

Better Moms Make A Better World

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Dates to Remember

March

- 12 Play Date: Chuck E. Cheese's, 10:00 a.m.**
 Address: 253 Congaree Road, Greenville
 Bring your little ones for some fun playing in the Toddler Zone. You may want to bring some money for tokens in case your children would like to play the other games.
- 22 Mom's Night Out: Spa Night, 7:30 p.m., Greer FBC**
 A night of relaxation and pampering! There will be make-up and hair demonstrations. We will also do manicures for each other. Bring a drink to share, your hair brush and nail polishes.

April

- 6 Mom's Night Out: Easter Celebration Prep Party, 6:00 p.m., Greer FBC**
 Come help us prepare for the Easter Party the next day.
- 7 Easter Celebration, 10:00 a.m., Greer FBC**
 Join us for an Easter party! We will have an egg hunt, a craft, story time and snacks.
- 12 MOPS Meeting, 9:00-11:15 a.m.**
 Topic: Bloom Where You're Planted

May

- 3 MOPS Meeting, 9:00-11:15 a.m.**
 Topic: Joy
- 7 Play Date: Strawberry Picking, 10:00 a.m.**
 We will pick some yummy strawberries at the Sandy Flat Berry Patch.
- 17 Mom's Night Out: Bowling, 7:00 p.m.**
 An evening of fun at Wade Hampton Lanes in Taylors.

Breakfast Rotation

The responsibility for providing breakfast for the moms rotates among the Table Groups.

April: Steering Team **May:** Mentors

Date Change

Please note the change in date for the April MOPS meeting.

The meeting will now be held on April 12.



Birthdays

3/17 Charity Van Horn

MOPPETS Corner

Today your children will be learning about spring, weather and the story of Jesus calming the storm. They will hear stories and take part in a variety of activities to reinforce the lesson.

Remember to thank our wonderful MOPPETS volunteers!

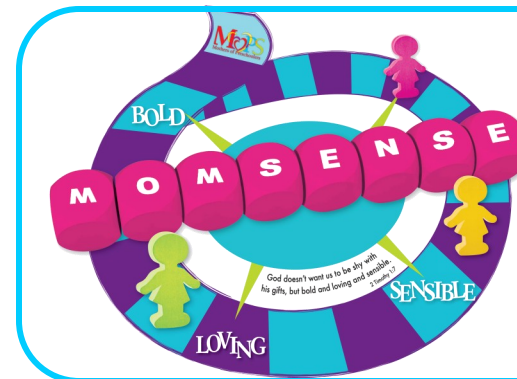


Service Project

Our service project for the year is to support the Piedmont Women's Centers by collecting supplies for their Newborn Bundles. The following are items they put into the Newborn Bundles. Items in bold are ones that they desperately need. New and Gently Used items are appreciated. No used nipples or pacifiers can be accepted; these items must be new.

sleepers	receiving blankets	newborn outfits	Diapers – sz. NB or 1
socks	booties	washcloths	bibs
pacifiers	comb/brush	8oz. Bottles	4 oz. bottles
baby towels	baby wash/shampoo	onesies	baby lotion

Please bring items to our meetings and we will gather the items and deliver them to the Women's Centers. Thank you!



Together in the Game of Life

MOPS of Greer First Baptist Church

March 2012

A Note from Holly, Our Coordinator

Anyone who knows me very well knows that I am a bit of a perfectionist in a lot of areas. After becoming a mom I've had to learn how to relax a little. I admit, it's an area of my life that needs work. I don't want my children to see me "stressed out." And as my daughter likes to point out, no one except Jesus was perfect.

I'm trying to accept my imperfection. My kids need to see that I don't expect perfection from them either. I like that I work hard and do my best, but sometimes I get so busy trying to be everything to everyone, that I miss out on what is most important. It is OK if the dishes are still in the sink the next morning or a basket of laundry doesn't get folded. (That used to be much harder for me to say.) So, I'm going to throw in the towel at doing everything perfectly and just try to be the mother that God wants me to be.

Moms and Depression

by Ruth McWhite, this month's Guest Speaker



The words MOM and DEPRESSION just shouldn't have to go together!!! It's hard enough to be a good mom with all of the expectations that we manage to put on ourselves. BUT when you add the burdensome emotions of depression, it can really be a STRUGGLE.

There are some GREAT tools out there! One of my favorite books is Happiness Is a Choice, by Min-erth and Meyer. It really helps to give a great overview of the characteristics of depression. This book can offer great encouragement on how to overcome these emotions. In my own personal life, the Lord has shown me some of the simplest tools that have become very effective in my own life.

Healing for Damaged Emotions, by David Seamonds, is also a great book. He does a marvelous job of seeing the roots of depression. Very often these roots actually come from low self esteem. Low self esteem can then send us off in pursuit of perfection. But we don't live in a perfect world, and the fallout from that reality is often.....depression.

Depression can also have some roots in hormones. My husband's best line on hormones is simply, "A hormone is a terrible thing!" Mothers and Sons, by Jean Lush, is excellent. It is actually rather humorous! So we will look at the correlation of hormones and depression when we meet in March.

And I also want to share two spiritual disciplines with you that are a DAILY thing for me that God has used in a remarkable way to help me to return to the source of JOY every single morning.

Depression has hit my life during two of my pregnancies and also during our last move in 2002. Hopefully I can bring a word from the WORD that will encourage you in your own journey!

Guess Who?

An Interview with Holly Ramsour

The last in a series of interviews designed as an opportunity for you to get to know the members of the MOPS of Greer FBC Steering Team. Holly serves as the Coordinator on the Steering Team.

Hometown? Warren, TX **Lived in Greer area for how many years?** 2 years
Your children and their ages? Kaylee-8, Kariss-6, Kellyn-2 **What did you want to be when you were 12 years old?** A doctor **Toilet paper: pull from the top or bottom of the roll?** TOP **Favorite color?** Blue **Favorite hobbies?** cooking, reading
What was your favorite childhood toy? I liked playing outside and "pretending" things with my brothers. **What was the last book you read?** *Parenting Beyond Your Capacity* **Are you a morning or night person?** morning person **If you had to give up a favorite food, which would be the most difficult to give up?** probably pizza, it frequents our household **Favorite game?** Guesstures **Words of advice for other moms?** Cherish every moment because they fly by so quickly. Pray for your children. Love your children. And teach them about the one things that matters most—Jesus! Take lots of pictures and try to take time to journal.



Preschooler Activity

Spring Color I Spy

Venture outside to enjoy the warm spring weather...and indulge in a colorful game of I Spy while you're at it! Kids love this classic game, and this color-themed version is just as fun but twice as educational. If your preschooler needs help with color recognition, this is just the game for her. She'll get to play outside and enjoy nature all while learning her colors.



What You Need:

- Card stock or other sturdy paper (index cards work well too)
- Scissors
- Markers in a rainbow of colors

What You Do:

1. Begin by talking about color with your child, using the markers as a guide. Take each marker out of the package one at a time and ask her to name the colors as you go along.
2. Cut the card stock into 5" x 7" rectangles. If you're using index cards, move on to step 3.
3. Have your child draw a picture of a flower, plant, or other spring thing on the front of each card, using only one color for each card.
4. Now turn each card over and write the name of the color you used on that card on the back using the same color marker. For some handwriting practice, try writing the words lightly in pencil first, then having her trace over the letters in marker.
5. Now it's time to play! Take the cards outside. Choose one card and ask your child to name the color, then turn the card over to reveal the color word.
6. Now look around outside and find something natural (like a tree or flower) that's the same color as the card.
7. Once you've found something, turn to your child and say, "I spy something with my eye that is the color ____". Encourage her to try and find the object you chose. Give her descriptive word clues to help point her in the right direction. If she guesses another object that is the right color, let her know that her pick is also correct.
8. Continue playing by repeating steps 5-7 for the rest of the color cards. Once she finds all the colors, she wins!

During the course of the game, invite your child to select unique adjectives to describe each color. Encourage her to get creative with her word choices and use her imagination!

Source: <http://www.education.com/>

Perfectionist Moms: Cut It Out!

No mom really likes to admit she's a perfectionist—but of the 500-plus women we spoke with over the years of researching our new book, *Mothers Need Time-Outs Too*, we discovered that perfectionism is the number one issue keeping modern mothers from enjoying the moment. We are all so busy trying to be everything to everyone—and doing a stellar job while we're at it—that we don't have a spare second to plug into our own needs or desires.

But beware: this will hurt us, and our families, in the long run!

Countless psychological studies point to links between perfectionism and dysfunction. "One of the most pernicious forms of self-generated stress stems from perfectionism," explains Dr. Jon Allen in a 2003 *Perspective Magazine* article. A continuous cycle of striving, failure, and self-criticism creates stress which pumps our blood full of hormones like cortisol and epinephrine. Both have been proven to harm the immune system, making people more vulnerable to a variety of illnesses—from the flu to cancer. Perfectionists often want and expect others to be perfect, too, perpetuating the cycle and leading to disagreements, wrecked relationships, and even more stress.

So what's the solution? It's easier than you think! Mothers say it's important to:

- Accept imperfection, perhaps even revel in it. Joelle, mother of one from New York, loves going to her messy friend's house. It reminds her that not everyone has to live with the same standards.
- Share responsibility, and let go of the need to always be in control. When your nine-year-old folds laundry, tell her you appreciate how hard he or she tried.
- Choose your priorities. You can cut down on your activities—and your children's—to free up time for other things or for nothing. YOU are in the driver's seat.
- Open your mind to alternative ways of running things. Elizabeth, raised in Germany and now living with her family of five in France, noticed how differently even those two neighboring cultures can be when it comes to mothers' standards. "There's no one way to do it correctly," she said. "It really helps me to know that."
- Trust yourself. Be comfortable with what works for your family: it doesn't matter what other people think about how your kids are dressed, whether your kitchen is spotless, or if your son made the A-team.

Dr. Allen, a professor of Psychiatry at Baylor College of Medicine adds: "The good news is, although perfectionism can be a relatively ingrained personality trait, it can be moderated over time." Ultimately, you are responsible for your own happiness, and if lowering your standards will help you carve out a some more "me-time," then give it a try—your family will thank you for it!

Article by Katrin Schumann; Reprinted from: <http://www.divinecaroline.com/>

Cooking With Kids

Bird Nests



What You Need:

2 cups granulated sugar • 1/2 cup butter • 1/2 cup milk • 6 tbsp cocoa • 1/2 cup fine shredded coconut (optional)* • 3 cups oatmeal • Large Pot • Wooden Spoon • Waxed Paper • Jellybeans or Foil-Wrapped Eggs • Large Popsicle Sticks

What You Do:

1. Combine the first four ingredients together in a large pot and bring to a boil for about 2-3 minutes, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon.
2. Take pot off of stove and add the coconut and oatmeal. Mix until everything is coated.
3. Give each child a piece of waxed paper. Drop a generous sized spoonful of the "birds nest" mixture onto the waxed paper.
4. Have each child work the mixture with a popsicle stick until it's cool enough to handle.
5. Have children shape the mixture into a birds nest and then let set.
6. Once the mixture is set (either in the fridge or at room temp.) give the child a handful of jelly beans or chocolate foil wrapped eggs to put in the centre of their nest.

*If you omit the coconut, replace by adding 1/4-1/2 cup of oatmeal.

Depression: God Is Not Silent When We Suffer

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Never has so much been crammed into one word. Depression feels terrifying. Your world is dark, heavy, and painful. Physical pain, you think, would be much better—at least the pain would be localized. Instead, depression seems to go to your very soul, affecting everything in its path.

Dead, but walking, is one way to describe it. You feel numb. Perhaps the worst part is that you remember when you actually *felt* something and the contrast between then and now makes the pain worse.

So many things about your life are difficult right now. Things you used to take for granted—a good night's sleep, having goals, looking forward to the future—now seem beyond your reach. Your relationships are also affected. The people who love you are looking for some emotional response from you, but you do not have one to give.

Does it help to know that you are not alone? These days depression affects as much as 25 percent of the population. Although it has always been a human problem, no one really knows why. But what Christians do know is that God is not silent when we suffer. On every page of Scripture, God's depressed children have been able to find hope and a reason to endure. For example, take 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (ESV):

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Come to God with your suffering

You can start to experience the inward renewal that the apostle Paul experienced when you come to God with your suffering. God seems far away when we suffer. You believe that He exists, but it seems as if He is too busy with everything else, or He just doesn't care. After all, God is powerful enough to end your suffering, but He hasn't.

If you start there, you'll reach a dead end pretty quickly. God hasn't promised to explain everything about what He does and what He allows. Instead, He encourages us to start with Jesus. Jesus is God the Son, and He is certainly loved by his heavenly Father. Yet Jesus also went through more suffering than anyone who ever lived!

Here we see that love and suffering can co-exist. And when you start reading the Bible and encounter people like Job, Jeremiah, and the apostle Paul, you get a sense that suffering is actually the well-worn path for God's favorites. This doesn't answer the question, *Why are you doing this to me?* But it cushions the blow when you know that God understands. You aren't alone. If we know anything about God, we know that *He comes close to those who suffer*, so keep your eyes open for Him.

God speaks to you in the Bible

Keep your heart open to the fact that the Bible has much to say to you when you are depressed. Here are a few suggestions of Bible passages you can read. Read one each day and let it fill your mind as you go about your life.

- Read about Jesus' suffering in Isaiah 53 and Mark 14. How does it help you to know that Jesus is a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief?
- Use the Psalms to help you find words to talk to God about your heart. Make Psalm 88 and Psalm 86 your personal prayers to God.
- Be alert to spiritual warfare. Depressed people are very vulnerable to Satan's claim that God is not good. Jesus' death on the cross proves God's love for you. It's the only weapon powerful enough to stand against Satan's lies. (Romans 5:6-8, 1 John 4:9,10)
- Don't think your case is unique. Read Hebrews 11 and 12. Many have walked this path before you and they will tell you that God did not fail them.
- Remember your purpose for living. (Matthew 22:37-39, 1 Corinthians 6:20, 2 Corinthians 5:15, Galatians 5:6)
- Learn about persevering and enduring. (Romans 5:3, Hebrews 12:1, James 1:2-4)

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Try one step at a time

Granted, it seems impossible. How can someone live without feelings? Without them you have no drive, no motivation. Could you imagine walking without any feeling in your legs? It would be impossible.

Or would it? Perhaps you could walk if you practiced in front of a large mirror and watched your legs moving. One step, wobble, another step. It would all be very mechanical, but it could be done.

People have learned to walk in the midst of depression. It doesn't seem natural, though other people won't notice either the awkwardness or the heroism involved. The trek begins with one step, then another. Remember, you are not alone. Many people have taken this journey ahead of you.

As you walk, you will find that it is necessary to remember to use every resource you have ever learned about persevering through hardship. It will involve lots of moment by moment choices: 1) take one minute at a time, 2) read one short Bible passage, 3) try to care about someone else, 4) ask someone how they are doing, and so on.

You will need to do this with your relationships, too. When you have no feelings, how to love must be redefined. Love, for you, must become an active commitment to patience and kindness.

Consider what accompanies your depression

As you put one foot in front of the other, don't forget that depression doesn't exempt you from the other problems that plague human beings. Some depressed people have a hard time seeing the other things that creep in—things like anger, fear, and an unforgiving spirit. Look carefully to see if your depression is associated with things like these:

Do you have negative, critical, or complaining thoughts? These can point to anger. Are you holding something against another person?

Do you want to stay in bed all day? Are there parts of your life you want to avoid?

Do you find that things you once did easily now strike terror in your heart? What is at the root of your fear?

Do you feel like you have committed a sin that is beyond the scope of God's forgiveness? Remember that the apostle Paul was a murderer. And remember: God is not like other people—He doesn't give us the cold shoulder when we ask for forgiveness.

Do you struggle with shame? Shame is different from guilt. When you are guilty you feel dirty because of what you did; but with shame you feel dirty because of what somebody did to you. Forgiveness for your sins is not the answer here because you are not the one who was wrong. But the cross of Christ is still the answer. Jesus' blood not only washes us clean from the guilt of our own sins, but also washes away the shame we experience when others sin against us.

Do you experience low self-worth? Low self-worth points in many directions. Instead of trying to raise your view of yourself, come at it from a completely different angle. Start with Christ and His love for you. Let that define you and then share that love with others.

Will it ever be over?

Will you always struggle with depression? That is like asking, "Will suffering ever be over?" Although we will have hardships in this world, depression rarely keeps a permanent grip on anyone. When we add to that the hope, purpose, power, and comfort we find in Christ, depressed people can usually anticipate a ray of hope or a lifting of their spirits.

Excerpt from article by Edward T. Welch; Reprinted from: <http://www.familylife.com/>