



Hospitality Handbook

MOPS International exists to encourage, equip and develop every mother of preschoolers to realize her potential as a woman, mother and leader in the name of Jesus Christ.

“The MOPS Experience”

Our vision is that every mother of preschoolers is so impacted by her MOPS experience that she carries it with her for life, making her a better mom who creates a better world.

As a leader of a local MOPS group, the MOPS experience begins with you. Therefore, we are asking you to be:

- **Relevant**, so that every mom will know that MOPS is for her
- **Relationally Inclusive**, so that every mom will feel welcome and accepted in community
- **Growth-oriented**, so that every mom will be challenged to grow as a woman, mother and leader
- **Passionately Christian**, so that every mom will be drawn one step closer to Jesus and one step further in her influence for God’s kingdom
- **Purposeful**, so that every mom will know she’s part of God’s bigger purpose, picture and plan to make a better world!

Ideas for Living out “The MOPS Experience”

Relevant

- Meet moms where they are. Your group should reflect your community.
- Consider how it would be to walk in someone else’s shoes.

Growth-oriented

- Commit to spiritual development and growth with your leadership team.
- Plan speakers to challenge moms to grow as women, mothers and leaders.

Purposeful

- Encourage moms to accept who God created them to be and to find their purpose.
- Intentionally connect the church with your MOPS group to help moms grow in faith.

Relationally Inclusive

- Help each mom build at least 3 strong relationships within the group.
- Get moms involved in serving and leading. Start with small bite-size commitments and give them opportunities to stretch and grow in those areas.

Passionately Christian

- Create a safe environment for every mom regardless of her faith background.
- Be committed to growing spiritually so that your love of Jesus shines through!
- Find ways to express Christian love in action.

The Purpose of Hospitality

Mothers of preschoolers are often used to putting the needs of their children before their own, and rarely take the time to nurture themselves. The Hospitality Team sets the tone and offers a pleasant and sustaining environment where the felt needs of a mother are met.

The overall goal of MOPS Hospitality is to create a warm, safe, comfortable and inviting place where a woman can feel accepted among friends by:

- ☉ Creating an atmosphere of welcome as women arrive, making each woman feel glad she came to MOPS.
- ☉ Serving food at MOPS meetings, helping women feel nurtured, facilitating interaction and providing time to relax.
- ☉ Reaching out between MOPS meetings to women and their families, showing that MOPS genuinely cares about moms, not just about their MOPS attendance. This builds deeper relationships, providing more opportunities for sharing the truth of Jesus through lifestyle evangelism.

Simplicity is key. Hospitality doesn't have to be expensive or elaborate to be effective. The goal is to communicate to each woman, "You are special and we care about you."

Above all, love each other deeply Offer hospitality to one another. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

1 Peter 4:8-10



Hospitality Team Leader Job Description

Personal Characteristics:

- ☉ Demonstrates a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Because members of her team may not have committed their lives to Christ, she is in an excellent position to encourage each member to make this decision.
- ☉ Reflects a warm and friendly personality and demonstrates a caring attitude toward each mother she encounters.
- ☉ Displays a sense of calmness, which is reflected in a smooth, flexible, organized manner.
- ☉ Gifted with a God-given ability to create a welcoming, encouraging atmosphere. She ensures MOPS is appealing and inviting to every mom.
- ☉ Delegates well and enjoys having many women involved in the completion of her team's responsibilities.

Position Responsibilities:

- ☉ Focuses on the needs of women and arranges the atmosphere of MOPS.
- ☉ Organizes the refreshments at each MOPS meeting, delegating responsibilities to team members and MOPS moms as needed.
- ☉ Assures a warm welcome for every woman who comes to MOPS.
- ☉ Delegates or plans and implements special events, both at MOPS meetings and outside of MOPS.
- ☉ Reaches out to mothers beyond MOPS, organizing help for families and the community.
- ☉ Serves on the Steering Team and attends meetings.
- ☉ Reads the *MOPS Handbook* and *Hospitality Handbook* and understands the vision of MOPS International and her relationship to the MOPS group.
- ☉ Disciples her team members and encourages each woman to grow in her relationship to Christ.

The Hospitality Team

Hospitality is an important part of the MOPS ministry and is best carried out through a team of dedicated, caring women who help with hospitality responsibilities during MOPS meetings and through outside activities and projects. Being part of a team also provides an opportunity for women who enjoy reaching out to get involved and develop their talents.

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

- 🕒 **Meet regularly.** Build relationships with one another to share ideas, plan and work on projects. This will provide you with an opportunity to reach out to non-Christian women on your team, to build friendships based on common interests and to challenge each team member.
- 🕒 **Plan ahead.** As soon as you know the MOPS International annual theme and your group's teaching topics for the year, brainstorm together possible themes and ways to carry them out. This will help you to prepare, organize and delegate the necessary financial work.

Many MOPS groups divide responsibilities for refreshments by assigning a different Discussion Group to bring food to each meeting.



- 🕒 **Divide responsibilities.** Create different teams who are responsible for specific tasks in Hospitality. Recruit greeters who will arrive at MOPS meetings early to welcome the other moms and help them get settled. Recruit women to organize refreshments and others who will mingle with new moms, helping them connect with others in the group.
- 🕒 **Mingle during the meeting.** Encourage each team member to spend time socializing. An important part of every Hospitality Team member's job is to make women at MOPS feel welcome, and the best way to do that is to speak to her. Hospitality Team members should not spend a meeting in the kitchen or other space removed from the main area.
- 🕒 **Arrange for set-up and takedown at MOPS meetings.** Ask for team volunteers who can arrive early to organize tables, chairs and decorations or stay late to clean up.

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I was so shy when I started coming to MOPS that I never talked to anyone and never volunteered for anything. Then a friendly woman asked me to help set up the snacks every week. I had something to do! They needed me! From there I went to coordinating the refreshments, to being a Hospitality Team Leader. Now I'm the one approaching shy moms to set up the cups and plates before a meeting!

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General Hospitality Guidelines

- ☉ **Utilize nametags**, which help provide individual identity and a feeling of group membership. MOPS International provides a nametag as part of the MOPS International Membership with downloadable stickers to distinguish Discussion Groups and allow every mom to personalize with the number and gender of her children.
- ☉ **Use variety.** If possible, change the setup of your room and/or table arrangement once in a while to provide visual variety and help the group mix.
- ☉ **Build community.** Help women meet and get to know one another through icebreakers and games. MOPS offers rest, relaxation, fellowship and fun. Laughter should be one of the first sounds heard when someone walks into a MOPS meeting!
- ☉ **Give away door prizes.** Giveaways provide opportunities for MOPS moms to socialize and are another great way for the MOPS women to get to know one another. Keep small gifts handy and give awards for silly things, new babies or first-time visitors. A “Congratulations on Your New Arrival” certificate is available on the MOPS Leaders’ website.

A popular MOPS door prize is the Golden Cracker Award, given to women who are announcing a pregnancy. The MOPS mom is given a bowl (or bucket, basket or whatever is on hand) filled with crackers. Each cracker is tied with a blue or pink ribbon. The mom closes her eyes and pulls out a cracker, and the color of the ribbon predicts the sex of the baby. If you decide to use this door prize, be sensitive to women who may be suffering through infertility or have experienced a miscarriage, and recognize new adoptions in a special way.



- ☉ **Use skits, poems and music** to make sure your meeting stays fresh. Draw upon the skills of a variety of people in the group.
- ☉ **Establish secret pals/sisters.** Draw names for secret pals. Do special things for each other throughout the MOPS year and reveal identities at the end.
- ☉ **Identify your Hospitality Team.** Use special stickers on nametags or pins to help set your team apart so that others will easily know who can help them when they have a need.
- ☉ **Remember the MOPPETS Team.** Work with the MOPPETS Team Leader to make sure there is a tray of snacks for the MOPPETS workers. They'll appreciate your efforts and feel a bond to your group.

Has your group created a great
skit? Share ideas on the Hospitality
Forum at www.MOPSLeaders.org.



Welcoming the Newcomer

MOPS exists to encourage *every* mother of preschoolers. If each woman on the Steering Team understands that a friendly greeting is an important part of her job, and if the Hospitality Team models welcoming behavior, every woman who comes to your group will feel valued and welcomed!

Here are some suggestions for welcoming the women to your group:

- ② Assign greeters to meet each woman (newcomer or “veteran”) as she enters the building. The greeter can give directions to MOPPETS, help a heavily-burdened woman with her load or introduce a first-time visitor to another mother.
- ② Put some type of identifying symbol on a newcomer’s nametag. This helps all MOPS women take responsibility for greeting new mothers.
- ② Set up an information table. Display books on parenting, recent crafts or handouts from creative presentations and any publicity items you have created for your group. This will help to occupy first-time visitors to MOPS.
- ② Have temporary nametags available for new moms. A temporary nametag template is available on the MOPS Leaders’ website.
- ② Introduce newcomers to the group. Avoid anything that could embarrass the mom or cause an awkward situation.
- ② After the meeting, write a note to each newcomer. Thank her for coming and let her know the date and schedule for the next meeting.

Simple Hospitality by Jane Jarrell,
Thomas Nelson



What Should Our Meeting Look Like?

Creating an atmosphere at each MOPS meeting that is both inviting and fun is an important part of the Hospitality Team's task. Show a mom that she is welcome and that someone took the time to prepare for her arrival. The key, as always, is to keep it simple. Avoid exceeding allocated time for announcements, ice breakers and other hospitality activities, as this takes away from needed teaching and group discussion time. Leave room for women to interact around the atmosphere.

MOPS groups may choose a theme for their meeting and decorate accordingly. A theme is an idea that unifies and gives direction to a variety of different activities.

Many MOPS groups find that having a theme that lasts all year helps them plan. Speaking topics, activities and language (like Discussion Group names) are easier to brainstorm when you have a direction to start. Choosing a theme to last through the year will also help you with decorating your MOPS meeting area. You can create centerpieces, banners or visuals and use them meeting after meeting.

Each year, MOPS International chooses a theme that communicates the vision and purpose of MOPS. The theme is always based on scripture and lends itself to strong visuals and applications that unite us as we use them all year long at events and in publications. Local MOPS groups should use the same theme and share implementation ideas.

The best way to ensure a return visit from a first-time visitor or regular MOPS attendee is to provide opportunities to have fun. Create an atmosphere and attitude that will make moms want to smile.



MOPS Refreshments

One of the greatest tools in the hands of the Hospitality Team is food, which nurtures those who enjoy it. Consider these guidelines as you minister through food:

- ☉ **Use a variety of foods.** Set an example of healthy habits by varying the food types you present.
- ☉ **Keep it simple.** Don't let the food become the focus of the meeting, or intimidate future volunteers by creating high expectations of extravagant refreshments. Food at a MOPS meeting is there to facilitate interaction and relaxation.
- ☉ **Enlist help from the MOPS group.** Providing meals or refreshments for others now and then builds self-esteem and the feeling of belonging among MOPS women. A few days before the meeting, remind women that they volunteered to bring food.
- ☉ **Enlist help from outside the MOPS group.** Sometimes women outside a MOPS group volunteer to organize meals for evening and teen MOPS moms.
- ☉ **Consider foods that fit a theme.** Providing meals or refreshments that fit a theme will help MOPS moms get into the spirit of the meeting.

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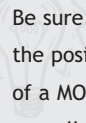
I can't express how much it meant to me to sit down at my very first MOPS meeting and eat a snack by myself, without little hands grabbing pieces from my plate.

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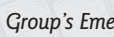
Reaching Out To Moms Beyond MOPS Meetings

A mom's life doesn't stop when she leaves the MOPS meeting. She is constantly adjusting to new issues, situations and experiences in her family life. Your Hospitality Team can make a lasting impact in the life of a MOPS mom by meeting her needs, especially during difficult times. Establish a team of women who can coordinate meals, transportation, childcare and care packages to moms who are experiencing the following life changes:

- 🕒 New babies
- 🕒 Miscarriages
- 🕒 Illness or injury (their own or a family member's)
- 🕒 Moving to a new home
- 🕒 Divorce or separation
- 🕒 Unemployment or other financial hardship
- 🕒 Death in the family



Be sure to celebrate the positive moments of a MOPS mom's life, as well. Designate a volunteer to send cards for birthdays, anniversaries and other important events, like the birth or adoption of a baby.



Group's Emergency Response Handbook for Small Group Leaders by Roxanne Wieman,
Group Publishing



Helping moms in need can be a sensitive endeavor. Some women may be upset to know that others are aware of the details of her life, particularly difficult situations. Approach her with love, offering the support of your MOPS group while promising to respect her privacy if she prefers that. Never share a situation with anyone outside your team unless the woman herself requests it or gives you permission to share it.

Work with your Chartering Ministry to compile a list of resources that they recommend utilizing to meet specific needs.

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I was a ‘professional meal-recipient’ for seven months after my daughter was diagnosed with cancer. My MOPS group was awesome! They ran errands, brought food and even did my laundry. Most important to me, a MOPS woman arranged for childcare and took me out to lunch every few weeks so that I could get away, and she listened as I processed through a difficult time. I never felt that kind of love before!

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Community Projects

Sometimes a mother of preschoolers has a difficult time seeing the world beyond her own family. You can help the moms in your group recognize and meet the needs of their community by coordinating a MOPS outreach project. Whether it's a one-time or year-long endeavor, giving moms the opportunity to be involved in "the bigger picture" will provide them with a sense of accomplishment, while meeting the needs of others.

Consider the following possibilities:

- ☉ Adopt a local Pregnancy Resource Center, hospital nursery or home for mothers. Find out what their needs are and organize a shower or ask moms to volunteer their time, doing whatever is needed.
- ☉ As a MOPS group, sponsor a child or provide gifts for children in need around the world. Contact MOPS International for more information about organizations that have programs specifically for MOPS.
- ☉ Set up a schedule for MOPS moms to volunteer at homeless shelters or soup kitchens. Make or collect blankets or food goods that the center needs.
- ☉ Participate in a charity-fundraiser, like a marathon or community fair, that supports a specific cause your MOPS group understands.

Encouraging women to get involved in community projects may push them outside their "comfort zone." Before you start a project, consider your own comfort zone and what God wants you to do. Be willing to try something new, and commit yourself to being personally involved in a project, rather than simply donating money or gifts.



Special Events

Many MOPS groups discover that they want to spend time with each other outside of their regular meeting times and away from their children. Planning special get-togethers outside the MOPS meeting time creates more opportunities for women to get to know one another and deepen their relationships.

Here are some examples of special events that your group may consider planning:

- ☉ **Mom's Night Out.** Choose a restaurant, coffee shop or other gathering place in a central location and invite moms. This provides a casual, unstructured opportunity for moms to spend time together, and gives them a chance to eat a meal that they didn't cook and don't have to share! Spice up the evenings out with unusual activities, like a scavenger hunt or a trip to the video arcade or bowling alley.
- ☉ **MOPS and POPS.** MOPS and POPS are events that bring together MOPS moms and dads (or single MOPS moms and their dates) for a time of fellowship and fun. MOPS and POPS events should reflect the same caring and level of comfort as the MOPS meetings. They should include food, fun and activity, along with some low-key sharing about the difference Jesus makes in lives and in families. Plan a special "date night" with a nice dinner and speaker, or a fun-filled barbeque with the whole family. Carry lifestyle evangelism over into the gathering. The atmosphere should be non-threatening, comfortable and friendly.
- ☉ **Weekend Trips.** Organize a weekend away at a local hotel or at someone's home. Spouses and children may or may not be invited. If it is a "moms only" event, create a slumber-party atmosphere with movies, snacks and lots of talking.

If you decide to plan a MOPS and POPS event, be sensitive to the single moms in your group. Invite single moms to bring dates if appropriate, or plan a special social activity for them.



Special MOPS Meetings

Twice a year MOPS groups design a special MOPS meeting in which they extend an invitation to accept Christ. Consider creating a uniquely welcoming atmosphere that enhances these opportunities.

☺ **MOPS Tea**

The MOPS Mentor or Coordinator will invite a MOPS mom or outside speaker to share her spiritual journey and relationship with Christ. Use ivy, flowers, china or beautiful paper products and provide finger sandwiches, scones, pastries and tea to replicate an inviting tea room atmosphere.

☺ **Holiday Meetings**

Christmas, Easter and Mother's Day are great times to share about Jesus. Utilize decorations and food that compliment the holiday theme.

Better Moms Make A Better World



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