

Mothers' Union service for Mothering Sunday 2022:

This service can be adapted for use in a group or individual setting

Mothering in all seasons

All families encounter some challenging times, whether through external circumstances or of their own making. Yet, in all, God is there for us as our perfect heavenly Father. On Mothering Sunday, we praise God for his constant love and give thanks for mothers and carers who persevere through the ups and downs of family life. We also give thanks for the support MU gives to those who need a helping hand to navigate the circumstances they face.

Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the merciful Father, the God from whom all help comes!

2 Corinthians 1:3 (GNT)

We come to worship our perfect heavenly Father who, loves us with a mother's love, shows the way we should go, and shoulders our burden in times of need. *Amen*

Hymn:

Now Thank We All Our God or For the Beauty of the Earth

Opening prayers

God of all, born into a family, knowing the joys and tensions that family life can bring, grant to us your grace.

May hope be stronger than struggle, may celebrations be more frequent than trials, may kindness prevail over judgment, may equality dissolve

oppression, may love break walls of hate.

Amen

Rachel Halsall



Bible readings

1 Kings 17:8-16 (NLT)

The Lord said to Elijah, "Go and live in the village of Zarephath, near the city of Sidon. I have instructed a widow there to feed you."

So he went to Zarephath. As he arrived at the gates of the village, he saw a widow gathering sticks, and he asked her, "Would you please bring me a little water in a cup?" As she was going to get it, he called to her, "Bring me a bite of bread, too."

But she said, "I swear by the Lord your God that I don't have a single piece of bread in the house. And I have only a handful of flour left in the jar and a little cooking oil in the bottom of the jug. I was just gathering a few sticks to cook this last meal, and then my son and I will die."

But Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid! Go ahead and do just what you've said, but make a little bread for me first. Then use what's left to prepare a meal for yourself and your son. For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: There will always be flour and olive oil left in your containers until the time when the Lord sends rain and the crops grow again!"

So she did as Elijah said, and she and Elijah and her family continued to eat for many days. There was always enough flour and olive oil left in the containers, just as the Lord had promised through Elijah.

2 Corinthians 1:3-5 (GNT)

Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the merciful Father, the God from whom all help comes! He helps us in all our troubles, so that we are able to help others who have all kinds of troubles, using the same help that we ourselves have received from God. Just as we have a share in Christ's many sufferings, so also through Christ we share in God's great help.

Reflection

In our Bible readings we heard about one mother who was helped to provide for her family in a challenging situation and we were also encouraged to be those who follow God's example and help others ourselves.

In our MAMD resource pack we read Dophine's story about how she was helped to adapt in order to provide for her family. Whatever circumstances families face, and whatever the reasons for them, we know that God is there when we turn to him. We pray that we will be ready to be part of his provision for others as he shows us the way.

Reflective prayer

We take a moment after every section to bring our own response to God and to remember those we know for whom it is particularly relevant.

In every family there are seasons of joys and challenges:

Seasons of laughter, and seasons of sadness.

Times of unexpected joy, and times of unwanted trauma.

Circumstances to cherish, and circumstances to overcome.

Seasons of harmony, and seasons of discord.

Times of resilience, and times of weakness.

Moments to look forward with hope, and moments to look back with thanksgiving.

God in every circumstance and season, we bring you our worship and praise.

Amen

Hymn:

Brother, Sister, Let Me Serve You or He's Got the Whole World in His Hands

Final blessing

May the Lord who provides for all our needs, sustain us day by day.

May the Lord whose steadfast love, is constant as a mother's care, send us out to live and work for others.

And the blessing of God Almighty.

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with you and remain with you always.

Amen



Why not create a bookmark of delight this Mothering Sunday

J. B. Priestley, who wrote the book *Delight* in 1930 about the little things that bought him joy, was delighted by fountains, a walk in a pine wood or a new box of matches. You might feel delight at the smell of roses, the first cup of tea of the day or a treasured memory of a day spent with your mum. A great conversation starter and something you could do with your MU branch too!

How to Create

Choose some coloured card and cut out to a template of 54 x 182mm. Add ribbon or stick-on buttons depending on how creative you are feeling! Then write your delights on one side but leave space on the reverse for your recipient's! Maybe also include a short Bible verse too.

*Take delight in the Lord,
and he will give you
the desires of your
heart.*

Psalms 37:4



Mothering Sunday this year falls on Sunday 27th March which coincides with the start of British Summer Time. The longer Spring days bring the promise of more time spent outside enjoying the natural beauty of our gardens, parks and countryside with our mums, mother figures, or, of course, the members of your Mothers' Union branch!

Below are some ideas for Mothering Sunday and the glorious days ahead. Head over to our website for further details, recipes and other Mothering Sunday resources.



1. **Do brunch.** Treat your mum to brunch out or invite her to brunch at home! Decorate the table simply with seasonal flowers, your favourite tablecloth, teapot and china and serve delicious homemade pancakes with a choice of toppings.



2. **Create a jar of bath salts to give as a gift.** Bath salts in a jar not only look pretty but are simple to make and will give the recipient a luxurious, relaxing bath.



3. **Try clipping.** This means embracing and everyone is encouraged to form a circle around the church and hold hands. It used to be a Mothering Sunday tradition in medieval times but is now only practised in a few churches around the UK. Why not revive it at your church or with your MU, surrounding your local 'mother' church and giving it a hug?



4. **Plant seeds for the seasons.** Simplicity is planting seeds and lovingly tending them as they grow. Create a seed planting kit, choosing a favourite seed variety, wrapping it beautifully or germinating some seeds at the start of Spring to plant later in your garden or give to your mum or treasured friend.



5. **Meditate and pray.** Take some time out in the fresh Spring air. If your mum is sadly no longer here, or can't be with you today, take a photo of her outside, sit quietly and think about special times you've had together. Find time to thank God for your precious relationship.

Find more on this at: www.mothersunion.org

Make a Mother's Day 2022

Membership resources

We know Mothering Sunday can be a day of huge delight or one of sadness.

There is such a juxtaposition between the highs of the day – the excitement of small children rushing to deliver a homemade breakfast and handmade cards or a delicious lunch out with an elderly mum – and, for some, the lows.

If a precious mother is no longer here, a mother-daughter relationship is broken, or, if becoming a mum is proving a difficult journey, we may feel melancholic or a deeper anxiety.

So, on Sunday 27th March, when our experience of mothering or being mothered is unique, we reach out to God and ask him to walk with us into the Spring light. We give thanks for our relationships with our mothers, or those who are a mother-figure to us, and for the healing of any distress.

We hope you can find some delight however you spend this Mothering Sunday.

