



MOPS Mentor 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 Mentoring

A mentor is someone who walks a few steps ahead of us. At MOPS, she brings perspective on mothering, womanhood and relationships, based on biblical principles and her own life experience. Through teaching and one-on-one relationships, she communicates with vulnerability and honesty.

The MOPS Mentor is a mature woman who has a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. She is able to mentor mothers of preschoolers, not because she has all the answers, but because she has put herself under God's care. As one who has experienced many of the challenges that they now face, she offers encouragement and hope.

Responding to biblical mandates, she seeks God in fulfilling the challenge of being a teacher, role model, counselor, friend and advisor to the MOPS group.

As a MOPS Mentor, you are a woman of significant influence and one of the keys to a healthy, thriving MOPS group.

As apostles of Christ ... we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the Gospel of God, but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.

1 Thessalonians 2:7-8



MOPS Mentor Job Description

Personal Characteristics:

- ☉ Displays maturity and a vital, personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- ☉ Demonstrates an ability to guide, advise and encourage younger mothers, without being seen as a woman who knows-it-all, or as the leader of the MOPS group or Steering Team.
- ☉ Desires to serve Christ, and models the image of Christ in her compassion, gentleness and patience.
- ☉ Teaches by example and encourages, counsels and shares with moms, especially in one-on-one relationships.
- ☉ Displays an accurate and thorough understanding of the vision and mission of MOPS International.
- ☉ Able to explain “the hope which is in her,” and is available to lead a mom to a personal relationship with Jesus.

Position responsibilities:

- ☉ Encourages the Steering Team and discipless them, equipping each member to grow in her relationship with Christ and with other team members.
- ☉ Assumes teaching responsibilities in some groups. Sharing from her own experiences and insights, she teaches mothers, choosing her speaking topics with the help of the Steering Team and seeking to meet the needs of MOPS mothers.
- ☉ Ensures, along with the Coordinator, that the gospel is presented in at least two MOPS meetings each year.
- ☉ Helps select outside speakers if she does not teach at every meeting.
- ☉ Circulates at MOPS meetings, mentoring the moms one-on-one.
- ☉ Attends all Steering meetings as an advisor, not a voting member.
- ☉ Reads the *MOPS Handbook* and the *MOPS Mentor Handbook* and understands the vision of MOPS and her relationship to the MOPS group.

The Roles of a MOPS Mentor

@ Friend

Strive to be open and vulnerable, with eyes to see who might need a friend. By talking with individuals, laughing and crying with them, and listening to them, you will create personal relationships that women need and desire.

@ Counselor

Most MOPS moms need a good listener who hears how they feel without telling them how to feel. Become familiar with the issues mothers of young children face today. Be attentive. Show kindness, sensitivity and flexibility when a mom mothers differently than you did. Pray for godly wisdom as you listen, especially to discern when you may need to refer a mom to a professional.

@ Advisor

Give advice in an open and loving way when asked, not as an authority. Be content to offer quiet support. Let the women on the Steering Team develop their leadership skills without you taking charge or telling them what to do. Be flexible. Build up, encourage and disciple the women as they invite you into their lives. Help each mom know success even in small areas.

@ Role Model

You teach far more through your actions, manner and example than you do through your words. The women in MOPS will watch you, looking for ways that love and patience are lived out in relationships.

Different MOPS Mentors will be gifted in these areas in different ways. Consider the roles of a mentor. Which is your strongest one? How can you use that to the best advantage in MOPS? Which is your weakest role? How can you grow in this area?

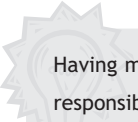


☺ Teacher

The most successful MOPS Mentor is the one who demonstrates genuine warmth, acceptance of each mom and the ability to verbalize truth as it has been worked out in her life. By providing organized talks during MOPS meetings or by sharing with small groups, you offer guidance based on experience, as well as helping moms feel comfortable approaching you to build a personal relationship.

☺ Advocate

As a MOPS Mentor, you need to advocate and champion your MOPS group within your Chartering Ministry. As a peer, your voice may be heard differently than younger women in the church. Remind the Chartering Ministry staff about the women and families that are being reached and changed because of MOPS. Encourage the church to invest in these young moms as leaders by paying for them to attend convention or other training opportunities. Educate yourself on the vision of MOPS International and remind those you are working alongside that when we impact a mom, we impact her family and through this, we impact the world.



Having multiple mentors can be a benefit to your MOPS group. When mentoring responsibilities are shared among several women there is more opportunity to encourage, equip and develop individual moms. Mentor responsibilities can be shared in a variety of ways. Mentors may share teaching responsibilities with one another and/or outside speakers. Each mentor could be assigned a Discussion Group to join and build relationships. One mentor could attend all Steering Team meetings or mentors could rotate attendance. One mentor could facilitate the prayer and devotion time for the Steering Team while another focuses on prayer needs for the group.

The key to successful multiple mentors is clearly defined roles. Spend time with the Coordinator to evaluate the needs for the Steering Team and group. How can each mentor use her strengths to encourage, equip and develop moms and the group?

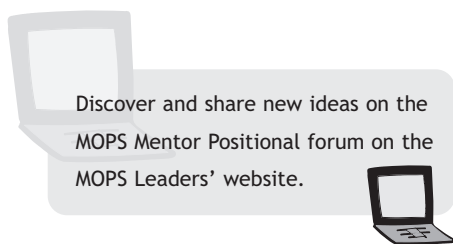


General Guidelines for Relating to the Steering Team

Your first responsibility as a MOPS Mentor is to support the Steering Team. This group of mothers of preschoolers has made a significant commitment of time and energy to creating and maintaining a program for other moms, and they will need someone to nurture them from time to time. Your role as a role model and friend will give these women extra doses of encouragement when they feel tired or overwhelmed, and your experiences will help them gain a sense of perspective.

Consider these ways to support the Steering Team:

- 🕒 Accept the Steering Team, especially the Coordinator, for who they are and support them in their responsibilities. Encourage each woman with the strengths God has given her. Consider ways to support her: write notes, share scripture, be available to brainstorm, supply a meal, volunteer to help with administrative tasks or bring snacks to a Steering meeting.



- ⑥ Work with the Steering Team to plan your teaching schedule in advance, if applicable. Having a strategy for a year of MOPS talks can help team leaders plan. Look at the coming year all at once and make a MOPS calendar with the weeks you will be meeting. Circle the days before obvious holidays when you may consider having a guest speaker or giving a talk dealing with that holiday. Then write down topics that would be appropriate.
- ⑥ Stop, think and pray about the personalities and temperaments of each woman involved if conflict arises. Let this determine how and when you deal with the conflict.
- ⑥ MOPS International offers a number of curriculum products to incorporate into your MOPS meetings. Each year a new curriculum is created to accompany the MOPS annual theme.

*Finding a Mentor. Being a
Mentor* by Donna Otto,
Harvest House



Communicating God’s Truth to an EPIC Generation

Mothers need hope, and MOPS leaders need to communicate that hope in a way they will best hear it. In communicating the message of Jesus, you are communicating an ageless truth, but the way you “package” that truth should depend on your audience. That is the communicator’s creative challenge—and calling.

According to Dr. Leonard Sweet—historian, Christian author and cutting edge thinker—the challenge requires understanding our audience in order to communicate God’s Truth to a new generation.

A significant influence today is the Internet. We live in a “web world,” with a generation that has grown up sitting in front of their screen, controlling what they see, maneuvering their way through information and images with a mouse. When they get bored, they quickly change their experience with a click.

According to Dr. Sweet, four qualities define communication that young listeners can readily receive. The qualities make up an acrostic using the word EPIC: Experiential, Participatory, Image-based and Connective. As you prepare talks and relate with the women in your MOPS group, consider how to incorporate these ideas.

We REMEMBER what we learn

10% from what is read

20% from what is heard

30% from what is seen

50% from what is seen and heard

80% from what is said in our own words

90% from what is said as it is being done



Experiential,

They are not seekers as much as experiencers, hungering for an experience of God. Contemporary worship songs demonstrate this principle by using words like: “I want to know you. I want to hear your voice ... I want to touch you, I want to see your face, I want to know you more.”

Here are some ways to increase the *experiential* quality of your communication in MOPS:

Carpe Mañana by Dr. Leonard Sweet, Zondervan



- ☉ Involve them in the experience.
- ☉ Have them use their senses. Look around the room together, take a deep breath or listen to the sound of stillness.

Participatory,

They are used to shaping the outcome of what they receive. They expect to change results in order to get what they want or need or to “get the best deal.” That becomes part of their expectations.

Here are some ways to increase the *participatory* quality of your communication in MOPS:

- ☉ Ask personal questions. “What is your greatest need today?” “What is your greatest fear?”
- ☉ Involve them. Have them repeat a phrase or stand up or raise their hand to indicate how they feel about an issue.
- ☉ End with a question that invites participation, such as, “What is God asking you to do as a result of hearing this?”
- ☉ Invite them to consider God’s nudges on their hearts.

Image-Based,

Images are powerful influencers. This generation is used to good graphics, colorful illustrations and strong visual aids.

Here are some ways to increase the *image-based* quality of your communication in MOPS:

- ④ Use visual aids. For instance, MOPS often uses the crumpled empty juice box to help others understand how mothers of young children often feel sucked dry and empty.
- ④ Use drawings and photographs.
- ④ Use handouts created with graphic excellence.
- ④ Use good illustrations, metaphors and analogies.

Connective,

They desire to experience a connection, both with the messenger and with each other. For instance, in a contemporary worship service, song lyrics go up on a screen, so that instead of looking down at a hymnal, people are looking up together and feel connected.

Here are some ways to increase the *connective* quality of your communication in MOPS:

- ④ Be one of them, not an authority figure. Be vulnerable, transparent, a fellow learner; not perfect.
- ④ Find common ground that connects you to them in experience.
- ④ Use names of people in the audience when possible and personalize the setting, referring to the location, season, day of the week, etc.

“

Don't tell me how to do it; show me how you got through it.

”

Ten Tips for Planning Your Talk (And Generally Relating to MOPS Women)

1. Get to know MOPS women! You may not have time to get to know each woman personally, but you can interact with various women on a regular basis. Talk with members of the

Steering Team as well as other women attending MOPS about issues they are facing. The general topics are usually the same, but different groups need different approaches.

You can find more information on sharing your story on page 68 of the *MOPS Handbook*.



What particular aspect of their marriage is troubling them?
Why are they struggling with disciplining their children?
What kinds of struggles are they having in friendships?

2. Share from your life. One of the primary gifts offered by a MOPS Mentor is the benefit of her own experience. “Flesh out” Scriptural principles with illustrations from your own experience. Sharing about yourself makes your talk more credible and interesting. MOPS moms will look to you as a model. Share stories from your past or tell how you overcame struggles or explain how God brought comfort when you failed. As you relate with MOPS moms, think back to the time when you had babies, toddlers and young children. MOPS women hunger for the encouragement of a life that visibly demonstrates the application of Scriptural principles in everyday examples.

As you listen to their experiences, try to understand the moms you are mentoring by considering the world in which they live. What have they experienced that you did not? How does that shape their mothering? What has changed between your years of mothering and theirs?



3. Narrow your topic. With limited time to share, you won't be able to give a full lecture on a broad issue. Think about the main message you want to address, and then make a basic outline. Evaluate whether you can talk adequately on each point. Try to meet moms where they are, using lots of specific examples, stories and research about a single issue. They'll gain valuable insight when you go deeply into one area.

4. Use resources. When preparing your talk, read a few good, up-to-date books, articles or websites on the topic. Focus and decide on the points you will make. Don't become overwhelmed by the resources, but let them help in shaping your talk as they apply. It is often helpful to make a list of "Further Reading" available to your group as well. Ask your pastor, Steering Team or check the MOPShop for resources to include in your list.

5. Always be sensitive to *every* mom. Remember that some moms in the group are Christian, some are not; some know the Bible, some do not; some are married, some are not; some are working outside the home, some are not. Don't narrow your talk to one particular situation in the group. When sharing ideas or using examples, think about the variety of situations women might represent and present your ideas in an open, accepting way.

Many of these suggestions are also helpful for Mentors who are building relationships with MOPS moms but do not teach.



6. Encourage and love women through your teaching.

Remember that for many moms, MOPS is the high point of the week—a time to have fun, get refreshed and re-energize. Uplift them. Value them. Use love, not pressure or guilt, to get your message across. Don't let it be enough that you feel love for them; say it in many different ways!

7. Treat women like the intelligent adults they are.

Sometimes mothers of young children feel they are viewed as brainless, and that their mothering responsibilities have removed them from the culture. They may feel strained and isolated, but they have experience, intelligence and depth. Approach them as one adult to another, woman to woman. Give them information, and help them develop critical thinking skills to make choices that are right for themselves and their families.

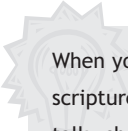
8. Avoid religious jargon. Think about the language you use. Too much “Christianese” may confuse or turn women off. Try to avoid words and phrases such as “being saved,” “quiet time,” “filled with the Spirit,” etc. Think of simple, clear ways to express what you mean. Then entrust your talk to the Holy Spirit’s guiding.

“

Mothering matters. It’s one of the most significant undertakings we can ever begin. It shapes our world, our family and ourselves. Whew. No wonder we’re tired. No wonder we take it so seriously. No wonder we’d rather do nothing else with our child—than mother. No wonder we care so much and work so hard to do it right.

Elisa Morgan and Carol Kuykendall, *What Every Mom Needs*

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When you're preparing sections of scripture from which to base your talk, choose only a few verses at a time. Beware of the tendency to dig into deep theological truths. Keep your talk focused on basic truths and values that non-Christians can grasp.



9. Give your moms opportunities to accept Christ. Use your discretion as to when this feels appropriate. Page 71 of the *MOPS Handbook* states that a clear testimony and presentation of the gospel message be

made twice a year. As a MOPS Mentor, perhaps you'll want to pray once in awhile during your talk, or pray with a mom in your one-on-one relationships.

10. Use humor! We all need to laugh at ourselves and with each other. You may not feel like a comedian, but we all have our own sense of humor. Let that come out. You'll put moms, and yourself, at ease and open up a line of communication that won't happen in any other way.

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Our Mentor visits Discussion Groups on a rotating basis in order to listen to the moms' reactions to her lesson. She tries to remain 'invisible' so she won't dampen their discussion. If asked for her input, she says, 'I already had my turn to talk, now it's your turn.'

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Frequently Asked Questions About MOPS Teaching Topics

What is a MOPS lesson?

The basic MOPS teaching topic is a simple talk, anchored on biblical truths and shared from the heart and out of the life experiences of the MOPS Mentor or guest speaker.

What is the purpose of a teaching time in MOPS meetings?

- ☉ To teach life skills aimed at the specific needs of mothers of preschoolers
- ☉ To relate biblical principles to everyday life without making presentations that sound like a Bible study
- ☉ To show God's care and involvement in every area of life

What themes or topics are appropriate?

MOPS topics will relate to one of three areas:

- ☉ Motherhood
- ☉ Womanhood
- ☉ Relationships

The general MOPS group teaching topics are based on MOPS International's Ministry Values. More information on these values can be found on page 15 of the *MOPS Handbook*.



MOPS Curriculum is designed to address a variety of topics relevant to moms. Visit the MOPShop at www.MOPShop.org for current MOPS Curriculum.



What resources should I use in preparing my talk?

- 🕒 Real-life experiences
- 🕒 Information from respected books, articles, websites, etc.
- 🕒 The Bible

How should I narrow the focus of a topic?

Look at the unique needs of your group and choose topic ideas by considering the following:

- 🕒 Observed needs of the women in your group
- 🕒 Suggestions from the Steering Team
- 🕒 Ideas from Discussion Group Leaders
- 🕒 Questionnaires from the MOPS women
- 🕒 Evaluations
- 🕒 Ideas from other MOPS groups, the MOPS Leaders' website and MOPS International publications and resources
- 🕒 Current literature, research, etc.

In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned.

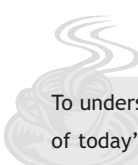
Titus 2:7-8



Sample Topics for MOPS Teaching Topics

MOTHERHOOD

- ☉ Helping Children Discover They Love Each Other (sibling rivalry)
- ☉ How to Really Love Your Child (affirmation)
- ☉ Children: God's Gift to You (valuing your child)
- ☉ Polishing Parental Mirrors (a child's self-esteem)
- ☉ Discipline: Learning Self Control
- ☉ Raising Confident Kids (affirmation)
- ☉ Learning to Let Children Go (separation)
- ☉ Who's in Charge? (balancing authority with love)
- ☉ Failure—Stepping Stones to Growth (dealing with failure)
- ☉ Kindergarten Readiness
- ☉ Encouraging Kids' Creativity
- ☉ Developing the Love of Reading
- ☉ Play: The Work of Children
- ☉ Children and Their Emotions
- ☉ Quality and Quantity Time
- ☉ Travel With Children



To understand the needs and culture of today's mothers of preschoolers, spend some time immersing yourself in contemporary media. Read popular parenting websites, watch television, pick up contemporary women's magazines and books. What is influencing women today?



WOMANHOOD

- ☉ Discovering Who You Really Are (self-esteem)
- ☉ Creating Memories to Last a Lifetime
- ☉ It's My Body (women's health issues like breast cancer, birth control, PMS)
- ☉ Creating Success Out of Failure (attitudes toward and learning from failure)
- ☉ Emotions: How to Be in Control vs. Being Controlled
- ☉ Anger: Handling Yours and Others
- ☉ Long Months and Short Paychecks
- ☉ Your Home is You (expressing yourself in decorating, etc.)
- ☉ Planning for the Future (college funds, retirement, wills and trusts)

RELATIONSHIPS

- ☉ Commitment in Marriage
- ☉ Discovering, Developing and Deepening Friendships
- ☉ Communication in Marriage
- ☉ The Intimate Marriage (physical, emotional, spiritual)
- ☉ Who Are the People in Your Neighborhood?
(understanding and living at peace with other families)
- ☉ Keeping Grandparents Involved, But Not Too Involved
- ☉ Dating With Preschoolers
- ☉ How Do You Relate? (understanding personality styles)

The MOPS International line of foundational books and curriculum address many of these topics.



Preparing Outlines

When preparing your talk, you may find it helpful to start by creating an outline. There are several steps to this process:

Identify the central idea

Develop one sentence that summarizes your talk and its purpose. The sentence should be:

- ☞ Short enough to be remembered
- ☞ Clear enough to be meaningful
- ☞ Specific enough to be achieved

Develop a working outline for the lesson

- ☞ 1. Come up with a topic
 - Brainstorm
 - Review your list
 - Eliminate extraneous ideas
 - Emphasize the relevance of each topic

- ☞ 2. Create main headings
 - Group ideas into areas that make sense
 - Arrange the groups logically

④ 3. Use organizational tools

- Parallel structure
- Sentences
- Topics
- Action verbs
- Alliteration
- Acrostic

④ 4. Add the details to the outline

■ Introduction

Attract attention

Arouse interest

Announce central idea

■ Body

Communicate content

Connect insights

Create commitment

■ Conclusion

Repeat main points

Reemphasize central idea

Recognize importance of personal life application

Public Speaking Tips

Speaking in front of others is a great privilege, but it can also cause anxiety. Here are some general guidelines to keep in mind as you prepare to speak to your MOPS group.

- ☞ **Project confidence** — You may feel more nervous than you appear to others. Never apologize or begin your talk by telling the group you “aren’t very good at this.”
- ☞ **Use vocal energy** — Increase your volume and speak conversationally. Practice speaking in front of a mirror to improve sound quality.
- ☞ **Relax your movement** — Relax your body to help you concentrate. Use gestures to enhance your content. Minimize body language distractions. Use a podium or music stand to rest your hands on if necessary; don’t cross your arms or shove your hands in your pockets. Consciously balance your weight on both feet to avoid rocking or bouncing.
- ☞ **Hold your audience** — Consider your audience when you think about what you need to say and how you will say it. What do they need to remember? What do they care about? How does this apply to their lives?

You will get better at being up front the more you do it. Remember the story of Moses, who didn’t feel like a good speaker and wanted God to choose someone else to lead the people. Moses became one of God’s great leaders, despite his dislike for public speaking.



MOPS International Resources for MOPS Mentors

- 🕒 Check out and participate in the MOPS Mentor forums at www.MOPSLeaders.org.
- 🕒 Make sure to register with MOPS International as a Steering Team leader so that you receive ongoing communication and information such as *Connections* magazine and Leaders Online.
- 🕒 Attend the MOPS International Convention and Leadership Summit training opportunities with your group. Many sessions are planned specifically for MOPS Mentors. You'll grow as a woman, mentor and leader.
- 🕒 Register for MOPS International Membership and receive the great resources MOPS offers to mom members. Utilize these resources to learn more about today's mom.
- 🕒 *FullFill: Live Out Your Influence* is a magazine, an online community and a collection of resources that are specifically for women, to equip them to recognize, utilize and maximize their influence. Join the *FullFill* community at www.fullfill.org

Better Moms Make A Better World



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