



## An update on the Saltshaker session

### What is the Saltshaker session?

It's an informal session offering an opportunity for members to explore together appropriate ways of reflecting God's love through outreach initiatives.

### How might it help us?

The mission of Mothers' Union is to show our Christian faith by the transformation of communities; a key way that members achieve this is by offering practical, Christian care to families (think of Away From it All Holidays, work in prisons, parenting groups, marriage preparation sessions, parent and toddler groups and many other forms of outreach initiatives). It's vital that any initiative the Mothers' Union offers is set up safely and is effective, but some feedback from members suggests that whilst it's important to focus on this, they'd also appreciate an opportunity to step back from the planning of 'how' to do projects, and set some time aside to explore together how to appropriately reflect God's love to the people who are supported through Mothers' Union initiatives.

### Feedback from the pilot for the Saltshaker session

The Saltshaker session was piloted in June 2011 as a day session, (around four hours actual session time) and the feedback was encouraging.

*"We're good at doing projects but perhaps lost sight of 'why'. Days like this will help."*

*"Every diocese should try this."*

*"Thank you for a wonderful day. It was just what I needed and has inspired other areas of my life. I really felt that God was in all our deliberations and I think that this would be great to use in other areas."*

### Short term next steps

With this encouragement, two more Saltshaker sessions were held at Mary Sumner House in March, and several of the Mothers' Union provincial conferences taking place this autumn will be including the Saltshaker session within the programme (Wales and York).

### Longer term plans

As this initiative develops, we hope that some of those who come along and experience the day, especially if they already have some experience of facilitating groups, will then share the session

with members in their area, so that a much wider group of members will be able to engage with it.

### So who could facilitate a Saltshaker session?

Before anyone considers if this is a role they'd like to undertake, we'd encourage them to first **experience** the Saltshaker session. After that, if you have some experience of facilitating groups, please contact the central staff team, and we will send you a form to fill in to apply to be a facilitator for this session and then send you a facilitator's pack. We'd very much encourage anyone hoping to undertake this role to identify someone they can work with as a co-facilitator.

Several people who have already experienced the session, and have group facilitation skills, have indicated that they might be willing to visit other dioceses and facilitate the Saltshaker session. If you'd like details of who these people are, please contact the central team.

Catherine Kyte and Jane Groves are members of the central staff team who have facilitated the Saltshaker sessions organised by Mary Sumner House so far. They'd be delighted to confer with anyone who would like to explore introducing the Saltshaker session in their diocese, and would also be happy to help facilitate events Mothers' Union leaders want to organise in their diocese/area.

### Costs and other practical things for Saltshaker sessions.....

Venue and refreshment costs are the main items.

**Lunch:** we'd suggest either providing lunch and asking for a donation, or perhaps arranging a 'bring and share' lunch, rather than asking everyone to just to make their own arrangements. Eating together provides an opportunity to share fellowship, and forms an important element of the Saltshaker experience.

**Numbers:** We'd suggest that around 18 is a good number for a session like this. Smaller would be fine, but any bigger might make the session less informal and interactive.

**For further information:** Please contact the central staff team at [outreach@themothersunion.org](mailto:outreach@themothersunion.org)

*"It is a pleasure to warmly commend the Saltshaker session. People today hear with their eyes. They are fed up with just words. If Creeds are not lived out in deeds they will not listen and rightly so! When they see the salt of Christ's love being shaken into lives in loving sensitive and caring ways they see Christianity in action".*

The Rt Rev Ken Clarke, Bishop of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh