

## Session 1:

# • • • • Kickoff to *Adventure* • • • •

### Prep

Welcome to your first session of Where Moms Connect: A Year of Adventure. The main preparation instructions for the sessions are easy, and many are the same (lighting, music, prayer) for each session. You'll be encouraged to know that no other materials are needed for this first meeting!

- Read the entire lesson at least once (twice is better though!) so you're comfortable with the content.
- Make sure you have reflective music to play during discussion times, using a CD or MP3 player, and ensure that the lighting and temperature create a comfortable, inviting place for women.
- Prepare your heart by praying for the moms who come, and ask that God will encourage them with his love.



### Connecting Together

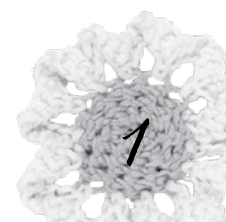
- Cheerfully welcome women to Where Moms Connect. Be sure to introduce yourself—even if you think everyone knows you. ☺
- Since this is your very first session, take time to share the current theme of Where Moms Connect: A Year of Adventure, with a brief overview and explanation of the topics that your group will explore together in the weeks and months ahead.

- Share any info a person newer to your group might need to know, such as where restrooms are located, where the coffee is, and when your regular meeting times are scheduled, and make any other necessary announcements.
- If they don't already have one, let moms know how they can get a copy of *A Mom's Book of Adventure*. Each mom needs her own copy. Making photocopies is not permitted.
- Invite those who may be sitting on the fringes to move to a table with others. Let women know there will be lots of conversation, so they'll need to sit with at least two others so they can participate. Ask all moms to introduce themselves to those at their tables, and allow about 2 minutes for those brief introductions.

### Adventure Stories

**Today we're going to start a year of adventure together! Think about an adventure you've had in your life. Where did you go? What did you do? I can tell you my favorite adventure was...** (briefly share your story, modeling the kind of sharing you would like moms to do in their groups).

**It's your turn now, so gather together in groups of no more than four moms total, and take 1 minute each to share a brief story of the best adventure you've had.** Allow 4 minutes for conversation at tables. Give a 1-minute warning when moms need to start wrapping up.



## Connecting to the Topic

I imagine you shared some amazing stories of your adventures! Let's take a few minutes to think about what an adventure really is. In your small group, turn to the first page of Session 1 in your *Mom's Book of Adventure*, and discuss only the first question found there. Allow 3 minutes for conversation at tables. Give a 1-minute warning when moms need to start wrapping up.

I'd love to hear some of the definitions you came up with in your groups. Is there anyone who would be willing to share a definition you discussed in your group that you really liked? Allow time for three or four women to call out their definitions.

As we've heard, there are many ways we could define "adventure." Webster's dictionary says an adventure is: 1) an undertaking usually involving danger and unknown risks; 2) an exciting or remarkable experience.

An exciting and remarkable experience sounds like a lot of fun. We would probably all sign up for that type of adventure! But the one involving dangers and risks might be a little out of the comfort zone for some of us!

Every adventure has some element of risk, and we encounter risks every day in our adventure as mothers. They include the decisions we make about what we say or do; how we balance work, rest and play; handling emergencies; and how we encourage and nurture our kids—not to mention the occasional risk of encountering a dead rodent in a pocket or a crayon picture on a freshly painted wall!

Parenting is an adventure, full of wonderful and exciting moments but also full of uncertainty and risks. It's a joyful, yet at times fear-filled, journey.

Every other week for the next nine months, we are going to share this adventure of motherhood with each other. Let's take a few minutes to think about the importance of exploring and navigating this exciting, challenging, and sometimes risky journey *together*!

## Adventuring Together

Right now, we're going to participate in an adventure that involves a lot of risk! We've just been cast in an episode of a reality survival show, and we're lost in a forest in the middle of winter in Minnesota. Let's see how we'll survive!

Ask women to refer to the "Surviving the Adventure" section in Session 1 in *A Mom's Book of Adventure*. Here they will find an adventure activity that they will do individually at first and then work through with their small groups. Tell moms they'll have 10 minutes to complete the activity on this page with the other moms in their small group. You may want to play music softly in the background during this time. Give a 1-minute warning when moms need to start wrapping up.





## Two—or More—Are Better Than One

I hope you all survived your adventure together! How many of you think your group will survive? Ask for a show of hands.

I'm going to tell you the correct answers in a few minutes, and we'll find out if you survived or not, but first let's hear from a few groups about how you *felt* during this discussion. What emotions did you feel as you were trying to decide the ranking of the survival items by yourself? Allow time for two or three women to share briefly with the large group the emotions they felt during the individual survival activity.

How were your emotions different when you were trying to decide the ranking of the survival items with the others in your group? Allow time for two or three women to briefly share how their emotions were different during the group survival activity.

Now let's think about how we feel when we are facing a difficult parenting decision. Turn to a mom next to you and answer the reflection questions under the heading "Two—or More—Are Better Than One" in your *Mom's Book of Adventure*. Give moms 5 minutes to share with their partner. Give a 1-minute warning when everyone needs to start wrapping up.

Now let's find out how well you survived your adventure. These answers were compiled by survival experts, so the closer you are to their answers, the better your chances of survival. To score, give 1 point for each correct answer in both your individual and group rankings. Here are the experts' ranking of the survival items.

Read the list and reasons for the rankings aloud, and encourage women to make a note of the suggested ranking so they can compare how well they did, both in their group and individual scores.

## Surviving the Adventure

1. **Cigarette lighter.** Cold is the gravest danger, and the greatest need is for a source of warmth. Even without fluid, the lighter can be used to produce sparks to start a fire—for warmth or to signal for help.
2. **Ball of steel wool.** Steel wool can catch a spark to start a flame, and it is the best thing you have available to do that.
3. **Extra shirt and pants.** Clothes serve multiple purposes, including being a source of warmth, shelter, bedding, bandages, signaling devices, and a starter for fires.
4. **Can of shortening.** This item has many uses such as:
  - When rubbed on skin, shortening protects from frostbite.
  - Shortening can be eaten.
  - Melted into oil, shortening can be used to start fires.
  - Melted shortening soaked into a piece of cloth makes an effective torch.
  - The can could be used to melt snow for drinking water.
  - The lid could be used as a mirror-like signaling device.
5. **Hand ax.** Use an ax to cut wood for building fires, clearing a campsite, or constructing a frame for a shelter.
6. **Family-size chocolate bars.** Chocolate will supply the energy needed to gather wood and set up signals.
7. **A quart of 100-proof whiskey.** The only uses are fuel for a fire or a torch. It's dangerous to drink because it causes dehydration and rapid loss of body heat.
8. **Compass.** This can be a dangerous item, as some survivors may try to walk to the nearest town. Chances of survival are greatly reduced by leaving the group.

Adapted from the textbook *Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills*, Ninth Edition, Johnson & Johnson, Pearson Education, Inc., 2006.

**Does everybody have their scores? Did any person or group get a perfect score?**

Congratulate them if they did, as this is very rare!

**Did anyone get a better score when ranking the list on your own than you did with the group?**

This would be unlikely, unless the person is very familiar with survival skills, so congratulate them for their expertise if they did!

**How many of you did better on the group score than you did on your individual score?**

Ask for a show of hands. This should be a much larger percentage.

**Our chances of survival go up significantly when we problem-solve difficult decisions with a group. This test has been used extensively with groups, and the research is conclusive that the group almost always makes better decisions than the individual person does. This is also true for us in our adventure as moms.**



## Connecting With God

Let's think a little more about why a group would have a better chance of survival than an individual. Under the "Connecting With God" heading in your *Mom's Book of Adventure*, read the Bible verses together with your group, and discuss the questions.

Give moms 10 to 15 minutes to discuss and share. Play music in the background, and give them a 1-minute warning before having them turn their attention back to you.



## Connecting to My Life

Let's take a couple of minutes to reflect on what we've shared and experienced during our adventure together today. You'll find

space in your *Mom's Book of Adventure* to write your thoughts, draw a picture, or capture any words you want to remember from today. I'll play soft music as you reflect. You can also use this time to pray if you like.

Give the women about 2 minutes to reflect and make notes. Play instrumental music softly in the background; then lower the volume and turn the music off, gently signaling that women should return their attention to you.

The notes you make in this book each week will become a great record of the adventures we'll share. There will be days in between our meetings when you may feel isolated and alone. Use this book to stay connected to the courage and wisdom you received here and the people you shared with. The additional readings after each session are also there for further reflection or an extra boost when you need it!

## Closing

Let's close our time together by taking just a moment to reflect and identify an adventure in parenting we are struggling to survive right now. Perhaps you've felt lost in a cold wilderness with few resources available. It's important for us to remember we are never alone. We always have Jesus. And we always have each other.

I'd like you to turn to each other in your small groups and say: "You are never alone in this adventure; you *will* survive!" Pause for women to do this.

Now I'd like for all of us to join hands together in one big group. Pause for women to do this. Let's repeat together as we hold hands: "We are never alone; we *will* survive!" Pause for women to do this.

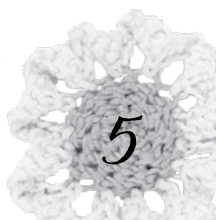
**Let's take a moment now to pray silently—or just take a moment of silence—to ask God for courage and joy in the adventures of motherhood we will experience in the upcoming weeks we share together.** Allow a brief time for silent prayer and reflection.

**I'd like to close with a Bible verse and a short prayer. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 says, "Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help."**

Pray for the moms, asking God to help them survive and enjoy their adventures in motherhood. Thank God for his unfailing love and his promise to meet their needs

through encouragement from the Bible and from their connection with the moms gathered together at Moms Connect. Pray for each woman to be willing to reach out and help each other along the journey. Give thanks to God for the exciting and remarkable experiences that are ahead!

Thank women for coming, and let them know how much time is left before they need to collect their kids from child care. This is also a great time to remind moms of any announcements that were made at the beginning of your time together, as some may have come in late.





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