**CAMERA HOT POTATO**

To play this game you need a camera (digital works best) with a flash and self-timer. Gather in a circle. The first player sets the timer on the camera, then points it at herself for a moment. She passes it left – repeating the process until the timer ends and it takes a photograph. The loser (the person holding the camera) gets a challenge (like wearing a silly hat, etc.). Then, the game begins again. Print the pictures or create a slideshow for the next meeting.

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**BECOMING ... STARRY EYED**

*Choosing to live in both.*

Mandy Arioto has three kids, two dogs and a consistently messy house. She married her husband because he prefers her without makeup. Mandy is a seeker and sometimes finder who likes dancing always and running sometimes. She loves the smell of thunderstorms in the summer. Mandy is the President and CEO of MOPS International. Check out her new book “Starry-Eyed: Seeing Grace in the Unfolding Constellation of Life and Motherhood.”

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**1. Do you ever have a hard time living in both?**

**2. What are the most dichotomous parts of your personality?**

**3. How would life change if you decided to become comfortable with “all of it” instead of fighting against it?**

**4. What are your “great many things”?**

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**STARRY LANTERN**

This beautiful starry lantern brightens up a room by projecting spots of light onto dark walls, resembling stars in a night sky. It is inexpensive, pretty and so easy to make, but it creates an ethereal atmosphere.

Have Leaders and Mentors write random facts about themselves on an index card. (Things like their favorite song or movie, a hobby, a location they have visited, a hidden talent or their most embarrassing moment.) Read the facts and let moms guess which woman belongs to which set of facts. This is a great way for the group to get to know Leaders and Mentors in the group.

Jen Hatmaker is a best-selling author and speaker who pastors a church along with her husband, Brandon. They pioneered Restore Austin, connecting churches to local and global non-profits for the individual, collective and social renewal of Austin and beyond. Jen is the author of nine books and Bible studies and also starred in her own HGTV show. In this video, she talks about girlfriends and our deep need to have a tribe of friends with whom we can be completely ourselves.

1. What kinds of expectations do you have in a friendship?
2. How important is it to you to make new friends at this stage of your life?
3. Do you feel like you have "your people"?
4. Do you find it easy or difficult to make friends? To keep friends?

Use this fast-paced question-and-answer game to learn more about the people around you. This works with any sized group, with people who know each other well or who don’t know each other at all – it also guarantees you will leave with a new friend.

Visit mops.org/leader/do for instructions on speed-friending with both small and large groups, and for a list of questions to get you started!
**TRUST WALK**

Find an outdoor space with minor obstacles (trees, branches, small hills) or create one inside. Have moms arrange themselves in pairs. One partner will be the guide and the other will be blindfolded. The guide will spin their partner a few times so they aren’t sure which direction they are headed. The guide must then lead their partner with only verbal cues (e.g. “About five steps ahead there is a branch. Step over it slowly.”). Consider having each pair switch roles or having short debrief afterwards.

**BECOMING ... INTIMATE**

Answering questions about how much sex is enough.

Shannon Rants, MA, LPC is a licensed mental health counselor and has served as an adjunct professor at Colorado Christian University. In this video she answers the question, “How much sex should I be having?” Shannon normalizes sexuality in long-term relationships and helps frame what makes for a healthy sex life.

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**TALK**

1. How do you and your partner differ in expectations about sex?
2. What role does sex play in your relationship?
3. How has your sexuality changed after having kids?

**DO**

**HOMEMADE LIP BALM**

Made with all-natural ingredients, this lip balm is sure to give you a kissable pout. Find cute tins to put it in and you’ll be all ready for a lengthy make-out session.

**WATER, AIR, EARTH, FIRE**

Have each woman tell four things about themselves using the four elements of the natural world:

**WATER** - What is her favorite beverage?

**AIR** - What is a smell she cannot stand?

**EARTH** - What is her favorite place she has ever visited?

**FIRE** - What is her most embarrassing moment?

**Variation:** Place four different colored stones or pieces of paper in a cup — each color represents a category. Each person pulls out one stone or piece of paper and has to answer that question.

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**EXPLORING THE COSMOS.**

Deborah Haarsma, Ph.D. serves as president of BioLogos, an organization which invites the church and the world to see the harmony between science and biblical faith. She shares her excitement for creation and the Creator in an easy-to-understand explanation of the stars, planets, and light and dark found in our sky. She encourages us to reach out and embrace the wonder of our universe.

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**1.** When you think of the vastness of the universe and the greatness of the Creator, what one word comes to your mind?

**2.** There is always more to learn and children ask a lot of questions. How can you enter into the learning with your child?

**3.** As Deborah explained, the darkness isn’t always empty. What dark place have you found to actually be full of good things?

**4.** What is one thing you can do to find wonder in the universe today?

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**AGATE NECKLACES**

Agates are semi-precious, brightly colored stones usually found near volcanic rocks. Use beautiful agate slices and jewelry findings to create a stunning (but inexpensive) statement piece.

Explain that many companies have slogans or mottos that reflect their values. For example, Ford Motor Company uses the slogan, “Quality is job one.” Ask each woman to write a slogan to describe herself and share it with the group.

Recognizing the gifts and challenges of strong feelings.

Anger: We all deal with it, but we all may not want to talk about. Lisa-Jo Baker shares personal stories of dealing with her own anger, as well as the anger of a child whose strong feelings often resemble her own. She warmly sheds light and hope into a topic that is often taboo.

1. In what situation or time of day do you find it hardest to handle your anger? What have you done to control it?
2. What does your family DNA look like? What is the history of dealing with anger in the family you grew up in and the family you have now?
3. When you feel angry, how do you defuse it?
4. If you graded yourself on how you handle your own anger or your child’s anger, what would your report card say?

Who doesn’t love glitter? Use glass flat-back marbles, glue, varnish and all the glitter you want. Add a magnet to your fridge door and create art for it. Visit maps.org/leader/do for step-by-step instructions.
Groups within a group
The Leader calls out a criteria and a number. Attendees find the stated number of people who fit the criteria and share one fact about themselves. Some suggestions:

- Find four people with the same color eyes as you. Tell them your favorite color.
- Find three people who have the same favorite food type as you (barbecue, Italian, Mexican, whatever). Share the name of your favorite restaurant.
- Find seven people who were born in the same month as you. Share two adjectives that describe you.

Becoming ... comfortable with grief

Recovering the art of mourning.
Justin Kron is a frequent speaker on topics related to the Jewish heritage of the Christian faith.

He helps us understand the customs that help other cultures navigate loss and grief. With advice for any kind of loss, he draws on tradition and a deep spiritual legacy to enlighten our difficult seasons.

1. We all face seasons of loss. It can be the loss of someone we love, the loss of a relationship or the loss of our own identity. Sharing our own loss often helps someone else deal with her own. Share about a season of loss in your own life.
2. How can we support someone else that is going through a period of suffering or grief?
3. How can you prepare yourself ahead of time for a season of loss?

Apple pie/crisp

A warm apple pie can transport you back to the comfort and joy of family together at grandma’s house, or maybe remind you of a walk on a crisp day. It is called comfort food for a reason! Have each woman make an apple pie for her family dessert or a small individual size to share with her husband or a friend.

SONG BINGO
Play snippets of songs from a particular era or genre, including some kid’s songs. Make bingo cards with their titles to hand out. The first mom to get bingo wins!
(TIP: Use a website like print-bingo.com to create your cards.)

DISCOVERING THE PARENTING ATTRIBUTES THAT DEFINE OUR GENERATION
Elisabeth Nesbit Sbanotto, Ph.D., LPC holds a BA in Interpersonal Communication from the University of Northern Iowa, an MA in Counseling from Denver Seminary, a Ph.D. in Counselor Education from the University of Arkansas, and is currently on staff at Denver Seminary. She talks about the unique attributes of parents in the three generations that currently co-exist and the ways each generation can engage with their children in meaningful ways.

1. In which generation do you fit and do you agree with Elizabeth’s explanation of your generation’s attributes?
2. Would you say you have a high or low “frustration tolerance”? How can you increase that tolerance level and help instill the same in your child?
3. How can you prepare your child for hard things?
4. Do you have a relationship with people in generations outside your own? What value do you see in being aware of the things that shaped your generation and theirs?

ORIGAMI STAR GARLAND
Master the art of beautiful paper folding and create a star garland from your favorite paper.
Everyone receives at least five bead necklaces (or some other object they can easily pass along to another mom – like popsicle sticks or pieces of candy). Moms will ask each other questions, trying to get another mom to answer “no,” but each mom is trying to rephrase her answers so she doesn’t use that word. Every time she says “no,” she gives one of her objects to the one who asked the question. The mother with the most objects at the end wins.

Inspiration for the parenting journey.
Jan and Mark Foreman live in San Diego, where Mark pastors North Coast Calvary Chapel. Jan is a gifted teacher and artist, and facilitates partnerships with underprivileged women and children, both locally and in developing countries. They are parents to Jon and Tim Foreman, of the band Switchfoot, and recently wrote a book entitled “Never Say No.” They share practical advice for instilling wonder in our children’s world, cultivating their gifts, and balancing structure with individual choice, to raise big-picture kids.

1. When was the last time you told your child “no”? Was there a way you could have found a “yes” instead?
2. What rituals do you have in your family now? What is one you might like to start?
3. How can you meet your child on his or her level and create a world of wonder for them?
4. What clues have you seen that point to your child’s gifting or passions? How have you encouraged those things in your child?

Alternative: Provide a tutorial for moms on outdoor activities to have with their kids. Pass out a copied booklet of instructions on how to build a large teepee out of sticks, a list of things to spot on a hike or ideas for making bird feeders.
**FUN THINK**

**EXPERIENCE 9**

**REACT AND ACT GAME**
Put papers with unique scenarios written on them in a bag. Have players randomly select a piece of paper and react to the experience using words, gestures and facial expressions. Teammates try to guess what happened. Set a time limit for the players to act out their event and give a point for each correct guess.

Examples of events can include:
- Being surprised by a large, aggressive bear in the woods
- Making the winning pass at the Super Bowl
- Winning the lottery

**TALK DO**

**EXPERIENCE 9**

**BECOMING ... GOOD SLEEPERS**
A discussion about healthy sleep habits for kids.
Jenni June is a certified baby and child sleep consultant. She helps us discover answers to the difficult questions about healthy sleep habits and ideas for helping kids (and moms) find healthy sleep rhythms.

1. Are you sleep-deprived? Is your child? How does it affect you?
2. What are some poor sleep habits you or your child have and how can you change them?
3. Jenni’s four pillars of sleep hygiene are environment, sleep cues, routines and timing. Which one do you feel is a struggle for your family? Discuss ways to improve it.
4. What one thing are you going to do this week to help improve the sleep patterns in your home?

**STARRY EYED GROUP EXPERIENCE KIT**

**BECOMING ... GOOD SLEEPERS**

**LAVENDER BATH SALTS**

After washing all the tiny fingers, toes and heads-of-hair in your house, use these scented, stress-relieving bath salts for yourself.

**STARRY EYED GROUP EXPERIENCE KIT**
LIKES AND DISLIKES

Ask everyone to write down five of their likes and five of their dislikes on index cards. Read the cards around your table, one at a time, and have everyone try to guess which woman the information belongs to.

BECOMING ... SEEN

Inviting others to witness our story creates opportunities for resilience and growth.

Jackie Alvarez is the Executive Managing Editor of MOPS’ Hello, Dearest magazine. In this video, she shares honest personal stories of shame and failure, and her desire to be unseen in those moments; however, allowing other people to be part of those vulnerable places has created opportunities for feedback, resilience and growth. She invites you into the beauty of seeing yourself and letting others see you.

1. Describe a moment that you experienced shame or failure. Did anyone witness it or come alongside you? How did you react?
2. Resilience happens in big moments, but also the small, in-betweens. Describe a time when you experienced resilience – big or small.
3. Is there a place in your life where you need feedback from others or to be seen? Why is it often so hard to admit?
4. How can you invite your children to the process of being seen and resilient?

Using teacups, jars or vases from local thrift stores, plant succulents – the ultimate resilient plant. This activity allows plenty of time for discussion to continue. Make extras to give to MOPPETS workers or other volunteers.

BUILDING TOGETHER

Provide each table with recycled paper or newspaper and tape. Give them each five minutes to build the tallest, free-standing structure they can, from the floor up; and no one is allowed to talk while building. How can you communicate without words?

BECOMING ... A MAN WHISPERER

Learning the secret inner needs of men in order to facilitate productive communication.

Shaunti Feldhahn received her graduate degree from Harvard University and was an analyst on Wall Street before becoming a social researcher, best-selling author and popular speaker. Today, she applies her analytical skills to investigating eye-opening, life-changing truths about relationships - at home and in the workplace. She focuses on the things the men in our lives need to hear from us, and how sometimes we say one thing but our men hear another.

1. What are some assumptions you had about men that changed once you got to know one?
2. What negative signals do you send out, either to your husband or others in your family? How can you turn those into positive signals?
3. Do you allow your husband to engage with and parent his children in his own way? If so, what does that look like?
4. How can you change the dynamic of your home by the way you communicate with your husband?

Cut out initials from cardboard boxes (corrugated cardboard or just cereal boxes will do). Use glue to wrap them with fabric, decorative paper or even glitter! Use your own initials or make one for your child.

STICKER STALKER
A great game to play throughout your meeting. Every woman gets a sheet of stickers and must get rid of the whole sheet by sticking them to the other women without them noticing. If someone catches you, they can stick one of their stickers on you. The first one to empty their sticker sheet wins!

BECOMING ... WONDERSTRUCK MOMS
Recognizing the beauty and pain of motherhood and parenting a child with special needs.
Lisa Gungor is one half of the Grammy-nominated musical collective known as Gungor. She and her husband Michael use their skills as accomplished songwriters and multi-instrumentalists to tell honest and forthright stories through music. Lisa shares about the birth of their second daughter and her unexpected Down syndrome diagnosis. With gut wrenching honesty, she sheds light and hope on motherhood, raising a child with special needs and the power of community.

1. How do you celebrate the differences in your own family and in those around you? How do you help your children embrace differences and celebrate them?
2. Have you had a time in your own motherhood story where you felt alone or paralyzed by fear? What helped you move through it?
3. Lisa Gungor says, “We should be involved with things that make us uncomfortable; because then, it becomes comfortable.” Do you agree with her? And how can you get involved with uncomfortable things?

FELT HAND WARMERS
Here is a secret solution to chilly fingers: rice filled hand warmers. They’re perfect to stick in your coat pocket. (TIP: You can use the same idea to create foot warmers or a stress-relieving neck wrap.)
UN-BIRTHDAY PRESENT PASS
Wrap a small gift – one per table. Wrap it multiple times using different wrapping paper for each layer. Just like musical chairs, pass the present around the table while the music plays. When the music stops, the woman holding the present tears off one layer of wrapping paper. When the music starts again, continue passing the gift. Continue until the last layer of wrapping paper is torn off. That woman gets to keep the gift.

BECOMING ... FAMILIAR WITH KINDNESS
Discovering how to be kind to ourselves and how to receive the kindness of others so that we can extend kindness to the world.

Leeana Tankersley is an author and blogger who talks about life and motherhood from a grace-filled perspective. Leeana offers thoughts about kindness: practicing kindness toward ourselves, being willing to receive the kindness of others and changing the world by injecting moments of beauty.

1. Share about an act of kindness you have received. Have you ever been hesitant to receive kindness from others?
2. What are you and your children doing that sends kindness into the world?
3. What does practicing kindness toward yourself look like? How can you practice this kind of self-kindness more?
4. Do you ever find that you are bullying yourself? How? And how can you stop it when you sense it starting?

CUPCAKE STAND
Candle sticks and thrift store plates together, make a beautiful stand for cupcakes, cookies or candies. Perfect for the middle of your brunch table or to deliver to a friend, filled with goodies.

FUN

HIDDEN TALENT

Everyone is good at something! Go around the table and have each mom share what her hidden talent is – bonus points for demonstrating it!

THINK

BECOMING ... HONEST ABOUT SUFFERING

Depression and Suffering: Tips for soul care
Carrol Showalter, MA, LPC is a licensed therapist and adjunct professor at Denver Seminary. In this video, she shares about an increasing epidemic of depression and anxiety in young women. She provides tools and techniques about how to cope and helps to normalize the feelings that so many women experience.

TALK

BECOMING ... HONEST ABOUT SUFFERING

1. Why do you think anxiety and depression are reaching epidemic proportions among our generation of women?
2. Have you ever experienced a dark season? What three words would you use to describe it?
3. Was it difficult or easy for you to talk with others about what you were/are feeling?
4. What do you do to care for yourself when things feel dark or anxiety starts to overwhelm?

DO

FREE THE GIRLS

Use your activity time to plan and execute a “Free the Girls” bra drive, or pick another local service organization to work with. Working side-by-side for a cause strengthens the bonds in your group.
Find out more at freethegirls.org and visit mops.org/leader/do for more service ideas.
Give each table a vase or bowl and some tape. Each team has two minutes to create a beautiful centerpiece using only the items in their purses or on their bodies.

A conversation about finding creativity in the dark. Amena Brown is a poet, speaker, author and event host. She explores how creative work teaches us about our life’s rhythm, and how we can better tune our ears and lives to the rhythm of God. Amena shares about creativity and how she needs both light and darkness to create, and boldly discusses how her skin color impacts how she views darkness.

1. Do you consider yourself creative? Why or why not?
2. Amena shared her moments in the dark and in the light. Share about your darkest night or your brightest light.
3. How can you better embrace both dark and light?
4. What is something you can do this week to find creativity in your ordinary?

Make decorative candle hurricanes, glass vases, platters, plates or cups using stickers and glass-etching medium. (Keep in mind, glass-etching medium requires a well-ventilated space, gloves and access to water to wash it off.)

Optional: Use paint instead of the glass-etching medium.

FUN THINK TALK DO

GOOD OR NEW
Ask each person to share something good or new they have experienced in the last 24 hours. Have them explain how it impacted their day.

BECOMING ... LOVED
A discussion about the radical goodness of God.
Phil Owen is, by the grace of God, a native to Colorado and has been fortunate enough to spend most of his life in the Denver area. He has been a pastor at The Sacred Grace – Tuesday Night Liturgy in Englewood since 2011 and is passionate about introducing and reintroducing people to the lavish, transforming grace of God. He currently lives in Denver with his wife, Makayla, and their dog Maeby (“may-be”).

1. Have you ever been surprised by an experience with God?
2. Do you ever feel uncomfortable talking about God, or being honest about questions you have about faith?
3. What beliefs about God make it hard for you to accept that God loves you?
4. How do you help your kids think about God and how radically he loves them?
5. What is something that everyone at your table can pray about for you?

STARRY EYED GROUP EXPERIENCE KIT

1. Have you ever been surprised by an experience with God?
2. Do you ever feel uncomfortable talking about God, or being honest about questions you have about faith?
3. What beliefs about God make it hard for you to accept that God loves you?
4. How do you help your kids think about God and how radically he loves them?
5. What is something that everyone at your table can pray about for you?

THUMBTACK ART
Start with a canvas, simple patterns and lots of pretty thumbtacks. Add a little elbow grease and create a one-of-a-kind art piece.
**HUMAN SCRABBLE**
Assign each woman a letter of the alphabet. Play some music while the women scramble to link arms and create words. The longest word wins. Continue for a few rounds.

**BECOMING ... STORY SHARERS**
Capturing stories using light and darkness.
Steve Stanton is a Denver-based photographer who is well-known for his unique talent to use light and darkness to capture human experiences. He weaves together tales of photography, traveling and family life to help us understand God and ourselves just a little bit better.

**TALK**

**BECOMING ... STORY SHARERS**
1. If you could solve one problem in the world what would it be?
2. What accomplishment are you most proud of?
3. Share a moment you had with your child that others may have seen as ordinary, but you found to be remarkable.
4. Share about a time when dealing with your child’s fear turned into a bonding experience for you.

**DO**

**PHOTO BOOTH**
Set up a fun photo booth, provide props and allow women to take turns taking individual and group pictures. (Note: If you do this activity at the very beginning, you might be able to get photos printed at a 1-hour photo and have them ready by the end of the meeting.) You might also ask a photographer to come in and give pointers on capturing your own stories in pictures.

Visit mops.org/leader/do for step-by-step instructions and great photo booth ideas.