



# ADVENTURES IN MOTHERING

"... how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ..." EPH 3:18

## Let the Adventure Begin!

September 2008

I am so excited to be back at MOPS! Summer has been great but it's time to get back to a more scheduled way of life. Although I love the freedom that summer allows, my devotional life suffers when I'm not on a regular routine. And with a brand new baby in the house this summer, my major focus was on sleep, feeding schedules, and helping my preschooler adjust to his new sister. Yet in spite of the busyness of our household I felt an emptiness and realized that the relationship I hold most sacred had been set aside.

I missed more church than I care to admit, rarely made time to pray and almost never read my bible. Whether it was laundry, cleaning, cooking, or entertaining the kids, there was always something to do—important things or at least they seemed so at the time—that kept me from spending time with God. And when I wasn't busy, I was too tired.

Thankfully, my husband made every effort to take my son to church and keep him focused on what is important, but it didn't seem to help *my personal* walk with God.

When August arrived I really began to sense His absence. I felt lost without Him, the One who knows me best.

When I wrapped my head around that thought and admitted that I had been distant from Him, I was able to move forward and make some serious changes.

I started by making it a priority to set aside time for daily devotions and prayer...no matter how busy I was. With two children under the age of three, it was important to choose a time when I would not be distracted. It was time to return to God...no excuses. It's been amazing to feel close to Him again. He knows me, He understands me, and He loves me in spite of my many imperfections.

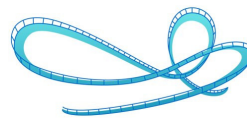
It wasn't long before someone invited me to join a weekly Bible study for the Fall. Immediately my mind was flooded with excuses. *Where will I find the time? I have way too much going on. I have small children.* But then I remembered Matthew 6:33 where we are told to seek His kingdom first and the rest will come. If I am really serious about growing and deepening my relationship with Christ, and I am, then I will do what any relationship requires—make the time. I joined the Bible study.

As you settle into more of a routine this September, I hope you join me in making time for the One who loves us most, our Heavenly Father. God bless!

*By: Jenna Banaitis, MOPS Publicity Coordinator*



"...how long, how wide,  
how high and how  
deep is the love  
of Christ"  
Ephesians 3:18



**Welcome to MOPS!**

**Join the Adventure**

The MOPS theme for **2008-09 is Adventures in Mothering.** This theme equips us, as moms, to learn more about ourselves as we go through the adventure of motherhood. We will celebrate and embrace the fun in the experiences, even in the midst of daily mom life that stretches us emotionally and spiritually.

The metaphor for *Adventures in Mothering* is an amusement park. With the sights, sounds, tastes and smells of the amusement park, motherhood might feel like a sensory overload. But our MOPS group will enjoy this together and learn more about ourselves as women, moms and leaders.



MOPS is a ministry of Westfield Evangelical Free Church  
 568 Southwick Road, Westfield, MA 01085  
 (413) 562-1504  
[www.westfieldefc.com](http://www.westfieldefc.com)  
 Service time is Sundays 10AM  
 (Childcare/Sunday School is provided)



*The Adventure of Obedience*

*By: Glynnis Whitwer*  
[www.proverbs31.gospelcom.net](http://www.proverbs31.gospelcom.net) (June 2008)

**Key Verse:**

***“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” Hebrews 11:1 (NIV)***

The story is told that when Dr. David Livingstone was working in Africa, a group of friends sent a letter saying, "We would like to send other men to you. Have you found a good road into your area yet?" Apparently, Dr. Livingstone sent this message in reply: "If you have men who will only come if they know there is a good road, I don't want them. I want men who will come if there is no road at all."

I wonder if God thinks this about us sometimes. I wonder if He ever calls us to obedience without showing us the path we will travel, or the end result, just to see what we will do. Kind of like a test. Will we obey without a road map?

And I often wonder why following God isn't easier. There are days when I feel tired of getting called out of my comfort zone to obey God. On those days I've been known to whine in my prayers asking God if there isn't any way I can serve Him from the safety of my recliner. But that's not God's ways. God's heart is to reach people in every cul-de-sac, city, country and continent, and that often involves a risk on our part.

Maybe there is something within us that is revealed when we are pressured from without. Maybe the call to obey shines light on the truth about our faith. I know that in order to grow, faith must be stretched, and that's often uncomfortable.

You see, I have not learned to trust God in the easy ways of faith. I have not learned to trust God by reading a book or listening to a great sermon. Nor have I learned to trust God by hearing how my friend trusts God. No, I am learning to trust God by stepping out into an adventure of obedience and discovering for myself that He is trustworthy.

This happened when my husband and I started tithing (after I resisted for years), and watched God cover all our needs and more. This happened when I obeyed His command to write a book (even though I didn't know what I would write about), and watched God open doors of opportunity. This happened when we said yes to adoption, and are watching the blossoming of two little girls who now have a hope and a future.

Obeying when God hasn't revealed the steps along the way or the final destination is challenging. But when we choose to walk by faith and not by sight, God gets all the glory in the end because we KNOW we couldn't have done it on our own!

*Dear Heavenly Father, I praise You for being completely trustworthy. Thank You for having my best interest at heart, even when the path to obedience seems scary. Help me to take the next step of faith, even when I don't see where I'm going. I will choose to trust You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**

*"Making the decision to have a child - it's momentous. It is to decide forever to have your heart go walking around outside your body."*

*- Elizabeth Stone*



## What is MOPS?

MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) is a non-denominational Christian ministry program designed to nurture mothers with children from infancy through kindergarten. MOPS helps moms...and MOPS makes a difference in the lives of families. Visit [MOPS.org](http://MOPS.org) for more information and resources on mothering preschoolers.

The MOPS International theme for 2008-2009 is **Adventures in Mothering**. The content for our year is focused on learning more about ourselves as we go through this crazy adventure called motherhood.

[www.orgsites.com/malmopsofwestfield](http://www.orgsites.com/malmopsofwestfield)



## Message from a Child...

author: unknown

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you hang my first painting on the refrigerator, and I immediately wanted to paint another one.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you feed a stray cat, and I learned that it was good to be kind to animals.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you make my favorite cake for me, and I learned that the little things can be the special things in life.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I heard you say a prayer, and I knew that there is a God I could always talk to, and I learned to trust in Him.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you make a meal and take it to a friend who was sick, and I learned that we all have to help take care of each other.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you give of your time and money to help people who had nothing, and I learned that those who have something should give to those who don't.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you take care of our house and everyone in it, and I learned we have to take care of what we are given.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw how you handled your responsibilities, even when you didn't feel good, and I learned that I would have to be responsible when I grow up.

When you thought I wasn't looking I saw tears come from your eyes, and I learned that sometimes things hurt, but it's all right to cry.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw that you cared, and I wanted to be everything that I could be.

When you thought I wasn't looking I learned most of life's lessons that I need to know to be a good and productive person when I grow up.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I looked at you and wanted to say, 'Thanks for all the things I saw when you thought I wasn't looking.'

LITTLE EYES SEE A LOT...

Each of us (parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, teacher, & friend) influences the life of a child.

How will you touch the life of someone today? Live simply. Love generously. Care deeply. Speak kindly.



## MOPPET WORKERS NEEDED

Calling all MOPS Grandmothers and Grandfathers! We need your help! Volunteer a few hours once a month to help in our MOPPET Program by reading a book, rocking a baby, helping with crafts, or playing games.

Please call Michelle Longey at 737-3377 if you are able to help.



### WOMEN IN THE WORD

Join us on **Thursday Mornings** as we study the Bible. This is an ongoing study through the school year that is held at Westfield Evangelical Free Church. This year you can choose from four different studies. All meetings are from **9:15a – 11:15a and begin on Sept. 18th**. Childcare is provided through age 6. For more information, contact Karen Loftus at 562-9903.

**Come & be blessed!**



### MOPS COMMUNITY OUTREACH

**November & December:**  
Adopt a family for Christmas

**January & February:**  
Serve dinner at the Community Table in Westfield to the Homeless.

**March & April:**  
Spring Cleaning – we will donate items to the Bethlehem Houses and Lutheran Social Services.

**Stay tuned for more info.**

# New England

## Nights with **Beth Moore**

### 2008 dates and locations

Monday, October 13	<b>Essex Junction, Vermont</b>
Tuesday, October 14	<b>Durham, New Hampshire</b>
Thursday, October 16	<b>Newark, Delaware</b>
Friday, October 17	<b>Bloomfield, Connecticut</b>

To register, call 1.800.254.2022 or visit [www.lifeway.com](http://www.lifeway.com) and click on "Events."

*(Dates and locations subject to change without notice.)*



### STEERING COMMITTEE

Mentor: Diane Hodges, 357-8726  
 Coordinator: Michelle Longey, 737-3377  
 Asst. Coordinator & Discussion Groups: Karin Coutsouridis, 568-6080  
 Creative Activities: Mary Beth Reed, 789-4216  
 Publicity: Jenna Banaitis, 785-1832  
 Hospitality: Maria Seddon, 569-5416 & Sarah Lakota, 351-5936  
 Finance: Beth Ryan, 642-3096

### **MOPPETS:**

Tina Desroches, 357-8592  
 Megan Patterson, 568-0233



### UPCOMING MOPS MEETING TOPICS Mark your calendar (and invite a friend)!

**October 14, 2008:** The Ticket Booth: Surviving Rising Expenses, Pam Peters

**November 18, 2008:** Merry Go Round: Highly Distractible Moms, Carol Barnier ([www.opengifts.org](http://www.opengifts.org))

**December 9, 2008:** The Ferris Wheel: How High and Deep is the Love of Christ, Greg Dyson