

- Lois:** My name is Lois. I am the mother of Eunice, grandmother to Timothy. Maybe you have heard of him. He is a disciple of Jesus, follower of the Apostle Paul. Oh, what a wonderful boy.
- Eunice:** *Mother, they know who Timothy is. They want to know why we are here.*
- Lois:** Eunice dear, we are here to share our offering.
- Eunice:** *I know that, Mother. We need to tell them.*
- Lois:** Well, go ahead dear.
- Eunice:** *We are here to offer our gift of nurture. I have to give my mother the credit for that, though. Any nurturing that I learned to give to Timothy, I first learned from her. She helped me raise him.*
- Lois:** Thank you, Eunice. That is just how we did things back then. Yes, we offer to you the gift of nurture. And, we have been trying to discern how to explain what nurture means.
- Eunice:** *It seemed simple until we really started thinking about it. I'm not sure it is something you can teach.*
- Lois:** Of course you can teach it! I taught you, didn't I?
- Eunice:** *Well, I don't know, Mother. Maybe I inherited it.*
- Lois:** Nurture is an attention to detail. It is sharing our stories with our children and grandchildren. It is teaching them the ways of Christ, showing them that love of God and love of others is what is expected. Timothy learned very well.
- Eunice:** *Yes he did. It must have impressed Paul. I was in shock when he mentioned us by name in that letter to Timothy.*
- Lois:** He saw who had done the hard work in the family! Nurturing is no easy task.
- Eunice:** *That is true. Do you think we made a difference in spreading Christianity?*
- Lois:** You mean, you and I?
- Eunice:** *Yes.*
- Lois:** Well – Yes! Yes, I do. I really do. Timothy would not have been able to do all he did had it not been for his upbringing. You did a good job.
- Eunice:** *Thank you. WE did a good job. I'm sorry. I think we got off the subject. Like I said, explaining the gift of nurture is not easy.*
- Lois:** Giving nurture is no easy task either.
- Eunice:** *You said that already, Mother.*
- Lois:** Sorry. I'm sure I've said this too, but it is worth repeating - tell your stories, teach your children and grandchildren to love God and love others, pay attention to the details.
- Eunice:** *And you will be pleasantly surprised where that will lead them . . .*
- Lois:** and their children and many others whose lives they touch.
- Eunice:** *Good job, Mother. I think we are finished now.*
- Lois:** All right then.

Discussion Suggestions - Lois and Eunice

Oh, the volumes many of us could write on how the nurturing faith of our mothers and grandmothers influenced our own faith story! The handing down of scriptural knowledge from one generation to the next is a cornerstone of our faith. For all of my growing up years, my grandmother made sure that our two week long visits in the summer coincided with her church's Vacation Bible School. We surely learned a lot at VBS, but where we learned the most was in watching our grandmother include God in her most trivial daily activities. In the garden she would thank God not only for her bountiful harvest, but also for the chance to see a beautiful butterfly on her tomatoes. As she would wash her vegetables from the garden, she would thank God for the water in her well with which to do so. As we gathered around the table, she would thank God not only for the food that He so graciously provided, but also for us, her grandchildren to be there to share it with her. Before bed, we would watch her study her Sunday School lesson for the week at her kitchen table, faithfully every night. As we climbed into our beds, we knew that a prayer would be said for our safekeeping. God was with us at Amma's house, there was no doubt about that, and when our two weeks time at Amma's house was up in the summer, our faith and knowledge of God went home with us larger than it had been when we'd arrived.

Our children, grandchildren and church children need us more than ever to nurture them in their faith and knowledge of the Scriptures. In today's fast-paced society, it is so very important that they see strong spiritual influences from within their family and church family alike. Now more than ever, we need to heed God's call to train up our children.

- ✦ Are you taking advantage of the many opportunities you have to be a spiritual mentor in children's lives? Invite the women to name all the relationships with children and youth they can think of where they serve as a witness to God's love and grace. Write all the names up on newsprint. (*Leader: make sure that you provide newsprint and markers for this activity*)

Encourage your group to become more active in the lives of the children within your church. Visit their Sunday School classes; read their Bible lesson for the day; share with them what Sunday School was like when you were a child; encourage them to read their Bibles daily. Really get to know them and develop a relationship with them. Your presence with them will not go unnoticed by them. By loving them and teaching them about Christ now, you are not only increasing their faith, but you are giving them an example to follow when they are the adults and the children in their lives need nurturing in their faith.

- ✦ Provide note cards and pens and encourage the women to write a note of encouragement to one of the young people they named. Even provide the stamp to ensure the notes of nurture get mailed!

PRAYER:

Thank you, nurturing God, for all the children in our lives with whom we have the opportunity to reach out and share our faith and knowledge of Christ and His love for us. Give us guidance and direction so that we can be effective in our ministry with them. Thank you especially for those in our lives who served to nurture us in our faith as we grew and matured into the women we are today. Amen.