

- Melanie Wall: April 4
- Val Hill: April 11
- Amanda Swann: April 11
- Beth Shore: April 26
- Brittany Moyer: April 30

MOPS Schedule: Speakers, Crafts, Snack/Clean-up, & MOPPETS

- April 15th Meeting**
 Speaker/Topic: Surprise Speaker, Beyond MOPS
 Craft: Salvation Bracelets
 Snack/Clean-up Tables: Brown, Purple, Blue
 MOPPETS: Jasmine Smith, Wendy Moe, Jen Bandy, Satina Startzman, Amanda Swann
- May 6th Meeting**
 Speaker/Topic: Lupe Maple, Personal Journey
 Craft: Body Scrub
 Snack/Clean-up Tables: Berry, Red, Yellow, Green
 MOPPETS: Kristen Peterson, Allie Johnson, Erin Costa, Karen Baretich, L. Neal, Kelli Hall
- May 20th Meeting**
 Speaker/Topic: Tina Bustamante, Read Any Good Books Lately?
 Craft: Table-top Gardens
 Snack/Clean-up Tables: Pink, Brown, Purple, Blue
 MOPPETS: Sommer Kelly, Tawnya Cranmore, Anna Chadwick, Rachel Alleman

Do You Swag?

by Jill Chi

If not, you have to check out Swagbucks.com! Swag Bucks are virtual dollars that you earn just by using the web like you already do.

I have already received my first \$5 Amazon gift card and I am halfway to my second one. You earn points when you use Swagbucks search engine and then you can choose different gifts based on the number of points you accumulate.

Whether it's searching the web, playing games, watching videos, completing special offers, trading in cell phones and video games, or shopping online, Swag Bucks will show you how to earn rewards for the activities you're already engaging in, with no strings attached. Check them out today!

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Lauren Neal, MOPS Coordinator

Too Pooped To Pop by Lauren Neal

Disclaimer: this might be a "TMI (Too much info)" type article, for some of you, so... sorry!!

Does everyone remember *Too Pooped To Pop* from the Froggy books? Have you gotten to the Froggy books yet? If not, make sure and find your closest Scholastic Book pamphlet and pick yourself up some.

I'm Too Pooped To Pop, from keeping track of my family's bodily functioning. Little back story: We have 3 kids, 2 dogs, and...oh yeah, myself. My husband will have to take care of himself. We, as moms, keep track of everything from cutting nails to when the last time everyone pooped. Hence the pun, too pooped to pop. My little girl (4) has been constipated for the last week, and it has taken its fair share of my mental energy. I have been worrying about, troubleshooting, purchasing items to help with this problem. I know, as a seasoned mommy and a nurse, that this is merely a temporary little problem, yet to this little girl, it seems so terrible, and a problem I must solve NOW! Of course, after looking online, and discussing it with a few friends, we got her little "problem" taken care of. I hope...

I was just thinking, though, how many little "problems", we as moms solve. We cut nails,

wash hair, check for bumps, kiss bruises, fix poopy problems, tweak eating habits, steer behaviors, encourage good behavior, "No burping, farting, picking, hitting, biting, grabbing", keep your hands to yourself, say you're sorry, be more loving, I love you. Tell him you love him. Tell him you're sorry. I'm sorry. We'll have a better day tomorrow.

We are problem solvers. Who solves our problems? This little, insignificant "poop problem" is something I wouldn't really think I should bring to God. But, I found myself worrying a lot about it. If it's something that creates enough stress inside me that I can recognize it as stress, then it's big enough for God. In fact, there's nothing too small. I just want to encourage you to give yourself a break as a mom, and to bring the big and small to God. It might seem trite or basic, but so often we just walk around with this "hum" of low level stress all the time. Jesus said, "Come to me all who are weary and heavy laden"... that's you momma!

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From the Kitchen of Cora Berry: Great Bunco Mix

Ingredients:

- 1 big bag of pretzels (Costco)
- 1 big thing of mixed nuts (Costco)
- 1 big box of Chex mix (Costco)
- 1 small box of Bugles

You mix this, spread it out over a big jelly roll pan. Then, over at the stove, you melt the following together:

- 1C Karo syrup
- 1C butter
- 2C brown sugar

Let these boil (The amount listed is for 1 jelly roll pan's worth. If you have more, break out more butter!)

Pour boiled yumminess over aforementioned Chex Mix. Bake at 350 for 5 minutes. Take out, stir, return to oven for 5 more minutes. Let cool slightly, then break into large chunks and place in adorable containers and give to everyone you know! Enjoy!!



Mentor Moment: Plan To Reflect God by Cindy Klein

My husband Doug and I have been married 28 years—we met in high school and married at 21. We had our first daughter, Denica (26) 2 years later, Jordan (24), Jessica (22) and Tanner (19) quickly followed. Being an active part of a church community has always been a central part of our lives and we have called Northshore Baptist Church our home church for the past 8 years. My background is in early childhood education and that has been useful in being a mom and also as I am enjoying being a MOPS mentor.

I love the anticipation of the Spring Season, knowing I can expect the trees to bud, the birds to return, days to get longer and hopefully some sun! I love that God gives us variety, but that He truly is a God of rhythm and order.

I realized early on that I wanted our home to reflect that aspect of God, I wanted fun and variety but within the contexts of a schedule. It was overwhelming at first to realize I really was the controller of our schedule and what we did or did not do was up to me. I knew from teaching preschool how kids really did thrive on a schedule and loved routines and anticipating what was coming up and I knew this took planning.

Several times a year I would get alone with God, my notebook and calendar to create our schedule. Establishing meal times, nap and bedtime was first on the list, and then I would put down the weekly and daily routines: when were chores, play dates, crafts, TV; what days would I do shopping, housework, bible study, exercise appt. etc. As the kids got older I would involve them in their schedule, making charts with rewards for establishing a new routine. I would also write down menus for the weeks and had a menu plan I would make with our schedule. This planning gave me freedom to do the things that really mattered, and became very useful as the kids got older and more active.

Looking back on my notebooks I see our schedules and am reminded of all the different stages and seasons of life we have been through. We had lots of fun and did not always follow the plan but it was there as a guide helping me be intentional in my desire to reflect God and be a good steward with what He has entrusted to me. I know God will reward your faithfulness to seek Him as you give Him your time and let Him guide your days!

In the Spotlight: Mary Hawkinson CO-COORDINATOR



About my family... Jeff and I will be celebrating our 5th anniversary this May. Eli will also be turning 3 in May, Garrett will be 1 in August, and we're looking forward to a summer spending time outdoors!

My favorite thing about being a mom is... I'm the boss! I get to decide the direction of our day, every day. I also get to remind Eli, my almost-3-year-old, of my authoritative status on a regular basis. 😊

One of the hardest things about being a mom is... being the boss! Having the burden of responsibility for the little lives Jeff and I have created can be sobering, but I'm slowly learning to balance that with having fun with my kids at the same time.

When I am down, the thing I do to feel better is... exercise, then talk to my husband. He has a funny way of looking at things that can usually make me laugh and smile when I am vexed.

The one thing I would love to find at a yard sale is... Home decorating pieces! I'd love a great big, unique wall hanging for over my front room mantle. That space is just buggin'! Maybe a cool old chair I can practice re-upholstering in my favorite fabric, too.

My Secret Super Power: I can drag myself out of bed after a long night of feeding an infant and helping a toddler to not be so scared of the dark in his room, get myself and my children dressed, fed, and out the door to make it to MOPS on time with a snack in tow, with time enough to spare to sit in the Starbucks drive-thru line. While I get ready in the morning, I keep laundry piles at bay by feeding the washer another mouthful of dirty clothes, change two poopy diapers, and manage to unload the dishwasher while eating breakfast. Many call this uber-ability "Mom", but I call it a SuperPower.

Craft Corner: Bloomin-Buttons

What you'll need:

- 26-gauge green florists' wire
- Colorful buttons



How to make it:

- For each flower, thread an 8-inch length of florists' wire up through a stack of colorful buttons, then back down, as shown.
- Twist the wire just below the stack to secure it, and then insert the flower in your plant's soil.



Richer Relationships: When Less is More

"Better a handful with quietness than both hands full, together with toil and grasping for the wind."
Ecclesiastes 4:6

Many of us are afflicted with the "go, go, go disease". Somehow, we've developed the core belief that we can't be happy unless we have our lives full of activities. But the disease leaves us feeling exhausted. Our most cherished relationships become shallow and tense, and we become confused because we're trying so hard but feel empty. We're "grasping for the wind."

In our light-speed culture, one of the marks of true wisdom is the determination to carve out time and space to reflect, rest, and recharge our emotional batteries. Creating "margin" in our lives doesn't just happen. We have to schedule it, value it, and then protect it from the onslaught of voices that scream, "You've got to do this, too!"

The price we pay for creating these regular times is that we have to say no to some activities, but we need to be honest about the price we've paid for saying yes to too many things. Making margin a priority reduces stress, increases fulfillment, and leads to richer relationships with God and every person in our lives.