



moms

mothers offering mothers support



OVERVIEW

This discussion guide is for your MOMS Small Group to use when you meet. The goal of the small groups is to allow for deeper connections through our shared experience of motherhood, growing in our faith, and support and care for one another. No doubt you will figure out how to do just this when you meet.

If you want a way to structure your time, you can use this as a guide. We imagine that this may take as little as 10-15 minutes or your entire time to go through this guide. We don't have leaders, per se, in that we hope you work together as a group to share facilitating and leading. We imagine this as a devotion that can center everyone, and we also recognize that moms also need time and space for conversation about their lives.

- ❖ Read the prayer together.
- ❖ Have someone read the scripture and devotion.
- ❖ Answer a few of the discussion questions.
- ❖ Share prayer requests and close in prayer.

Week 1: The Courage to Encourage

Prayer: *Gracious God, we thank you for gathering us again. Help us to be present to your Spirit and to one another. In Christ's name, Amen.*

Scripture: Ephesians 4.29-32

Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.

Quote: Brene Brown, *I Thought It Was Just Me*

"Courage is a heart word. The root of the word courage is cor - the Latin word for heart. In one of its earliest forms, the word courage meant "To speak one's mind by telling all one's heart." Over time, this definition has changed, and today, we typically associate courage with heroic and brave deeds. But in my opinion, this definition fails to recognize the inner strength and level of commitment required for us to actually speak honestly and openly about who we are and about our experiences -- good and bad. Speaking from our hearts is what I think of as "ordinary courage."





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Devotion:

The little prefix “en” is what transforms the word courage to encourage. It’s those two letters that add the action to our courage. “En” means “to cause a person to be” or to “put into our provide something to someone.” To encourage is to provide and put courage into another! As moms, we know we can use all the courage and encouragement we can get!

Think about a person who has encouraged you before or someone you have encouraged. Did it take courage to encourage? Why? Does it take courage to encourage another?

Sometimes there are challenges in giving encouragement...there’s a risk that the other person won’t be able to receive what we say as encouragement...they may not want to hear affirming words about themselves...sometimes we feel inadequate to offer encouragement (we get concerned about saying the “right” thing)...we also need to have the right heart when we encourage (sometimes what we are really offering is advice on topics like potty training or discipline). Sometimes we think we have to give answers.

Despite these challenges, what if we tried on courage to give encouragement, to trust that we have all that we need and that we are perfectly prepared to share from what we have?

Discussion Questions:

- ❖ What’s the best encouragement you have ever received?
- ❖ An Activity: First, take turns (maybe in groups of 2-4) and each mom shares a current challenge in your life where you could really use some encouragement. It could be about a feeling you are struggling with (i.e., irritated, overwhelmed) or a situation with relationships or parenting – whatever is on your heart today. Next, the other moms can search their pockets, purses and bags and find an item that might give encouragement to that person, along with saying words of encouragement. Repeat with each person and share back with larger group if you want. (Hopefully you will see that you were perfectly prepared to share encouragement from your purse and your heart!)

Sharing Prayer

- ❖ Close with this prayer or another you have: *Lord, Thank you for your faithfulness in our lives. Thank you for your encouragement; may we receive it fully. Give us courage to offer encouragement to others. Remind us that we are equipped for the journey with your grace and peace, Amen.*

