

Women's Ministry Ideas

<u>Twilight</u> Playtime:	<u>Between Friends</u> Morning Tea	<u>Craft Group</u> Ideas	<u>Worship</u> specials
<u>First Time Mum's</u>	<u>Playtime Outreach</u>	<u>Day Retreats</u>	<u>Community</u> Involvement
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Background

Play Time commenced as a ministry of the Mulgrave Community Baptist Church in 1995. The main aim of the program is to provide a balanced program for children prior to their schooling years. Participation is encouraged through a program that is designed to enhance the physical, social, spiritual and educational needs of those involved. Play Time provides an opportunity for parents and children to meet together in a safe, supportive and caring environment for their mutual benefit.

Evangelism Opportunities

Although Play Time is a program primarily for children, it became obvious that many of the folk who attend with their children are there for their own benefit.

For this reason, the Play Time Committee believed there were excellent opportunities to witness to our non-Church friends at Play Time.

We have tested two events to date

Twilight Play Time

Our church is very aware that many of the programs of the church that attract outsiders are generally made up of women. For this reason Play Time decided to shift the time slot of the program on two Tuesdays of the year from 9.30 am - 11.00 am to 5.30 pm - 7.30 pm.

The evening included a simple meal (which replaced the normal morning tea) as well as the regular program components (craft, story, devotion, singing). Fathers and older siblings were invited to experience Play Time first hand and see their younger family members in operational mode.

Effort was made by the Play Time Committee to make the evening special by enhancing the normal program. (Puppets were used in story telling, extra attention was given to craft preparation)

Result

Most families attended the special Christmas Twilight Play Time. Fathers are interested in their children as much as mothers and they participated in the program willingly. Twilight Play Time gave us an excellent opportunity to meet the normally elusive Dads. Older siblings (as well as the parents) were made aware of programs in the church that are geared for their age group.

Between Friends Morning Tea

The Play Time leadership are very aware that when there is a large group of ladies and children in one room it is very hard to have an intimate conversation with anyone. Conversations very rarely reach a level of deepness where you feel comfortable to share your faith.

For this reason, instead of Play Time on a Tuesday morning, the ladies who attend were invited to spend the morning at one of the leaders homes. Group sizes did not exceed four families.

Result

Deeper friendships were formed. Mothers got to know each others interests and family background. Support networks were formed. Personal needs that would never had surfaced in the Play Time environment surfaced. Non-church women could see a Christian Home first hand.

First Time Mother's Group

We would like to share a little about a support group our church is nurturing:

First Time Mother's Group was originally developed from a community need. New mothers isolated in a new area, not all people have family and support and most start out with little education in order to meet one of the most important roles they will ever undertake. Young mothers battle to manage the demands of this new role as well as look after themselves.

We discuss the choices that motherhood brings and those that influence family life. As well as practical needs discussed, care for their spiritual need is introduced by a scripture verse with some discussion to open each session.

Our aim is to help build the mother's self-esteem and self-confidence through understanding ages and stages of their babies' development and growth, through discussion and shared experience. We encourage participants to reflect, question and make their own decisions about their style of parenting.

Some subjects covered include:

- Parenthood
- Safety issues
- The importance of play
- Conflict resolutions
- Family history
- Nutrition – for baby and mum
- Budgeting
- Aggression/assertiveness

Our program also includes guest speakers, craft days, and a 'time-out' for mothers over dinner every three months.

Our group has a progression from "First Time Mothers' Group" over the first year, "Tiny Tots Group" during the second year, then on to "Play Group" giving us the privilege of caring for families from when their children are born until they enter school.

Other outreach ideas for Playtime Groups

These are ideas that have been used to good effect by a variety of churches:

Working bees

Family activities – kite flying, picnics

Craft evenings – no children (if possible)

Special Ladies Evenings –

- demonstrations, fun evening, dinner, guest speaker

Baby sitting club –

- mix church and non church parents

One to one –

- invitation back home for cuppa or lunch
- arrange to meet for a 'picnic' in a park or some safe environment where children can play

Family to family –

- invitation for afternoon picnic, bar-b-cue

Family related seminars

- Positive parenting
- Communication
- Marriage Enrichment
- Parenting/Working – the balance

Pre School/School Seminars

- Preparing your child for school
- Encouraging your child to read
- Understanding the teaching methods of today

Craft Ideas

Evangelism as part of the craft morning/evening is still one of the most difficult areas. The ratio of church to non-church is fairly low. However, below are a variety of ideas that have been used in different areas of Australia.

Chat and Choose:

These are groups found in various areas of Australia. Because of the earlier retirement age of men, many are now attending Craft groups and learning all types of skills – leather, wood work, cross stitch, model planes etc. This format of group seems to make it very easy for men and women to both be involved in a wider variety of crafts – some more non-traditional than others.

At Home Groups:

Some of the larger craft groups were found to be very impersonal. Because of this, some women from neighbouring suburbs started smaller craft groups in their homes. Some were day, some evening – depending on the children involved. The aim was to keep an even ratio of church/non-church women. Church women were only encouraged to attend if they brought a non-church neighbour or friend with them. Because of the smaller number a good relationship was able to develop. Confidence was built, and invitations to church activities were willingly accepted.

Craft Camps:

These have developed well over the last few years. Once again, it is to give the church and non-church women quality time together. A program of craft is run over the weekend, but there is also a speaker who can relate her 'craft' to her Christian walk. These are very effective bridge-building weekends.

Craft Service:

The morning service is a time where the craft women are invited to attend and to showcase their work. The Craft Leaders organise the service as well as lead. There are items and a slightly more relaxed format so that it is not threatening to the non-church women/men. The gospel is clearly presented through testimony, music and word.

Christianity Explained:

Some Craft groups are now using *Christianity Explained* as one of their electives during their craft morning/evening. This is six one-hour sessions. Most craft times are two hours, so they can do this for one hour and then do a one-hour craft as well.

Alpha Courses as well as *Christianity Explained* are normally advertised as part of the Church family program.

Day Retreats

1. Some start at breakfast and go through to the evening meal. In some cases the women do

their own catering, or they arrange for some of the men of the church to cater for them.

2. Others start at about 9.30am and finish by 4.00pm. These ones folk normally take their own lunch and morning and afternoon tea is provided.
3. They are held at the church, in picnic areas or areas where there are facilities that can be used by the participants eg pool, tennis court.
4. Spiritual retreat where there is a fairly heavy emphasis on teaching, prayer, self assessment and encouragement as well as relaxation.
5. "Fun" retreat day where there is an emphasis on relaxation, fellowship and fun with spiritual input in short, interactive sessions.
6. Some are run on a Theme for the day. These are normally a mixture fun and spiritual

Worship Specials

1. One church has some Messianic Jews in its membership. These women have started a Messianic Dance group who perform in their own church, but also support any of the messianic speakers/teachers when they visit other churches/denominations.
2. Some churches have women involved in Movement to Music and this is used as a regular part of the worship service.
3. Drama, monologue and presentations are all used by women's groups to enhance the worship service in some churches

Community involvement

1. Encouraging some of the "at home" older folk as well as others to make baby gifts that are then taken to a local private hospital for distribution to new mums. Each gift has a "scroll" attached. On this tastefully decorated paper are the name of the church and a brief outline of the activities of the church – for parents and children.
2. A rural church on a major north/south and east/west highway intersection, supplies toilet bags for accident victims to the local hospital. They are customised for male/female and adult/child. A small card with a greeting is enclosed as well.
3. One church holds a Devonshire Morning Tea on the front lawn of the church three times a year. They also have craft stalls as part of this morning. They have found it has brought together all the generations in the church – from 80 year olds to young teenagers – as well as making them more public to the community.
4. The above church also holds a Lawn Fair once a year. Their church is on a main thoroughfare and so it is very easy for the community to be involved. Of course more than the women are involved on the day, but they see this as one of their ministry areas.
5. A regular fortnightly meeting for the older folk in the local retirement homes. They arrive in buses or are picked up and spend a morning singing, talking, share a short devotional and having morning tea.
6. Several groups run craft and Nifty Nitters mornings in aged homes. This is a positive time for the people involved as it includes women and men. Their items are used as gifts for the family, but also sold to raise finance for their Aged Home.

Mentoring

Women Mentoring Women, Heart Sisters, Being There are just a few of the names given to groups which are set up specifically for mentoring. It is normally a covenant relationship between older and younger women in the church. They have found that in today's mobile society it is a great encouragement for both age groups to be ministering to each other and is forming bonds between

the different generations.

WebPages

- Please feel free to check the Queensland Baptist Women's Ministry WebPages for a variety of online resources and ideas <http://gbwm.baptistchurch-online.com>
- Some are also available on the Australian Baptist WebPages: <http://abw.baptistchurch-online.com>
- The <http://swp.baptistchurch-online.com> has links to both of these pages.