

Family Sunday School

Topic: Mother

Introduction:

This Sunday is Mother's Day! We are all pretty familiar with the idea of God as Father, but the bible is also full of images of God as mother, particularly in the Old Testament, although Jesus refers to himself as a mother hen in multiple gospels (Matt 23:37, Luke 13:34)! We use the metaphor of a father to talk about God as protector, defender and caregiver, but what else could we understand about the character of God by talking about God as mother? We'll talk about that in Family Sunday School today.

The Set-Up

Ask (older children):

- What is today? What kind of people do we celebrate today?
- Who is someone who is not your biological mother who is also like a mother to you, that you want to celebrate?

Ask (younger children):

Keep a list of these answers to both of these questions, you'll need them at the end of the lesson

- What is your favorite thing about your mother (*or someone like a mother*)?
- What are the good things that mothers do?

Say: This week, we're going to talk about Mothers, and how what we can learn about God by watching our mothers.

The Lesson

Say: We think of God as a father a lot, but there are also places in the bible that refer to God as a mother! God is neither a man nor a woman, so just like we can learn a lot about God by thinking about God as a father, we can learn just as much from thinking about God as a mother.

Have a family member read Hosea 11:3-4

Ask:

- What things is God (the "I") doing in this passage?
- How are those things like a mother?

Have a family member read Isaiah 66:13

Ask:

- What things is God doing in this passage?
- When is a time your mother comforted you?
- When is a time God has comforted you?

Have a family member read Isaiah 49:15

Ask:

- What is God (“the I”) doing in this passage?
- What is your favorite food your mom makes/made you?

Say: In second-century Christianity, one of the most common symbols of Christ was a mother pelican, (*Skip if too graphic for your children!*) based on the legend that mother pelicans will pierce their own skin and feed the babies some of their blood when food is scarce. All of ways that mothers love us show us all the ways that God loves us too. Mothers give of themselves, their energy, their time, their love, to make sure we are safe and loved, and so does God!

Take the list of younger children answers and put “God” in the place of “mom” so instead of “Mom helps me when I’m sad” its “God helps me when I’m sad”

Ask (adults):

- How do images of God as mother challenge our perception of God?
- How do images of God as mother challenge our perception of the mothers around us?

Take a minute to give thanks for the mother and mother-like figures in your family and close in prayer for them.