

ESL MOMS GROUP

A great way to reach international Moms is to offer an ESL Moms Group. This can be done as a stand alone group, part of an ESL Ministry and/or part of the Women's Ministry in your church. This can be done for high beginner through advanced fluency level students. However, all the ladies in one group should be approximately the same fluency level. If you have different fluency levels, consider having more than one class.

We recommend using the following books, *Mothering by Heart: Loving Your kids while Leaning on God* by Cheri Fuller and *The Mommy Diaries: Finding Yourself in Daily Adventure*. Both of these books can be ordered from Christian Book Distributors (CBD.com) and Amazon.com. Each lady in your group will need their own book. I encourage you to have the ladies pay for their own book (but you order them and have them on hand to sell) so that they have some investment in the study.

This study can be led by just one lady, but I would encourage you to have 2 leaders if possible. This gives more people to develop relationships with the students, offers a wider variety of experience and it is not a crisis when someone is out sick or on vacation.

The basic format is that of a book club. You meet each week for at least an hour and a half (or could be up to 2 hours). The class could meet during the day or in the evening. It is nice if childcare is available, but could be done with children present (try to have quiet activities for them to do in another part of the room).

1. You open with a short prayer appropriate for the fluency level of your students. Initially all prayers should be done by the leader. Once you know the ladies in your group and think that some of them might be comfortable praying, you could ask if there is anyone else that would like to pray that day.

2. The leader may want to start the class with a short story about an event in their life that pertains to the chapter they will read that day. Or if there is a cultural event coming up in America, you may want to explain that. For instance, shortly before Valentine's Day you may want to show the Moms the kind of Valentines that teachers expect students to give out in class. Explain that you have to give them to all the students (rather than just their child's best friends) and tell where you can buy them and the approximate cost. Or you could start the class with a cartoon that relates to being a mom. Good strips for this are "One Big Happy", "For Better or Worse", "Hi and Lois" and "Zits."
3. There is a vocabulary list ([click here](#)) for each chapter. There are approximately 30 words and/or idioms per chapter. Give a copy of the day's vocabulary to each lady (or give it to them a week ahead of time). Go over each word. You may want to expand and give an example of how to use that word/idiom. If you are teaching beginner fluency level students you may also want to work on pronunciation. To do this you could use simple repetition drills.
4. Read the chapter out loud by having each person read one or two sentences. Do not try to correct all of the pronunciation errors. Do not jump in when Moms stumble over a word. Give them time to work it out in their mind. The chapters are short, only about 3 pages long.
5. Now ask the ladies if they have any questions about words/idioms that were not covered in the vocabulary. Make sure that they know that since they own their book they are welcome to write in it. You should provide pencils/highlighters for them. Go over any of these words. Expand on the meaning with stories from your own life, if applicable.

6. Each chapter has questions for reflection at the end. Go over these questions and have each lady answer them. Do not let one lady monopolize the group. Make sure that all the ladies are given the opportunity to speak.
7. You can serve refreshments half way through the class period. Make these simple. You can bring them, have a sign up sheet or just have refreshments whenever someone brings something. You may want to keep a supply of paper goods (cups, plates, napkins) easily available.
8. Close the class with prayer.
9. Do not rush off right after the class. Be prepared to stay. This is a time when Moms will approach you with problems/concerns that they don't feel free to discuss in front of the class. Always be available for them.

Although it is helpful to have taken the ESL Teacher Training, Teaching English Language Learners the Good News, this group can be led by someone who has not had the training.

If you can have this group at the same time as other Women's Ministry Bible Studies at your church, you can use their on site daycare and participate in their outside activities. Your Moms will love to get together with American Moms in the other Bible Study groups if they are in a group (safety in numbers) and you are present. If there are no outside activities, ask another group to do something with your group, i.e. a Christmas Tea. At these events, if at all possible, pair one of your Moms with an American Mom. This can be done easily by putting stickers on name tags and having ladies find the sticker that matches theirs (of course you have made sure that each international Mom has a sticker that will match an American lady).

Leading an ESL Moms Group does not take a lot of prep time for the leader. However, they do need to read the chapter ahead of time and look at the vocabulary list. If there are words that you can bring in the actual item to

show them (i.e. recipe box) or could bring a picture (i.e. settee) that is very helpful. Also it is good to look ahead and see what American cultural events are coming up and be prepared to teach about them (i.e. Valentine's Day, Ground Hog's Day, etc...)

Above all you need to be praying for these ladies. They will be sharing with you the struggles that they encounter while parenting in a foreign culture. Remember that the values you hold dear may just be American and not necessarily Biblical.

It is good to have a registration form for the ladies to fill out. On this form be sure to ask for their husband's name and the names, sex and ages of their children. This knowledge will help you to pray for them and serve them better.

If you have any questions about ESL Moms Groups, please contact Nancy Booher at 410-465-0154 or nbooher@pcanet.org

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