

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 Encouragement for Moms

Welcome to the very first edition of the 'Moms in Bloom' e-newsletter, "the garden." I hope you look for God in your daily lives, because when I do, I'm blessed with glimpses of what He's up to in my life and around me... and it's cool!

Take this new moms' group. God has been cultivating a love for gardening in me these past few years... especially this past year, as I have worked hard on my flower bed in our backyard. I had no idea that God would use what has become a beautiful display of His glory to inspire the name of this group. And I'm so excited because it's not just a name, but it's a theme with so many incredible analogies that parallel our lives here on earth and in our relationship with the Lord. He's all about us growing in Him and blossoming into all He created us to be. He created us for a divine purpose,

and throughout our journey of life, He desires that we follow His lead and actually become more like Him.

Here's the analogy that the Lord has revealed to me... an analogy He uses much in the Bible: We are like the soil a gardener prepares and fertilizes to support life and growth. Like this soil, God prepares us to receive His seed, or His Word from the Bible. When we are ready to receive Him, He pours Himself into us, just as water is poured onto plants and taken in to fill them up; causing them to spread deep roots and flourish. The life-giving water for the plants is like the eternal life we receive when the Holy Spirit comes to live in us. We have a promise that we will not perish! It's water that is used in baptism as a symbol of new life in Christ. When we surrender to Him, He spills into

all areas of our life, just as the water flows into all the tiny little veins of the leaves and moves into all parts of the plant to give it full life and growth.

God provides sun that gives life that would not be possible in the darkness for the plants... something we cannot provide for them by our own means. The sun is like God's Son, Jesus, that He provided for us... a light in a world darkened with sin and hopelessness. He illuminates the sin in our lives... that can grow up around us and choke out our very lives, just as weeds suck the life-giving water away from plants, leaving them to wither and die.

He gives us the power and strength to pull weeds of sin out of our lives. ...Forgiveness of our sin, and a hope for eternity in heaven one day with God. It's also with God's help

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September 2007
e-newsletter of:



"Moms in Bloom"
moms' group

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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 and God's Word and a relationship with Him, we can better fulfill that role... and enjoy the journey together!

We hope this e-newsletter is a blessing to you, & we desire to reach more moms with encouragement & hope. Please forward these on to moms you know, & they can receive them directly each month by emailing Wendy (above). Pass it on!



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

Who doesn't want better health... to feel stronger, have more energy, and to help prevent premature aging and disease?? One of the best things we can do for our bodies and our sense of well-being is to simply get outdoors and get moving. The weather is still nice yet before the cold of winter comes, so take advantage of it now! Walking is great exercise and basically only takes a good pair of walking shoes and a little time. If you can go alone, take your music... most likely it'll be more fun and keep you moving at a faster pace to get your heart rate up. You'll be so glad you did. Remember my motto: Don't think about it, just do it! :) -WL

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

that we can see the truth that when we prune our lives of the things that are not of Him, even though they can *look* good, new growth is produced.

This makes me think of the Salvia that still looked good to me in my garden. My sister insisted I cut it back to stimulate new growth and blossoms. With reluctance I did it... getting rid of the pretty purple 'expired' flowers. I was thrilled to see the new growth come back quickly and even more beautifully!

If you are a gardener of any sort, you know how much it's like growing in your faith, raising children, or cultivating relationships with your husband, family, and friends. It takes much dedicated

work and "tending". And if you have really dedicated yourself before to producing an abundant crop or radiant flower bed out in your yard, you've been blessed by your efforts with a bountiful harvest and/or the splendor of color. I encourage you to think about these analogies in your daily life a bit. Let God cultivate some meaningful thoughts in your mind and the attitude of your heart. Know that whether or not you're currently seeing the fruit of your efforts, for example, in your parenting or relationships, when we look to God for His guidance, truth, and wisdom, we will ultimately reap what we sow, and with God, He will provide an abundant harvest! -WL



"For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God."

1 Peter 1:23



Kitchen Connection ...Sharing Recipes Our Families Love

Got a recipe you're glad to have?? Don't keep it a secret... email it to Wendy at wendy@momsinbloom.com !

Black Bean Soup –from Wendy Lempner's kitchen (Morrow, Oh)

1 med chopped onion
1 Tbsp. grd. cumin
2 Tbsp. canola oil
1 1/2 c. broth
2 Tbsp. lime juice
4 cloves minced garlic
1 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
3- 16 oz. cans black beans, undrained
3 c. thick 'n chunky salsa
a few sprigs of cilantro (opt'l, but good!)

Over medium heat, cook onion, garlic, cumin, and pepper flakes in oil until onion is tender (about 3 min.). Remove from heat.

In electric blender, puree 2 cans of the beans and their liquid and cilantro (opt.) in batches with broth; add to 4 quart pot. Stir in remaining beans, salsa, & lime juice. Heat to boil; reduce to low. Simmer 30 min. Can serve with sour cream & great with corn bread.

Peach Crisp –from Stacey Berg's kitchen (Morrow, Ohio)

1/2 cup Quaker Oats
1/2 cup flour
3/4 cup brown sugar
3/4 tsp. nutmeg
3/4 tsp. cinnamon
3-4 peaches sliced
A little sugar
1/3 cup melted butter

Put the peaches in a 9x9 dish. Sprinkle them with a little bit of sugar. Mix all the other ingredients in a bowl and then add the melted butter to mixture. Place mixture on top of peaches, spreading evenly. Bake in oven at 375 degrees for 30 minutes. Enjoy warm with vanilla bean ice cream!

Craft Corner ...Seasonal Craft Ideas: "Treasure Box"

What you'll need:

- Shoe box with lid
- Liquitex Basics Gesso
- Red and yellow acrylic paint
- Large paintbrush
- Construction paper (we used red, yellow, green, brown and orange)
- White craft glue
- Water
- Foam alphabet paint stamps
- Acrylic sealer spray, matte

How to make it:

Remove any labels on the shoe box. Paint outside of box and lid with Liquitex Basics Gesso. Allow to dry completely. Once dry, paint box and lid with red acrylic paint. Let dry completely.

Kids love to collect little "treasures" they find. But where to put them? This project is easy to make and creates a lasting holder for them! Craft from www.kaboose.com Check them out for more ideas!

In a small bowl, mix together equal parts of water and white glue to create a paint-able, yet milky, homemade decoupage mixture. Tear construction paper into 1-2" pieces. Working about 3-5" at a time, paint the decoupage mixture onto the top surface of the box. Place construction paper pieces on top of the decoupage, then put a layer of decoupage mixture over the top of the construction paper pieces. Construction paper pieces should overlap each



other a little and will create a mosaic affect. Use alternating colors so that you don't have too much brown or too much green in one spot, etc.

Continue with this all over the outside of the box, leaving only the rim of the lid red. Using the alphabet stamps and yellow acrylic paint, stamp the words "My Treasure" onto the front of the box lid rim.

When the entire project is dry, spray with a coat or two of acrylic matte sealer.

When dry, have fun filling it up with treasures!



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

I want to share something with you which I bet you can relate. It's called "comparisonitis". You may be familiar with this 'condition'. I think women definitely are, from my experience. God created us with many abilities and gifts. We have much to offer... probably because there are so many people depending on us for so much! We have many opportunities to bless others. But what do we tend to do with those gifts? I know I've compared mine with others before, feeling inferior. I bet you have too. As women, we can really push ourselves and be our harshest critic, often focusing on our weaknesses instead of our gifts when we look at other's strengths/gifts.

That is **not** what God intends for us. He wants us to embrace and use our God-given gifts for the common good. Using our garden analogy, we are like flowers that God created to be unique and beautiful in our own way. We come in all shapes, sizes, colors, and varieties; each with our own needs, strengths, and weaknesses. Like flowers, we all grow & blossom at *different* rates and during *different* seasons of our lives. We are

different, & God planned it that way! As gardeners know, a garden is truly special and interesting when there is a *variety of different flowers*. Christians make up "the body of Christ"... like all those flowers standing together to make a radiant garden. The Bible says that **"God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as He wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body."** 1 Cor. 12:18-20. Look at that!

...you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is part of it."

1 Corinthians 12:27

We can rest assured that we are equipped to fulfill the purpose for which God made us! We only have to be concerned with these purposes and NOT *other's* purposes. Therefore, we

shouldn't look at other's gifts with jealousy, but we should come together, each giving of our gifts and blessing one another. This helps me to not look at my sister's love of and flare for cooking and be envious. Sure I can learn more about cooking and strive to be better, but I should just enjoy the yummy meals she makes and the joy she has when she blesses others with the fruit of her gift! Be encouraged to blossom where you're planted! -WL

Babes in Bloom ...Moms Aren't the Only Ones Blooming!

Moms share fun things to do, parenting tips, funny things they said, teachable moments, etc.



In keeping with the "theme" of this first issue, I thought it would be appropriate to share a cute thing my daughter said a year ago to my mom. They were spending some time outdoors together, and my daughter was running around finding little "treasures". My mom made a comment that she was really enjoying that and she very seriously answered: "My middle name is 'nature!'" Too cute! Don't you just love it when they come up with something like that... something only a child could think of! I sure do. Actually both my children really love nature and exploring it to see what they'll find. These times are so perfect to grab those "teachable moments" that keep cropping up in our

daily lives, and talk with them about God and how amazing His creations are. Just take a few minutes to examine all the intricate details of a flower... look real closely with them at all the different parts, colors, and textures in *each* flower! We can help them develop an awe of God & instill a respect for God's creations.

If your child/children are like mine, they seem to always be collecting "treasures" and bringing their special 'finds' inside. You might want to make the craft featured this month in the "Craft Corner" with them. And here's the 'bonus'... you'll be multi-tasking... spending fun time together, developing their artistic side, and organizing their "stuff". Moms can appreciate that! -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, my busy life of being a mom can find me last on the priority list of the day... or not even on it! I can allow myself to become over-exhausted, frustrated, and even short with my family. Help me see that taking some time daily with You and to "grow" myself is a necessary part of being the woman & mom you want me to be... to experience the fullness of life You intend for us. Help me carve out that time... help me find You! Amen.

For your husband (if applicable):

Lord, if I'm honest with myself, I can sometimes overlook the needs of my husband... often forgetting to pray for him. Thank you for him Lord, and help me appreciate him and who he is. No, he's not 'perfect', but then neither am I! Only You can perfectly meet my needs, and I shouldn't place unrealistic expectations on my husband... ones that he can't possibly meet! Help our love grow over the years. Draw us closer. Amen.

For your child/children:

Lord, my child/children are so precious to me. Thank You for giving them to me/us. Please help me look to You each day as I experience joy with them and even struggles. Help show me the best way to raise them up, and how to teach them about You and Your incredible love for us. This life is tough... full of unknowns and trials. With You & Your Word, I pray they will know where to turn for help. 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?

I found it fitting for our first issue of “the garden” to feature the flower garden that inspired our new name, “Moms in Bloom”... my garden. When this picture was taken, this bed was only less than a year old. Last year this time it was just dirt ready for some plants. And how fun it’s been to see all these plants from friends & family, and our local nursery come together to create something so beautiful. It’s been an exciting journey for the whole family to work on, tend, anticipate, water, weed, and even pray for these plants. This summer all our hard work and sweat have paid off so richly, with lessons learned, a greater appreciation of God’s creation, and so many hours of enjoyment gazing at the flowers and the busy activity of all our visitors: birds, rabbits, toads, & butterflies. It’s a little habitat to learn from and experience. We always keep our binoculars handy for a closer look at the birds, and a bird book handy to learn their names. The kids love it! I hope you find ways to enjoy God’s creation too! -WL



September's featured garden : Wendy Lempner's... the garden that inspired the name, 'Moms in Bloom'!



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.

-The **Red Plate** for Special Occasions-

A fun tradition for your family to start is to use a “Special Day Plate” to honor a family member on special days in their life. On their special day, they are served dinner on a red plate as a way of marking the milestone. The plate can also be used to comfort in times of struggle. These can be purchased at your local Christian store or online, and you can use a permanent marker to record the special events on the back of the plate. making it a family heirloom. Our family’s red plate says “*God thinks you are special today, and every day.*” That’s important for us all to know!

Here are a few examples of it's use:

- birthdays or anniversaries,
- to acknowledge an act of kindness,
- recognition of good grades, a job well done, or for a goal achieved
- the first day of school or night home from camp or college, and
- to support someone who has worked hard to get a part in a play, make a team, or win an election, and even with disappointments... and anything else you can think of!



The Harvest... Share the Fruit of What You've Sown

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



Do you ever wonder if you’re getting through to your kids and if all your hard work teaching them the proper ways to behave will ever show through in their actions? I think we all do at least at some point. We want what’s best for our kids and to teach them to follow God in all they do. But at times, it may seem that it goes in one ear and out the other. Can you relate?? I know my kids have gone through times of good behavior and then times where I wondered what I was doing so wrong (especially the 2’s & 3’s)! They can bring us to our knees quicker than a stinky diaper! But I want to encourage those of you who are currently struggling with your children. There are some times when you feel like you’re a broken record, re-

peating over and over how they should share with others, pick up their toys, not throw a fit while you’re on the phone, ETC! But God encourages us with the verse below to continue on. I can tell you from my personal experience that this is “tried and true”. I received godly advise from friends when I first had my son to be consistent in all I did with him... that “consistency is the key”. I tell you that I have clung to that parenting advise, and although it takes a lot of effort to be consistent, all my/our effort is reaping a beautiful “harvest”. I say this humbly as a way to encourage you. I’m not

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”

Galatians 6:9

a perfect parent or an expert, but I can share my experience. One “quickie” piece of advise: mean what you say and say what you mean. Follow through and practice ‘1st time obedience’, instead of allowing disobedience while *threatening* punishment again & again. It can be hard, I know, but lean on God through prayer... He’ll help you! This consistency and effort on your part, with His help will shape their character, and help produce that “fruit” in our children’s lives that will bless our homes & others, ultimately pointing to the source of all good -the Lord. God wants to use our children & families to be a light in a world that needs it. Keep up your diligent efforts, pray a lot, & be ready for the harvest! -WL