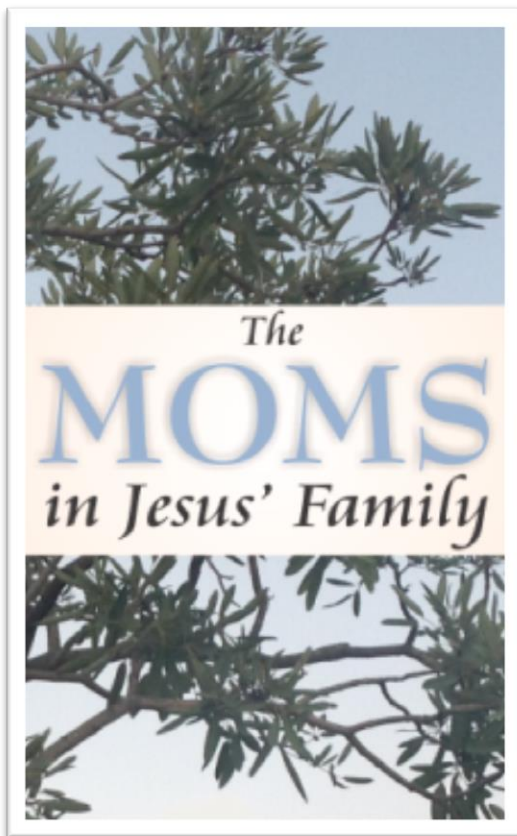




FREE Group Discussion Guide



No Purchase Necessary

This group discussion guide includes everything you need to start a Mom's group today!

This discussion guide includes enough material to support 10 group meetings.

Each discussion is based on a mother from Jesus' (very) human ancestry. Some of the scripture passages are lengthy, so we have provided a summary of each mom's life for you.

We hope that this guide will help your group reflect, share, and celebrate your time as "Mommy."

Motherhood lasts a lifetime
but you're only ...

Mommy
for a Moment



Moment 1: Jesus' Family Tree

Skim the genealogy, paying special attention to verses 2, 3, 5, 6, 16, all which reference moms in this study. Verse 2 cites fathers Abraham, Issac, and Jacob; the women that go along with them are Sarah, Rebekah, and Leah, respectively. Also, Matthew does not trace Jesus' genealogy all the way back to Adam, but Luke does (Luke 3:38), and so we've also added Eve to this study as well.

Read Matthew 1: 1-16

A long list of unpronounceable names may not seem too illuminating at first glance. Matthew began his gospel with this genealogy because he was writing to Israelites, who were awaiting the arrival of their Messiah. According to prophecies, this "Savior of their people" would be a direct descendant of King David, and so Matthew lays out Jesus' lineage for his readers from the get-go.

Genealogies in the Bible follow either a "father of so-and-so" or "son of what's-his-name" type of pattern. What is striking about Matthew's list is that a few mothers get mentioned along the way, too. And what is really mind-blowing is that God included these particular women to make up His only begotten Son's family tree.

A seductress. An ex-prostitute. A foreigner. An adulteress. Not exactly glowing candidates for mothering Christ's ancestors. Yet God chose to include them, demonstrating:

- 1) His unconditional love for EVERYONE, no matter how imperfect; and
- 2) His power to work ALL things together for the good of those who love them.

The ladies in Jesus' family line were all once mommies once just like you, and like you, they were women with their own strengths and weaknesses, desperately in need of a Savior.

Reflect

What do you hope to learn by studying the moms who make up the ancestry of Jesus?

Share

Find out a little bit about everyone's ancestral background.

Celebrate being Mommy

What is one moment from the past week that you want to cherish forever?

Thank

Thank God for His unfailing love and ability to work all things together for your good.

Pray for each other

Share your specific requests and lift each other up in prayer.

Support other mommies

Encourage them by reminding them how much they are loved.

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Moment 2: Eve

The First Mommy

Read Genesis 2:20 - 4:26

Eve: the first mother.

It's pretty easy to get mad at Eve, especially with the whole "pain in childbirth" curse that results from her disobedience. (Let's also point out, though, that verse 3:6 reveals that Adam was right there with her in the temptation scene, and he didn't appear to make peep).

Can you even imagine what it must have been like for her when it came time to deliver the first baby? No *What to Expect When You're Expecting*, no Lamaze; just the knowledge that pain is coming!

And any sibling rivalry we might have to deal with between our kids is nothing compared to what Eve had to witness with Cain and Abel. She was the first mother who had to suffer a death of a child.

Our parting glance of her in scripture is of a woman who is grateful to be blessed with another son.

She was the first woman to learn that the joy of having children far outweighs the momentary pain of childbirth.

Reflect

What will you take away from your study of Eve?

Share

Share your individual childbirth stories.

Celebrate being Mommy

What is one moment from the past week that you want to cherish forever?

Thank

Thank God for blessing you with your children.

Pray for each other

Share your specific requests and lift each other up in prayer.

Support other mommies

Encourage them by listening to their childbirth stories.

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Moment 3: Sarah

The Oldest Mommy

Read Genesis 12,16-18, 20-21, 23

Let's recount the highlights of Sarah's life:

- 1) Marries her half-brother and is declared barren;
- 2) Captivates the Egyptian Pharaoh with her beauty, resulting in the infliction of serious diseases in his household;
- 3) Meddles in God's plan to bless Abraham with a family and convinces him to sleep with her servant, and then blames and mistreats others when her plan succeeds;
- 4) Gets her name changed by God;
- 5) Laughs after eavesdropping on her husband when she hears she is to have a son in her old age--and then lies about laughing;
- 6) Captivates another ruler with her beauty (at the age of 90!)--which results in barren women in the king's household;
- 7) Gives birth to Isaac in her nineties;
- 8) Mistreats her servant Hagar--again; and
- 9) Dies at the age of 127 and is buried in a foreign land (after real estate negotiations).

Even though she doesn't seem to do a whole lot that seems right and just, God promises to bless her so that she will be the mother of nations and future kings. (Gen. 17:16)

Reflect

What will you take away from your study of Sarah?

Share

Share the ways in which you've been supernaturally blessed.

Celebrate being Mommy

What is one moment from the past week that you want to cherish forever?

Thank

Thank God for forgiving you even when you repeat past mistakes.

Pray for each other

Share your specific requests and lift each other up in prayer.

Support other mommies

Encourage them by counting your blessings as mommies.

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Moment 4: Rebekah

The Mom Who Played Favorites

Read Genesis 24-28

Rebekah's marriage story reads like a romantic comedy, doesn't it?

Rich Man sends forth a Matchmaker to find the right girl for his son. Matchmaker prays for a sign to know which girl is "the one." Beautiful Girl (with a tasteful nose piercing) suddenly appears at a local watering hole. Matchmaker gives her a mini-makeover and discovers an old family connection in the process. The engagement is on, and there's partying and more eye candy as the Rich Man's costly gifts of jewels and clothing are brought out. Girl's family wants her to stay, but Girl asserts her independence, declaring "I will go."

Boy goes out to a field one evening to meditate and spots camels approaching. Girl spots Boy from afar and inquires about him. Girl learns that he is "the one." She's quick with a veil and ready for love as Boy learns who she is. He takes her to his childhood home to get married. And they live happily ever after...

Until those pesky twin boys came along, that is. Even in the womb, they fought with each other, compelling Rebekah to seek the Old Testament version of a sonogram, i.e., ask God, "Why is this happening to me?"

In some ways, Isaac and Rebekah are a repeat of Abraham and Sarah: she's beautiful and initially barren; he tells people his wife is his sister. But while Abraham and Sarah could dote on their only son together, Isaac and Rebekah's affections were split by their two boys.

They played favorites, and Rebekah went to great and treacherous lengths to make sure Jacob ended up ahead of Esau. The account of her life ends with her complaining about her daughters-in-law.

Reflect

What will you take away from your study of Rebekah?

Share

Share how you met the father of your children.

Celebrate being Mommy

What is one moment from the past week that you want to cherish forever?

Thank

Thank God for the fathers of your children.

Pray for each other

Share your specific requests and lift each other up in prayer.

Support other mommies

Ask them what first attracted them to the father of their children.

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Moment 5: Leah

The Unloved Wife

Read Genesis 29-30

At first, the Jacob and Rachel story reads just like that of Isaac and Rebekah. But just when we think we're about to see another boy-meets-girl romance play out, a greedy and conniving dad messes everything up.

Leah seemingly gets the short end of the proverbial stick. There's a lot of debate over the description of her eyes ("weak?" "delicate?" "light-colored?" "lovely?" "bleary?" "soft?"), but there's no arguing that she was not her husband's first choice. She gets one week of her husband all to herself. (And he probably wasn't in a great mood that week, considering he'd just been swindled out of seven more years of his life in order to get his dream girl).

When God saw Leah was not loved, He blessed her with several sons. After the births of the first three, she thinks, "Jacob's got to love me now." But he doesn't. So when Judah--her fourth son and direct ancestor to Christ--is born, she declares, "This time I will praise the Lord."

Things get pretty ugly between Rachel and Leah from then on. There's a lot of Sarah-style husband-sharing with maidservants to produce offspring. Leah has three more babies, and Rachel is finally blessed with the birth of Joseph (who makes it big in Egypt).

However dysfunctional these family relationships, the offspring that result from Leah, Rachel, and their maidservants are blessed with the honor of generating the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Once again, God demonstrates His ability to transform human shortcomings into something glorious.

Reflect

What will you take away from your study of Leah (and Rachel)?

Share

Share how well your own extended family gets along with each other.

Celebrate being Mommy

What is one moment from the past week that you want to cherish forever?

Thank

Thank God for always loving you, even if it seems like no one else does.

Pray for each other

Share your specific requests and lift each other up in prayer.

Support other mommies

Encourage them by listening when they are struggling in family relationships.

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Moment 6: Tamar

The Seductress

Read Genesis 38

Struggling to conceive? Tamar's troubles bring a whole new meaning to the phrase. (Someone should really pitch her story to Lifetime).

Her husband is so evil, God has to make him disappear. Her brother-in-law shirks his duty to provide a family for her, and so he also bites the dust. She's sent packing to her parents' house and waits in vain to be hooked up with her other brother-in-law.

She decides to take matters into her own hands. With no sperm banks at her disposal, she devises an elaborate plan of entrapment to ensure she won't die childless:

- Step 1: Go undercover as a prostitute.
- Step 2: Plant self in the path of Father-in-law and seduce him.
- Step 3: Acquire damning evidence as payment for service.
- Step 4: Await your sweet moment of justice.

Tamar would have gotten along great with her grandmother-in-law Leah. (Can't you just image them commiserating their fates as neglected women together)?

In the end, not only is Tamar declared "righteous" (Genesis 38:26), but she is also blessed with not just one, but two baby boys. Apparently, twins run in Jesus' family--along with deception and scheming.

Reflect

What will you take away from your study of Tamar?

Share

Share your own journeys to conception.

Celebrate being Mommy

What is one moment from the past week that you want to cherish forever?

Thank

Thank God for being able to reveal His glory in even the ugliest of situations.

Pray for each other

Share your specific requests and lift each other up in prayer.

Support other mommies

Encourage them by supporting them during times when they may be struggling to conceive.

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Moment 7: Rahab

The Prostitute

Read Joshua 2 and 6

Did you ever see the classic movie "The Ten Commandments" with Charlton Heston? Rahab's story would be in the sequel.

After the death of Moses, Joshua takes over as the Israelites' leader as they fight to take possession of "the Promised Land." He sends two spies to scope out the city of Jericho, and they find sanctuary in the house of a prostitute named Rahab.

Even when threatened by the local authorities, Rahab covers for the Israelite spies and hides them on the roof, while at the same time leading their pursuers on a wild goose chase.

Why does Rahab take such a big risk? Because of her great faith in the Lord. She recounts to the spies all the mighty wonders she has heard the Lord has performed on their behalf, and declares that He is indeed the God of heaven and earth (Joshua 2:11). Then she secures protection for her family and helps the spies escape safely back to Joshua.

Sure enough, when the Israelites bring down the walls of Jericho (solely by their trumpet blasts and shouting), Rahab and her family are the only ones spared.

New Testament writers hold her up as a model of faith (James 2:25; Hebrews 11:31). And, despite her Gentile (non-Israelite) background, she becomes an ancestor to Christ.

Reflect

What will you take away from your study of Rahab?

Share

Share women who have been great models of faith in your own lives.

Celebrate being Mommy

What is one moment from the past week that you want to cherish forever?

Thank

Thank God for the gift of faith.

Pray for each other

Share your specific requests and lift each other up in prayer.

Support other mommies

Encourage them by making your home a safe haven for them to come and relax.

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Moment 8: Ruth

The Poor Foreigner

Read Ruth 1-4

Can you imagine moving to a foreign country with your mother-in-law? Despite the challenges of early widowhood, poverty, and xenophobia, Ruth perseveres with unparalleled devotion.

How refreshing to read about some of the more likable characters in Jesus' ancestral line! Boaz is generous and honorable. He goes to great lengths to provide for Ruth's security and well-being, and even protects her modesty in the "threshing floor" scene (Ruth 3:14).

Ruth's story introduces us to some fascinating cultural practices of the Israelites at that time:

- providing for the poor by allowing them to "glean" the fields;
- allowing "kinsman" to "redeem" or purchase the property of a relative to preserve the family legacy; and
- the legalizing of a transaction by swapping sandals.

No matter how foreign some of the practices seem to us, the universal themes of Ruth resonate with us today:

- Naomi's grief upon the loss of her husband and children;
- Ruth's determination to provide for her family;
- Naomi's desire to play match-maker;
- The joy after the birth of Ruth's son.

How fitting that the setting of Ruth is Bethlehem, hometown of her great-grandson King David and birthplace of her descendant and King of Kings, Jesus.

Reflect

What will you take away from your study of Ruth?

Share

Share about your own relationships with your mother-in-laws.

Celebrate being Mommy

What is one moment from the past week that you want to cherish forever?

Thank

Thank God for providing for your needs, especially during challenging times.

Pray for each other

Share your specific requests and lift each other up in prayer.

Support other mommies

Welcome mommies from different backgrounds into this group.

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Moment 9: Bathsheba

The Adulteress

Read 2 Samuel 11 and 12

Adulterous political figures capture the attention of present-day media. But powerful men have always succumbed to such temptation, as we read in the story of David and Bathsheba.

David--the king known as being the one after God's own heart-- slips up big time when he decides to stay home while his army goes off to war. He sees Bathsheba bathing and wants her immediately, even after he's informed that she's married.

We don't know whether Bathsheba resists or not, but ultimately the king has his way, and Bathsheba ends up pregnant.

David attempts to bring her husband home from war to cover up his actions, but Uriah's sense of soldierly duty foils this scheme. David then sends him to the front lines, ensuring that he will be killed.

After Bathsheba mourns her husband, she is brought to David and bears him a son. But this child becomes ill, and eventually dies.

The prophet Nathan finally gets through to David that what he has done greatly displeases the Lord, and David finally confesses his sin.

Bathsheba is then blessed with the birth of another son, Solomon, the wise king of Israel and builder of the Temple in Jerusalem.

Reflect

What will you take away from your study of Bathsheba?

Share

Share a time when you experienced grief.

Celebrate being Mommy

What is one moment from the past week that you want to cherish forever?

Thank

Thank God for limitless love and forgiveness.

Pray for each other

Share your specific requests and lift each other up in prayer.

Support other mommies

Encourage them by sharing the good news that God will always love and forgive them.

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Moment 10: Mary

The Lord's Servant

Read Luke 1 and 2

Virgin. Highly favored. Blessed. These are the descriptions that we associate with Mary.

We've seen her portrayed in so many Christmas pageants, and yet, how often to reflect what it must have been like for her? Even though she's never slept with a man, she's informed by an angel(!) that she's going to have a baby--and not just any baby; she's is going to give birth to the Son of God. And what is this unwed teen-mom's response?

"I am the Lord's servant." (Luke 1:38)

Even though it means public disgrace. Even though it means the possibility of losing her fiancée. Even though it seems too impossible to be true. Mary declares, "May it be so," and her faith enables God to dwell among us in human form.

We read about the visits from wise men and shepherds, and the travels to Egypt and the Temple in Jerusalem, and we learn that Mary is treasuring all of these moments in her heart (Luke 2:51).

What must it have been like for her to be Jesus' mommy? To give birth to the Author of life? To care for the daily needs of the Good Shepherd himself? To swaddle and snuggle the Savior of the world?

She, like us, experienced the daily routine of cleaning up messes, feeding hungry bellies, soothing physical hurts, and saying bedtime prayers. She treasured it all. Let's do the same.

Reflect

What will you take away from your study of Mary?

Share

Share your favorite Christmas memories or traditions.

Celebrate being Mommy

What is one moment from the past week that you want to cherish forever?

Thank

Thank God for the example of Mary.

Pray for each other

Share your specific requests and lift each other up in prayer.

Support other mommies

Encourage them to treasure the moments they get to experience as mommies.

Motherhood lasts a lifetime, but you're only...



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