

# mommy the CEO

by Barbara  
Curtis



It was the kind of splendid September day when sending kids to school just feels wrong. Fortunately, that year I was homeschooling and calling the shots. Plus we were living in California, an hour from the Pacific Ocean. For all I knew, it could be the last day of summer, and we wouldn't want to miss that. So it was off to the ocean with five children under eight years of age—Josh, Matt, Ben, Zach and Sophia.

Together, we cleaned up from breakfast, prepped the car, then gathered beach blankets, umbrella, towels, swimsuits, diapers, sunglasses, sand toys, first aid kit, sunscreen, a cooler full of snacks and drinks—ay yi yi yi yi! Hello, motherhood, goodbye spontaneity.

I loaded the assorted car seats then strapped, snapped and buckled five wiggling bodies into Big Blue—the 1989 Suburban we grew out of only a few years later. And we were on our way.

With everyone else in school, the whole beach was ours. I staked out our territory close to the water, hauled everything down from the car, and set up camp. For five hours I served as personal valet, sunscreen slatherer, weather advisor, recreation director, swim instructor, lifeguard, EMT, food concessionaire, manners consultant, bus boy, interpreter, peace negotiator, psychologist—not to mention lost-and-found.

Finally, I hauled everything back to the car, strapped, snapped and buckled five sunscreen-and-sand-coated no-longer-wiggly warm, limp bodies back into Big Blue and headed for home.

The sun through the window was soothing, and the car was full of contentment. It had been a wonderful day, and I was pleased with myself as a mother.

Then from the back seat, I heard Zach clear his throat, and in his

deadpan four-year-old Eeyore voice ask, “Mom, when are you going to get a job?”

“This is my job,” I said, somewhat amused and just a little edgy.

But homeward bound, as the kids fell asleep one by one and I was left alone with my thoughts, I began to see the beauty of Zach's question: Somehow—even though it could be hard work and even though I had my testy moments—my kids didn't think of motherhood as a job.

And I decided that was a good thing—because motherhood isn't really a job at all, but a calling. And callings just don't look like jobs, because they require more of a person than a job requires.

Which makes it hard for moms whose days are spent conquering mountains of laundry, creating peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and kissing *owies*.

We live in a world where success is measured by progress—as recorded on report cards, sales reports, performance reviews and pay raises. And symbolized by ribbons, trophies and merit badges. In our lifetimes, our husband and children will bring scores of these items home and make us proud. We'll put them in scrapbooks, sew them on uniforms, frame and hang them up for all to see.

But I don't know of any special awards for teaching a child to tie her shoe or coming to dinner when he's called. No raises or praises when a mother drops everything to drive someone to the store for posterboard: “*Your project's due tomorrow? But it's almost eight o'clock!*”

Every day this goes on—everyday moms doing everyday things—sometimes struggling with feelings of inferiority or even worthlessness—just being obedient to their call.

But while motherhood can look easy—it's certainly not rocket science, after all—the irony is this: While lots of important people in important places conduct lots of important business every day, the truly most important work in the whole world is really going on at home, where the CEO is Mommy.

And God is like an equal opportunity employer, giving every woman in the world—through birth and adoption—this wonderful, unequalled opportunity.

I guess if we got disgruntled enough from lack of appreciation, we could start a Mommy Power movement (the same seeds of discontent that began the feminist movement—only in a direction away from motherhood). We could have bumper stickers that say: *If Momma ain't happy, ain't nobody happy.*

We could sue people who put us down at parties and maybe even get a special mention as a protected minority not to be discriminated against.

But that wouldn't be very mommy-like, would it? Because there's something about mommies that should be soft where others are hard, kind where others are cruel, patient where others can't wait. We may not start out that way at all, but there's absolutely nothing like motherhood to change anything about us that needs to be changed.

At least, that's how it's been on my motherhood journey. I set out to make a home, to grow a family and to help my children reach their potential.

The most amazing thing is that while I was helping them reach theirs, God was helping me reach mine.

*Be sure to hug a mother today!* □

*Barbara Curtis and her husband, Tripp, are raising 12 children, three of whom are adopted. In 2004 the Curtises received the Angel in Adoption Award from Congress. In addition to appearing regularly in the Plain Truth, Barbara's work is published in a wide variety of Christian magazines.*