



IN THE SUMMER OF 2004 MY DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, RACHEL OLSON, ASKED ME TO CONSIDER BEING THE “MENTOR MOM” FOR A NEW OUTREACH MINISTRY AT OUR CHURCH CALLED MOPS. THE PURPOSE OF MOPS IS “TO NURTURE EVERY MOTHER OF PRE-SCHOOLERS BY MEETING HER DISTINCT NEEDS TO THE GLORY OF JESUS CHRIST.” MY ROLE WOULD INCLUDE BRINGING A MATURE PERSPECTIVE ON MOTHERING, WOMANHOOD, RELATIONSHIPS BASED ON BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES, AND MY OWN LIFE EXPERIENCES. AT FIRST I WAS FLATTERED TO THINK THAT MY WISDOM WAS WORTH PASSING ON! THEN I GOT EXCITED ABOUT THE IMPACT MOPS COULD HAVE ON OUR COMMUNITY. GOD COULD ACTUALLY USE MY LIFE-LONG LOVE FOR BABIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN AND LESSONS I’D LEARNED FROM RAISING MY OWN FOUR CHILDREN TO TOUCH LIVES. WOW! OF COURSE, THE REAL REASON I COULD MENTOR YOUNG MOTHERS WAS NOT BECAUSE I HAD ALL THE ANSWERS, BUT BECAUSE I HAVE PUT MYSELF UNDER GOD’S CARE. BY BEING HONEST AND VULNERABLE ABOUT MY OWN STRUGGLES, I COULD OFFER ENCOURAGEMENT AND HOPE. EACH TIME WE MEET AS A GROUP, I SHARE A FIVE MINUTE “MENTOR MOMENT,” AND I’VE GIVEN THREE TALKS AS WELL. I GET TO KNOW EACH MOM WHO COMES BY SITTING AT A DIFFERENT TABLE EACH WEEK, LAUGHING AND CRYING WITH THEM, AND BEING A GOOD AND ACCEPTING LISTENER. SOME HAVE GIVEN ME PERSONAL PRAYER REQUESTS TO PRAY FOR. I ALSO SEND PERSONAL NOTES, BIRTHDAY CARDS, AND SMALL GIFTS FOR NEW BABIES AS ANOTHER WAY TO CONNECT. ANOTHER PART OF MY ROLE IS TO ADVISE AND ENCOURAGE THE STEERING COMMITTEE. ONCE A MONTH, THIS COMMITTEE MEETS IN MY HOME TO PRAY AND PLAN. I AM SO IMPRESSED BY THEIR DEDICATION, ORGANIZATION, AND DESIRE TO REACHOUT.

WOMEN LOVE STORIES AND ARE RELATIONAL. WHEN A MENTOR MOM SPEAKS, SHE CAN ASSUME THERE IS A ROOMFUL OF MOMS WITH NEEDS LISTENING. WHEN THOSE NEEDS ARE BEING MET, HEARTS ARE OPEN TO HEAR SPIRITUAL TRUTHS. MY PRAYER IS FOR EACH MOM TO BE ALL THAT GOD WANTS HER TO BE.



“GOD COULD ACTUALLY USE MY LIFE-LONG LOVE FOR BABIES, YOUNG CHILDREN, AND LESSONS I’D LEARNED FROM RAISING MY OWN FOUR CHILDREN TO TOUCH LIVES.”

KARIN OLSON



MEETING NEEDS

WHAT SURPRISED YOU ABOUT BECOMING A MOTHER?


Before I was a mom, I couldn’t handle the thought of cleaning up vomit, wiping runny noses, or changing dirty diapers. Now I can almost say I enjoy those tasks. I love my kids and find fulfillment in caring for them.

Tammy Dube (MOPS attendee)

*32 MOMS ATTENDED MOPS DURING THE FALL SEMESTER.
NINETEEN MOMS WERE NOT FROM FIRST FREE.
ELEVEN FIRST FREE MOMS WERE ON THE LEADERSHIP TEAM.
TWO MOMS FROM FIRST FREE ATTENDED.*



FEEDING MOMS SPIRITUALLY AND PHYSICALLY



**“REACH OUT AND CARE FOR
SOMEONE WHO NEEDS THE TOUCH OF
HOSPITALITY. THE TIME YOU SPEND
CARING TODAY WILL BE A LOVE GIFT
THAT WILL BLOSSOM INTO THE FRESH
JOY OF GOD’S SPIRIT IN THE FUTURE.”**

EMILIE BARNES



MOPS (MOTHERS OF PRESCHOOLERS) AT FIRST FREE

“IT WAS A GREAT EXPERIENCE. YOU ALL DID SO MUCH TO MAKE A REALLY GREAT MORNING OUT FOR MOMS!” IS HOW ONE MOM DESCRIBED FIRST FREE’S MOPS (MOTHERS OF PRESCHOOLERS) GROUP. ANOTHER MOM SAID, “I LOVED IT!”

THIS SUMMER A GROUP OF MOMS FROM OUR CONGREGATION MET IN THE CHURCH BASEMENT (WITH OUR CHILDREN) AND AGREED TO OBTAIN A CHARTER FROM MOPS INTERNATIONAL IN DENVER, AND START AN OUTREACH PROGRAM DESIGNED TO REACH WOMEN OF ALL BACKGROUNDS WITH CHILDREN FROM BIRTH THROUGH KINDERGARTEN. WITH OUR CHARTER, SUPPORT FROM OUR PASTOR, AND THE OUTREACH COMMISSION, MOPS AT FIRST FREE STARTED ON SEPTEMBER 17TH, 2004, AT 9:30 AM SHARP—WELL, ALMOST. (WE HAD A LOT OF CHILDREN TO GET ORGANIZED THAT MORNING!)

OUR MORNINGS ARE DESIGNED FOR WOMEN WHO ARE MARRIED AND UNMARRIED, BELIEVERS AND NON-BELIEVERS, CONSERVATIVES, AND LIBERALS. THE ONLY REQUIREMENT IS THAT YOU ARE A MOM OF A PRESCHOOLER. AT MOPS, WE BELIEVE THAT MOTHERS ARE ALWAYS “ON-CALL” TAKING CARE OF THEIR FAMILIES, BUT WHO TAKES CARE OF THEM? THE ANSWER, OF COURSE, IS MOPS!

OUR TWO-HOUR MEETINGS ARE DESIGNED TO FEED THE MOTHERS PHYSICALLY. WE HAVE DELICIOUS HOMEMADE BREAKFASTS! WE FEED THE MOTHERS SOCIALLY AS WELL. IF YOU HAVE EVER TRIED TO HAVE AN EXTENDED CONVERSATION WITH AN ADULT WHEN YOU ARE ACCOMPANIED BY A TWO-YEAR-OLD, YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN. THE CHILDREN ARE WELL CARED FOR IN OUR MOPPETS PROGRAMS, AND THE MOTHERS GET TO TALK TO ADULTS—ALONE! AT SOME MEETINGS, WE ALSO GIVE THE MOMS A CREATIVE OUTLET. WE’VE HEARD THAT SOME MOMS NEED MORE CREATIVE CHOICES THAN PLAYDOH AND CRAYONS. IN FEBRUARY, WE HOST A SPA DAY FOR OUR MOMS WHERE THEY WILL MAKE THEIR OWN BATH SALTS AND LIP BALM. THEY WILL ALSO RECEIVE MUCH DESERVED PAMPERING IN OUR “MOMMY MANICURES” AND “HAIR HEAVEN” STATIONS PLUS OTHERS! (CONTACT SHEILA DECKER TO HELP WITH THIS EVENT!) WE ALSO FEED THE MOMS SPIRITUALLY AT EACH MEETING BY HAVING A SPEAKER ENCOURAGE US IN OUR MOTHERING AND BY SHARING THE GOSPEL OF SALVATION THROUGH JESUS CHRIST AT CHRISTMAS AND EASTER.

SHEILA DECKER