

A Mothers' Union Family Service for Mothering Sunday 2018

Welcome

Welcome to our Mothering Sunday Family Service

Today is a special time to thank God for mothers and all who help our families to flourish and grow well.

It's also a time to celebrate our church family where we are all united together as brothers and sisters in Christ, with God as our perfect heavenly parent.

Let us pray: *(a child may read this prayer)*

Father God,
We thank you for mothers and carers everywhere,
and for all they do to help our families grow well.

We thank you too for our church family,
where we can care for each other
as brothers and sisters in Christ.

And, most of all, we thank you, Lord,
that you are our heavenly parent
who loves us and helps all families grow well. **Amen**

Hymn:

Readings *(Two children could read these if appropriate)*

Stay close to Jesus: John 15:5, 9-12

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: love each other as I have loved you.

Our church family: 1 John 3:1; 4:21

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

And he has given us this command: anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.





Talk

The children may like to come up to the front for the talk

Have a dry stick-like plant; watering can; plant food; items to represent ways to help a family grow well.

As it's Mothering Sunday today I thought I'd show you my plant that I was hoping to give to someone who cares for me. I planted it a little while ago but it's not doing very well.

Show children the dry plant and ask for suggestions as to how to make it grow better. Encourage suggestions such as watering, plant food, maybe sunshine, talking to it! etc.

Thank them for their helpful suggestions which you will try out and see what happens.

This reminds me that we sometimes talk about family trees. By this, people usually mean finding out who is in their family in the present and who has been in their family in years gone by. Sometimes people can discover all about their family members from hundreds of years ago!

But just imagine our families as a real tree or plant. To make our family grow well we will want to care for it just like you showed me how to care for my plant. But instead of water and plant food there are other things that our families need to make them grow well.

I wonder if you can think of what will make a family grow well.

Produce the watering can and choose volunteers to delve into it and bring out one thing each to represent love, kindness, time for each other, e.g. heart, clock, card with "sorry" written on it....

All of us can help our families grow well by loving each other, showing kindness, forgiving each other when things go wrong, spending time together...

But today especially we want to thank God for our mums and those who care for us, for their love and all that they do to make our families grow well.

And did you know that all of us here belong to two families! We have our own family we belong to and we have our church family that we're also part of; with God as our heavenly Father and each other like brothers and sisters. Sometimes the church is called "mother church" so it's particularly good to remember we are part of it on this special day.

So we have our own family tree and we have our family of God tree, and today we want to thank our mums and those who care for us and our church family for helping both trees to grow well.

You may like to provide paper leaf shapes for each in the congregation to write their name on. These could be gathered up and helpers stick the leaves onto a tree outline, or a useful pillar at the front of the church.

A story of a mum helped by Mothers' Union

Anna lives in an area of Tanzania that experiences prolonged periods of drought and is dealing with rapidly deteriorating soil quality due to deforestation and overuse of fertilisers. As a small-scale farmer, year on year Anna struggled to grow enough food for her family.

As part of training she received from Mothers' Union, Anna learnt to use manure on her land, instead of nutrient-sapping fertilisers, and learnt how to turn it into biogas. Now she can grow enough food for her family. And she also has fuel to cook with and light her home. She suddenly realised that what had previously seemed dirty and useless was actually something that could completely change her family's life.

Offering:

Today you can support Mothers' Union's Make a Mother's Day Appeal and help more mums like Anna learn skills to improve their household. Or you could help a mother learn to read and write, become a better parent or give women a powerful voice to speak up for their rights and combat gender-based violence.

This Mothering Sunday please support us as we reach out creatively and actively across the world to nurture flourishing family relationships, help women bloom and communities thrive.

Offertory Hymn:

It's good to remember that however life is for us we all belong to our special church family where we are loved and accepted, and where we can show our love for God by caring for each other.

This Bible verse reminds us of this:

Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

1 John 4:21

Explain that the verse is talking about their church family not just their own family. Ask children to show the congregation the actions then the whole church family to say the verse with actions together.

Giving out of thank you gifts/cards

We've thought about the different ways our Mums and those who care for us help our family and our church family grow well so now we want to say thank you.

Children can give out their "Thank You" cards and planted bulbs or other appropriate gifts to their Mums, carers and to the congregation.

It's good to say thank you to people who care for us. It's also good to pray for our families. So let's pray now.



The children could also sing their Thank You song from the children's resources here.

Prayers

Father God,
help us to grow our families well
by staying close to you
like branches joined to a tree.

Children raise arms high like branches

Help us to grow our families well
by staying close to each other
like leaves clustered on a branch.

*Children move close together, raise arms
and cross hands to make leaf shapes*

Help us to grow our church family well
by staying close to you and each other
so we can be rooted in your love
and share our faith together.

*Children raise arms high, then move close together
Crouch and point down, then point to everyone*

*You may like to include an informal sharing of the peace where the church family,
including the children, greet each other with words such as
"Peace be with you and all our family*

Final Hymn:

Blessing

Let us go from here rejoicing
in our family on earth
and our family the church.
As the children of God
we take his love into the world
that others may also rejoice
and be part of his family. **Amen**

*Further Mothering Sunday resources can be found on the Mothers' Union website
<http://www.mothersunion.org/MotheringSunday>*

