



Christian Mentoring

JOHN MALLISON MINISTRIES

MY UNIQUE ME (MUM)

AN EXPERIENCE AT GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH, PARA VISTA

History & Purpose

The experience (My Unique Me - MUM) was first encountered at another local church, which had been adapted from a resource being used by Lifeline.

It is a useful tool in helping women explore their relationships and various roles in their lives by allowing them to tell their story and grow in self awareness, self acceptance and acceptance of others, especially their family of origin.

It has focused on scriptural principles of God's love and acceptance, and our need of forgiveness from God, and our forgiveness that we are able to offer others.

Christian counseling is often recommended for women wishing to move forward in emotional wholeness,

Program Framework

Women on the pastoral team have developed and built on this framework:

- Participants bring a gift, or memory relating to this particular relationship, where they share their experience
- Leaders present information about this particular relationship, gained from recommended books, observations of people, and scriptural truths
- Participants explore this particular relationship and its significance for them, usually done individually
- Shared discussion time, in small groups about their discoveries and experiences
- Fellowship and friendship opportunity over refreshments and food

Over the years at Para Vista, it has been further developed by offering women the first steps in identifying and dealing with past hurts (feelings, attitudes and behaviour); and looking at forgiveness and acceptance of themselves and those with whom they are in relationships.

Program

The program goes over 8 weeks, focusing on one aspect each week:

- Me as me
- Me a friend
- Me a daughter
- Me a sister
- Me a mother
- Me a wife
- Me a lover
- Me again

Supervision and accountability of leaders

- An apprentice should be encouraged in leading a small group, and learning from the coordinator all aspects of organization and preparation
- Leaders need to be able to identify with the season of life through their experience
- Leaders may find that making a commitment of being involved for 2 years is a way of learning, and growing new leaders
- Preparation, debriefing and unloading between the leaders is to be encouraged for each session, as different issues may arise, which may need to be followed up
- Debriefing and unloading to pastoral staff is to be encouraged, taking into consideration



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confidentiality agreement, both for the benefit for the leaders and also in the pastoral team knowing women's issues and blockages to forgiveness and acceptance

Training

- Is given in preparation times before the running of the course
- Growing through experiencing the course, before being asked to facilitate
- Encouragement for leaders to attend training programs offered by the church e.g. Boundaries, Care and communication skills
- Reading the recommended books
- Personal desire to grow through reading recommended books, and their own MUM experience

Mentor facilitation

- Happens in an informal way
- Leaders may be seen as mentors for women participating in the course
- Should participants choose or request an ongoing relationship with another participant, including a leader, it may be the launching pad for a new phase of personal growth and ministry opportunities
- Women's ministry to women by women is still in its infancy
- Women's ministry is still evolving at Para Vista, and will be continue in God's time in His way

A personal reflection

- This small group offers the opportunity to share my story - the important relationships (e.g. parents, siblings, friends, husband, and children) and how they have contributed to who I am.
- Through this process I have been able to let go of some past hurts and memories (even ones I didn't know were still affecting me).
- I have a greater understanding of myself, and how I can take responsibility for my own actions and behaviour.
- How God sees me through Jesus' eyes has enabled me to go forward in confidence knowing that I am unique, special and important to God.
- I enjoyed getting to know other women and hearing their stories and being part of their journey too.

Sessions go for 2 hours where

- women are encouraged to share a memory or gift given to them in that particular role
- discussion in small groups (loosely based on seasons of life especially in relation to age of children) focuses on sharing experiences, and encouragement given through books, biblical applications and wisdom

During the course,

- a visit is made by one of the small group leaders to each participant, to offer a one on one sharing time
- a celebration time is held at the end of the course when we celebrate our discoveries about ourselves, our journey, and how God sees us.

Ground rules

- Sharing is optional
- Confidentiality is paramount, especially of what other people share
- Listening and acceptance of each other is a precious gift we give to each other

Resources

- A handout is given to participants after the memories are shared, which offers insights, encouragement and ways of understanding that particular relationship
- A leader's sheet which details scheduling, points to ponder, possible areas of hurt and pain that could surface, and ways to offer insight, encouragement and scriptural truths



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- Each week, various Christian books are recommended, and these are available for loan.
- Book reviews have also been written.
- A box of tissues is needed as quite a bit of pain and hurt surfaces, especially in sharing the gift/memory.

Selection of leaders

- Leaders are required first to be participants, having the opportunity of working through their own experience, after which they can then act as leaders
- There will always be a session that will touch the heart of each woman, and the same is true of leaders
- Part of the leader's role is to be real, transparent and open in their sharing, which encourages participants in their sharing
- Leaders, while still growing in their relationships, need to be willing to listen and draw people out and focus on others, rather than just focusing on their own experiences
- Leaders are encouraged to share the lessons they have learnt from their own experience, as well as offering a message of hope and emotional wholeness and hope we have in God
- Prayer is vital in choosing leaders who are mature Christians; supporting the participants as they share their significant relationships-, and in revealing God's character to them, especially acceptance, forgiveness

Julie Freund

Further information can be obtained from the following:

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