

**SUB TOPIC THEME:  
THE MOTHER EFFECT:  
Influence of nurturing**



**LESSON OBJECTIVE:**  
*Mothers are critical to the success of families in many ways. Without a mother (or a good mother), the family often feels incomplete. With a good, nurturing mother, families flourish.*

*Understanding and appreciating the role a mother plays in their development and nurture as teens is the goal of this study.*

**Set Up Info:**

***Supplies Needed:***

1. Computer or internet connection to watch the YouTube video
2. Deck of cards
3. Some paper, markers, pens, etc. to make thank-you cards and notes
4. Copies of the Student Response sheet (printed below)
5. Bibles so you can look up the Scripture story (or copy the ones below)
6. A passion to see students transformed in their positive influence on friends!

***Instructive Prep:***

Resilient families are those that have a sense of strength and purpose to them. Often times in military families, mothers play a critical role in the development of positive attitudes and ways of dealing with the stresses of today's deployment environment. But mothers need help, too, and students can offer that appreciation and recognition of the role their mother is playing for the family (often both mom and dad roles), and thus build into the strength of their own families. Some moms are actually the military member, and, perhaps all the more, need regular words or acts of appreciation from family members.

This session is designed to look at some of the ways that mothers are critical to the running of a stable family. Even if the mother is the military member, her nurture and care are felt by the family, and that's super important. The

goal of this lesson is for teens to understand the significant role that moms play in families and to come to a point of regularly appreciating and expressing thanks to their own mothers (and mothers of friends). When moms are truly appreciated, they take it to heart, and it fuels their lives for a long time. It's a way to build stronger, more resilient families!

The progression of these studies is four-fold: *learn, feel, do, and what next*. We want students to learn something new, connect at an emotional level to some degree, and participate in doing something during the study (like making a hand gesture as a weapon). Finally, the *what next* focuses on a change in attitude and/or behavior, which you will find in the challenge of the Life Application section. Remember, we are moving toward spiritual and emotional transformation in kids' lives, so the application section based on God's truth is really the crux of the time together! Have fun and lead well.

## INTRO:

*This is a story about something irresponsible that I did as a teen and how it affected my mother. Rather than appreciating her day-in and day-out thoughtful provision and nurture of our family, I took the opportunity to scare her to death! Mostly after this incident, and maybe because of it, I began to appreciate the almost hidden things my mom did to make our family life so stable. The last part is a look at emotions that Spock has toward his human mother.*

## INTRO STORY:

One day I came home from school to an empty house. Now for some of you that's no big deal, but for me, it was a rare occasion. You see, my mom was a stay-at-home mother who had made a decision years before that she would do everything possible to be home when we got back from school. It's a decision that, as a kid, I wasn't even aware of. It was just life, the way it was. Later I became aware of the fact that it was a decision she made for our benefit; a decision that meant that she had to bear the brunt of inconvenience in order to provide that stability for us, her three kids.

This particular day, I got home before her, but within two minutes, I heard the car pull up in the driveway. I quickly hid my books on the stairs to the second floor and hopped into the coat closet and closed the door, but not before grabbing one of my dad's hats and putting it on. I waited excitedly to jump out and scare her. I've always loved getting reactions. I waited. She came in the front door. I waited. She put her purse down. I waited. She came over to the closet. I was ready! She opened the door

and I fell out of the closet like a dead man with a massive groan – uuhmmmm!

Then I watched in dread as my mom shrieked and screamed and closed and covered her eyes and face and shook and screamed some more!!! OMG! What had I done??!! I could not get her to calm down. I tried to hold her and tell her it was just me and when she began to gain some semblance of control, she started screaming again in fear and shaking all over. This went on for AN ETERNITY (probably about five real-time minutes). The shame that came over me was intense. When she finally calmed down, I could not look her in the face. I was NOT looking forward to dad getting home.

She never really made a big deal of it with my dad, and I know my backside was thankful for that! But even more amazing is that she forgave me. She didn't lecture me or hold it over my head, she just forgave me. I think the shame that I felt was tied to the fact that she provided so well for us as a family; dinner together every night around the table, clothes washed and folded, home when we got home from school, supportive of my dad, encouraging us to develop into strong men who pursued our dreams, cleaned up after we got sick without complaining...the list goes on. And I thought it would be cute to scare the life out of her. I think I have apologized for that bone-headed act every time I think about it, even though she has forgiven me.

There are always strong emotions that surface when I think of my mom, because I know how she has loved and nurtured me. Perhaps you have seen the 2009 version of the movie Star Trek. Spock is a young man who is half Vulcan and half human. That creates some issues when he is a boy, but later in life he realizes the deeply important influence that his human mother has had on him. She provides the seat of his vibrant emotions, and she is a very strong encouraging force in his youth. This clip is a montage of the emotional reactions Spock has concerning his human mother.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEnWOLyrUTc>

Intro Questions:

1. What is a dominant emotion that you have when it comes to your mother (guys may need some help with examples of emotions. Put them in 'I feel...' statements, like "I feel thankful," or "I feel warmth," or "I feel hurt.")
2. What kind of son/daughter do you think you are for your mom?

### PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

*Use a deck of cards to determine the order that kids will answer the next questions. Have everybody pick a card and then answer in the order with the highest card (Ace*

*high) going first and the lowest card going last. After the first question is answered, pick again and do the same thing for subsequent questions.*

1. What is something specific your mom does for the family? (*use Student response sheet*)
2. What character traits do you think of when you think about your mom (like honest, compassionate, strong-willed, etc.)? (*use Student response sheet*)
3. Describe a time when you were without your mom and what life was like for your family.
4. After watching the Spock montage, what emotions surfaced that you identify with in relationship to your mother?
5. Write your own questions: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## CENTRAL BIBLE PASSAGES

*Below are two short interactions that mothers in the Bible have with other key characters. First is Hagar's interaction with Abraham and Sarah, and the second is a mother's request of Jesus. Look at the way that both mothers handle the protection, provision, love and nurture of their children (in both cases, boys).*

### GENESIS 21:9-21

#### *Hagar and Ishmael Are Sent Away*

9 One day Ishmael, whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham, was playing with Sarah's son Isaac. 10 Sarah saw them and said to Abraham, "Send this slave and her son away. The son of this woman must not get any part of your wealth, which my son Isaac should inherit." 11 This troubled Abraham very much, because Ishmael also was his son. 12 But God said to Abraham, "Don't be worried about the boy and your slave Hagar. Do whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that you will have the descendants I have promised. 13 I will also give many children to the son of the slave woman, so that they will become a nation. He too is your son." 14 Early the next morning Abraham gave Hagar some food and a leather bag full of water. He put the child on her back and sent her away. She left and wandered about in the wilderness of Beersheba. 15 When the water was all gone, she left the child under a bush 16 and sat down about a hundred yards away. She said to herself, "I can't bear to see my child die." While she was sitting there, she began to cry.

17 God heard the boy crying, and from heaven the angel of God spoke to Hagar, "What are you troubled about, Hagar? Don't be afraid. God has heard the boy crying. 18 Get up, go and pick him up, and comfort him. I will make a great nation out of his descendants." 19 Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well. She went and filled the leather bag with water and gave some to the boy. 20 God was with the boy as he grew up; he lived in the wilderness of Paran and became a skillful hunter. 21 His mother got an Egyptian wife for him.

**Comment:** *This mother was literally kicked out of the house. Wandering on her own to provide for her son and herself, she finally resigned herself that they would both die. Even in the face of death, she honored her son by not wanting to watch the boy die. Miraculously, God provides, and she cares first for her son, Ishmael. On her own, we can speculate that she nurtures him into adulthood where he is described as a skillful hunter. She even plays matchmaker, possibly because she knows the value of his life, and it will take a special woman for her son, the survivor, the first-born of Abraham!*

### Matthew 20:20-23

#### *A Mother's Request*

20 Then the wife of Zebedee came to Jesus with her two sons, bowed before him, and asked him for a favor.

21 "What do you want?" Jesus asked her.

She answered, "Promise me that these two sons of mine will sit at your right and your left when you are King."

22 "You don't know what you are asking for," Jesus answered the sons. "Can you drink the cup of suffering that I am about to drink?"

"We can," they answered.

23 "You will indeed drink from my cup," Jesus told them, "but I do not have the right to choose who will sit at my right and my left. These places belong to those for whom my Father has prepared them."

**Comment:** *Mothers have an amazing capacity and boldness when it comes to providing for their children! This assertive Jewish mother wants the best for her boys, and she's not afraid to ask the Son of God for special favors. It may sound funny, but it's a nurturing response even when they are adults.*

### LIFE APPLICATION:

6. Make a list of 10 things that your mom does that contribute to the nurture and overall well-being of your family. Make a nice card for her identifying some the things you are thankful for from your list of ten. (use *Student response sheet*)

7. Write 8 to 10 statements of encouragement for your mom on small cards or strips of paper; things like “I love you!” “Thanks for washing and folding my underwear!” “I’m glad you’re my mom!” etc. Then go around your home and place them in locations where she will discover them throughout the next week; places like the laundry room, her medicine cabinet, the kitchen drawer for utensils, a book she is reading, etc. (*use Student response sheet*)

8. Write your own challenge: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT RESPONSES:**

1. SOMETHING SPECIFIC YOUR MOM DOES FOR THE FAMILY:

2. LIST SOME OF YOUR MOM’S CHARACTER TRAITS: (Circle all that apply)

Appreciation of beauty and excellence; bravery; capacity to love;  
 caution and prudence; citizenship and teamwork; creativity; curiosity;  
 fairness; forgiveness; gratitude; honesty; hope; humor;  
 industriousness and perseverance; judgment and critical thinking;  
 kindness; leadership; love of learning; modesty; perspective; self-  
 control;  
 social intelligence; spirituality and sense of purpose; zest

3. MAKE YOUR LIST OF 10 THINGS AND CIRCLE THE ONES YOU’LL PUT IN THE CARD:

4. BRAINSTORM WITH YOUR GROUP AS TO SOME ENCOURAGEMENT STATEMENTS FOR YOUR MOMS: