

Mothers' Union Parenting Groups

This is our aim

- To encourage and affirm parents in their role within the family

These are our Objectives

- To provide a supportive environment for parents to meet together
- To increase parents' confidence and enjoyment in their role
- To help parents realise that they are not alone; everyone struggles as a parent
- To discuss ideas about how to respond to certain behavioural patterns
- To view things from a child's perspective
- To support networks between parents and other community groups
- To strengthen links between the local church and families

Here are our Values

- Respect confidentiality
- Value each and every person equally
- Accept people where they're at
- Respect boundaries

Mothers' Union Contacts in Ireland

All Ireland Action and Outreach Unit Co-ordinator

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Your Local Contact:



Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

In Mothers' Union, we're

Passionate *about* Parenting

Unconditional Love
A Sense of Security
Encouragement
Attention
Guidance
Boundaries
Respect
Forgiveness
Growing Independence



How do I get started...

Decide on the focus: Is it for parents of children aged nought to six, teenagers or in between?

Invite mums and dads; also parents-to-be, single parents, grandparents, carers.

Personal contact with parents is best: When you chat have a leaflet ready with details of dates, times, etc.

Baptism and Confirmation preparation may be a really useful opportunity to tell parents about the group. Advertise through health centres, family centres and wherever there are young family groups.

Keep it manageable: Start where you know most parents. Gaining confidence is important for everyone.

Share the workload: Use your Mothers' Union members (where possible) to spread the word and provide support. Mothers' Union in your area will have a designated Parenting Coordinator who will be able to advise you on all aspects of running a Parenting Group.

Resources:

What's available?

Mothers' Union is not re-inventing the wheel. There are many professional publications available for facilitators and parents.

A variety of resources is available within your area:

Could your church, local school or community group offer financial help to run the course?

Using a Mothers' Union Parenting Facilitator

There are trained Facilitators in many areas of the diocese.

Mothers' Union Facilitators are volunteers trained to national standards. Accreditation is through the Open College Network and all Mothers' Union Facilitators are trained to NVQ Level 3 Facilitation Skills.

Running the First Group

ORGANISATION

How many weeks? 6 to 8

How many in a group? 6 to 10

How long is a session? 1 1/2 to 2 hours

VENUE

It needs to be inviting and comfortable – not be too formal an environment. Technical equipment is needed for DVD/video, and computer availability.

DAYTIME OR EVENING

Offering parents quality time and space away from busy home life is important. Crèche facilities may be needed for daytime sessions.

Your facilitator will know about these:

Family Caring Trust www.familycaring.co.uk

Positive Parenting www.parenting.org.uk

Parentalk www.parentalk.co.uk

Family Time www.discoverfamilytime.com

Lucky Duck Publishing www.luckyduck.co.uk

Commitment

To get the most out of sessions encourage parents to be there every week.

There may be a minimal fee to cover costs of materials/handbooks, etc.

Ending a Session

Taking time for quiet reflection at the end of a session is popular. If appropriate it may be a religious reflection. Most importantly, we accept people where they're at in their parenting experience.

After Running a Group

Don't be surprised if parents want to carry on meeting together in some way. It is a great way of forming new friendship groups and feeling a sense of belonging.

Some groups may decide to have a celebration at the end of the course.

The response from parents who have been on parenting groups run by Mothers' Union has been wonderful:

"The friendship and support made me feel more confident"

"The guidance from the course and the discussion with other group members gave me a more positive attitude to parenting"

"The friendly, comfortable atmosphere and the ideas for de-stressing have helped me to become a more relaxed parent".

"I really needed help and that is what I got!"