



# Mum & Mother

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Gilmore Girls

Created by Amy V. Sherman

© 2000, The WB

Source: <https://mubi.com/films/gilmore-girls>

## Introduction

Mum & Mother is a six-part family drama with motherhood at its core. Following the parallel stories of NATALIE FISHER (38) and her two daughters, KATE (22) and EMILY (15), the show explores womanhood from every angle, offering audience members a chance to see themselves represented on television, whether in their mid-teens, their early twenties or older. A show about women, *for* women. Think *Gilmore Girls* meets *This is Us* – a combination of real people experiencing the ups and downs of life and the intrinsic relationship between mothers and daughters. The everyday families of *EastEnders*, mixed with the cinematic world of dramatic television, like Amazon's *High School* and E4's *My Mad Fat Diary*. Though targeted towards women in their 20s to 40s, the show offers something to a broader audience through its representation of different socio-economic groups. It explores class differences, parenthood, quarter-life crisis and adolescence through its commercial hour.

The Fishers are a single-parent, working-class family living on a council estate in a small town in rural Norfolk. With a population of only 20,000, a run-down community centre and just one high school, everyone knows everyone. They're 'real', down-to-earth, like many of the working families that make up our country. But what makes their story so unique? What makes *Mum & Mother* different? Well, it's the fact that both Natalie and her fifteen-year-old daughter Emily are pregnant at the same time.



Better Things

Created by Pamela Aldon, Louis C.K.

© 2016, FX

Source: <https://www.vox.com/2016/9/8/12841688/better-things-fx-review-premiere-interview>

## Story

The Fishers, a working-class, single-parent family, are just about making ends meet. NATALIE (38), who is three months pregnant, works hard to keep the roof above her two daughters' heads, EMILY (15) and KATE (22). Emily studies and Kate basks in the freedom of unemployment. Like *Gilmore Girls' Rory*, Emily and Kate only have their mother in their life, building a seemingly unbreakable bond. However, things quickly take an unexpected turn for all three of them; Natalie loses her job, Kate is forced to step up and Emily finds out she's pregnant. The mother-daughter trio's bond is tested properly for the first time.

Emily and her middle-class boyfriend SAM (16) have a tough decision to make, one that leads them to an abortion clinic, where they quickly back out, unable to go through with it. Their choice to keep the baby affects several people: Sam's laid-back father, CHRISTOPHER (45), his uptight and class-conscious mother, EVANGELINE (44), Kate, Natalie, and even teachers in the school. What will happen? Can they afford this? Will they be good parents?

Over the course of the series Natalie, Kate and Emily try to navigate their way through life with two new babies on the way. Natalie battles her pride in doing it alone but also wants to find the baby's father, who she hasn't seen since their one-night stand. Kate must drop her values to support her family. Emily must cope with her new role as a mother and the pressures it places on her at home and school. On top of this, Sam's mother is unsupportive, pushing Sam away and into Natalie's home, creating further financial strain.

Tensions boil, hormones run high and poor Sam is stuck in the middle of it all.

When Emily decides she wants more for her baby, she finds herself at JASON (38), her estranged father's, house. His lacklustre response and dismissal confuse Emily. Why has she never been good enough? Finding comfort in Natalie, Emily finally puts aside any hope for rekindling her relationship - but finds the encounter a trigger, now looking at Sam in a different light.

Guilty for the heartache of her daughter, Natalie no longer sits on the fence, wanting answers from STEPHEN (33), the father of her new baby. Before they can even finish their debate, her waters break, and the pair are forced together through a traumatic labour.

The season concludes with two new arrivals, both signifying profound change within central characters. Connections are made, forgiveness is given and new journeys are about to begin.



This is Us

Created by Dan Fogelman

© 2016, NBC

Source: <https://www.cheatsheet.com/entertainment/this-is-us-season-6-episode-16-new-photos-show-young-rebecca-kate-randall-kids.html/>

## Episodes/Structure

**EPISODE ONE:** *Change is Coming* / We meet the Fishers, a fully female, slightly dysfunctional family cramped into a small, but homely council house in Norfolk. A noticeably pregnant Natalie gets fired from work. Her eldest daughter Kate is unhappily unemployed, yet too proud to work in retail and Emily, her youngest, experiences morning sickness that proves to be her worst fear, pregnancy. Each character has a choice to make or a problem to solve. Can Kate overcome her snobbishness? Will Natalie find a new job? Will Emily and her boyfriend Sam keep the baby?

**EPISODE TWO:** *Breaking the News* / After deciding to keep the baby, Emily breaks the news to Natalie and Kate. Confused and concerned to begin with, Natalie is ultimately supportive of her daughter and promises to help as much as she can. Directly contrasting this are Evangeline “Eva” and Christopher, Sam’s middle-class parents, who are anything but happy for their son. Frustrated and devastated at the news, Eva pushes Sam away, leading him to move in with Natalie. Tensions rise at school between Emily and Sam as rumours begin to spread. Natalie contemplates finding Stephen, the father of her unborn baby, who she hasn’t seen since their one-night stand. Kate has an interview for a tacky Britpop-themed cafe, despite hating the idea of working there. She gets the job, despite being unable to hide her distaste.

**EPISODE THREE:** *Judgement Time* / Now unable to hide her bump, Emily finally tells the school about her pregnancy, receiving a frosty response from MRS RUSSELL (55), her old-fashioned headteacher. Natalie talks to Citizen’s Advice about her unemployment and upping her benefits, slightly ashamed of herself for struggling to cope. Kate has a chance encounter with an old school rival, Morgan, who gloats about the publication of her poetry collection, and is smarmy about Kate’s café job. We re-join Emily and Natalie at the hospital for their joint scan appointment. Emily hears her baby’s heartbeat for the first time and Natalie learns her baby is in a posterior position but is reassured this should fix itself. We finish the episode with Christopher making a surprise visit to the house, offering a large sum of money to Natalie, and returning home to an angry Evangeline, who ultimately just misses her son.

**EPISODE FOUR:** *Reaching Out and Rejection* / Emily grows tired and frustrated when feeling more heavily judged than Sam by their peers. Noticing the change in her daughter, Natalie talks to Emily about her experience of teenage pregnancy with her father; rather than being comforted, Emily just feels the absence of his presence more. Sam reveals how much he misses his parents. Kate starts working on a novel, spurred on by her run-in with Morgan. Natalie starts shopping for the baby in charity shops and bumps into Evangeline who insists she joins her for a *real* shopping trip. Desperately wanting to find common ground, the mums sit for coffee, but it soon becomes clear that Evangeline needs something from Natalie – she wants her son back. Emily seeks out Jason, her estranged father, but doesn’t receive the welcome she envisaged, returning home an emotional wreck, seeking comfort from her mother and sister.

**EPISODE FIVE: *Connections*** | Kate continues working on her novel, cramming in writing during her breaks at work. Natalie tracks down STEPHEN (33) and confronts him about the baby and his responsibility as its father. Emily and Sam sit down with Evangeline and Christopher to patch things up. When Evangeline reveals her plan for them, discussing a live-in nanny, Emily is outraged at Sam's quick acceptance. The pair argue about how they want to raise the baby. Emily storms out, believing Sam never wanted the baby in the first place. Meanwhile, Natalie and Stephen's discussion is cut short when Natalie's waters break and Stephen must step up, taking her to the hospital and contacting Kate. At the hospital, Natalie faces complications with the birth, needing an emergency c-section. With no one yet there, Stephen goes with her for support. When she finally arrives, Kate is told she can't see Natalie whilst she's in surgery. She calls Emily, telling her to get to the hospital immediately.

**EPISODE SIX: *New Life*** | All the characters are together, supporting one another and putting aside differences whilst they wait for news of Natalie and the baby. Stephen heads to the waiting room to fetch Kate and Emily, telling them they have a sister. Everyone meets Sophie, Natalie recovers, and Stephen cannot help but feel fatherly love upon holding his daughter. We skip a couple of months. Emily sits her final exam. Sam and Evangeline decorate a spare room for the baby. Kate prints out her novel, places it into an envelope and posts it. Back at home, Emily just begins to unwind with Natalie and Sophie when her waters break. They spring to action, racing to the hospital, calling Sam and attempting to contact Kate, who is unreachable. Whilst Emily is giving birth, Kate is at an interview that appears to end well. When she finally checks her phone, she races to the hospital too. The season ends with everyone in one room, all meeting Archie, their son, grandson, and nephew - finally finding connection and common ground.





Juno

Directed by Jason Reitman

© 2008, Fox Searchlight Pictures

Source: <https://editorial.rottentomatoes.com/gallery/24-certified-fresh-high-school-movies-since-2000/juno-3/>

# The Fishers

**Natalie Fisher** is thirty-eight. She is a hard-working single mother, although often mistaken for older sister, of two girls - and is currently pregnant with another. In lieu of their absent father, Natalie goes above and beyond for her girls, working overtime through her pregnancy to provide for them. Despite all her efforts, Natalie struggles to make ends meet, often fretting about money. Though she hates the stigma around raising kids alone, she cannot help but fear another child going fatherless thanks to her decisions. Judged as a pregnant teen and now as a geriatric mother, Natalie worries about what others think of her – though she hides this well with humour. Despite all this, Natalie takes comfort in the fact her daughters took a different path to her, prioritising their education above all. She hopes that through them, she can finally prove herself to others.

**Kate Fisher** is twenty-two. A creative writing graduate, Kate has dreams of becoming a successful author, though has never had the discipline or motivation to attempt it. Quick to judge, slightly stuck up and determined to do better than her high-school peers, Kate refuses to work on anything she deems below her standards, leading her to a long spell of unemployment. Having been held to deadlines in school and then university, Kate is ashamed to find this newfound freedom strangely enjoyable, taking out her frustrations on those around her. She is torn. Who is she? The hard worker who strives for the best, or this new Kate, who is happy sitting around the house doing nothing?

**Emily Fisher** is your 'average' fifteen-year-old. She likes *Harry Styles*, going to the cinema and hanging out with her boyfriend Sam. Unable to slot into any of the school cliques, Emily is a drifter, nice enough to be considered a friend to everyone. She goes through school quietly, unnoticed, mostly sticking with Sam. A 'home-bird', Emily spends much of her time at home in the comfort of her mother and sister, where she truly comes out of her shell. Though she'd never admit it, Emily admires her older sister, Kate, considering her a best friend. With ambitions for university and a studious attitude, Emily hopes to follow in Kate's footsteps and acquire a degree – in what though, she isn't quite sure. With no solid plan in mind, Emily hopes her passion will reveal itself to her soon, wanting nothing more than to have a clear goal to follow.

# The Templetons

**Evangeline 'Eva' Templeton**, forty-five, rich and uptight. Described by many as a 'stuck-up bitch', Eva finds it invigorating to get under people's skin. Often bored and spending most of her days working from home, Eva finds enjoyment in picking at the lives of others, especially the family of Sam's girlfriend. However, though she hides it, behind this judgement Eva is worried. Worried that despite being financially worse off, the Fishers might be happier, closer, and more connected than she'll ever be with her own son.

**Christopher Templeton**, forty-six, is a laid-back property developer and relaxed father to Sam. Taking the 'good cop' role in the parenting duo, he is favoured by Sam and Emily, who see him as being reasonable and approachable in contrast to Eva. Unlike his wife, Christopher always remains collected, taking his time to think things over and gather his thoughts, a trait that Eva finds irritable. Though he finds his wife a challenge at times, Christopher always sticks by Eva, committing to the vow he made her when they were just starting their twenties.

**Samuel Templeton** is sixteen, though he looks more like fourteen. His lanky frame and awkward nature make him an easy target for bullies, though he is more the butt of a joke than a regular target. Unlike his girlfriend Emily, Sam is part of a clique, with whom he plays video games. When things with Emily got more serious, Sam distanced himself from his friends, spending most of his time by Emily's side – another thing for the kids to laugh at. At home, Sam's relationship with his parents is fine. He loves his mother, though her judgemental nature is hard to overlook. When he's not at work, Sam tries to spend quality time with his dad, eager to please him and desperate to make him laugh. Though he loves his parents, Sam often finds himself comparing them to Natalie, his girlfriend's mum, envious of the ease of their relationship.



Ackley Bridge

Created by Ayub Khan Din

© 2017, Channel 4

Source: [https://ackleybridge.fandom.com/wiki/Candice\\_Murgatroyd](https://ackleybridge.fandom.com/wiki/Candice_Murgatroyd)

## Everyone Else

**Jason Pollock** is a thirty-eight-old bum. Since walking out on Natalie and his two daughters, Emily and Kate, to pursue a career in music, Jason has achieved nothing. Having moved into his deceased father's house only three streets down from his children, Jason spends all his time inside, when not at his part-time retail job. Despite a clear lack of motivation, Jason is still adamant that he can pursue his dreams and make it big as a guitarist. This belief is the only thing that stops him from finally acknowledging the potential effects of his abandonment. Often, Jason will drive past Natalie's house, glimpsing at the girls and reassuring himself that they are doing fine without him – something he finds both comforting and a punishment.

**Stephen Twomey** is thirty-three. Charming, likeable, and always ready with a joke. Stephen is hard not to fall in love with – which is probably why Natalie got pregnant with his child. Recently divorced and new to the area, Stephen is just landing on his feet, landing a job in a local bookshop, and putting his English degree to some kind of use. Always taking on new opportunities that arise and desperate to make the most out of life, Stephen can come across as preachy. Many jokingly call him a 'gap year guy' who never grew up, which Stephen laughs off unphased. Not caring what others think of him, Stephen breezes through life the way *he* wants to, unafraid of upsetting people along the way.

**Mrs Margaret Russell** is fifty-five. Having worked as a headteacher in Emily's high school for fifteen years, she is very rigid and stuck in her ways. Most people would describe her as old-fashioned, a comment she chooses to take as a compliment rather than the subtle dig that is intended. Never one to back away from an argument and always first to offer her opinion, Mrs Russell is controversial and disliked by many.



Eastenders

Created by Julia Smith, Tony Holland

© 1985, BBC

Source: <https://www.irishmirror.ie/tv/who-eastenders-liam-butcher-bianca-25120249>

# Setting

Set in a small town in rural Norfolk, the Fisher family find themselves challenged by their surroundings. The limited job prospects isolate Kate further from her ambitions and prevent Natalie from finding secure, well-paid work after losing her job. The small population (just 20,000) means that Emily's secret becomes increasingly harder to keep and the whole family suffer from the judgemental nature of small-town society.

## Key Locations:

**The Fisher House** | Situated on a small council estate, the Fisher's small terraced house is overcrowded with both things and people. With only three bedrooms, the house has no space for the two babies that are on their way. Natalie's financial status means that the house is in a constant state of repair, with half-finished décor and scratched-up furnishings. Yet their house feels homely, with every wall covered in family photographs and school certificates stuck on the fridge. It's comfortable chaos.

**The Templeton House** | A stark opposite of the Fisher house, Eva and Christopher keep their detached five-bed house pristine. On a new, gated estate in the town, the Templeton house is grandiose, with a large garden and double garage. Inside the house is modern and bright, with lots of empty white walls and silver furnishings. The few family photos that are on display are tucked neatly onto organised bookshelves or windowsills, almost out of view. The house is unarguably beautiful, like something from a catalogue.

**High School** | The only high school in the town, Grove Road High School is a large maze of old buildings and outdoor mobiles. Without the funds for a rebuild, the school buildings have been the same for decades and it shows; the ceilings are covered in patches of damp, the paint is chipped and the décor is old-fashioned. The newest part of the school is the courtyard, a green space at the centre with benches, a vegetable patch and outdoor walkways into the various buildings. This courtyard tends to be the hangout spot for the older year students, who claim ownership of the benches.

**The Café** | 'Cuppa Royalty', is a Britpop-themed café where Kate starts working. The walls are heavily decorated in royal family memorabilia and the tables and chairs are all upholstered with the British flag.

# World and Background

In modern-day Britain, the Fisher family have a number of challenges facing them. With unemployment high, a cost-of-living crisis and high levels of anxiety following a global pandemic, the Fishers are navigating through an already challenging world. With the surprise news of another baby on the way, all three women feel the mounting pressures both financially and mentally.



My Mad Fat Diary  
Directed by Tim Kirkby  
© 2013, E4

Source: <https://www.kiddycharts.com/parenting-tips/10-mums-make-feel-less-parenting-failure-toptvmums/>



## Genre, Tone and Style

Mum & Mother is best described as a family drama series, encapsulating the core elements of dramatic television through the struggles of its characters - how will they cope? Will they pull through? Following the different members of the Fisher family, the show will discuss single-parenthood, teen pregnancy, unemployment, class differences and much more, giving the audience a taste of what is an everyday struggle for some families.

Thematically, the show will encapsulate similar features to *Gilmore Girls*, *Better Things* and *My Mad Fat Diary*. Exploring single-parenthood, specifically female-led single-parenthood on a budget, the show will pull from *Lorelai's* dedication, *Linda Earl's* wit and the large family of *Better Things*.

Stylistically, the show will jump between the parallel stories of its central characters much like *This is Us*, giving us snippets of the individual lives within the family unit.



Waterloo Road

Created by Ann McManus, Maureen Chadwick

© 2006, BBC

Source: [https://bbc-waterloo-road.fandom.com/wiki/Ali\\_Redback](https://bbc-waterloo-road.fandom.com/wiki/Ali_Redback)

## Look & Feel

The show will be almost stylistically like a documentary in its appearance. With simplistic colouring, locations as opposed to sets and using age-appropriate actors, the audience will feel immersed in the world of the characters, like they're watching a documentary. Shows like *Waterloo Road* and *My Mad Fat Diary* are key visual references, using pre-existing buildings for their shoots. Doing this will help to establish the locations and give the show the documentary effect, almost like a fly on the wall of their lives.



Sources:

<https://www.cnbc.com/2016/12/05/career-mistakes-robby-makes-in-the-gilmore-girls-reboot.html> | <https://property.mitula.co.uk/property/terraced-houses-great-varmouth> | <https://www.visitnorfolk.co.uk/destination/holt> | <https://www.dailystar.co.uk/tv/bbc-confirms-holby-city-axe-25053680> | <http://waterlootvroad.weebly.com/rochdale-location.html> | <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/lists/cast-juno-1054254/> | <https://www.marca.com/en/lifestyle/tv-shows/2022/04/07/624e137d268e3e9d5e8b45a6.html>



High School

Produced by Leslie Cowan

© 2022, Amazon Freevee

Source: <https://www.harpersbazaar.com/culture/film-tv/a41576909/tegan-and-sara-quin-high-school-ode-to-coming-of-age-and-coming-out-interview/>

## Potential for more?

There is a large potential for Mum & Mother to be a serialised show. The characters' lives will continuously change and develop over time. There may be new love interests, new careers, changing homes, marriages and other big life moments that can play out over the years. As long as the family is functioning the series can continue, with audiences wanting to revisit their lives to see what has or hasn't changed for them.

The hypothetical second series would follow life after birth for both Natalie and Emily, seeing how they compare as mothers. Kate's career would be starting. Sam would balance parenthood and sixth form. Evangeline would continue her fight to be the best grandma. But the main life event that throws further challenges into Natalie's life, is a custody battle for Archie. After bonding with his child and comparing financial situations, Stephen questions whether Archie would be better off living with him, something Natalie strongly disagrees with.

There are lives for these characters beyond season one.



Never Rarely Sometimes Always

Directed by Eliza Hittman

© 2020, Focus Features, Universal Pictures

Source: <https://www.heyuguys.com/never-rarely-sometimes-always-review/>