

As we celebrate 130 years of Mothers' Union in the Oxford Diocese, may God's Word inspire us to rejoice in his faithfulness through the years and to envision us with faith for the future.

Celebration

Let them thank the Lord for his faithful love and his wondrous works for all people, *Psalm 107:8*

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Celebration

They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness. *Psalm 145:7*

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God's faithfulness

May the favour of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us – yes, establish the work of our hands. *Psalm 90:1, 17*

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God's faithfulness

The Lord is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation. *Psalm 100:5*

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God's faithfulness

The plans of the Lord stand firm, the purposes of his heart through all generations. Psalm 33:11

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Our faith for the future

For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. *Jeremiah 29:11*

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Our faith for the future

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. *Hebrews 11:1*

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Celebration

Praise the Lord! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens! Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his excellent greatness! *Psalm 150:1-3*

Pass on the Celebration!

Preparation

Make enough parcels allowing 4 layers per parcel for each group of 4 people to pass around. The base layer contains a bag of 4 sweets (ideally Celebrations should be used) with a Bible verse card from the selection above. Each subsequent layer has a Bible verse card. You will need suitable music and a means to play it.

On the Day

We are going to play pass the parcel with a difference! We are going to use the game as a means to prayerfully consider how we give thanks for the 130th anniversary of the MU in the Oxford Diocese and how we will use what we have discussed today to make plans for our future.

When the music starts please pass the parcel slowly around, take time to think about our work and the things for which we would like to thank God in our 130th year. When the music stops although it is time to take off a layer, before you do this take a minute in your group to pray for the person holding the parcel. (If in subsequent rounds you have already opened a layer please pass on to your neighbour so that everyone has a turn).

When you have opened the parcel nominate someone to read the Bible verse written on the card. Do this slowly and then repeat it a few times. Wait for everyone to identify a particular word or phrase that resonates with them. Then quietly let these sink into your thinking. You can then share with the others in your group and discuss your individual thoughts. From this you may like to share a word/ phrase or a prayer that comes from your reflection with the group as a whole. Please feel free to write it on a post-it note to be displayed.

Once all the layers have been opened and the sweets revealed inside encourage the recipient to share these with the other members of their group. They are after all Celebrations which are meant to be shared - in the same way as we are sharing our 130th celebrations with each other throughout this special year.

Finish with a prayer to gather the game to a close and acknowledge the thoughts, reflections and prayers that have come as a result. You may like to use:

Thanksgiving Prayer as we celebrate 130 years

Living Lord,

We give grateful thanks for the Mothers' Union in the Oxford Diocese and for your love that continues to inspire us into active service as we celebrate our 130th year. Strengthen us to do your work, encouraging us to reach out into our communities bringing your hope to those in need.

We thank you for all our members, past and present and pray that you will guide others to join us, so that together we may fulfil your vision for our work. Be with us in this special year and help us to make wise plans that enable us to grow and thrive for many generations to come. **Amen**