

Utter MomSense

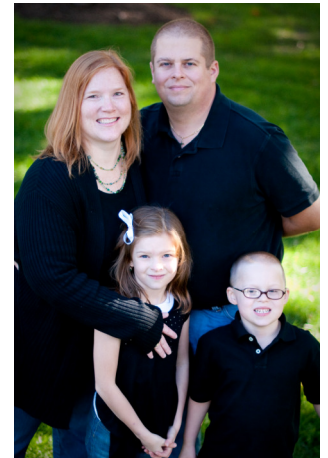
The monthly newsletter of MOPS – Mothers of Preschoolers @ Libertyville Evangelical Free Church

November 4, 2011

Developing an Attitude of Gratitude

The holiday of Thanksgiving gives people renewed focus on being grateful for all the blessings we have in our lives. Dr. Robyn Varblow (who spoke to us last month on increasing joy in our lives) encouraged us to keep a Gratitude Journal with specific things we are thankful for. Here's a few of mine ... Feel free to use them as a springboard to starting your own journal.

- I'm thankful for my husband of 12 years, Michael, who has been a far better partner for me than I could have ever imagined. He continually challenges me to give, serve and love more selflessly and more genuinely. He calls me higher!
- I'm thankful for my firstborn, Rebecka Joy (age 7), who has a tender heart and loves to help and serve others. As a momma who needs extra assistance, her helpful spirit is a constant reminder of God's provision for us. She brings me joy!
- I'm thankful for my 'baby', Zack (age 5), who has an energetic zest for life and abundant curiosity. Zack's perpetual motion reminds me that even with my disability that life is to be enjoyed and devoured with intensity. He keeps me young!
- I'm thankful for MOPS, for the friendships I've developed and the influence so many phenomenal MOPS speakers and moms have had on my life in the last 8 years. So much of my mothering style has been developed from things I've learned or seen modeled at MOPS. Y'all have challenged me to be a better mom!



Look around at all the blessings in your life and develop an attitude of gratitude!

~ Chrissi Wall, Coordinator

Getting a grip on griping by Jenn Uren (MOPS Alum)

More times than not, we as moms find ourselves in a downward spiral of griping. You ask your child to do something and they gripe about it. Your response is to gripe about your child and how they don't listen and your child in turn gripes about how unfair everything is. Before you know it -- a full blown gripe fest is in session and the original task that was assigned is still undone. So how do we turn this around?

1. Pray together.

It is never too early for our kids to learn how important prayer is in our lives as moms. Modeling this for them at a young age will make it more natural at an older age. Your prayer can be as simple as, "Dear Jesus, please help me to be patient as a mommy and please help _____ to do a good job listening and obeying. Help us to show love to each other."

2. Communicate clearly together.

Emphasis on clearly. Calling out an assignment into a vast house is probably not sufficient. Eye contact helps. But beyond that, be clear in what is expected, when it is expected and what can be expected to happen if it isn't done. For example, you may tell your three year old that he/she needs to put away the puzzles, that this needs to be done before lunch which is in 15-minutes, and if it isn't done, then there is no PBS kids during lunch. For an older child it might involve a more personal consequence and more detail. "Please have your lunch box on the counter by 4:00 so that mom can wash it and have it ready for tomorrow. If you choose not to, then you are responsible to wash your lunch box. Only clean lunch boxes will be packed by mom in the morning." Remember that younger kids need simple, short-term instructions. Older kids can handle more complex, future oriented instructions.

Emphasis on together. Allow your child to respond. Maybe your three year old has to use the potty. Help him/her learn how to say, "May I use the potty before I pick up the puzzles." Or your older child needs to have the freedom to negotiate -- maybe he/she has a play date afterschool. They need to be able to ask before hand if they can push back that deadline, or ask a sibling to do the task on their behalf. The goal is to teach and learn obedience and respect, not to train "yes men".

3. Celebrate together.

Recognize that there is a mutual benefit when instructions are followed. After the puzzles are picked up and lunch is ready, watch PBS kids together. Younger kids need immediate gratification. Older kids are learning delayed gratification, so choose an activity you can do together and decide when to do it -- after dinner, on Saturday afternoon, etc.

Before you know it, you and your kids will be focusing on the joy of being together and less on the task at hand.

Fun Fall Crafts & Activities



Hand & Foot Turkey

- Trace foot
- Trace 4 hands & place behind foot
- Glue pieces to paper
- Let kids decorate eyes, feet, comb, beak, wattle, etc. with paper or markers
- Reminder: Let kids place pieces in their own creative style. (It's hard as moms not to over-direct.)
- Creativity & fun is the goal!

~ Submitted by Beth Gehring

Handprint Turkeys

These fun handprint turkeys are a great way to forever capture just how little your kids' hands were. Tips:

- Use washable paints
- Don't forget to write your child's name & date on the back.

~ Submitted by Anna Cue



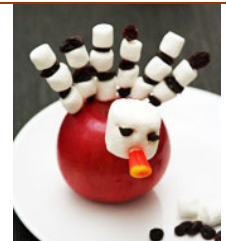
Learn the Turkey's parts: <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/birds/label/turkey/index.shtml>

Thanksgiving Apple Turkey Craft

Materials: A large red apple; Large and mini sized marshmallows (one large, at least 20 small); Toothpicks (seven per apple should be enough, but have extras on hand in case they break!); Raisins (15 – 30); Candy corn (one)

Directions

1. Place the apple on a flat surface and remove the stem as close to the apple as possible.
2. Carefully poke a toothpick into the apple on the outer rim behind where the stem was. Keep placing the toothpicks in this fashion until you have six of them fanning out behind the stem to represent the tail feathers (three clustered on one side and three on the other.)
3. Once the toothpicks are in place, slide a raisin onto the first one, then a mini marshmallow, then another raisin, in a pattern. Talk to the kids about patterns and see if they want to create a different one (raisin, raisin, marshmallow, etc.) Repeat it on all six toothpicks. Be sure the pattern ends with the mini marshmallow at the top so the tip of the toothpick is no longer exposed.
4. Now, on to the face of the turkey! Place another toothpick in front of the six toothpicks on the opposite side of the stem. Gently press the large marshmallow onto the toothpick.
5. Using scissors, snip tiny slits into the spots where the eyes will go. Press a raisin into each eye hole. (Parents may want to help the kids with the scissors, since you'll want to make a very small slit.)
6. Using the pointy end of the candy corn, poke it into where the nose goes and you've got your turkey!



Pumpkin Pie in a Bag

Fun project to do with your kids!

Pour 1 1/3 c of cold milk and 2-4 oz boxes of vanilla pudding into a Ziploc bag. Remove air. Have the children squeeze and knead the bag for one minute or until everyone has a turn. Add 1-15 oz can of pumpkin, 1 t cinnamon, and 1/2 t ginger. Remove air, shut the bag and knead again until blended or everyone has a turn. Set aside.

Put Graham crackers into another Ziploc bag and crush them with a rolling pin. Give each child a small Dixie cup. Have them put 1-2 T of crushed graham crackers into their cup. The adult then needs to cut a hole in the corner of the pumpkin/ pudding mix and squeeze some into the cup, on top of the crackers. Put a dollop of whipped cream on top. ENJOY!! I recommend using top quality Ziploc bags for this activity.

This & more great ideas at: <http://www.makinglearningfun.com/index.html>

Pumpkin Pie Play Dough



1 cup flour
1/4 cup salt
2 Tbsp cream of tartar
1 cup water
1 Tbsp vegetable oil
4 tsp pumpkin pie spice
12 drops yellow food color
6 drops red food color

Mix all ingredients in a non-stick saucepan...cook and stir over medium heat. Keep stirring until the mixture pulls away from the sides and sticks together in a big lump when stirred. Dump out onto a cutting board, let cool. When cool enough to touch, knead for 2-3 minutes. If stored in an airtight container this will last for months.

~ Submitted by Anna Cue



Do It Yourself Molded Crayons

From: http://www.makeit-loveit.com/2011/03/mister-make-it-and-love-it-series_14.html

1. Pull out all of those old broken crayons and start peeling all the papers away. (Or, buy a fresh new box of crayons.) The kids have fun with this part and love the freedom of being destructive. You can use any sort of oven safe molds for the next step. IKEA has silicone molds for a dollar or two. (However, they are now officially crayon molds because the crayons may not come off. But, more crayons can be made with these in the future.)
2. Start filling up the little molds with a variety of colors, breaking up the crayon pieces a little smaller if necessary. Make sure to let those little hands help. They will love this. (You can even have the older children sort by color.....they'll love the task.)
3. Then place the molds in a pre-heated 250 degree (F) oven for 5-10 minutes.....peeking in on them every so often. Also, place tin foil down on the rack below the crayons, in case there are any spills. Crayon would not be fun to clean out of the oven. When you have noticed that the crayons are almost all the way melted, use a toothpick to gently poke at the crayons.....releasing some of the air pockets. But you don't want to actually mix it because you want your colors to stay separate and vibrant.
4. Once the crayons are completely melted, pull the molds out of the oven and allow them to rest on the counter until cooled. (It took about 15 minutes for crayons this size.) Then place the molds in the freezer to allow them to really harden.....and speed up the cooling process. (I left them in the freezer for about 15 minutes.)
5. Run the bottoms of each mold under hot water, to help soften up the silicone tray and help separate the crayons from the bottom of the mold. Then push the molds from the bottom and pop out each crayon.

This could be a great party favor for birthdays or attach a heart crayon to a card for a creative valentine.

Making a Merry Household by Joan Schiller

A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but heartache crushes the spirit. Proverbs 15:13

On meditating upon how to have a merry home, God revealed to me something that seemed obvious, but also challenging. It has to start with me and my attitude. I sure didn't want to hear that, but a merry home just doesn't automatically happen. Like all good things, work is involved. So I must look inside me. What is causing me to be disinterested, apathetic or just plain crabby? There is some soul searching and cleaning up that needs to be done. Am I back to my self-centered way of thinking that everything revolves around me? After all I am the mom that makes it all happen around this house. I truly need a heart check and a readjustment of my ego. Do I truly believe that if I am not happy, then nobody else in my house will be happy either?

Today will soon be history and I do need to make the most of it. To have a servant's heart is not easy, but what a beautiful reflection I will be of Jesus to my family and others if I do. If I just take a moment out of the day and focus on all my blessings, I wonder if that would help with my attitude adjustment. I have a saying on a block of wood that sits by my kitchen sink. It states, "*Blessings-count them each and everyday*". If we actually counted our blessings and made a list, we would not be disappointed or dismayed. Our God is not just loving, but also very giving. He loves to bless us and there is no way we can out give God!!

So make that list and let the spirit of the living God speak to you today so that the heart check and refining can begin. And yes, you will not be able to hide that **cheerful** face. The merry home is going to follow!!! More next time on how that cheerful heart is good medicine (Proverbs 17:22).

Joan Schiller was part of the WOW (Wiser Older Women) panel earlier this fall and teaches the four year old MOPPETS class. She is married with 4 adult children and one grandchild.

Spring Registration

Hard to believe, but Spring is on the way!!! Register at one of December MOPS meetings [December 2 & 16] for Spring 2012 MOPS! Fees for the spring will be \$56 [checks payable to LEFC]. Registering before the end of the year reserves your spot - After that we take moms on a first-come-first-served basis depending on space. We don't want anyone to *not* come because of financial issues, so scholarship applications are available for those in need (see Amy Cope). Also, please consider contributing to our scholarship fund or sponsoring another mom if you are able. Any questions, please contact Amy Cope abcupe@gmail.com

Mom Only Events

- **Thursday, December 8th - 7pm @ LEFC -** Christmas Project Night and Cookie Exchange
- **Thursday, January 26th - 7pm @ LEFC -** Swap and Game Night
- **Thursday, March 8th - 7pm @ LEFC -** Movie Night
- **Monday, April 30th - 7pm @ LEFC -** Cafe Night

FREE FOOD by Mary Sun

Jewel has a secret "kids club"...you ask the produce guy for a kids' club card, and with that card, your child gets a FREE banana or FREE red delicious apple EVERY time you shop at Jewell!!! Card is valid till 8/15/2012! You just scan the card every time you check out, and their fruit is FREE! And of course, they still give out the free bakery cookie...but shhh...don't tell the kids that!



LEFC MOPS invites you to The Newlywed Game

Please come and share your wedding

Album pictures and memories

Monday, November 14th

at 7 o'clock in the evening

Libertyville Evangelical Free Church

Hospitality Room - right side of sanctuary

Wedding cake will be served

Better Moms Make A Better World



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Mothers of Preschoolers