

Mothers' Union

Together at Home: Resources and Prayer Pack



Bringing us together this Mothering Sunday. Resources include activities and seven days of prayers for you to stay connected and add your voice to our global family.

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families



This Mothering Sunday

we thank God for the people in our lives who have nurtured, cared and shown us the spirit of mothering.

2020 taught us how, even when apart, we are all able to pull together in solidarity and kindness, and make sure no one feels isolated or unable to connect.

We want to encourage you to remain connected in the run up to Mothering Sunday and inside this booklet you will find a set of activities and worship linked to the day. You may want to contact others in your branch and community to see if it is possible to run a celebratory virtual event, such as a tea party to praise and remember the mothers/caregivers in our lives. Alternatively, you could use these resources creatively yourself or share with other family and friends online or by phone.

In the second part of this booklet, you will find a special prayer diary. We encourage all members to join with us for our seven days of prayer starting on International Women's Day through to Mothering Sunday. You could do this with your group, church or individually – safe in the knowledge that you are adding your voice alongside your fellow members as we pray for women and girls around the world.

Through all the uncertainty, the most important thing is that we are always safe in anything we do and follow all current government guidelines.

May the Holy Spirit fill our hearts with peace, love and joy as we look forward to a brighter year ahead.

With heartfelt thanks and may God bless you this Mothering Sunday.

Sheran Harper

Worldwide President, Mothers' Union

P.S. you can find and download more Mothering Sunday resources on our website by visiting www.makeamothersday.org, where you can also order your gifts online.

Ways you can connect and raise vital funds together:



For Mothers' Union Branch Leaders

We know that in the current climate, your branch members are unable to meet, and many are unable to attend church. So, why not hold a branch meeting online and use some of the activities in the pack and on our website. We have also included a service you can follow.

For those members who may not be online why not encourage them to follow our seven days of prayer at the same time every day, maybe you can do it together on the phone, so that we are joined in fellowship.

There are many ways to connect this Mothering Sunday and share our virtual tea party together.

Four of the simplest ways are:

zoom

Zoom makes it easy for anyone to join your party via a link that you can share in advance. It is currently one of the most popular free video apps around.



WhatsApp Groups

Use WhatsApp to share messages with each other in a group of up to 100 people. Groups of up to eight people can WhatsApp video call too.



Facebook Messenger

A group video chat on Facebook Messenger can take up to 50 people, and displays up to six people at once.



Skype

Skype is one of the most well established video calling apps. You can use it across desktop, laptop, tablet and mobile.



A service for Mothering Sunday

This service may be used by individuals, or adapted to suit a group setting, dependent on current guidelines.

Personal Reflection

Before the service, ask each participant to bring with them a photograph of the person or people who have mothered them throughout their life. At this point of the service ask them to hold their photograph and maybe light a candle as well. Encourage everyone to thank God for all that person has been in their life and the impact they have had. You may want to encourage each person present to share why the person in the photograph is special to them and one thing that person taught them that has stayed with them.

Close the reflection with the following words.

Lord, we thank you today for each and every person in our photos who have mothered and guided us through our lives. Thank you for giving them to us to guide our paths in life. May we continue to treasure them and hold them close to our hearts. **Amen**

On Mothering Sunday, many of us thank God for the women who have had the greatest impact on our lives, and celebrate their unconditional love and sacrifice.

For others, however, Mothering Sunday brings mixed emotions, and it can take real tenacity and trust in the Holy Spirit to give love and to feel loved.

So, in this service we remember before God families of all kinds, as they navigate the joys and challenges of family life, and ask for his blessing upon them.

*How great is the love the Father has lavished on us,
that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! 1 John 3:1*

We draw near in worship to our heavenly Father, with full and thankful hearts,
that we belong to his family and are all equally loved by him. **Amen**

Hymn

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling *or* Draw Me near to Thee



Opening prayers

Wherever we are, we live in God's family.
When our families are broken by circumstance and pain,
He reaches out to hold us in His arms, piece by piece
He makes us whole again,
and in His love-filled hands we are transformed.
So Lord, help us to build relationships
in all the corners of our hearts.
To be like you, to love like you,
to heal brokenness and restore wholeness
in families worldwide. Amen

Bible readings

Isaiah 40:11

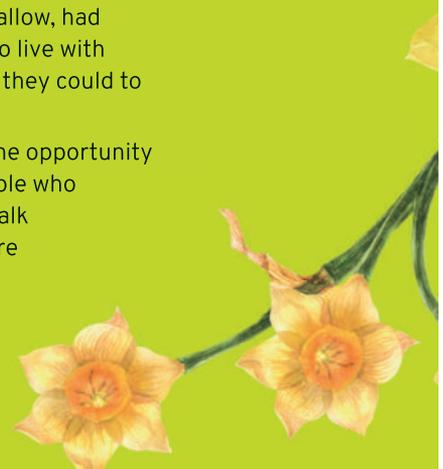
Ephesians 3:14-19 (GNT)

Talk

If you are following this service at home, at this point you may like to read Rosa's story in your MAMD catalogue and letter, and thank God for his provision for this family through the work of Mothers' Union.

For 10-year-old Rosa and her grandmother Wendy, Mothering Sunday has often brought tears of sorrow. Rosa's late mother, Mallow, had spent years battling with alcoholism, so Rosa had gone to live with Wendy (69) and her husband (72). They tried everything they could to help Mallow, but she sadly passed away.

Our Mothers' Union AFIA breaks gave Wendy and Rosa the opportunity to rest and find some peace. And also to meet other people who had struggles in their own lives, so together they could talk openly, honestly and in safety. Today, Wendy and Rosa are continuing on their lifelong journey, but now they are no longer alone.





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.

God of celebration, who rejoices with those who rejoice,
we pray for those for whom Mothering Sunday is a time of thanksgiving and joy.

God of compassion, who weeps with those who weep,
we pray for those for whom Mothering Sunday is a time of heartache and pain.

God of community, who calls the children to come to him,
we thank you that your love abounds for families of every kind.

God of comfort, who gathers us as a hen gathers its chicks,
we thank you that your love surrounds the disappointed and hurt.

God of every circumstance, we bring our thanks and praise that we belong to your family as your beloved children. **Amen**

Hymn

Take My Life and Let it Be or Great is Thy Faithfulness

Final blessing

May the love of the Father fill our hearts
May the love of the Lord Jesus fill our homes
And may the grace of the Holy Spirit
bind us together in love in our families
and communities.

And may the blessing of God be
with you,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen**

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Mothering Sunday Quiz



- 1. What food is most associated with Mothering Sunday?**
a) Sunday Roast b) Eggs c) Simnel Cake
- 2. In Ancient Greece, which goddess was celebrated on Mothering Sunday?**
a) Goddess Artemis b) Goddess Hestia c) Goddess Rhea
- 3. 'Mother's ruin' is a common British name for which alcoholic drink?**
a) Gin b) Vodka c) Brandy
- 4. In which Indian city, did Mother Theresa found her missionary?**
a) Mumbai b) Varanasi c) Calcutta
- 5. How many cards are sent for Mothering Sunday in the UK?**
a) 10 million b) 45 million c) 30 million
- 6. In which year did Marie Curie become the first woman to be awarded the Nobel Prize?**
a) 1925 b) 1903 c) 1910
- 7. Mother of Pearl is a common name for?**
a) Nacre b) Jewel c) Stone
- 8. Who was the mother of Queen Elizabeth I?**
a) Anne Boleyn b) Mary Queen of Scots c) Mary II
- 9. Which popular Mothering Sunday flower do Christians believe were made from the tears of Mary when she wept for Jesus on the cross?**
a) Carnations b) Daffodils c) Sunflowers
- 10. When did women get the parliamentary vote in the UK?**
a) 1918 b) 1917 c) 1916

Answers on
back page

Traditional Simnel Cake

Did you know that Simnel Cake, now popularly associated with Easter, is really a Mothering Sunday tradition? In the 17th century, girls in domestic service were donated the ingredients by their employers so they could take Simnel Cake home to their mothers. Today, it's often decorated with eleven marzipan balls, representing Jesus' loyal disciples, but it doesn't have to be.

Here is a recipe you can try at home.



Ingredients

For the cake:

175g/6oz light muscovado sugar | 175g/6oz butter, softened, plus extra for greasing
| 175g/6oz self-raising flour | 3 large eggs | 50g/1¾oz ground almonds | 3 tbsp milk
| 100g/3½oz sultanas | 100g/3½oz glacé cherries, quartered | 100g/3½oz dried apricots,
cut into small pieces | 2 tbsp mixed spice powder

For the topping:

450g/1lb golden marzipan | 3 tbsp apricot jam | large egg, beaten

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 160C/140C Fan/Gas mark 3. Grease a 20cm/8in round, deep-sided, loose-bottomed tin with butter and line the base with baking paper.
2. Put the cake ingredients into a large bowl and beat together until well incorporated. Spoon half the mixture into the prepared tin and level the surface.
3. Roll one-third of the marzipan to the same size as the base of the tin and place on top of the cake mixture.
4. Spoon the remaining cake mixture on top of the marzipan and level the surface. Bake for 1¾-2 hours or until golden-brown on top and firm in the middle. If the cake is beginning to brown but not cooked through, cover it with tin foil. Leave the cake to cool for 10 minutes before removing from the tin.
5. Heat the apricot jam in a pan, then brush the top of the cooled cake with a little warm jam. Roll out half of the remaining marzipan to fit the top of the cake. Place the marzipan on the cake and use your thumb to crimp around the edges.
6. Make 11 balls from the remaining marzipan and place these around the edge of the cake, fixing them to the marzipan with a little beaten egg.
7. Brush the marzipan with the egg and glaze under a hot grill for about 5 minutes (turning the cake around to ensure even browning). You can do this using a cook's blowtorch if you prefer.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/mary_berrys_simnel_cake_49483

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families



Uniting in seven days of prayer

From International Women's Day on 8th March to
Mothering Sunday on 14th, let us come together
to pray for women and girls worldwide.



You are welcome to join us live on the Mothers' Union Facebook page every day at noon GMT as we include these prayers with our midday prayers. Alternatively you can also access these and our midday prayers through the Church of England's Daily Hope Line on 0800 804 8044 (please follow the options).

As our Lord Jesus Christ respected, trusted and revered women, so we act and pray for women's recognition, equality and empowerment throughout the world.

 @MothersUnion

Monday 8th March

Women and access to education

Investing in the education of women and girls transforms communities. Evidence shows that girls who receive an education can participate in the decisions that most affect them, earn higher incomes, and build better futures for themselves, their families and their communities. Yet 132 million girls worldwide are out of school today.

In 2000 Mothers' Union began the Literacy and Financial Education Programme (LFEP), to empower marginalised communities through literacy, numeracy, business and problem-solving skills. Twenty years on, those women who have participated enjoy greater financial independence and greater respect and equality in their homes and society. They are contributing to the family income, having more of a decision-making role in the home and are involved in community politics and leadership.

Prayer points

- Pray for we a world where all girls have access to education up to secondary school level
- Pray for Mothers' Union's Literacy and Financial Education Programmes
- Pray that all women and girls realise their worth and the joy of knowledge and education

A prayer for women's education

Lord, may You fulfil many girls' and women's longing for wisdom and a better life.

Bless them with a quality education, supplies, and a family and community that supports their educational goals.

We reflect on the Bible verse as we pray "Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold." (Proverbs 3:13-14)

Amen

Adapted from a World Vision prayer





Tuesday 9th March

Women and poverty

Throughout the world, women are in the lowest-paid work and are underpaid. Globally, women still earn 23 per cent less than men and at the current, slow rate of progress, the World Economic Forum estimates it will take another 202 years to close the gap.

In fact, a staggering 75 per cent of women in developing regions are often not paid enough to escape poverty. Gender inequality like this comes at a disastrous cost, and not just to women but to whole regions and countries. It is important that we pray and campaign for women's equality to create a future free from poverty.

Prayer points:

- For the gender pay gap to close around the world
- For governments and decision makers to prioritise an end to poverty and to recognise that gender equality is one of the most efficient ways of doing this
- For those living in poverty, a hope for their futures

A prayer for an end to poverty

*Creator God,
you loved the world into life.
Forgive us when our dreams of the future
are shaped by anything other than glimpses of a
kingdom
of justice, peace and an end to poverty.*

*Incarnate God,
you taught us to speak out for what is right.
Make us content with nothing less than a world
that is transformed into the shape of love,
where poverty shall be no more.*

*Breath of God,
let there be abundant life.
Inspire us with the vision of poverty over,
and give us the faith, courage and will to make it
happen.*

Amen

Christian Aid



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Wednesday 10th March

Women and gender-based violence



Gender-based violence (GBV) is an abomination that takes many forms and hurts 1 in 3 women in their lifetime. Whether it's sexual violence, from a partner or non-partner, female genital mutilation because of customary oppression, or early marriage because of poverty and inequality, we must fight together to bring it down from 1 in 3 to zero.

Ending violence against women and girls needs a community-based, multi-pronged approach, and sustained engagement with multiple stakeholders. And it starts with speaking out. By lifting our voices, we challenge societal attitudes and myths that allow gender-based violence to persist; ensure that survivors know they are not alone, and can access help, justice and healing; and we put pressure on those in authority to act.

Prayer points

- Why not use the statistics in the text above to form specific prayers as well as praying for:
- Mothers' Union work around the globe calling for an end to GBV
- World leaders and the Church to continue to shine a light on GBV and call for action
- That we will continue to be a voice to the voiceless and speak up!

A prayer to end GBV

God bless you with insight to recognise violence in all its forms and courage to name it, speaking out for justice.

The Lord Jesus bless you with compassion for the vulnerable and grace to stand with them, sharing his strength.

The Holy Spirit bless you with a prayerful heart and power to breathe peace, transforming the world.

The blessing of the holy and gracious Trinity, eternal wisdom, living word, abiding spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

Amen

Anglican Church of Australia



Photo by Josh Garner on Unsplash



Thursday 11th March

Women and peace & reconciliation

In conflict and war, the effects on women, however brutal, are frequently unrepresented, and women's voices ignored in formal peace processes.

But Mothers' Union know that women can be powerful drivers of peace. Studies show that when women are included, the chance of a peace agreement lasting at least 15 years increases by 35%.

In the 84 countries in which we live and work, Mothers' Union members directly affected by the realities of war are today making peace at individual and community levels, with decision-makers and with those involved in formal peace channels.



Photo by Gabriella Clare Manno on Unsplash

Prayer points

- Pray for Mothers' Union in the DRC where we support women affected by sexual violence in conflict and empower them to advocate for change at local, national and international level
- Pray for Mothers' Union in South Sudan, where members are actively involved in getting women's voices heard throughout the peace talks, providing support for those displaced by the war and facilitating community healing and reconciliation processes
- Pray that we continue to look at the need around us - where we see communities devastated by violence and conflict, our response must be to act, speak up, and raise the voices of women around the world

A prayer for peace & reconciliation

*Jesus, Prince of Peace,
 Be with your peoples
 Suffering the storms of war,
 In fear of thundering weapons,
 Shedding raindrops of tears
 For lost loved ones,
 Lost homes,
 And lost futures.
 Shine on them Lord,
 The sun of justice,
 Bring them fresh breezes of hope,
 The gentle warmth of confidence and trust
 Built on a springtime of reconciliation.
 Amen*

Sue Cooper/CAFOD

Friday 12th March

Women and economic empowerment



It can be easy for us to take our relative economic freedom for granted. We can apply for jobs, operate our own bank accounts, and spend, invest and donate as we choose. Yet through our work with communities around the world and through you, our 4 million members, Mothers' Union know this is not the reality for many women.

Currently, globally, women undertake 2.6 times the unpaid care and domestic work that men undertake.

But women's economic empowerment and equality is critical to achieving sustainable development.

That's why Mothers' Union support women to participate equally in existing markets, to become economically empowered, able to grow their assets, sustain their own income and take on greater decision-making roles for their families and for their communities.

Prayer points

- Reflect on the Bible verse Micah 6:8; "What does the Lord require of you? To act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God"
- Pray that all may see that empowering women benefits children, families and communities

A prayer for economic empowerment

*Now, I bloom in darkness.
My roots planted deep—but bound.
I will cry out to God in my despair.
He will strengthen me.
His Spirit will quicken my tendrils.
They will spiral out and twine themselves to grace and mercy.
I will not stay in the dirt that binds me.
His Word will bring forth new shoots.
Loosed from the poverty, pain, and inequity that bound me,
I will bloom in the sunshine of His love,
Anchored in the fertile ground of His kingdom.
I will flower in God's power.*
Geri Coleman Tucker



Photo by Ben White on Unsplash



Saturday 13th March

Women and influence

The Bible calls all Christians to imitate Jesus and give voice to the voiceless, who in many cases are women. With a powerful voice, we are called to speak out for women who have no representation, and to walk alongside women and girls to empower them to speak for themselves.

Prayer points

- Pray for all those who advocate for women around the world
- Pray for the work of Mothers' Union as they advocate for peace and safety, self-reliance and gender justice
- Pray that the voices of our members are heard

A prayer for equality and influence

Lord,

You are the call in each one of us...the call to give a voice to the voiceless, to speak out for those who cannot speak out for themselves, to be present in the places where they have no representation, and to walk alongside them, empowering them to speak.

We carry our own burdens, but still, you are the call in each one of us...to bear the burdens of others, to advocate for human dignity and the common good.

We pray that those in positions of power see the value of creating the economic, political and social conditions that will allow all human beings more ready access to their own fulfilment.

May we hold our government accountable for the promises it has made to help those who are living without a voice and may each one of us hold ourselves to the same account.

Open our ears to hear the largely silent cries, open our eyes to see the faces that remain nameless, open our mouths to encourage those who struggle to find a voice, and bless us with the courage and conviction to do so.

Amen

Thymewood



Photo by Priscilla Du Preez on Unsplash

Sunday 14th March

Women of Faith

When we look to the past and at the world around us now, how encouraged we can be by women of faith. In the Bible we learn from Hannah's tears and frustration as she asks God to hear her prayer for a child and, the courage Esther showed. We learn from the example of our founder Mary Sumner, how she overcame her fears to speak up for women and families, and the compassion of Mother Theresa. And we learn from those surrounding us today – as Bishop Rachel Treweek speaks up against domestic abuse, and as Reverend Christine Lee becomes the first Korean-American woman to be ordained as a priest in the Episcopal Church; speaking on the value of seeing women as Jesus did.

We must always remember that these women will never have seen themselves as extraordinary, even if we do. They are normal, everyday women used by God to achieve extraordinary things.

Prayer points

- Think of women who inspire you and thank God for them
- Lift up the women in your life, that God may guide them to greatness for all
- Pray for the faith of women in the world – that their lights may shine in the darkness as beacons of hope

A prayer for women of faith

God our creator

You have built your Church through the love and devotion of women everywhere:

Inspire us to follow their great example

That we may with them share

In the vision of your glory

Through Jesus Christ your son, our Lord

Amen

Church of England

Quiz Answers

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. Simnel Cake | 6. 1903 |
| 2. Goddess Rhea | 7. Narce |
| 3. Gin | 8. Anne Boleyn |
| 4. Calcutta | 9. Carnations |
| 5. 30 million | 10. 1918 |

www.makeamothersday.org

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The Mothers' Union, Incorporated by Royal Charter 1926, is a charity registered in England and Wales (Registration No: 240531)

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