



ADVENTURES IN MOTHERING

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

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

January 2009

Happy New Year! I know for some, the end of one year and the beginning of another can be a difficult time, but for me New Year's truly is Happy. Maybe it's just the word "new", which makes me happy. It brings to mind words like, fresh start, beginning, anticipation, excitement, etc. Every year I enjoy taking out our *new* family calendar and filling in birthdays, anniversaries, vacations, and other happenings. I look forward to all the events and even the blank spaces. I wonder how they will be filled in with activities. The anticipation of what each day will bring is so exciting to me.

The Bible says that, "Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." (Lamentations 2:22-23). I have saved my old calendars since I have been married for the reasons in this verse. When I look back to see all that the Lord has brought me/us through, I am reminded how faithful God truly is.

No matter if I break my goals, like the one I had for January – you know, no junk food, no sweets. This resolution lasted almost eight hours into New Year's day when I remembered I had a dark chocolate candy bar in the freezer. I told myself I had to eat it, if it was there until February it would be stale – wouldn't it!?!

Even though I can't even keep a promise to myself, God's promises never fail. His love letter to us, the Bible, is full of His promises. One goal/resolution I hope we've all made and that we all keep is to become familiar with His promises, by reading His Word and ultimately claim these promises as our own. When we do this, no matter what the year ahead looks like or ends up being, good and bad, we will have the blessed assurance that God loves us and "His compassions never fail". May God bless you and your family in 2009.

By: Michelle Longey, MOPS Coordinator



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



MARRIAGE SEMINAR

Focus on the Family presents

"Focus on Marriage" - Seeing your marriage through the eyes of God.
A Simulcast Conference featuring Beth Moore, Dr. Gary Smalley, Dr. John Trent, Dr. Del Tackett, Gary Thomas and special music guest Jeremy Camp.

**Live Via Satellite: February 28, 2009 at
Westfield Evangelical Free Church, 9 am - 4:30 pm**

Register by sending check with contact information to:
WEFC, 568 Southwick Road, Westfield, MA 01085
Dec. 1 - Jan. 31 = \$35/individual, \$59/couple

NEXT MONTH MOPS NEWS!

ANNUAL TOY EXCHANGE: Next month is our much anticipated Toy Exchange. Please bring in all your gently loved toys in good working condition that your children don't play with anymore.

You will be able to exchange them for other "new" toys!

NOTE: You don't need to bring a toy to take one home and vice versa!

TUNNEL OF LOVE: In addition to our Toy Exchange, next month we will have a very special quest speaker. Pastor Dave Young from Westfield Evangelical Free will be speaking on marriage, love and relationships. Please come to enjoy this very special message. Invite a friend!



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



CHILDHOOD OBESITY:
Making weight loss a family affair
www.mayoclinic.com/health/childhood-obesity

by: *The Mayo Clinic Staff*

Childhood obesity treatment — and prevention — begins at home. Here's how to change unhealthy behaviors and create a healthy-weight environment for the entire family.

Childhood obesity is usually caused by eating too much and exercising too little. The solution is eating healthier foods and increasing physical activity, but it'll be tough for your child to do it alone. The most effective way to treat — and prevent — childhood obesity is to adopt healthier habits for the entire family.

Change family behaviors. Rather than singling out your child, encourage the whole family to make healthy lifestyle changes. Consider these helpful hints:

Start small. Gradual changes are easiest to incorporate into the daily routine — and to maintain long term. Start by making a few small changes, such as turning off the TV during dinner, switching from soda to milk or water, or taking a family walk after dinner once a week.

Set goals. Set realistic, measurable goals for each family member, and then determine family goals. For example, your child's goal might be to eat fruit for afternoon snacks. Your goal might be to take a brisk walk three days a week. The family's goal might be to limit fast-food meals to once a month.

Recognize triggers. Be prepared for situations that may tempt you to fall back to your old habits. If you're used to eating popcorn at the movies, for example, bring only enough money for admission — or agree that you'll share a small carton of popcorn with your child rather than ordering separate treats.

Celebrate success. Frequent rewards can help keep your family motivated. When your child meets a goal — by asking for fruit rather than cookies after school, for example — offer praise and attention. When your family meets a goal, brainstorm healthy ways to celebrate your success. You might try a family movie night, a weekend picnic or a trip to the pool.

Keep it positive. Focus on healthy lifestyle changes, rather than your child's appearance or a number on the scale. Remember, treating childhood obesity isn't a race. It takes time and dedication to replace established behaviors with new, healthier behaviors.

Be flexible. It'll take time to get used to your healthier habits. Encourage everyone to stick to the plan — but if the goals aren't working for your family, consider making adjustments. It's better to create a new plan than to stick to one that isn't working.

Create a healthy-weight environment.

As you work toward healthy habits and behaviors, create an environment that supports these efforts.

For example:

Surround your family with healthy foods. Stock your kitchen with fruits, vegetables, whole-grain foods and other healthy choices. Keep junk food and sugary drinks out of the house.

Eat in. Reduce the number of meals your family eats in fast-food and other restaurants. Better yet, sit down together for family meals. Try new recipes or healthier alternatives to family favorites. Keep portion sizes reasonable. Encourage your kids to get involved in shopping and meal preparation.

Build physical activity into the daily routine. Organize family outings that involve physical activity, such as walking to the library or taking a family bike ride. Include children in active chores, such as washing the car or walking the dog. Encourage your kids to participate in school or community sports — or to dance, jump rope or do other physical activities on their own.

Limit household screen time. Set reasonable rules for TV and computer time, such as one to two hours a day for each family member — including Mom and Dad. Keep TVs and computers out of the bedrooms, and don't allow eating in front of the TV or computer.

Be a positive role model. Remember, the best way to get your child onboard with the new, active lifestyle is to commit to the changes yourself. Your actions teach your child what to eat, how much to eat and when to eat. You also encourage your child to be physically active every day if you make it a priority yourself.

Here's how you can be a positive role model:

- Eat nutritious foods.
- Don't bring junk food into the house.
- Control your portion sizes.
- Save treats and high-calorie snacks for special occasions.
- Turn off the TV.
- Be physically active every day.
- Stress the importance of healthy lifestyle choices, rather than a number on the scale.
- Making lifestyle changes can be challenging, especially when you're busy juggling the demands of daily life.

If your family works together and supports each others' efforts, you're more likely to succeed. Eventually healthy habits will become routine — and you'll be well on your way to treating childhood obesity and improving your family's health.



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 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/ma/mopsowestfield



A NEW YEAR'S PRAYER FOR YOU

by: *Wendy Blight*

www.proverbs31devotions.com

“Pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord.” Lamentations 2:19a (NKJV)

It's a new year. What is on your heart? What would you like to accomplish? What would you like to change? Have you made any New Year's Resolutions? A few years ago, I gave up making New Year's Resolutions. I could never keep them. One year, instead of a resolution, I wrote a prayer. Throughout the year, I watched in amazement as God worked in my life and in the lives of others through my simple prayer. Today, I would like to pray for you. Below is the prayer that the Lord put on my heart. As you read it, I invite you to use it as a model. Sit with the Lord and ask Him to help you personalize this prayer for you.

Father in heaven, thank You that You are Sovereign. Thank You that You know each precious woman reading this devotion. You planned for her to meet You here today. You created her heart. You know her every need, her deepest desires, and her open wounds. Lord, I ask that in this new year, You would fall afresh on her.

Father, You are Holy and call us to be Holy. Yet, we confess that so often our hearts wander from You, our speech does not glorify You, and our actions do not honor You. Soften our hearts to receive the words Your sweet Spirit has to speak to us. Clothe us with humility. Take away our desire to always be right and have our own way.

Help us to seek Your Word in all that we say and do. Help us to submit to Your Word; allow it to penetrate those deep places in our hearts that resist change. If necessary, put us through the refiner's fire to burn off those things that keep us from walking in step with Your character

Give us hearts that love and seek after Truth above all else. Give us wisdom and discernment to reject the lies of this world and the evil one. Guide us into all Truth. Guard our hearts and keep our eyes fixed on You. Grow in us those things that will make us more like You. As we study Your Word, fill us and saturate us with You!

Today, Father, we surrender our thoughts, our speech, and our hearts. Thank You that You are Faithful and True. We trust You will do a mighty work in us and through us this year and carry it on to completion until the day we step into eternity with You. Help us to trust in You with all our hearts and lean not on our own understanding. Help us to acknowledge You in all our ways so that we can hear Your voice as You say, "This is the way, walk in it."

Lord, we love You and thank You that You love us. May our lives be a living testimony of You. We ask this in the powerful and mighty name of Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord who will do immeasurably more than we could ever ask or imagine. In Jesus' Name, Amen.



SLOW COOKER BBQ PULLED PORK

(The Busy Mom's Slow Cooker Cookbook by: Jyl Steinback)

I made this recently, and I promise it will be one of your favorites. It was so good that we have served it at several parties over the holidays. Not to mention it is SUPER EASY! Enjoy! (Recipe submitted by: Jenna Banaitis)

Ingredients: 2 lbs pork tenderloin; 1 1/2 tsp. garlic powder; 2 cups BBQ sauce (I prefer Sweet Baby Rays); 1/2 cup frozen chopped onions; bread of choice

- Spray inside of slow cooker with cooking spray
- Carefully trim the meat of visible fat and season it with garlic powder. Place the onions in the bottom of the crock, then lay the meat on top of them.
- Pour barbecue sauce over the meat and flip it around to coat it. Cover and let cook for 7-9 hours on low.
- Carefully remove the cooked meat from the crock and shred using two forks.
- Put the meat back in the crock, mix in the remaining barbecue sauce & onions and let it cook another 15 minutes or so. (You could eat it now, but it's better if it soaks awhile.)
- Serve on any type of TOASTED bread you like best.

HOW WILL YOU RING IN THE NEW YEAR?

THE BELL

I KNOW WHO I AM

- I am God's child (John 1:12)
- I am Christ's friend (John 15:15)
- I am united with the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17)
- I am bought with a price (1 C or 6:19-20)
- I am a saint (set apart for God). (Eph. 1:1)
- I am a personal witness of Christ. (Acts 1:8)
- I am the salt & light of the earth (Matt 5:13-14)
- I am a member of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27)
- I am free forever from condemnation (Rom. 8: 1-2)
- I am a citizen of Heaven. I am significant (Phil 3:20)
- I am free from any charge against me (Rom. 8:31 -34)
- I am a minister of reconciliation for God (2 Cor 5:17-21)
- I have access to God through the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:18)
- I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realms (Eph. 2:6)
- I cannot be separated from the love of God (Rom 8:35-39)
- I am established, anointed, sealed by God (2 Cor 1:21-22)
- I am assured all things work together for good (Rom. 8:28)
- I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit (John 15:16)
- I may approach God with freedom and confidence (Eph. 3: 12)
- I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Phil. 4:13)
- I am the branch of the true vine, a channel of His life (John 15: 1-5)
- I am God's temple (1 Cor. 3: 16). I am complete in Christ (Col. 2: 10)
- I am hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:3). I have been justified (Romans 5:1)
- I am God's co-worker (1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor 6:1). I am God's workmanship (Eph. 2:10)
- I am confident that the good works God has begun in me will be perfected. (Phil. 1: 5)
- I have been redeemed and forgiven (Col 1:14). I have been adopted as God's child (Eph 1:5)
- I belong to God
- Do you know
- Who you are?



SIMPLE SHAKERS (www.familyfun.com)

Little kids seem born to shake: rattles, juice in a sippy, their own groove thing. You can delight them with this simple homemade shaker crafted from -- because we know you've got no shortage -- a pair of laundry detergent caps.

MATERIALS:

- 2 clean laundry detergent caps
- 1/3 of rice or un-popped pop corn
- Hot glue
- Colorful duct tape
- Time needed: Under 1 hour

1. To make one, start with 2 clean, same-size caps, pour 1/3 cup of rice or un-popped corn into one, then seal them together with a line of hot glue.
2. For added safety and decoration, wrap the seam a few times with a length of colorful duct tape.



DATE NIGHT ALERT!!! FIREPROOF MOVIE

Join us on **January 17th** at Westfield Evangelical Free Church for a free couple's dinner at 5:30pm followed by the new movie, FIREPROOF at 7pm. This movie is "amazing, action-packed, heartwarming, and a great resource to help strengthen and affirm marriages!" Dr. Gary Smalley
Please sign up at the registration desk in front as we need to prepare enough food for everyone.

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

MOPPETS:

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

