

# ***THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT CURRICULUM***

## **CELEBRATING MOTHER'S DAY**

### **Children Ages 5-11**

#### **OVERVIEW**

At this age, children are becoming more and more independent of their mothers as they explore their world. As children gain independence, interests and talents begin to emerge. Supporting and nurturing a child's gifts, goals and dreams becomes an important aspect of one's parenting role. Mother's Day is an opportunity for children to express their appreciation for the women in their lives who encourage them to express their unique talents and follow their dreams.

**The younger children** will hear the story of *Mother's Day Mice* by Eve Bunting in which the youngest mouse worries about what he is going to get his mother for Mother's Day. His brothers find some wonderful Mother's Day gifts in nature, but the littlest mouse finally composes and sings a song for her. Mother Mouse tells her children that although each gift is special in its own way, all of them are wonderful gifts of love.

**For the older children**, *Amazing Grace* by Mary Hoffman is a beautiful story about an African American girl named Grace who wants to play the role of Peter Pan in her school play. Her mother and grandmother encourage her to pursue her dream in spite of her classmates' judgments. The story is a beautiful demonstration of how important parental support and encouragement can be.

During Creative Expression time, the children may choose from several options, including composing a song for their mothers after brainstorming "what they love about them," creating dream catchers, or "drawing a dream" that their mother or primary caregiver is encouraging them to pursue. An alternative activity involves inviting the children's mothers or a significant woman in their lives to join them in creating a "Dream Box" together.

#### **Key Concepts**

We express appreciation for the women in our lives.

#### **Note**

The Mother's Day Resource section has many ideas that you may want to include in your Sunday experience with the children.

## **WELCOMING MOTHER'S DAY**

**Beginning Experience: Mother's Day Drawings**

Invite children to draw pictures of something that they love doing with their mothers or a significant woman in their lives.

**Materials**

Drawing paper

Crayons

Markers

**Gather the opening circle.**

**Joysong:** “If You’re Happy and You Know It”...(say, “Yeah, Mom!), # 328, *Wings of Song*

**Sharing:** Go around the circle and invite children to introduce themselves and say one thing they like to do with their moms or another significant female person in their lives. They are welcome to share their pictures if they wish.

**Meditation:** Let’s take a moment now to feel God’s presence in our lives by spending a few moments in meditation. I invite you to find a comfortable place where you are not touching anyone else and to close your eyes if you wish. Take a deep breath slowly in, and then silently and slowly, let it out.

Breathe in the presence of God that loves us like a mother. No matter what we do or what we say, our Mother God is always there, loving us and supporting us at home and at school, at work and at play, in our dreams and in our lives. In our imaginations, let’s see ourselves with our mother or maybe it’s our grandmother, or another wonderful, loving woman in our lives. Perhaps we are doing something that we love to do with her. Or perhaps we are just sitting with her in a safe and cozy place. Let us imagine God’s love surrounding both of us like a blanket of warm, soft light, as we spend a few seconds in the Silence. *Allow 20-30 seconds in the Silence or whatever feels comfortable for your group.*

Thank you, God, for your love. Let’s say this together. Thank you, God, for your love. Thank you, God, for mothers. Together...Thank you, God, for mothers. Amen.

## **EXPLORING MOTHER’S DAY**

### **Younger Children**

**Book**

*Mother’s Day Mice* by Eve Bunting

**Read the Story, *Mother’s Day Mice*.**

**After reading, ask:**

- How did the brothers show their love for each other in this story? What were they willing to share?
- What did each of the mice bring to their mother for Mother's Day?
- According to Mother Mouse, what did all the gifts have in common?
- If you could go out and find something from nature to bring home to your mother as a Mother's Day gift—like the mice did in today's story—what would it be and why?
- If you could create something all by yourself to give to your mother—like a song, a dance or a picture—what would it be?

## Older Children

### Book

*Amazing Grace* by Mary Hoffman

Read the story, *Amazing Grace*.

### After the story, ask:

- What is happening in this story? What is Grace dreaming about doing?
- What helps Grace believe that she can make her dream come true?
- What are some things that you dream about doing or being?
- How is your mother or another loved one in your life helping you make your dreams come true?
- How does God help us with our dreams?

## EXPRESSING MOTHER'S DAY

You may choose to offer one or more of the following creative activities for either age group.

### Option 1: What I Love about Mom

**Invitation:** Invite children to brainstorm a group list of “things they love about their mothers.” Suggest that the list can be displayed during fellowship where everyone can enjoy it. After the list is made, invite the group to decorate around it with markers.

Another way to expand this idea is to invite the children to compose a song and/or dance about mothers using some of the ideas they brainstormed. Or, they could each write a sentence for a special Mother's Day Blessing that could be read as a responsive reading at the end of the worship service. (See Mother's Day Resource section for more information on this.)

### Materials

Easel paper and easel  
Markers

### **Option 2: Gifts from Nature**

**Invitation:** Invite children to find one treasure from nature that they would like to give their mother, glue it to the poster board and then draw a picture around it.

#### **Materials**

Poster board or cardstock, 8½" X 11", one per child  
Objects from nature, i.e. small shells, stones, leaves, feathers, twigs, seeds, dried flowers, small pine cones, etc.,  
Tacky glue  
Markers

### **Option 3: Dream Catchers**

Before beginning, share with the children that dream catchers are a Native American creation, designed to hang near someone's bed to catch "bad dreams" and to allow the good dreams to go through. Then invite children to make a dream catcher for their mother or a significant woman in their life to acknowledge how they are helping to make their good dreams come true.

**Prepare Ahead:** You will need to prepare the following for the younger children. The older children may do these steps by themselves.

- Cut a hole in the center of the plate, approximately 4" in diameter.
- Using hole punch, put 8-10 holes around the plate, spacing evenly. This will create the weaving "loom."

#### **Invitation**

- Once holes are punched, invite children to create a "dream web" by weaving the yarn in and out of the holes. The beginning end of the yarn may be looped around the first hole and knotted or taped to the back of the plate.
- Demonstrate how to "weave" by drawing yarn through holes on opposite sides of the plate and working your way around. Invite children to do the same. Encourage them to experiment with the pattern of the web. It does not have to be perfectly symmetrical!
- Children may add beads or feathers to the web as they weave.
- Allow extra yarn to hang down from the bottom of the dream catcher, tying beads and feathers as desired.
- After weaving the yarn around the circle, they may place within the web the affirmation slips, or they may write their own. Then invite children to give the dream catchers to their mothers as gifts.

#### **Materials**

7"-8" paper party plates

Scissors  
Hole punch  
Yarn cut in 5'-6' lengths  
Pony beads  
Feathers  
Affirmations written on paper strips: "Thank you, Mom, for helping my dreams come true!"

#### **Option 4: Dream Boxes**

**Invitation:** Invite mothers or other loved ones to join their children in the making of Dream Boxes. Together, they will decorate the box, cut out magazine pictures or create pictures or symbols that represent the child's dreams to place in the box.

Invite them to plan a special time for a sacred ceremony together, when the box will be "planted" in the ground. Encourage them to imagine the child's dreams growing and "blooming" as they come true. Perhaps they will want to say a prayer together or an affirmation, such as "I believe in my child's dreams;" "I believe in my dreams;" and/or "God show me the way for my dreams to come true."

#### **Materials**

Small gift-type boxes  
Magazines for cutting out  
Construction paper  
Markers  
Scissors  
Writing paper  
Pencils

## **SHARING MOTHER'S DAY**

Invite children (and mothers if present) to gather in a closing circle and share their creations (only if they wish). If they have composed a group song, they may want to practice it and possibly share it with their mothers during fellowship. Close with *The Prayer for Protection*, reminding the children that these are all ways that our Mother God cares for her children.

The light of God surrounds us.  
The love of God enfolds us.  
The power of God protects us.  
And the presence of God watches over us.  
Wherever we are, God is.  
(And all is well.)