

the garden

-a monthly newsletter for moms who desire to blossom in their roles of being a mom, wife, and woman-

"For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations." Isaiah 61:11



Sowing the 'Seed of the Word' in our Daily Lives...

Practical, Biblical Encouragement for Moms

This month we celebrate Easter. I'm so excited to see my tulips, daffodils, and grape hyacinths I planted last fall pop up and blossom, like the ones pictured above. The new life and vibrant colors of spring symbolize the new life we have in Christ, because of His work on the cross. He took our sins upon Himself and paid our penalty for them IN FULL so we can be brought back into a right relationship with our Holy God and someday be in heaven forever with Him. Jesus' resurrection proclaimed His victory and fulfilled His prophecy -the greatest act of love ever known. Yes, you knew that already. But do you ever think about Heaven? -I mean really think about it. What exactly do we have to look forward to? Why is Easter truly a day to burst with pure joy? As a child, I dreamed that Heaven would be jumping on

clouds like the trampoline I never seemed to have enough time on in gymnastics, while eating as many marshmallows as I wanted. Sugar was



He is risen!

"God showed how much He loved us by sending His only son into the world so that we might have eternal life through Him". 1 John 4:7

now good for you! That has to be Heaven, right? That still sounds fun, but it would get old. Have you ever thought that Heaven sounds kind of boring? You might if you think we'll float on clouds and strum a harp for eternity. Well, I am excited to share some of the truly *fascinating*

things I've learned from reading an intriguing book called "Heaven", by Randy Alcorn, that debunks any thoughts like that. In his book, he heavily quotes scripture and uses it to open our minds to the reality and magnificence of where we're headed.

After reading some of it, I can't help but ponder why so little is talked about and taught on what our eternity will be like. Randy says, "We can only desire what we can imagine." Now I know that God really does give us clues in the Bible. Perhaps it's another one of Satan's schemes -to try to keep us from realizing the reality of the exciting and unbelievable *paradise* that awaits believers in Christ. Maybe we'd share Jesus more if we were really excited about Heaven. On the flip side, he also tries to blind us to the harsh reality of the alternative...Hell. For example, Continued on pg. 2...



This Month's "Pick" ...Health Tip of the Month

To be all we need to be as moms, we need to take time for us/our bodies

Are health concerns keeping you from enjoying eggs? According to the Nov./Dec. 2007 issue of "Today's Diet & Nutrition", we should actually *include* up to one egg per day in a healthy diet. Perhaps surprisingly, they are even classified as a "superfood" in their list of the top 12 foods for women. Eggs contain less cholesterol than originally thought, and very little saturated fat. Eggs are a great source of protein, iron, and the mineral choline, which for women is especially important. One large egg contains 125 milligrams, or 1/3 of the daily recommendation for adult women. Choline is an essential nutrient that's crucial to pregnant women and those of childbearing age since it is key in brain development of fetuses. It can also have an effect on memory later in life. It's best to choose antibiotic/hormone free eggs that are fortified with Omega-3 fatty acids. This makes them even more healthful, and worth the extra small expense. So fear eggs no more, and remember to avoid all extremes (Eccles. 7:18). -WL, R.D.

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Moms in Bloom strives to help equip moms to grow in the Lord & blossom where we're planted. We believe that mothering is one of the most important jobs there is, and through support of each other, God's Word, and a relationship with Him, we can better fulfill that role... and enjoy the journey together!

Looking for a Christian moms' group? Moms in Bloom meets every other Saturday morning near Maineville, OH. Check out www.momsinbloom.com.

Please forward these newsletters on to moms you know!

Sowing the 'Seed of the Word' in our Daily Lives ... cont'd from page 1

2 Thessalonians 1:9 says that those in Hell "will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of His power." Randy writes, "because God is the source of all good, and Hell is the absence of God, Hell must also be the absence of all good." And that includes relationships. He suggests that like the rich man was alone in Hell (Luke 16:22-23), it could be a place where people suffer alone in solitary confinement. Wow. That sounds like such a miserable eternity! This is reality, whether we choose to believe it or not. It's what God tells us. His plan and purpose for us here is to share the hope we have in Jesus with as many as we can. Please join me in asking God to bring people into our life with whom we can share Him and the way to salvation. You CAN do it! See below for some "tools".

den of Eden. In Isaiah 65:17, God said, "Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth." At that time, He will resurrect our old bodies and restore them into immortal, perfect bodies, then we will live with Him here – Heaven on Earth with no more suffering. He



"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him."

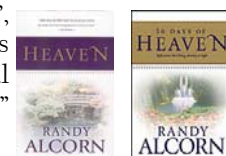
1 Corinthians 2:9

Randy explains that after we die, we will go to the "Present" Heaven to await Jesus' return to Earth. Then God will restore the Earth to its former glory (Acts 3:21) -the "New" Earth, as He created it in the Gar-

writes, "We are homesick for Eden... We long for what the first man and woman once enjoyed- a perfect and beautiful Earth with free and untainted relationships with God, each other, animals, and our environ-

ment. Every attempt at human progress has been an attempt to overcome what was lost in the Fall." Randy paints a beautiful picture of a glorified life, in the presence of God's glory... all for His glory! Life will be full of adventure and joy as we live with God and each other, exploring and enjoying His awesome creation and plan for us. This perspective helps me understand I don't have to feel like I need to see and do everything during this part of life. I'll have all of eternity to –in all its glory! Perhaps God Himself will be our Tour Guide. Nope... no time to be bored!

Randy's exciting insights still only give us a glimpse of what awaits Christians, as 1 Cor. 2:9 tells us. So be full of joy this Easter as you celebrate Jesus' resurrection, which because of Him, we'll enjoy one day too. This life may be tough, but we're just passing through... to paradise! Check out "Heaven", or Randy Alcorn's shorter devotional "50 Days of Heaven." Enjoy the view! -WL



Kitchen Connection

Sharing Recipes Our Families Love

Chunky Nutty Chicken Salad –From Cindy Bradbury's kitchen (This is super delicious, healthy, and one of Wendy's favorites!)

- 12 oz can Chicken Breast or cook chicken yourself
- 1/2 cup Craisins
- 1/2 cup chopped spicy almonds (Blue Diamond Bold Jalapeno Smokehouse Almonds are great! -At Target)
- 1 small stalk celery, chopped
- 2 green onions chopped
- 1/4 cup more or less of Miracle Whip (I use the light)

Mix first 5 ingredients. Add your Miracle Whip so that your chicken salad holds together but is not too creamy. Serve on a bed of greens for a refreshing salad or make into a sandwich.



Share Your Faith With the Lost

"Way of the Master" Tools

Need confidence sharing Jesus and His plan for salvation? "Way of the Master" can help! You may have seen their program on television. Kirk Cameron, from "Growing Pains", pairs up with Ray Comfort, a wonderful evangelist, to equip people like ourselves to effectively reach people for Jesus. Their award-winning t.v. program is fast-moving, contemporary, biblically sound, and clearly teaches and equips. Their website has some programs to watch and other excellent tools. You won't believe the quality and their witnessing on the streets! They make it fun to learn how to effectively share Jesus. They also have a radio show and an e-newsletter. Please check out: www.wayofthemaster.com. In Cincy, the show airs Mondays on channel 43 (TBN) at 7 pm -WL

Craft Corner: "He Lives" Plant Stake –for Your Spring Garden or Flower Bed

What better place to show rebirth and renewal than in the garden? Mark new seedlings with this plant stake.

Supplies needed:

- Tomb pattern
- Sun pattern
- Flower pattern
- Yellow craft foam
- Orange craft foam



- Gray craft foam
- White craft foam
- Pink craft foam
- Large craft stick for stake
- Glue
- Permanent marker

Kit available through Oriental Trading Company. This and many other Easter craft ideas at: www.apples4theteacher.com



Nourishment for the 'Soil' ...Sharing the Fruit of God's Work in our Lives

"the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop." Luke 8:15

"Big Gifts Come In Small Packages" At 18 weeks of my first pregnancy, my husband and I went for an ultrasound. Our excitement to see the life growing inside of me soon changed as the room became heavy with grief. The baby wasn't growing normally. We were told that he had everything from Down syndrome to Achondroplasia. The final was a diagnosis we could live with, so we affectionately called him "Myles the Midget." At 26 weeks, my doctor sent me from his office to the hospital to deliver our son immediately because he was making me so sick I could die. On September 12, 2002, Myles Alexander came into the world with a rush. I was in and out of consciousness, but I remember hearing that first cry. They told me he wouldn't cry, but this tiny 1 pound 2 ounce baby cried! The next 20 days were an emotional roller coaster. Each doctor had a different perspective on his prognosis. We couldn't touch or hold our tiny perfect boy, who was no bigger than my hand, yet he had captured many hearts. Though Myles was small, he was ornery. If he didn't like his nurse he would hold his breath over the respirator. They told me he was in distress, but working with people who could not speak, I knew the signs of distress, and he showed none. When I said, "Myles Alexander Hemrick, knock it off!", the machines suddenly stopped alarming and he looked up at me with these big beautiful eyes. I believe he knew exactly what he was doing, for it happened many times. On October 2nd, I got a call from the hospital. As I headed to the hospital, I felt an unexplainable peace. Doors opened that should not have, things happened that I cannot explain. I knew something was wrong when they waived protocol in the NICU and let me in without scrubbing in. I looked down the hallway that suddenly appeared miles long. My legs wouldn't move, yet something carried me. I looked at Myles, and knew that his fight was over. His heart rate was dropping -my sign from God. I turned to the doctors and said, "It's over. Turn the machines off." To my son I said, "Fly with the angels, Myles". And he did. Myles went to Heaven to be raised and loved by our Creator Himself. I then realized Jesus had carried me down the hall and was hold-

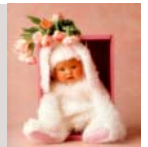
"Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from Him."

Psalm 127:3 NLT

ing me up. I felt Myles leave with angels and my heart rejoiced. I held my son for the first time that night. His body was lifeless and I said goodbye to all the dreams and plans I had for him. My heart broke, yet he's the best gift I ever received. For he taught me what true love is. Love is allowing someone to go to a better place, when your own life will never be the same. Myles taught me what it was like for Mary watching her son, Jesus. I saw Myles' ornery side when he tricked the nurses. Mary watched her toddler, Jesus, play; naturally curious as He explored his world. I watched as Myles was tortured with testing and IV's, using veins no bigger than string. Mary watched as Jesus was beaten, his flesh torn open, and she cleaned up his blood. I stood with Myles as he took his last breath, and Mary watched her son hanging on a cross bless criminals and beg forgiveness for those who had done this to Him before He took His last breath. Here's where the story is different, I buried my son never to see him on earth again, Mary buried her son, but He rose to save the world from sin. Every year we celebrate Myles' death and send balloons to him in Heaven. A part of my heart is still missing, but when my family returns to our heavenly home, that void will be filled. I rest assured that the best Father possible is caring for my son. -Janel Hemrick, Ohio

Babes in Bloom...

Moms Aren't the Only Ones Blooming!



As Christian moms, we want to keep Jesus' great love and sacrifice for us the main focus of Easter. As a child, I was so excited about the colored eggs and Easter bunny, that the story of Jesus took a backseat. There's a wonderful and fun book, "The BEST Thing About Easter", by Christine Harder Tangvald, that incorporates these things, but builds up to the BEST thing about Easter... JESUS! It's a "must have" book. You can "Google" it online or look for it in bookstores. -WL



Calling on God ...the Powerful Prayer of a Woman, Wife, Mother

Don't miss the opportunity to connect with God daily. Tap into His power in your lives!

For yourself:

Lord, Thank You for the beauty and color that spring brings. Help me think of You and what You did for me when I admire the new growth and blossoms. Help me appreciate more fully the suffering and my sin that You took upon Yourself on that cross. You did that for me. Help me share Your love with those who don't know You. Amen.

For your husband (if applicable):

Lord, Thank You for my husband. Please continue to draw him closer to You. Help him be the spiritual leader of our home and to seek You in all he does. Lord, bless us through him so that our entire family will be a light in this fallen and sinful world. Please work through us to reach more people for You, to bless them with all You have for them: forgiveness, redemption, salvation, paradise... YOU! Amen.

For your child/children:

Lord, This Easter may our child/children understand what we are truly celebrating -that it's about YOU. May they enjoy the fun with colored eggs, baby chicks and bunnies, but most of all, may they understand more each year what You did on the cross -for them. Lord, make it personal and real to them. Give them eyes to see the truth in a tangible way. Help us teach them as You would have us Lord. Amen.



How Does Your Garden Grow??... Have a Garden? Share it & Your Story Here!

What does your garden or flowers mean to you and your family?

As I sit here and look out my window, I cannot help but be in awe of the beautiful, crisp, white blanket of snow God has placed over my flowers that are still peacefully asleep in their beds. Even in the dead of winter, I am reminded of God's grace and the love He has for us. He let His Son die on a cross to be our "Blanket of Snow." This wondrous Blanket not only keeps us warm, but it is also our Protector, Comforter, and Redeemer. As our Protector we find in Ephesians 6:13 "Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm." Just as this blanket of snow and ice protects our flowers, God gives us an armor to protect ourselves from evil and strengthens us to do His work of sharing His word. Just as we plant seeds in our gardens to grow flowers, we also plant the seeds of God's word in the hearts of those we touch. In Isaiah 51:3 it says, "For the LORD shall comfort Zion: He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD." I found this scripture to be so true during the passing of my mom. It was a very difficult and sad time and I truly thought at times I was in the dark wilderness or the dry desert, but God gave me strength through the power of my friends' and family's prayers. Just as He keeps my flowerbeds warm, I felt God wrapping me up in His blanket to comfort me and dry my tears. God is also our Redeemer. Every spring He gives my flowers a rebirth just like the day of my salvation when He gave me a new beginning. -Cindy Bradbury



March's Feature:

"Winter's Blanket of Snow"

-Wendy Lempner's Garden, Ohio-



Family Traditions... Fun, Seasonal Ways to Teach our Children about God

Share your family's traditions that create memories and pass down important values here.

Use brightly colored jelly beans to share the promise of Easter.

"Jelly Bean Prayer"

Red is for the blood He gave.

Green is for the grass He made.

Yellow is for the sun so bright.

Orange is for the edge of night.

Black is for the sins we made.

White is for the grace He gave.

Purple is for His hour of sorrow.

Pink is for our new tomorrow.

A bag full of jelly beans, colorful and sweet, is a prayer, is a promise, is a special treat. May the joy of Christ's resurrection fill your heart and bless your life.

Next time your kids see jelly beans, they'll remember the story!

"Resurrection Eggs"



Resurrection eggs are a fun way to count down the days to Easter and pique our kids' interest in what Jesus did for us on the cross, and His resurrection from the dead! Each colorful egg contains a Bible verse that tell part of the crucifixion story and a symbol, like a rock to represent the one that covered Jesus' tomb.

To make your own set, go to www.rainbowcastle.org/resurrectioneggs.html

Or you can purchase them at Christian stores or online. -WL

The Harvest... Share the Fruit of What You've Sown: "Love Perfectly Expressed"

What "praises" do you have? What fruit do you see in the lives of your children? Encourage others!



She came to us wet and scared. "Mom, there's a dog in the yard," my boys stated the obvious. "Leave her alone and she'll find her way home," I said. But Candy, as she soon came to be known, would have none of that logic. She had found sympathetic hearts and was tired of running scared. We let her in the garage to shelter her from the rain and she promptly showed her gratitude by catching tennis balls in midair, much to the boys' delight. In spite of our earnest attempts to find her owner, Candy eventually stayed because she was irresistible and I sensed God had brought her to us. Months later, Sean announced that his friend had lost a dog matching Candy's description. "It

couldn't be her," I reasoned. She was too smart to have not found her way home just one street away. At a sporting event I was approached by the boy's mother. As we

"Live a life filled with love for others, following the example of Christ, who loved you and gave himself as a sacrifice to take away your sins."

Ephesians 5:2

talked the truth began to sink in to my heart. Candy was their dog. I knew we would have to give her back; it was the right thing to do. How would I help my boys to understand when they had grown to love Candy? A few hours later, my boys

watched as Candy, also known as Sierra, bathed her owner in doggy kisses. This mom's tears of joy matched my tears of pain as I watched my children begin the difficult task of saying good-bye. With maturity beyond their years, they graciously let Candy go." This is the right thing to do." I reminded them. I held my children as they wept that night and took comfort in the thought that their love for Candy had been the answer to a little boy's prayer. I thought about our heavenly Father giving His only son away and wondered if God had used Candy to teach my children that the ultimate expression of love is sacrifice.

-Mary Gallagher, Milford, OH