

FUN

EXPERIENCE 11

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Partners stand back to back. One mom has a pen and notepad. The other mom has to describe an object without naming it.

Set a 30 second time limit. The mom with the pen and notepad draws what she thinks is being described.

Display the pictures.

THINK

EXPERIENCE 11

EYES TO SEE ... MARRIAGE

Sexual promiscuity. Pornography. Infidelity. Redemption. Restoration. Freedom. These words span the spectrum of Jason Martinkus' life. Jason and his wife, Shelley, share their story of battling sexual addiction, ultimately becoming free of it and saving their marriage. Jason's passion is to tell God's story of redemption and give hope to people struggling with sexual integrity issues. Why do you think sexual addiction can be uncomfortable to talk about?

NOTE: As you prepare for this meeting, have suggestions of counselors available. Place business cards of an appropriate contact directly on the tables. (Talk to your sponsoring church for recommendations.)

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TALK

EXPERIENCE 11

EYES TO SEE ... MARRIAGE

Other than physically, how are you connecting with your spouse - emotionally, intellectually and spiritually?

When was the last time you felt close to your husband? Or had fun together?

What is one thing you can do to improve intimacy in one of these categories?

Is there something you need to address in your marriage? If so, what is one step you can take to make things different?

Do you believe not disclosing secrets or background is harmful to intimacy in close relationships?

Have you and your husband had some of these important conversations?

DO

EXPERIENCE 11

TIN CAN CANDLES

Use paper, washi tape or ribbon to decorate a clean and dry tin can, Mason jar or votive. Make a grouping of three.

Visit mops.org/leader/GEK for downloadable instructions.

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FUN

EXPERIENCE 12

THE M&M GAME

Everyone grab a small handful of M&M's. Answer questions according to this:

Red - something about yesterday

Orange - something you do well

Yellow - something about your childhood

Blue - something you learned last week

Brown - something you can't live without

Green - something you watch/listen to

THINK

EXPERIENCE 12

EYES TO SEE ... BOYS

Stephen Mansfield is a bestselling author and popular speaker who coaches leaders worldwide. He says the imprint of a mother on her son is huge. At the same time, boys are like aliens to mothers. As women, there are just things about the boy brain that are different from ours. A mom armed with knowledge about how she can uniquely influence her son can raise a boy into a great man. Have you thought about how raising your son is a peek into your husband as a boy?

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TALK

EXPERIENCE 12

EYES TO SEE ... BOYS

Do your kids have people from the immediate family level, extended family level and tribe level involved in their lives? If so, how does it influence them? If not, how can you build these circles?

Boys (and girls!) need their moms to call out the good in them. Name two good things about your child.

What do you do well with the boys/men in your life?

Does your family celebrate rites of passage? If not, what would you like to celebrate?

How can you encourage the qualities of a young knight in your sons or other boys in your life?

DO

EXPERIENCE 12

CLOTHESPIN MAGNETS

Mod podge pretty paper and embellishments to the flat side of a clothespin. Attach a magnet to the opposite side for a decorative way to hold important papers or pictures on your refrigerator.

Visit mops.org/leader/GEK for downloadable instructions.

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EXPERIENCE 13

WORD JUMBLE

Individually, or as a team, make as many words as you can from these words: MOPS INTERNATIONAL or A FIERCE FLOURISHING.

THINK

EXPERIENCE 13

EYES TO SEE ... WORDS

Jackie Alvarez is a writer and Editor-in-Chief for *Hello, Dearest* magazine. She believes words have power and meaning in our lives. A simple heart, filled with words from her grandfather, deeply impacted how she saw herself growing up and still impacts her today. We often don't know fully who we are until someone calls it out in us. Do you believe the words you say and think matter?

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TALK

EXPERIENCE 13

EYES TO SEE ... WORDS

What words have you been told about yourself? (Both positive and negative ones.)

What is worth noting about yourself? What words do you wish people would say about you?

If you know some of the women around you, what is worth noting about them? What can you call out in them to help them see themselves more clearly?

How are you using words in your home to shape the lives of the people who live there? Including you?

Do you think a lack of words can shape people, too?

What is one word you want to concentrate on in your life right now? Pick a theme word.

DO

EXPERIENCE 13

CHALKBOARD PLATTERS

Paint the center of ornate (or simple!) platters with chalkboard paint to create a place for important words.

Visit mops.org/leader/GEK for downloadable instructions.

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FUN

EXPERIENCE 14

SEPARATION ANXIETY

Give each team a bowl of colored beads, M&M's or Skittles and have teams separate them by color as fast as possible. For additional challenge, blindfold one member of the group, and she is the only one who can touch the beads or candy. The rest of the group helps with directions.

THINK

EXPERIENCE 14

EYES TO SEE ... RHYTHMS

Jared Mackey is a pastor and dad in Denver and describes his life as "divine humor, severe mercy and endless grace." Most of society functions on the belief that from Monday to Friday, I do what I have to do, and then maybe I get a sliver of what I want to do over the weekend. Jared encourages us to consider an alternative script for our week. TGIM (Monday), anyone?

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TALK

EXPERIENCE 14

EYES TO SEE ... RHYTHMS

What hobbies would you like to have when you are 60? How can you start them now?

Do you think of rest as a priority? What does rest look like to you?

How do you model enjoyable rhythms for your children? What rhythms do you want them to have when they are a parent?

What rhythm could you change/add/remove that would bring you and your family more energy, joy or rest?

DO

EXPERIENCE 14

SCRABBLE TILE COASTERS

Using wood Scrabble game tiles, create a set of coasters. You can create theme words (rest, love, home, cozy), seasonal (snow, star, joy, tree), sentences (Pass the popcorn) or make it random. (Hint: turn over the tiles for 'blanks'.)

Visit mops.org/leader/GEK for downloadable instructions.

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EXPERIENCE 15

ANOTHER USE FOR ME

Give each woman a cooking tool, utensil or other everyday object and have her come up with another use for it. Have them share with their table and then each table should choose someone to present an “infomercial” to the entire group.

THINK

EXPERIENCE 15

EYES TO SEE ... STRESS

Kelley Gray is a licensed professional counselor and mom to two girls. Most of us know some tips that will help get us through stressful times, but if we know what to do, why are we still so stressed? Kelley believes stress is here to teach us something about our unique lives and selves. What would happen if you made an intentional choice to decrease the stress in your life? What do you have control of?

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TALK

EXPERIENCE 15

EYES TO SEE ... STRESS

Do you use “overwhelmed, crazy, stressful or exhausting” to describe most days?

What if you used words that did not describe an activity level? (Try: happy, blessed, fun, full, interesting, challenging, etc.)

What causes you to feel stressed? What is your gut telling you to do differently/stop doing?

What do you say to yourself when you're stressed? ('I'm a bad mom.' 'Nothing will ever change.'). How about: 'I'm not a bad mom, this is really hard. I'm doing my best.' Or 'It feels really bad right now, but it won't be like this forever - things will get better.' Try it.

DO

EXPERIENCE 15

DIY CHAI OR HOT COCOA MIX

Mix up a batch to take home. Mix up and sip a warm cup of something delicious when you need a moment to breathe. Add a pretty tag or ribbon to the jar to remind yourself that it's special.

Visit mops.org/leader/GEK for downloadable instructions.

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EXPERIENCE 16

A LITTLE FRIENDLY COMPETITION

Play a quick game like Spot it! or Uno together.

THINK

EXPERIENCE 16

EYES TO SEE ... PLAY

Studies show parents are concerned about the impact significant screen time has on their kid's grades and social capability. Use some of the great resources provided by "SimplyFun" to learn about the importance of all kinds of play for your child.

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TALK

EXPERIENCE 16

EYES TO SEE ... PLAY

What skills have you observed being used & developed through your child's play? Think of skills in all three categories: academic, social & emotional.

How does play help your children in areas where they struggle? And areas where they shine? You can learn a lot about your child with how they choose (and don't choose) to play!

Do you know what kind of 'playful' mom you are? Down and dirty? Imaginative? Quiet play? Games?

What do you like to do and NOT like to do? Think of the ways you would choose to play with your child. It's okay to give your child a choice of several things YOU like to do, especially on days that it might be harder to get in a playful mood.

What can you do to enjoy playing with your child as well as encouraging them to play by themselves?

DO

EXPERIENCE 16

BUBBLE BATH PAINT

Using three simple ingredients, make some bath time fun and bring out the Rembrandt in your child (or yourself!)

Visit mops.org/leader/GEK for downloadable instructions.

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EXPERIENCE 17

MOMMY MULTI-TASKING

Teams race through a relay of mommy tasks, adding a new task each time. Pushing a stroller, holding a baby, talking on a phone, carrying groceries, etc.

THINK

EXPERIENCE 17

EYES TO SEE ... RAISING ADULTS

Sherry Surratt is the CEO of MOPS International and the mom of two grown children. She shares how she learned to adopt a long-term view for her kids and their behavior, realizing she was raising little people who would spend the majority of their life as adults. She changed her mothering focus from how she wanted her kids to act to who she wanted them to be. How would this change in thinking impact your own mothering?

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TALK

EXPERIENCE 17

EYES TO SEE ... RAISING ADULTS

Is it hard for you to sit back and let your children clean up their own messes and do their own chores?

Knowing that it will take more patience and time, what one chore are you willing to work with your child on this week?

What traits in your child annoy you? What nuggets of good could come from those traits?

Do you have a family culture that is distinct from other families? What do you want to be known for?

How can you address behavioral issues with your children while still nurturing the great things God built into them?

DO

EXPERIENCE 17

CANDLESTICK FRAMES

Paint and decorate picture frames to freshen up that family picture.

Visit mops.org/leader/GEK for downloadable instructions.

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EXPERIENCE 18

PRINCESS GOWN

As moms we don't often have events to get super dressed up for. Use table cloths, curtains, lengths of fabric, or toilet paper rolls to have moms create "princess dresses" for each other. Work in teams and have a fashion show when time is up.

THINK

EXPERIENCE 18

EYES TO SEE ... MOVEMENT

Robin Long had an unhealthy relationship with exercise. She started exercising because she felt she should do it, and now she enjoys exercise because it helps her feel vibrant, energetic and present as a mom and a wife. Exercising makes her grateful for her body and all it can do. Join her for a few minutes of conversation followed by a 30-minute Pilates workout. How do you feel about your body and what it can do?

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TALK

EXPERIENCE 18

EYES TO SEE ... MOVEMENT

What do you do now that helps clear your head?

Do you like to exercise? Why or why not?

What relationship do you want to have with your body in ten years?
For your kids to know about how you see your body?

What do you need to do to feel the way you want to feel?

Do you have a fitness goal? What barriers do you have to achieving it?

What, honestly, needs to change in your life for you to improve your relationship with your body and what it can do?

DO

EXPERIENCE 18

WORKOUT

Encourage moms to come dressed for a full Pilates workout that anyone can do. After the workout, cool down with water, healthy juice or smoothie beverages and discussion.

(NOTE: Consider modifying your meal during this meeting so moms won't be exercising on a full stomach. Perhaps offer a snack before and a buffet after with muffins, fruit, yogurt, hard boiled eggs and juice.)

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EXPERIENCE 19

WOULD YOU RATHER?

Place cards on each table with "this or that" phrases on them. Each mom must take a card and answer. Suggestions: Would you rather drink your child's backwash or eat their chewed food?

Visit mops.org/leader/GEK for question ideas.

THINK

EXPERIENCE 19

EYES TO SEE ... THE TALK

Tasha Lavert is a counselor, youth pastor's wife and mother of three who understands how some parents cringe when they think about having "The Talk" with their kids. She'll help you reframe the notion of the talk and claim the opportunity you have as a mom to take part in celebrating and shaping your child's understanding of sexuality.

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TALK

EXPERIENCE 19

EYES TO SEE ... THE TALK

How did your parents deal with The Talk? How has this shaped how you feel about sex, and how you talk with your child about sex?

What advice would you give other moms at the table?

What is your family culture when your child asks difficult questions? What is your knee-jerk response? What would you like it to be?

How can you set yourself up as your child's best resource?

How do you help your children protect their heart ("keep their kid" - as Tasha puts it)?

DO

EXPERIENCE 19

DRY/SPRAY SHAMPOO

A DIY dry shampoo mix that can also be made into a spray. A blend for brunette, blond and red hair. Perfect for those days you can't quite make it into the shower.

Visit mops.org/leader/GEK for downloadable instructions.

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EXPERIENCE 20

THREE THINGS ABOUT ME

Give each mom an index card and have her write three facts about herself, but nothing physical. Things like: favorite music, where she was born and a secret talent. Then, collect and shuffle the cards and hand them out. Each person reads a card and tries to guess who it is describing.

THINK

EXPERIENCE 20

EYES TO SEE ... MILE MARKERS

Amy Craig, a licensed professional counselor, talks about the developmental mile-markers a teen mom faces as she navigates the teen years and motherhood at the same time. She encourages teen moms to practice self-care, seek community and be kind and gracious to themselves along the way. Do you think it's harder growing up or harder being a mom in the season you are in right now?

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TALK

EXPERIENCE 20

EYES TO SEE ... MILE MARKERS

Share a story about a time you needed help and someone helped you. How about a time you were able to help someone when they needed help?

Think about the pace of your life right now - are you in a harder or easier season? How is your rest right now?

What part of you do you need to accept or have others accept about you to be in safe relationships?

What kind of person would you like to be by the end of this year? Is there one step you can take this week to move towards that?

DO

EXPERIENCE 20

SIMPLE STRING ART

Using foam board or cork board, create a simple piece of art with pins and some string.

Visit mops.org/leader/GEK for downloadable instructions.

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