Ideas for Branch Meetings

including Speakers Directory

Reg Charity 1065815
May 2013

Websites

http://muentprises.org/birmingham/
www.themothersunion.org
Mothers’ Union
Diocese of Birmingham

Ideas for Branch Meetings

You will find in these pages various ideas for branch meetings as well as information and contact details re Speakers. They are organised under the headings of the Mothers’ Union objectives. There is also a list of resources available both from the Mothers’ Union Office and generally.

The tradition of a monthly meeting with a Speaker suits many branches but not all and I have included alternative ideas that you might like to use. Do let me know how you get on when you use these ideas.

Please also let me know any other suggestions or initiatives that you have used at your meeting so that other branches can benefit from them.

If you do book a Speaker please note that expenses should be paid by the Branch with mileage at the current rate. (In 2013, 40p a mile) If this is a problem please contact me or the Diocesan President.

Remember - Make sure all in your church know they are welcome at meetings and, most importantly, enjoy them!

Canon Claire Laland, Training Officer
May 2013, clmap18@gmail.com
Mothers’ Union is an international Christian charity that supports families worldwide.

**Vision:** Our vision is of a world where God's love is shown through loving, respectful, and flourishing relationships.

**Mission:** To demonstrate the Christian faith in action by the transformation of communities worldwide through the nurture of the family in its many forms.

**Objectives:**

- To promote and support *married* life
- To encourage *parents* in their role to develop the faith of their children
- To maintain a worldwide *fellowship* of Christians united in prayer, worship and service
- To promote conditions in society favourable to *stable family life* and the *protection* of children
- To help those whose family life has met with *adversity*

**Values:** Mothers' Union is firmly rooted in a voluntary ethos. Its influence, leadership, and programmes are driven by and undertaken through members around the world as they respond to God's call to faith and action.

**It is good to keep all this in mind as you plan your programme.**
Promoting and supporting married life

Have a ‘Loving for Life’ trained facilitator to speak to your branch and find out about this Mothers’ Union programme.

Discuss how you might befriend couples who are to be married in your church. Might you introduce them to the church, or undertake to pray for them, or organise a tea for them so they meet other couples – married or about to be married - etc. Remember to consult with your incumbent about your ideas.

Ask everyone to bring a wedding picture – their own or that of friend or family - and discuss how weddings have changed over the years. Discussion will have more depth if the Branch Leader, and/or members, do some research before the meeting, ie changes in cost of weddings, number of weddings in church, number of people living together rather than marrying, wedding customs in other countries, etc. Try and keep discussion general rather than specific so as not to cause discomfort to any present. (see resources)
Obtain a set of ‘Choose Church’ cards published by Mothers’ Union in Birmingham and discuss how these could be used in your parish.

**SPEAKERS**

**Drive carefully** – your marriage is precious – Margaret Fulford

**Loving for Life** – Erica Parker/Val Warner

**Adventures at a Wedding Fair** – Margaret Fulford

*Encouraging young people to explore the realities of long term relationships* - John Kent

*Not a Mothers’ Union Speaker but willing to speak to groups about Explore Experience see - http://www.theexploreexperience.co.uk/*
Encouraging parents in developing the faith of their children

Hand in Hand – purchase a copy of this booklet and discuss how it might be used at home, with parents or in your church. Could it be a branch project to give to families coming for Baptism or might your parish like to buy copies?

Story telling – could your branch take on a project to provide the props for a Bible Story. Have a meeting and discuss the story you would like to illustrate and how it might be done.

Home pack – this is a free resource available from the Marketing Unit. The DVD, booklet and worship ideas will help you to look at different aspects of home life: provision, nurture, support, belonging and refuge.
SPEAKERS

Parenting – Margaret Fulford

Let’s Stick Together, relationships after baby – Margaret Fulford

Hosting Mary & Joseph – Claire Laland

It’s customary at Christmas – Valerie Hamley

Hand in Hand – a Mothers’ Union resource for families with activities – Lynn Tebbs

Making a Bible Story Bag – a practical session – Lynn Tebbs
Maintaining a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer, worship and service

Families Worldwide – use your copy of Families Worldwide and concentrate on one area/country. Ask members to find out something about it and bring to your next meeting. Discuss the prayer, worship and service of this area.

Homing In – use the DVD to discuss projects in one of our link dioceses. Or invite others to watch the DVD and have a Bring & Buy to raise funds for our links.

Projects – find out about current projects in Birmingham or worldwide. Does a particular project excite or interest you? Consider how to make members of your congregation aware of these projects and the extent of Mothers’ Union work locally and worldwide.

Quiet Time – ask someone to lead you in a Quiet Time and pray for the growth of your branch or another specific project.
Mosquito beetle – arrange a fun evening and play Mosquito Beetle to raise awareness about the mosquito net project in Luapula and other link dioceses.

Mothers’ Union Soup – many of our link branches make and serve soup to orphan children. Serve home-made soup one lunch time to raise awareness of projects in Natal and other countries. Invite others to the soup lunch either as a fund raiser or just to inform. Perhaps make use of the exhibitions from the Office.

SPEAKERS

Prayer

1 Meeting the Lord: Meditating together
2 Our Father in Heaven
3 Just as I am – help with prayer for small groups or individuals
4 Bringing the Bible to life – including its relevance for 2013
5 Healing and Wholeness in all their truth

Carolyn Cornfield

What is Prayer? Looking at different ways of praying – Claire Laland

Indoor Members’ Prayer Circle - Thelma Seal
1 Women of Faith – then and now
2 Hands – Ours & God’s – a meditation and reflection
3 Uncorking the wine – ourselves as the wine in His service
4 Meditation – approx. 1 hour of meditation and reflection. Choice of subjects.
   Lynn Tebbs

Four seasons – music and poetry through the seasons - particularly appropriate for Advent or Lent – Pat Walker

Using lamentation in prayer - help when praying is uncomfortable - Peter Walker

Worship

600 years – History of Knowle Parish Church
   Margaret Fulford

1 Amazing Grace (John Newton and the Wesleys)
2 Mission England: How Christianity came to our country
   Valerie Hamley

Service – see pages 11-15 for talks and ideas
Worldwide

Visit to Uganda - Kate Little

Natal, Mityana and Malawi – separate talks
Margaret Fulford

Mothers’ Union in a basket –
Looking at Mothers’ Union around the world
Claire Laland
Promoting conditions in society favourable to stable family life and the protection of children

**Teddies for Tragedies** – many members knit teddies, ask someone to speak who can tell you how they are used. Organise an exhibition of teddies knitted by members and friends and publicise.

**Schools** – is there someone from a local school or PTA who would talk to your group about how to help children starting school, or moving up to secondary school.

**Passionate about Parenting** – find out about Parenting Groups facilitated by Mothers’ Union.

**University** – could you find out more or initiate a project to help students living away from home for the first time. Ask members to find out what schemes are available in your area.

**Education** – Does your church have a role in local schools? Ask your Incumbent to speak about his/her involvement in local schools and ask how
Mothers’ Union might be more involved. eg Hearing

can children read.

**Bye Buy Childhood** – ask
members to look out for
advertisements that they feel
are inappropriate. Discuss at
your next meeting.
Alternatively ask members to
bring a magazine or newspaper
to the meeting and discuss the
advertisements together.

Decide what action you should take – if any – in
view of the Bye Buy Childhood Campaign. Look at
other media and discuss if/how the
commercialisation of childhood is affecting children.
See [http://www.byebuychildhood.org/](http://www.byebuychildhood.org/)

**Labelled for Life** – this booklet has been produced
to support and empower families. Discuss
something in the book or ask the Social Policy
Representative to speak about the Bye Buy
Childhood Campaign or other issues.

**Making a Difference** – devote a meeting to
looking at *Making a Difference*, Mothers’ Union’s
social policy toolkit, and see how you can get
involved in campaigning.

**What is a family?** Ask a few members to share
what family life means to them. Then ask everyone
to write a list of all the people they consider being
part of their family. Then in small groups discuss, *What is a Family?* Share the conclusions.

**Other families** – could some of your members share an experience of family life. Living in another country, fostering, adoption or being evacuated. Then consider in small groups what you have heard.

**Journeying Alone** – there are many in our Mothers’ Union and Church Families that are living alone. Discuss in small groups what you might (or do) find difficult in this situation. (For example, going on holiday or exchanging the peace.) Then think about the difference between loneliness and solitude. What have you learnt from these conversations?

**Going Solo** – ‘*Until recently, most of us married young and parted only at death. If death came early, we remarried quickly; if late, we moved in with family, or they with us. Now we marry later. We divorce, and stay single for years or decades. We often do whatever we can to avoid moving in with others — even, perhaps especially, our children.*’ Discuss if you think this is correct – and why.

**SPEAKERS**

**Making a home** – fitting out a narrow boat when in need of a new home – Margaret Guest

**Parenting** – Margaret Fulford
Helping those whose family life has met with adversity

**AFIA** – Find out more about the holidays/trips offered by Birmingham Diocese through the *Away From It All* Holiday Scheme. Perhaps combine this with a fund raising event for AFIA.

**Prison Work** – could your branch help with a local scheme for prisons: writing Christmas cards, knitting teddies, visiting. Find out from the Prison Representative what is needed.

**Women’s Aid** – A talk about Women’s Aid in Solihull and Birmingham. Contact Pat Walker to arrange this.

**SPEAKERS**

There but for the grace of God ... – behind the scenes of prison life - Sue Webb

**MU Prison work in Birmingham** - Rita Evans

**AFIA** - Jill Harris
Being Dad – offering support to young Dads in prison – Jackie Brocklebank

Project Leaders may also speak about aspects of their work – contact A & O Coordinator

General Mothers’ Union topics

1 The Ups and Downs of a Diocesan President
2 General Mothers’ Union topics & updates
   Margaret Fulford

1 Mothers’ Union Birmingham landmarks from 1892 to present day
2 Mary Sumner – her life and work
3 We celebrate over 135 years of Mothers’ Union
   Jennifer Owen (afternoon only in winter)

   Any aspect of inter-faith relationships - Sikh, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist
   (will bring woman of that faith)
   Ruth Tetlow

1 Mothers’ Union – lucky dip - looking at Inspire and HUG (Help us Grow)
2 I didn’t know that! – a look at how Mothers’ Union is organised
   Claire Laland
The wider aspect of Mothers’ Union Enterprises - Peter Johnson

Meet Mary Sumner - Audrey Davies

Mothers’ Union on the Move – Lands’ End to John O’ Groats - Lynn Tebbs

Other subjects

1 Florence Nightingale
2 The women in Jesus’ Genealogy
Valerie Hamley

Idle Women – Women who operated trading boats during World War 2 allowing men to join the forces and the effect on family relationships – Margaret Guest

Lace making – demonstration and talk
Pat Walker

1 Imagine – visiting a prison
2 A day in the life of a lay pastoral worker
Carolyn Cornfield
Amendments and Additions
Resources – available from Mothers’ Union
Office at Carrs Lane Church Centre

Displays

Reaching Out, Projects in Diocese

Wedding - Choose Church

Away From It All

Baptism Cards

Hand in Hand, Enjoying faith as a family

ByeBuy Childhood

Time for Parents, Parenting groups

Baby Garments for Premature or Miscarried Babies

Literacy and Development Programme

Worldwide Link Dioceses

Banners (wooden stand available)

6 Diocesan Link banners

5 Centenary banners depicting history of Mothers’ Union in Birmingham during past 100 years
Branch pennants – made for visit of WWP in 2003

**DVDs**

**What is Mothers’ Union?** - lasts approx. 5 minutes and can be used as general introduction to Mothers’ Union in this diocese.

**Homing In** – 20 minutes. Information about Birmingham’s Link Dioceses and Birmingham projects. May be used generally at, for example, branch meetings or during a service at church and/or during Wave of Prayer.

**Other resources available from Mothers’ Union Office**

String Game
Banana Game
Various videos

Homing In – folder of information about link dioceses (with Branch Leaders) or may be found on web site
Useful Web sites

www.themothersunion.org

http://muenterprises.org/birmingham/

http://muenterprises.org/inspired/

http://www.theexploreexperience.co.uk/

http://www.byebuychildhood.org/


Reference Books

1 For Better not for worse
2 We are created by God – resources published by Mothers’ Union Faith & Policy Unit

Just Cohabiting? The Church, Sex and Getting Married
Duncan James Dormer
*Discusses modern attitudes to relationships and gives some statistics*

From Shore to Shore – liturgies, litanies and prayers from around the world. USPG
Prayers

Committee Meetings
Father God, as we gather before you now, we hold before you each person here today .... (name each one)
We remember .... who is not able to be with us today.
We ask you to bless us in our homes and our families, and as we share and discuss, plan and review matters concerning our branch/deanery/unit ....
Help us to listen with one ear open to your voice, and one ear open to each other that all we do may be to your glory.
We ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen

The Wonder of Service
Father, we ask that you will help us to understand the wonder and diversity of service to you. We remember Jesus washing the disciple’s feet the night before he was put to death, and his command for us to do likewise. Teach us to see the wonder of service to others through Mothers’ Union and the church as an expression of your will. We ask you to make our lives, and those we touch, more worthwhile so that we grow in love for you and for each other. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

For Africa
Merciful Father, we thank You for the Mothers’ Union in Africa. You give members courage to face the challenges that threaten the stability of family life. You bring hope to families whose lives meet with adversity. Your Holy Spirit blesses, supports, guides, protects, comforts and sustains them. We glorify Your Name through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen

*All above prayers taken from* Be with me... published by Mothers’ Union Birmingham Diocese