several pointers will keep this business section on schedule:

🕒 Always have an agenda. The agenda may include:

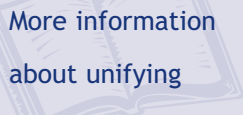
- Devotional
- Team reports
- Old business
- New business
- Personal prayer and praise
- Date, place, and time of next Steering meeting

🕒 Be professional.

Start on time no matter what. Be polite to those who are late, but don't dwell on excuses or apologies. Arrange baby-sitting so children aren't present in Steering meetings.



Serve Refreshments.
A simple snack helps
busy MOPS leaders
feel nurtured and
nourished.



More information
about unifying
Steering Teams and
Steering Retreats
is available in the
*Coordinator's
Handbook.*





A Basic MOPS Meeting

MOPS meetings differ for every group, tailored to meet the specific needs and preferences of the women attending. Although each group is different, the following is a general picture of a MOPS meeting.

WHEN:

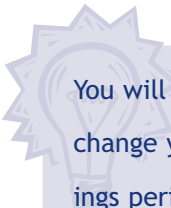
Many groups meet on a weekday or evening, twice monthly during the school year. This semi-monthly arrangement allows the MOPS women and leadership to enjoy and connect in MOPS without becoming overwhelmed by it and provides vacation times off, when families often have other obligations. Other groups decide to provide additional support to moms by meeting every week, or schedule only one MOPS meeting a month to fit into moms' busy schedules. The key is to find out what works for your leadership and your group.

SCHEDULE:

The basic schedule of a MOPS meeting is designed to integrate opportunities for relaxation, learning, meaningful discussion, and creativity. A MOPS format typically includes:


- 🕒 Socializing
- 🕒 Teaching
- 🕒 Discussion
- 🕒 Creative Activities

Some groups find that scheduling a Creative Activity after Discussion Groups allows for conversation to continue and relationships to deepen. Other groups have found that scheduling a Creative Activity first encourages women to arrive on time and gives them time to talk without interrupting the speaker. Still other MOPS groups find their meeting time to be too crowded if they try to “do it all,” so they alternate “activity” and “teaching” meetings.




You will probably
change your meet-
ings periodically as
your group grows
and changes.



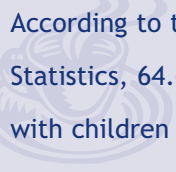


Before your group starts, consider all the options and talk with others about what seems to fit your particular community. As time passes, reevaluate whether the schedule you're using is working. If something else makes more sense, don't feel tied to doing it the way you've "always done it." Meet the needs of your group in the best way possible.

DAY OR EVENING?



MOPS groups meet during the day, in the evening, and on weekends. Weekday meetings tend to conflict less with "family time" and pre-schoolers' schedules, but can limit outreach to moms with other daytime obligations. Weekend or evening meetings are accessible to almost all moms, whether they work outside the home full-time or part-time, or stay at home, but may create attendance challenges due to family scheduling. Daytime groups typically offer a MOPPETS program, but some evening and weekend groups do not.



According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 64.6% of American mothers with children under six were active in the labor force in 2000. Those numbers continue to rise. Is your group accessible and relevant to the majority of mothers of preschoolers?



General Meeting Suggestions

Consider the following suggestions and refer to them from time to time as you plan MOPS meetings.

- ☉ **Equip your time with prayer.** As a Steering Team, pray before each MOPS meeting.
- ☉ **Be sensitive.** At every meeting, be aware that there may be women who do not know Christ. Remember to keep Christian phrases and lingo to a minimum. Make MOPS a place where moms can get to know Jesus and each other in a non-threatening atmosphere.
- ☉ **Extend a warm welcome.** Designate greeters to watch for newcomers, making everyone feel welcome and giving attention to those who look uncomfortable or alone.
- ☉ **Guide women through registration.** At the first meeting and with all newcomers throughout the year, invite each woman to register for your group and for the MOPS♥to♥Mom Connection. A basic registration form is available on the MOPS CD-ROM and on the MOPS Leaders' Web site. Give each woman a nametag. Even in small settings, nametags can be helpful.
- ☉ **Begin on time.** Demonstrate your dependability to the MOPS moms by beginning according to announced schedules. This will encourage them to be on time as well.
- ☉ **Give announcements...but keep them brief.** In the first meeting especially, focus on familiarizing women with the essentials. Be sure the program format and fee structure are clear.
- ☉ **Introduce the Steering Team, letting each woman explain her role.** Don't spend a lot of time doing this all in one meeting.
- ☉ **Share appropriate news from MOPS International.** When MOPS women hear what is happening in MOPS around the world, they gain the perspective that they are part of a significant group of women.

Remember that the “little things” matter during your time together. Do you take the time to smile, to say hello, to welcome each mom in a special way? MOPS is not about decorations, announcements, food, or schedules. It's about women coming together to encourage and support each other.



More information about presenting topical messages and occasional gospel presentations can be found in the “Lifestyle Evangelism” section of this book and the *MOPS Mentor Handbook*.



🕒 **Offer reassurance regarding children.** A mother’s most pressing concern is her children. Explain the MOPPETS program and policies.

🕒 **Include a lesson.** A brief lesson on an appropriate topic (not a Bible study) will provide moms with something to “take away” and consider.

🕒 **Discuss the lesson.** Group discussion is often the most crucial section of a MOPS meeting. Discussion Group Leaders should be prepared with questions that draw women out in a non-threatening manner.

🕒 **Keep the Creative Activities simple and varied.** Have the Creative Activities Team Leader describe the purpose of upcoming activities. Be aware of what your group enjoys doing.

🕒 **Close on time.** Again, dependability is demonstrated when meetings are kept on schedule. Encourage moms to pick up their children immediately after the meeting.

🕒 **Clean up.** Assign or ask for help to straighten up after the MOPS meeting. Return rooms to the condition they were in when you arrived, or better.

🕒 **Take care of business.** Pay MOPPETS workers and speakers when applicable. Deposit money from the meeting. Write thank you notes.

“

Few comforts are more alluring for a woman than the rich intimate territory of women’s talk...A woman friend will say, ‘You are not alone. I have felt that way, too. This is what happened to me.’ Home, in other words.

Elsa Walsh

”

Guest Speakers

Some MOPS groups invite guest speakers for every meeting, providing MOPS moms with a variety of relevant subjects from members of their community. Other MOPS groups depend on their MOPS Mentor(s) to do most of the teaching. Many groups do both.

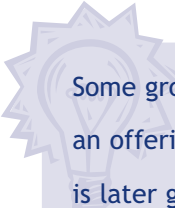
If your group is interested in inviting guest speakers to MOPS, consider the following suggestions:

- ☞ Use speakers who are believers in Jesus Christ and speak from a biblical base. You may choose to make exceptions to take advantage of an expert (for example, someone in the medical field).
- ☞ Let your speakers know that they can base their talk on Christian principles, but should not present a Bible study or use overtly Christian language. Explain that MOPS reaches Christian and non-Christian women by meeting their needs as mothers.
- ☞ Look over your Council Coordinator's speaker list, if available, for speakers and topics other MOPS groups have used and recommended.
- ☞ Decide ahead of time how much money, if any, is budgeted for guest speakers.
- ☞ Clarify to all speakers that MOPS is not a place to promote products, causes, or businesses. Let them know any policies your group has on selling products at meetings.
- ☞ Contact the speaker to discuss:
 - Speaker fee or necessary reimbursement, if any
 - Title of the presentation
 - Date and time
 - Handouts needed, especially discussion questions
 - Any needed equipment, such as an overhead projector or TV and VCR
 - The atmosphere of your MOPS group (particularly if your group tends to be talkative or restless, or if you allow babies in the meeting room)

Consider inviting a MOPS Mentor from another MOPS

group in your area to speak. This is a good utilization of talent and topics already developed.





Some groups take an offering that is later given to the speaker, rather than agreeing to a specific honorarium.



- Ⓢ When discussing finances and fees, be aware that many speakers typically receive an honorarium for speaking, in addition to their travel expenses. Clarify in advance the financial situation of your group and what you will be able to offer.
- Ⓢ Prepare discussion questions to accompany the speaker's talk. If the speaker provides questions, review them before distributing to Discussion Group Leaders.
- Ⓢ After your initial contact, send the speaker a written copy of your guidelines for guest speakers. Include the purpose of MOPS, your program schedule (highlighting how much time the speaker has), directions to your meeting location, and the date that you need to receive any handouts.

- Ⓢ At your MOPS meeting, greet the speaker and introduce her or him to the group. Have a check ready if an honorarium was agreed upon.
- Ⓢ Follow up with a thank-you note after the meeting. Include positive feedback from the moms who attended, as speakers enjoy hearing how their talk was received. A Speaker/Topic evaluation form is available on the MOPS CD-ROM and on the MOPS Leaders' Web site.

“

Our MOPS Mentor is a wonderful woman who takes the time to get to know each woman in MOPS, but public speaking is not her 'thing.' We made up for this by inviting a variety of people from our church and community to speak during meetings. The women have learned a lot!

”



Frequently Asked Questions About Getting Started

Why does our group have an ID number, and when should we use it?

Your MOPS group was assigned a number when you chartered. This number quickly identifies your group from the thousands of other MOPS groups and ensures that MOPS International keeps accurate records. It is listed on your Charter Certificate. Keep your number in a safe and convenient place, and make sure that all Steering Team members have it. Please include your group ID number on all communication with MOPS International, including phone calls, e-mail, and written correspondence.

Why do we pay Chartering and Charter Renewal fees?

MOPS International is a non-profit organization that charters groups in ministries of various denominations and affiliations in harmony with the MOPS International Faith Position Statement. Chartering is required to protect the integrity and characteristics of this Christ-centered organization.

Your MOPS group will renew its Charter each year, recommitting the Chartering Ministry and leadership to the ministry and paying a fee to support its relationship with MOPS International. You will receive specific information regarding fees and due dates from MOPS International each spring.

Your fees make MOPS possible! The MOPS International staff is continually developing new resources to assist you, including *Connections Leadership Magazine* and the MOPS Web site. We provide Councils for local leadership and leadership training events. In addition, the MOPS International staff offers personal assistance for your day-to-day MOPS group needs.


Financial support from local groups allows MOPS International to extend the ministry to more mothers of preschoolers by promoting and chartering groups in new areas and by offering financial aid to groups and individuals who demonstrate a need.



Is financial aid available?

Yes! Financial aid is available to Chartering Ministries that cannot take on some or all of the financial obligations of a MOPS ministry. Aid is granted based upon the results of a Financial Aid Request Form and the financial statement of your Chartering Ministry. Contact MOPS International for more information.

Is our MOPS Group covered by our Chartering Ministry's insurance or by MOPS International?



As a ministry of the organization holding your Charter, your MOPS group should be covered for insurance and tax purposes under their policy. The Chartering Ministry accepted the responsibility for your group by signing the Charter Agreement, which places your group under their authority, much the same as Vacation Bible School, Pioneer Clubs, Awana, or even the church choir. All guidelines and policies, including use of property, childcare personnel, safety issues, and equipment must be followed.

Part Three: Maintaining a MOPS Group

Every Mother of Preschoolers


The purpose of MOPS is to nurture *every* mother of preschoolers to the glory of Jesus Christ. As a Steering Team, commit yourselves to making MOPS available to *every* mom in your community, not just women in your church or your group of friends.

This may require a conscious effort to reach out, especially at first. The most important thing you can do as a Steering Team is to set an example. Invite women to MOPS. Recognize that *every* mother wants to be the best mom she can, but that every mother does things a little bit differently. Choose publicity opportunities that will reach out to a diverse group of moms. Demonstrate to the women in MOPS that you are committed to providing a safe, nurturing place for a diverse group of women. No matter how busy you are during MOPS meetings, be sure to welcome all moms, especially first time visitors.

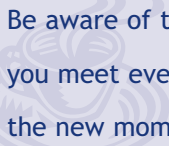
On a regular basis, evaluate your MOPS meetings to make sure you are reaching the needs of *every* mom who may visit your group:

Accessibility: Are your facilities accessible to moms and kids with special needs, including those in wheelchairs? If a visually impaired or hearing-impaired mom came to your group, could you make accommodations to help her participate in the meeting? If a mom contacts you who does not have transportation, is there a leader or volunteer who could pick her up?

Teaching: Are the topics presented at your MOPS meetings relevant to most moms? If you spend a majority of your meetings discussing the ways to balance career and children, or investing in marriage, or expensive activities, or the benefits of staying at home, you may unintentionally discourage moms who are not in those positions from attending MOPS. While there is nothing wrong with occasional talks on any of those topics, you should plan a variety of presentations about issues common to all mothers of preschoolers. If you do schedule a topic such as marriage, respect single moms by acknowledging that this topic may not be directly relevant to them.



Discussion: Make sure your Discussion Group Leaders are comfortable with different opinions, and are trained to keep talks about sensitive subjects from getting too personal. Experts offer many different perspectives on controversial issues like discipline, school choices, etc. and moms share those diverse opinions. Encourage Group Leaders to move the conversation forward, acknowledging the validity of every perspective without weighing in with her own opinion.



Be aware of the people
you meet every day —
the new mom in your
office, the woman
behind you in line at
the grocery store, the
young family living
down the street.
Challenge yourself to
start conversations and
meet new people.




Creative Activities: Some women love crafts, and the opportunity to do them will draw them to MOPS. Other moms claim to be “craft-impaired,” and the thought of having to produce something may scare them away. Balance your creative time between crafts and other creative opportunities, never assuming that everyone will enjoy a particular project.




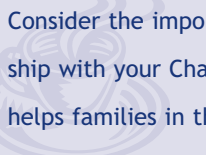


Working With Your Chartering Ministry

Your relationship with your Chartering Ministry is of vital importance to the health of your MOPS group. Think about the following suggestions.

- ④ Remember that your MOPS group is accountable to your Chartering Ministry. Your policies need to fall in line with their policies. For this reason, you should consult with your ministry leaders as you establish guidelines for your MOPS program (especially in areas of liability for moms and children, safety issues, Steering Team selection, fundraising practices, use of copiers and paper, etc.)
 - ④ Make a habit of regularly informing your Chartering Ministry leaders about what is happening in MOPS. Tell them about events you are planning, how the group is growing, and how moms and kids are being touched through MOPS. This will be a source of encouragement, and will give them specifics to pray about for your MOPS group.
 - ④ Develop friendships with those in the office. Communicate often and find out what services are available to you (copying, typing, computers, fax machine). Set up a mailbox in the ministry office for receiving news from the ministry and packages and other communications from MOPS International.
 - ④ Request that funding for your MOPS group be included in the ministry budget. Approach the leadership for financial support both for the cost of MOPS meetings and for travel and registration expenses for leadership training events. Explain the role of outreach to families in your community with no Christian background. The more seriously you consider MOPS a ministry needing support, the more likely your Chartering Ministry will be to make it a priority.
 - ④ Enlist your Chartering Ministry staff where needed. When you encounter a MOPS mom in need of counseling, refer to someone with the appropriate qualifications. Where there are in-depth doctrinal questions, recruit the help of those who can answer them. Invite the ministry leaders to speak on occasion at MOPS meetings.
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- ☞ Share MOPS with the ministry at large. Talk about the developments in MOPS during a church service or staff meeting. Set up a bulletin board where you can post your latest MOPS news. Write reports for newsletters or annual reports.
 - ☞ Show appreciation to those on your ministry staff who work to make MOPS effective. Write notes to secretaries. Applaud the staff leaders. Give testimonies to the Board of Directors. Find ways for your Steering Team and your entire MOPS group to communicate your gratitude to those who encourage you and the MOPS group.
 - ☞ Collect and share stories from your group about how women have been impacted by MOPS. These stories will share the vision better than anything you could do. Write down your stories and send them to MOPS International as well.
 - ☞ Area Coordinators and Council Coordinators help clarify the MOPS vision. Attend Council meetings when you are able, so you can keep up to date on MOPS International news and stories from other groups.



Consider the importance and potential of MOPS' relationship with your Chartering Ministry. What other outreach helps families in the community who are not involved with church, bringing both women and their children into a Christian setting to experience the love of Jesus? When a MOPS group and its Chartering Ministry are working hand-in-hand to care for women, the most ongoing, life-changing results will occur.





Unifying Your Steering Team

Each MOPS Steering Team will be composed of different women with unique skills, and your team is unified as you recognize and appreciate each individual and her contribution to the good of the whole. Here are some ways that you can strengthen your team:

Pray

Pray specifically for team unity to be evident. Pray for each woman's personal relationship with the Lord.

Set the Tone

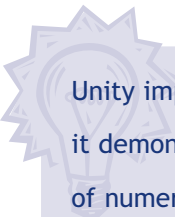
Establish an atmosphere of "hearing" one another; listen to each woman and her ideas. Encourage quiet members to participate in group discussions.

Be Accepting

Clearly welcome each person's input to a discussion or decision. Demonstrate that when an idea is turned down, the person who contributed the idea is still valued.


Make Decisions

Objectively look at the issues, facts, and rationale. Project the possible ramifications of outcomes, immediate and long-term. When there is significant disagreement, determine if there are reasons to postpone making the decision. Seek counsel from appropriate resources, especially from the MOPS Mentor.



Unity implies singleness of purpose; it demonstrates the positive result of numerous parts being brought together to form a whole.

Periodically during the MOPS year, stop to consider the purpose of your Steering Team, and whether you are working together to achieve a harmony that glorifies Christ.



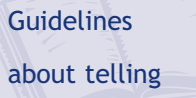
Becoming a Woman of Influence
by Carol Kent, NavPress



Build Relationships

One way to build unity is to interact together and share experiences. Here are ideas for deepening your Steering Team's commitment to MOPS and to each other.

- 🕒 Plan a time for Steering to share their life stories with each other.
- 🕒 Organize a Steering retreat to plan the MOPS year and get to know one another.
- 🕒 Host a social get-together for the Steering Team and their families.
- 🕒 Choose prayer partners, making the commitment to pray for one another throughout the coming year.
- 🕒 Draw names for secret friends, who will offer notes and encouraging reminders in surprise moments throughout the year



Guidelines
about telling
your story can
be found in the
“Lifestyle
Evangelism”
section of this
handbook.



Deal With Conflicts

Personal problems will arise. People may have differing opinions, but Steering meetings should never become gossip sessions. Matthew 18:15-20 provides some ground rules for conflict resolution. Speak to her privately, and if you can't resolve the situation, bring a neutral person, maybe a MOPS Mentor, to talk with both of you. If the situation still cannot be resolved, bring it to your Coordinator or Chartering Ministry. If you are not involved in the problem or the solution, do not discuss it. Clear up disagreements quickly.



Between MOPS Meetings

If your MOPS group meets every other week or once a month, questions sometimes arise as to whether to schedule something when MOPS doesn't meet. What to do?

🕒 **Nothing!** Over-scheduling can lead to over-extension and burnout. Moms have busy lives and have made a commitment to attend MOPS meetings, but additional activities may seem overwhelming.

🕒 **Steering Meetings** — Steering Teams will need to meet for planning, communication, and unity. Many groups find off weeks between MOPS meetings to be ideal for Steering meetings.

🕒 **Team Meetings** — Individual teams (Creative Activities, Hospitality, etc.) may need to meet for planning.

🕒 **Bible Study** — The off weeks may be an ideal time for Bible studies or seeker-friendly classes. Such studies could be cross-generational, rather than age-specific like MOPS.

🕒 **Get-Togethers** — For moms of preschoolers who enjoy being with other moms and children, off weeks may be used for extra gatherings. Keep it simple: meeting at the park or zoo, lunch or dinner at a local restaurant or a home, or other unstructured activities provide moms and kids time to connect without overwhelming the organizers.

Remember that these off-week activities can be great ways to welcome new moms who have not yet attended a MOPS meeting or to include moms on a waiting list.

“

I loved going to MOPS meetings, but it wasn't until I started meeting MOPS moms outside of MOPS that I really made the friendships that have lasted.

”

Sistering MOPS Groups

Sistering another MOPS group fosters relationships and provides resources and support to groups with needs. This is an opportunity for your group to look beyond your own needs and reach out to others.

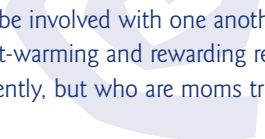
Sistering MOPS groups provide assistance to one another in many ways:

- ☉ Trading or providing childcare (for MOPS meetings or Steering Team meetings)
- ☉ Baby showers
- ☉ Special joint activities for those sistering with local groups
- ☉ Sponsoring fundraisers to benefit groups needing financial assistance
- ☉ Donating refreshments, decorations, craft materials, clothing, baby care items, etc.
- ☉ Corresponding with MOPS moms and leaders in other areas, especially internationally

“

Our MOPS group was sistered by another MOPS group that provided childcare for our meetings. A mom in our group needed coats for her children with sizes that no one else had, and our sister group found some through their church.... We hosted a brunch for them and shared our favorite foods. The relationship between the groups has been wonderful.

”



Sistering allows MOPS groups to be involved with one another in a personal way. Sister groups enter into heart-warming and rewarding relationships with those who may look or live differently, but who are moms trying to be the best moms they can be.


Sistering relationships can be local or long-distance. The relationship involves a minimum three-month commitment from each group, but may continue as long as both groups involved are active in the sister relationship. Over time, each sister group will experience the joy of giving as well as receiving.

If your MOPS group would be interested in sistering a group, please contact MOPS International. Let us know what type of group you are interested in sistering with: local or “long-distance,” Teen MOPS or general groups, etc. MOPS International will provide you with a form to complete, in which you agree to commit to the standards of a MOPS International sistering relationship, and then you will be matched with a sistering group. We will request a wish list from each group that you might be sistering with so you can learn of their needs and concerns.



Dealing With a Waiting List

Often a group is forced to begin a waiting list for women who want to take part in the MOPS program because the MOPPETS program is full. If this is the case with your group, consider some of these suggestions.

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- 🕒 The best solution is to start another MOPS group. (See “How to Multiply”)
 - 🕒 Let moms on a waiting list know that they are welcome to attend MOPS if they can arrange for outside childcare. When space becomes available, they will be able to bring their child to MOPS.
 - 🕒 Invite moms on the waiting list to register for the MOPS♥to♥Mom Connection, so that they can receive the benefits and resources available to all moms from MOPS International.
 - 🕒 Consider an absenteeism policy to make sure women in your group are committed to attending. For example, “Miss three meetings and you will forfeit your spot in MOPS to someone on the waiting list.” Make exceptions for special cases.
 - 🕒 Have moms in your group notify a Steering Team member when they know they won’t be able to attend a meeting in order to give someone on the waiting list a chance to visit.
 - 🕒 Ask moms on the waiting list to alternate between working in MOPPETS and attending meetings until a space opens for them.
 - 🕒 Assign each mom on a waiting list to a Discussion Group, so that they can invite her to outside activities and Bible studies, helping her connect with other moms even when she can’t attend meetings.



How to Multiply

If your MOPS group decides to multiply, there are several options.

- ☞ You can begin another group within the same Chartering Ministry and meet at an alternate time. Consider adding an evening group if your current MOPS group meets in the mornings, or meet on a different day.
- ☞ A core of moms in your existing group may decide to start a new MOPS group in another ministry in the community. This solution works well when some of the women attending MOPS attend another church.

Whichever route is taken, the multiplication requires that each group be chartered and have a designated Steering Team. In a situation where the new group begins with the same ministry, the original Charter stays with the original group, and the new group requests a new charter at a reduced rate. Contact MOPS International for more information about starting an additional MOPS group.

Keep in mind that MOPS groups vary in size, from less than 10 to more than 200, and there is no “right” size. The decision to grow your MOPS group by multiplying will be based on your own leadership opportunities and space limitations.






Frequently Asked Questions About Maintaining A MOPS Group

Why should we renew our Charter and remain a MOPS group?

Because MOPS groups are connected to MOPS International.

Chartering as a MOPS group not only provides resources and tools to start a program in your community, but your connection to MOPS International creates a relationship that will help your group succeed through the years. MOPS is a recognized and respected name across the country and around the world, and the chartering process ensures that each Chartering Ministry is committed to the principles found in MOPS International's Faith Position Statement. MOPS International also provides local groups with ongoing resources and opportunities for encouragement, leadership training, and guidance.




Because MOPS meets moms' needs. The MOPS program works. MOPS International is unique in its specific focus on mothers of preschoolers and understanding the needs of these critical years.

Because MOPS makes an eternal difference. MOPS helps families come to know Jesus in a personal way. Women and their families come into a church—sometimes for the first time—and find caring friends, encouragement, and instruction.

Because MOPS is for *every* mother of preschoolers. MOPS is an open door to every community. It successfully meets the needs of both Christian and non-Christian moms, in urban centers or rural towns, moms of every age, ethnic background, and lifestyle.

Because MOPS grows leaders. MOPS provides a place for women to grow as leaders as they work with one another. They learn leadership skills through the resources provided by MOPS International, and they learn to grow as a team and in their personal abilities. After graduating from MOPS, women often use the leadership skills learned in MOPS in other areas of their church and community.





If we need to drop our Charter, how do we do it?

There may be unavoidable circumstances that cause your MOPS group to stop meeting. For instance, if your Chartering Ministry will no longer be supporting a MOPS group, you will need to drop your Charter. This can be done by filling out a Drop Form or the Charter Renewal form sent to MOPS groups every spring. Your Chartering Ministry leader must sign the form, explaining why you will no longer have a MOPS group, and all initial Chartering Materials (handbooks, audio resources, videos, etc.) must be returned to MOPS International. You can use the form on the MOPS CD-ROM to track what has been sent back.

If there is still a desire in your community to continue having a MOPS group, your Chartering Ministry may also decide to transfer your Charter to another Chartering Ministry. This is often used when a Chartering Ministry is no longer able to support a successful MOPS group, when meeting space is no longer adequate, or when there are leadership changes in the Chartering Ministry or MOPS group. The transfer must be agreed to by both the original Chartering Ministry and the new one. Contact MOPS International for more information about transferring a Charter.






Part Four: Lifestyle Evangelism

What Is Lifestyle Evangelism?

As you begin and maintain a MOPS group, remember that the ministry is trying to reach *every* mother of preschoolers, both Christian and not. As you create a group that meets moms' needs, you will find a variety of women drawn to what you are offering. Most, whether they are Christian or not, will come to MOPS because the group meets their felt needs for friendship, learning, discussion, and creativity.



MOPS International's research shows that almost one-third of the women who attend MOPS are not involved in any church. If there are 85,000 women who are members of MOPS groups, that means as many as 25,000 women in MOPS may not yet know Jesus Christ as their Savior. They may be searching spiritually, or they may not yet have recognized their own spiritual needs. They come to MOPS because MOPS offers a safe and accepting environment, focused on mothering. MOPS may be the only reason a non-Christian woman will walk through the doors of a church or Christian ministry.

We have an amazing opportunity to help women and families come to know Jesus. That does not mean preaching a full gospel message at every meeting; instead, we believe that through first meeting the needs of women, we demonstrate the love of Jesus for them.

We share our faith through our actions and the way we live. We affirm the importance of motherhood and acknowledge both the joys and challenges that are a part of being a mother. We focus on the women themselves, who are accustomed to the focus being on their children. We teach and encourage women about issues that are relevant to their stage of life. We care for families by providing quality MOPPETS programs and outside activities that include the whole family.

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Preach Christ always.

Use words when necessary.

Francis of Assisi

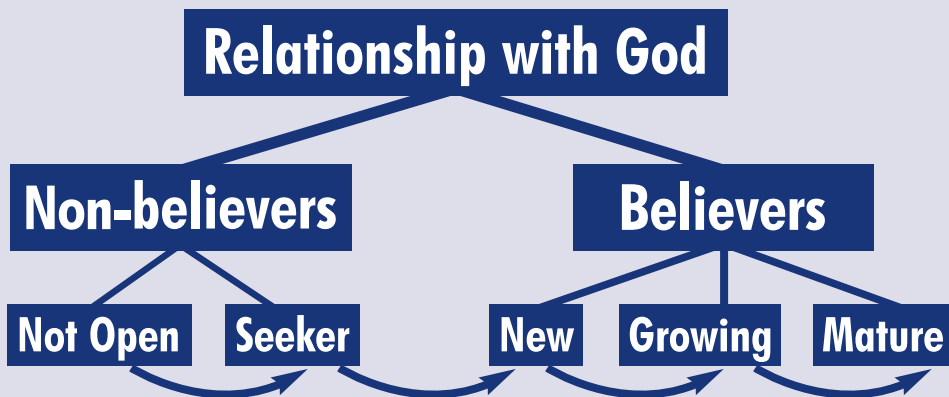
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In time, the care and love that we exhibit in our treatment builds the trust and comfort level to share the full message of salvation through Jesus. This happens in a variety of ways—through a presentation of the gospel message during special MOPS events, in Discussion Group conversations, and in one-on-one conversations between Christian and non-Christian moms who formed relationships in MOPS. The timing of the MOPS year provides opportunities to talk about who Jesus is (the Son of God) by Christmas, and to talk about what he did for us (on the cross) by Easter.

The aim of MOPS is to grow each mom toward maturity in her faith. Every woman in your MOPS group falls somewhere on this chart, as a non-believer or a believer moving toward maturity. How are you helping each mom along the way?



MOPS Mission of Discipleship



An Attitude For Evangelism

Love should be the base and method for evangelism. As you interact with women in MOPS, consider your attitude toward each of them and how the following principles can be lived out in your MOPS group.

Love...and let the Holy Spirit do the rest.

A common misconception about lifestyle evangelism is that if a woman doesn't come to Christ, it is the fault of the people who are sharing with her. You didn't say enough, or you said too much, or you didn't show her the "right kind" of love. But you do not convert the women in your group; the Holy Spirit does. Your part is to love; God's part is to move in the heart of a woman as she allows.

Love...no matter what.

Some non-Christian MOPS women will take a long time to accept the message of salvation. Some may never do it. Waiting is difficult, especially when a woman continues in behavior you don't agree with, or acts in ways you find offensive. At times you may feel that you've put enough prayer and energy into a person, and if they haven't responded by now they never will.

Let us not love with
words or tongue,
but with actions
and in truth.

1 John 3:18



Commit to loving each woman in MOPS no matter what. This is unconditional love. It is also a demonstration of faith in God's plan. Making a decision to love no matter what will send an unspoken message—the message that you care about her as a person, that she is important aside from any "agenda" of converting her.



Love...in humility.

Always be on guard against an attitude of superiority toward others, especially toward non-Christians. Avoid the “I know something you don’t know” mentality. Keep your “right-ness” in proper perspective. You don’t have all the answers. While we are on earth, we are all human beings with weaknesses and faults. Reach out to each woman, Christian or not, in an attitude of humility, knowing that we all have more to learn.

Love...as yourself.

You may think if you don’t act spiritual enough, or if you express unhappiness at any situation in your life, you will be presenting a picture of Christianity that is not attractive. But the most convincing and attractive spiritual life is the one that makes mistakes, laughs, cries, expresses fears and uncertainties, while turning to God for the answers. This is a spiritual life that is real, growing, and believable.



Called to Greatness by Ron
Hutchcraft, Moody Press






Practical Ways To Show Jesus' Love

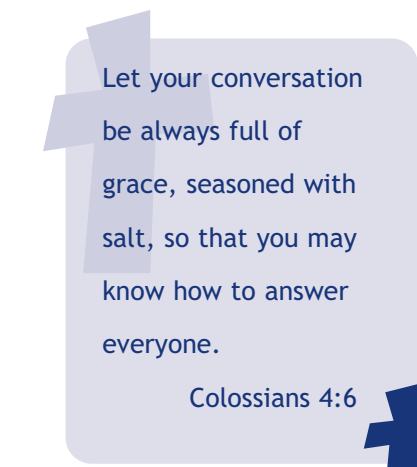
Mothers of preschoolers have many practical needs. They need rest, encouragement, information, a listening ear, and an understanding smile. Providing for these needs is a way of showing the love of Jesus. Organizing MOPS meetings, making phone calls, creating an atmosphere where a mom feels valued and special, are ways to demonstrate your faith to a woman who visits your group.

Here are other successful ways to reach out to women by becoming part of their lives:



☹ **Make sure that every mom is comfortable in MOPS.** You can't minister to moms if they aren't attending your group. If you are attracting only women who attend church, you are not completely fulfilling the mission of MOPS. Consider changing your publicity strategy to invite a more diverse mix. Evaluate the teaching topics and atmosphere of MOPS to make sure that every woman feels welcome. Praying during a meeting, singing praise songs, or using Christian language may discourage a non-Christian woman from attending. The woman who feels the farthest away from Jesus should feel comfortable attending your group.

☹ **Find common ground.** Common ground is a shared interest or background that serves as the basis for developing a relationship. Mothering is the most obvious common ground for women in MOPS, but stretch yourself to find other similarities to deepen the relationships. Common ground may be sharing a love for basketball, a hometown, the experience of moving a family several times, or a mutual acquaintance. Finding common ground is a process that many people approach naturally, but a MOPS leader who is committed to lifestyle evangelism can develop the ability to find common ground by being a good listener, asking questions, and observing people.



Let your conversation
be always full of
grace, seasoned with
salt, so that you may
know how to answer
everyone.

Colossians 4:6



🕒 **Show a genuine interest in each woman.**

Get involved in a mom's life outside MOPS. Ask, "What does she need that I can provide?" Offer to watch her children while she goes shopping. Provide meals when she brings home a new baby or cares for a sick child. Arrange for a baby-sitter for both of you so that you can have dinner or coffee together. Send birthday cards. Show that you genuinely care about her. As she comes to trust you with parts of her life, you may find opportunities to share some of your own, including the difference that Jesus has made in your life. Be careful, though, not to press her to talk about spiritual questions until she is ready.

Mommy Dreams, International
Bible Society, and *The Gift of*
Hope for Moms, International
Bible Society



Be aware of common ground as you meet people every day. Take the time to interact with them to find out where similarities may lie. As a Steering Team, share your experiences in discovering common ground, to give each leader new insights that she may try, as well.





Telling Your Story



As you develop friendships with women who don't know Jesus, you'll find natural opportunities to bring spiritual matters into the conversation as your comfort level with one another increases. Most often, your conversations will turn to spiritual matters when you share your personal story. Telling a story about how God has changed your life is one of the most effective ways to reach a non-Christian.

You will probably share bits of your story over time with women in your Discussion Group or your team. As you build trust and deepen your friendships, you will find the chance to share a greater portion of your spiritual story.

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One of the most convincing, measurable arguments on earth regarding Christianity is one's personal experience with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Charles Swindoll

”

Why should I tell my story?

In today's society, stories are an effective way to share a personal message. People can't disagree with your experiences, and stories are often more effective and less offensive than authoritative statements of what you believe to be true. If you present the message of salvation or the theological reasons why Christianity is true to a person who has not recognized her need for salvation, she is more likely to express personal disagreement with the facts and tell you why she rejects Christianity. But when you talk about how Jesus changed your life, she is more likely to listen.



How do I decide what is in my story?

All good stories have several common elements. They involve a person who faces a problem or conflict and then undergoes a change that resolves the conflict somehow. For Christians, faith brings about that change, so your personal story centers on how you faced a problem and the difference that God has made in your ability to cope with that problem today.

For help in identifying the elements in your story, ask yourself: How does God's truth apply to my life today? To my struggles as the mom of young children? How has my faith helped me deal with a problem, a bad habit, a child's illness, a difficult relationship, or my own negative emotions?

Pray that God will show you one or two specific areas of change in your life that can become your story. Write down some ideas. Think of specific examples.



Focus in on one particular challenge in your life, such as fear or pain. Describe how you used to deal with your fears, before you had faith. Give a specific example. Then describe how faith has changed the way you handle fear.

How do I tell my story?

Practice, both by yourself and in Steering meetings. Make your description interesting. Soon you'll find that you have many stories about the changes in your life and they will come up naturally in conversations. Share details and feelings that are a part of your story. Don't worry if you don't have a "radical" conversion experience to tell about. Don't embellish your story to be more convincing, or dwell excessively on past mistakes. Focus on how Jesus has changed your life. Each story speaks of God's love and faithfulness.

What is the difference between a story and a testimony?

For the purposes of MOPS, a story simply tells how God has changed your life and is more appropriate for a person who may not yet be ready to accept Christianity. A testimony adds another element, telling the listener specifically how you accepted Jesus, and how she can do the same with a prayer that includes recognition that she is a sinner, a need for forgiveness, and a belief that Jesus died on the cross and rose again to forgive sins. As you feel a woman starting to accept the truth of your story and an openness to talking about her own response, you may include these additional aspects. When you are able to share that good news with another mom, you have met her greatest need - the need for hope.

“Christianese” phrases to avoid:

As Christians, we don’t realize that we begin to use phrases that non-believers don’t understand, or even resent because they draw lines between us.

- ☎ “It was a blessing.”
- ☎ “Jesus came into my heart.”
- ☎ “God is so good.”
- ☎ “Quiet time”
- ☎ “My walk with God”
- ☎ “The Lord’s Supper”

As a Steering Team, consider other phrases that may turn off or confuse non-Christians.

Telling Your Story by Toben and
Joanne Heim, Piñón Press





Presenting the Gospel

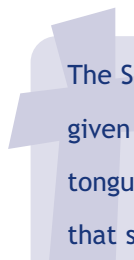
The MOPS format and in the relationships that are formed through MOPS offer opportunities to present a full gospel presentation.

In a MOPS Meeting

Special events at MOPS meetings near Christmas and Easter provide an opportunity to share the difference that Jesus can make in meeting a mom's need for hope. Discussion Groups may (or may not) turn to spiritual areas where the Discussion Group Leader can present the plan for salvation.

The presentation of the gospel requires great sensitivity, but impacts women more than anything else you will ever do in MOPS. Involve your Chartering Ministry in preparing for meetings where the gospel is presented.

- 🕒 Ask a ministry leader to be present.
- 🕒 Request prayer support before and during your meeting.
- 🕒 Let the ministry know about any decisions for Christ that are made because of your MOPS group.



The Sovereign Lord has
given me an instructed
tongue, to know the word
that sustains the weary.

Isaiah 50:4



In a Personal Relationship

Most women who accept Christ's message of hope will do so in the context of a personal relationship, rather than a message presented during a meeting. Be sure that each Steering Team and Discussion Group Leader can share her own story and lead a woman through her own personal acceptance of salvation.

Here are some indications that a person may be open to talking about the gospel:

- ☺ She asks questions.
- ☺ She is willing to read books that speak of spiritual matters.
- ☺ She is willing to attend a church or other spiritually related event.
- ☺ She is willing to talk about her beliefs.
- ☺ She seems free from a defensive attitude when discussing spiritual issues.

The “right time” and “the right way” to present the gospel message will depend on both the messenger and the listener. As a Steering Team, create an outline of questions to ask and ways that leaders should be prepared to lead a woman into a personal relationship with Christ.

Whether it's family issues, movies, politics, current events, or food, your friends tell you about what is important to them and don't expect you to always agree. If you work at relationships, you should feel free to share your faith without the fear of losing a friend.



When you talk about spiritual things, try to avoid common mistakes.

- ☺ Don't use clichés or theological language that will confuse your listener.
- ☺ Don't do all the talking. Ask questions as you share.
- ☺ Don't come across as authoritative. Be sensitive and understanding toward others.
- ☺ Don't force the issue. Asking a person to believe isn't always appropriate.

Follow-Up

Be prepared to follow up with women who indicate that they have made a personal decision to accept the hope found in Christ.

- ☞ Start an off week MOPS Bible study for new believers, or be aware of similar studies offered by your Chartering Ministry or local churches.
- ☞ Provide information about church services. Invite her to attend church with your family. If you are in a large community, include information about other churches in the area, as well. MOPS is not about denominations.
- ☞ Provide extra encouragement. The Coordinator, Discussion Group Leader, or MOPS Mentor may invite the new believer to get together to answer questions, or to give her an opportunity to tell her own story.

Bible Basics 101 by Teresa
Ferguson and Brenda Quinn,
MOPS International

