



Out of the Spin Cycle:

Devotions to Lighten Your Mother Load

by Jen Hatmaker

Six-week Leader's Discussion Guide

This flexible six-week study provides options that are sure to fit your group's needs. Want a fun way to get moms reading from the get-go? Use the introduction as a way to spark interest before they even pick up the book.

Next, ask your members to read the chapters indicated each week. When you meet next time, you'll be equipped with a series of five questions that pull material from various devotionals. And speaking of ditching the guilt, Mom—feel free to answer one question or all five, depending on your group's available time and interests. Finally, a “takeaway truth” at the end of each discussion gives everyone a nugget to think on as they head back into their busy lives.

Yes, you can help your group ditch the guilt, lighten their mother load, and spend more time with Jesus. Relax, dear leader, and let author and mom Jen Hatmaker show you how.



Introduction

1. Turn to the prologue, *A (Fairly Lame) Ode to Mothers*, on page 9. Ask someone in the group to read it aloud.
2. Did any of the hot-button issues in this poem hit a nerve? Why?
3. What if the author is right and “these things are preferences, not right or wrong” (p. 10)? How might this change our relationships with other moms—and with each other?



Week One

Chapters 1-7

1. How did you respond to this week’s reading? Where were you encouraged and inspired?
2. On page 18, the author offers up the universal cry: Will I ever be enough as a mom? Share some details on what “enough” looks like for you in your role as mom. How might Jesus’s words in Matthew 10:25 take the pressure off, starting today?
3. In chapter four, we discovered that praying for our kids can be done in an instant, anytime and anywhere: “Holy Spirit, lead my son every second of his life” (p. 26). What one-sentence prayer would you like to offer on behalf of each of your kids? Let’s take about three minutes right now to allow anyone in the group to offer a sentence-prayer on behalf of their kids.
4. What does it mean to develop “innocent shrewdness” in our relationships with those around us (ch. six)? How could you do this in your circle of influence? What would it look like for one of your kids to reach out this way to others?
5. The author says “goodness in equals goodness out” on page 37. Describe a time you felt connected to God and how that impacted your attitude, level of patience, etc.

Takeaway Truth:

How could you take time to allow God to whisper “I have all you need” this week?





Week Two

Chapters 8-13

1. How did you respond to this week's reading? Where were you encouraged and inspired?
2. On page 40, we learned through Scripture that the kingdom of heaven shows up in the small things—stuff that surprises us. Have your kids recently shown signs of spiritual growth? How are they surprising you?
3. In an upside-down way, the author reminds us “true greatness comes to us through the back door of servanthood” (p. 45). What does it look like for you to make a conscious decision to serve your family? What should it **not** look like?
4. Mom, what is one thing in your child that you’re afraid “will be over with before you know it” (p. 47)? What are you afraid of missing out on today?
5. In what ways is it easy for you to be self-absorbed? How about your kids? Discuss some practical ways we can teach our kids to love the Kingdom of God rather than “elevating themselves” (p. 62).

Takeaway Truth:

What new thing can you try in your family this week that illustrates you are “servants of the Kingdom?”



Week Three

Chapters 14-20

1. How did you respond to this week's reading? Where were you encouraged and inspired?
2. Have you ever realized that your identity in Christ pushes beyond the margins of all your roles—wife, mom, daughter, friend (p. 65)? Knowing this, if Jesus were sitting in this group right now, what might he want to say to each woman about her identity?
3. On page 78, the author asks, “Who would our children say Jesus is?” If your children are old enough, what do you think they would say if asked who Jesus is? What more would you want them to know?
4. Are you reassured to know that even John the Baptist (the one who announced Christ’s coming) needed reassurance that Jesus was Messiah (p. 86)? Toss out a few theological or spiritual questions you sometimes wonder about and discuss.
5. In chapter 20, the author talks about how Jesus urges us to keep things simple and travel light. When you confess sin to God, knowing he says he will forgive you, do you feel set free? Why or why not?

Takeaway Truth:

“Where love won, hope triumphed, and faith conquered . . . Jesus was the hero” (p. 89).



Week Four

Chapters 21-26

1. How did you respond to this week's reading? Where were you encouraged and inspired?
2. On page 101, the author talks about how God declared that two become one in marriage. If you're married, have you ever thought about how attacking your partner also hurts you—and your children? Take time to share about real ways you have built or want to build your marriage as a fortress for your entire family.
3. On pages 104–5, the author tries to help us see that God's desire to delight in us is even greater than our delight in our children. What is it about the moms in this group that you believe God delights in?
4. Chapter 24 draws the battle lines between a SAHM (stay-at-home-mom) and her DH (darling hubby). How do Jesus's words to "do to others what you would have them do to you" (Matt. 7:12) apply here? Do you have an example of how an effort to respect a husband's work or efforts made a shift in a marriage relationship?
5. Mom, do you really believe that "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt. 6:21)? Just as the author planned to give away seven items a day out of her home for a month, what could you do with your family that would put the focus on the intangibles of life while giving away to bless others?

Takeaway Truth:

"The extent you love your children is but a whisper of the devotion God has for you" (p. 106). So go ahead—ask for his help (Matt. 7:7–11)!



Week Five

Chapters 27-33

1. How did you respond to this week's reading? Where were you encouraged and inspired?
2. Chapter 27 highlights Jesus's words in Luke 14:10–11, where he says, in essence: *take a backseat and honor others through your humility*. The author rewrote this story for her kiddos to feature a lady named Vivienne. What are some other ideas for helping kids move toward humility?
3. Can you identify with the author's struggle in chapter 28 to discipline her kids so they can become independent? If allowing your kids to be completely dependent on you is a 1 and completely cutting the apron strings is a 10, where do you fall on the scale? Please explain.
4. Mom, are you creating the "failure-free" environment the author describes on page 128? How can we teach our kids it's okay to fail—and to celebrate them like Jesus does—when they do?
5. Did chapter 31 help you feel better about your post-baby body? In your group, come up with ten ways your bodies have served you well.

Takeaway Truth:

If you believed Jesus was ultimately responsible for your children, what area or struggle would you release to him (p. 142)? Write it down, Mom, and ask for his help this week in handing over the reins.



Week Six

Chapters 34-40

1. How did you respond to this week's reading? Where were you encouraged and inspired?
2. Have you ever considered that "most men live with a deep loneliness we don't understand" as the author says on page 149? In addition to actually finding time and energy for soul-satisfying sex, what are some simple ways we can bring the sexy back into our marriages? (a steamy verse from Song of Solomon in his lunch bag, a thirty-second kiss on his way out the door, etc.)
3. After the author revealed how Jesus often said "no" and placed limits on his life and ministry (pp. 156–57), do you feel more comfortable saying no? What would your personal/home/family life look like if you said "yes" to a realistic workload?
4. In chapter 37, the author quotes John 10:3, "He calls his own sheep *by name* and leads them out." Have you varied the way you approach each child in your family based on his/her uniqueness? What have you learned?
5. Henry Nouwen wrote, "To give a blessing is to affirm, to say 'yes' to a person's belovedness." As a group, come up with a short list of specific comments that can call forth blessing in your children this week.

Takeaway Truth:

Create a moment today when you can communicate love to each of your children based on their uniqueness.



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