

Single friendly Church

A CAMPAIGN HELPING CHURCHES TO INCLUDE SINGLE ADULTS

INCLUDING SINGLE PEOPLE ON MOTHERING SUNDAY

01. REMEMBER THAT IT CAN BE A PAINFUL DAY

Mothering Sunday can be a painful day for single people without children, but also for women (and couples) who've experienced miscarriages, stillbirths or had children who have died.

Similarly, men and women whose relationships with their own mothers have been neglectful, unloving or abusive, and those who have grown up without a mother, can also find the celebration of motherhood difficult.



02. PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE HURTING



Recognise those who are hurting in your prayer time.

It can help to explicitly mention and pray for different circumstances for which Mothering Sunday can be painful.

Hold a quiet moment for people to acknowledge any pain and bring it to God. This can help them grieve.

03. LIGHT A CANDLE

Light a candle on screen and encourage people to light one in their homes as a moment of reflection for those grieving for children they've lost – or ones they've never had.

Visit the [Baby Loss Awareness Week](#) website for more ideas.



03. INCLUDE GODPARENTS, MOTHER FIGURES, SUNDAY SCHOOL LEADERS.

Celebrate women who've been a mother figure in children's lives: godparents, those who foster; who help, teach or act as mentors; who step in when parents are struggling; and who are simply a motherly presence in the lives of young and old. Celebrate your Sunday school leaders - both men and women.

Single people often step into these roles, and it's good to acknowledge the value they've brought to others.

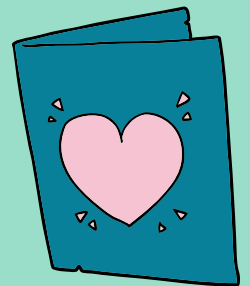
If you are delivering flower posies this year, it's a good idea to present these to every woman in your church. You can reframe this by acknowledging that the whole church community is involved the raising of children.



04. REACH OUT TO SINGLE PEOPLE AS A FAMILY

You could encourage parents to think of single people who are mother figures in their children's lives. Write a card or record a short video message for them.

Many single people are living on their own in lockdown - and some are feeling very isolated. This is one way of making them feel valued and included as part of the church and deepen connection between families and single people.



05. MAKE YOUR PHOTO SLIDESHOW INCLUSIVE



Some churches may choose to do a photo slideshow of mothers and families in the congregation. If you are going to do this, make sure your slideshow reflects your congregation, and include single people who are godparents, teachers, those leading Sunday School.

Alternatively, change the focus to be about the mothering of God for all of us, and include everyone from the church community.



06. ACKNOWLEDGE SINGLE PARENTS IN LOCKDOWN

Balancing homeschooling, childcare and home working has been tough for all parents, but especially for those who are single and have no one to share the load. Consider including a prayer for single parents in this situation and thank God for them.

07. USE EXAMPLES FROM THE BIBLE

In the sermon, could you mention Bible characters who act as mother figures for others? People in the Bible also faced many of the same struggles that we do today. You could mention women who were barren, those who had a difficult relationship with mothers, or painful experiences of motherhood. Examples include Mary watching Jesus die on the cross, Elizabeth who had a baby in older age.



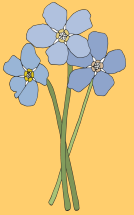
08. ACCEPT THAT IT'S JUST TOO MUCH FOR SOME



Despite your best efforts, some people will find Mothering Sunday services too raw and painful, and will avoid church on that day. It's good for people to know in advance that you will be doing a Mother's Day service, so they can choose to come or not come.

If you know members of your congregation will struggle, you may want to talk to them in advance. If your service will be inclusive, this may help to reassure them that they will be welcome, whatever their circumstance. Equally if the service will have a strong focus on families and birth mothers - let people know that.

PRAYER POINTS FOR MOTHERING SUNDAY



Making your Mothering Sunday prayers inclusive to cover a range of circumstances is really important. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Give thanks for Godparents, mother and father figures, mentors, teachers, Sunday school and youth group leaders.
- Give thanks for all those who nurture others and show them the love of God.
- Give thanks for the family of God that gives us a place to call home and experience love. Pray that we would understand how to be family to each other.
- Give thanks for older members of the congregation, for the support, wisdom, counsel, encouragement and love that they have to offer to the church community.
- Pray for single parents who are doing the job of both mother and father, and who have had to juggle childcare, homeschooling and possibly home-working during the pandemic.
- Pray for those who find Mothering Sunday difficult. For single people who wanted to be parents, women (and couples) who couldn't have children, who have experienced miscarriages, stillbirths or had children who have died.
- Pray for people whose relationships with their own mothers have been neglectful, unloving or abusive. For those who have grown up without a mother. For those mourning the loss of a mother.
- Pray for those who are isolated and who long for a family, to have opportunities to build close friendships in the family of God. Pray that families will be open to embracing single people and welcoming them into their family life.
- Give thanks for mothering love of God, and pray that everyone would feel and receive that love. Pray that we would be able to offer that love to people we know and meet, whoever they are.

"I have often avoided church on Mother's Day, sometimes been horrified at the lack of sensitivity, and, once, really comforted by the way it was handled.

Please don't make it an afterthought at the end. Please bring non-mums in right at the start. [For example] "We know this subject can cause pain, we want you to feel completely included in today's celebration of motherhood."