



# Nosh & Natter

## Building communities (Birmingham)

Mothers' Union members in Birmingham are helping mums and other women in their Church connect with each other through relaxed and informal fellowship meetings.

Most of the women in the group attend church but cannot do so regularly, so they love getting together informally for some fun, food and fellowship, and some time away from family responsibilities.



The first 'Nosh & Natter' 'get-together' took place in a members' garden but the group has now met in the pub several times since, and last year enjoyed a Christmas meal that Mothers' Union members cooked and shared with the group at the Church centre. Different women come along at different times; sometimes there can be as many as 12 people, sometimes fewer. Everyone who comes is encouraged to also bring their friends if they want to.

*Mothers' Union members have shared that "from these sessions friendships grow and the women start making plans together."*

For general guidelines about setting up and developing outreach initiatives, go to the members' section of the Mothers' Union website [www.mothersunion.org](http://www.mothersunion.org)

These informal meetings have only been taking place for around 18 months, but already, the members feel they've learned a lot:

### **Get the group going:**

Initially Mothers' Union members asked women they already had some contact with how they could help. They asked them whether they would like to get together informally for some fun, food and fellowship and just a little bit of time away from family responsibilities? The response was an overwhelming 'yes!'.

### **Go ahead regardless:**

Initially, dates to get together would be circulated and if no-one could come, the event would be cancelled. But members have found that they often get calls or texts on the actual day from people saying, 'Is this still happening?' So now, members always go ahead with whatever has been planned; they don't ever cancel, they just go to the pub and see who comes! They also now set the date of the next 'Nosh & Natter' at the meeting so the date can go into everyone's diary there and then.

### **Get texting:**

The Mothers' Union branch leader at the church prepares special invitations and another member follows up with a text. They found that the women like this approach and are more likely to respond.

### **Be flexible:**

Groups need to be flexible enough to accommodate for the fact that many who come to the sessions are busy and find it hard to commit on a regular basis.