



The Mom's Almanac

From Erin...

When I moved to Rockford in 2003 I moved away from my entire family, friends and everything that was familiar to me. I was also 39 weeks pregnant with my first child and I was lost. I knew no one, had no friends and my husband drove 60 miles away every day to his job while I stayed at home, alone. Once Elijah, our first son, was born I thought things would be easier, less lonely. I was wrong. Hormones kicked in, my emotions went awry, and I was on the phone constantly to my sister who was over an hour away. Then someone told me to find a local MOPS group. Huh? Why would I want to join a group of people who talk about moping your floors? But, it intrigued me for some reason (God) and I found this group here at First Free. I walked in the first day without knowing anyone. The room was filled with strange women, the smell of good food and there was a really perky woman speaking from the stage who claimed she was a mom and had 2 little boys. She made me laugh. Immediately, I felt welcomed by these women. The person

whose table I was assigned to was very friendly and introduced me to the other women. I cannot recall what we did at that meeting but I do recall wanting to come back. So I did. I kept coming. Then, the best part, I got involved, really involved. I started out being a discussion group leader, which was fun, but I was terrible at it, I rarely called the women at my table, play dates never happened and my table never really "gelled". I sincerely apologize to the women who were at my table that year, I had no idea what I was doing! Then, I heard that there was an opening to serve as hospitality coordinator so I jumped at the opportunity. I loved throwing parties, decorating, and cooking for people—so I was in. That was the first year I made some of the best friends of my life—and my first true friends in Rockford. We worked together, had fun together, had issues and worked through them and became great friends through the whole process. Since I have served on the steering team for the past 4 years, I can truly say that all of the

women I have served and worked with are all great friends. They are women I know I can call in celebration, in sorrow, in concern—I can call on them anytime and they will drop what they are doing and be there for me. I know it because I've done it.

I have learned that God will do amazing things in your life when you are wholeheartedly serving Him. He has taught me so many things since I have been involved in MOPS. He has shown me bits of His love for me through you, the MOPS moms. He blessed me with a more sympathetic heart towards hard issues women face by bringing me through them, with other MOPS moms support or showing me others who have suffered them, allowing me to play a small part in their healing and encouragement. Through serving, my relationship with Him and faith in Him has grown tremendously since that first MOPS meeting. I have met so many amazing women through MOPS and I am blessed enough to call them my friends. God has smiled down on me through this

2009-2010 MOPS Steering Team

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MOPS group and I am so thankful. I am thankful He brought each of you into my life. As I step down from being Coordinator this year know that you have blessed me by letting me serve you. Thank you. I hope you all have the same opportunity, in some way, to receive God's blessings they way I did through MOPS. I will miss serving you all next year but I will be thinking and praying for you all. May God bless you sweetly this summer and during the next MOPS year!

My Love, Erin

Butter Braids UPDATE

Thanks to success with sampling at First Free church and more orders over the past 2 Sundays, we have extended our fundraiser and now have new turn in and delivery dates.

The competition is still on...The top seller will get next session's meeting fees waived, worth \$36, and the 2nd place top seller will get session 1 childcare for one child covered,

worth \$27, or the equivalent as a credit towards her meeting fees if she doesn't have a child in MOP-PETS.

- REVISED—Turn in order forms and payment to Tiffany by May 11.
- REVISED—Pick up braids at First Free on Friday, May 21 at 10 am

or at our May 25 play date. Bring a cooler to keep your order cool!

- Tiffany's phone number is 815-978-9697 and her email is tagcmore@yahoo.com.

"Where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them." Matthew 18:20

Yay! Summer Play Dates!

Woohoo! Park play dates and more!

Tuesday, May 25, 10 am—All group play date at Tammy Anderson's home, 2219 Jonquil Place, Rockford, 61107. We'll have playtime in the fenced backyard for the kids, coffee and chatting for the moms, and morning snack treats for moms & kids. Sign up today just to let us know you're planning to come. Feel free to bring a friend!

Tuesdays, June 8 & 22, 10 am—Meet us at Aberdeen Park at Orth & Olson Rds. There are picnic tables, a shelter, and restrooms. Bring sand toys too.

July 13 & 27, 10 am—Meet at Hunter Park near Reid Farm & Spring Creek Rds. (west of Perryville) It's set back just north of Spring Creek Rd. No shelter or restrooms are available here.

August 10 & 24, 10 am—Meet us at Alpine Park just north of Colonial Village Mall on the east side of Alpine Rd. It's a great park for a wide range of ages. Bring sand toys. There's a shelter, picnic tables and restrooms.

To see copies of past newsletters and view our speaker/topic list for this year visit our website at: www.firstfreewomen.org

Pool play dates! One of our moms, Brenda Chomiak, is planning to host a couple of all group pool play dates at her home near Guilford and Perryville. Check your email this summer for dates, her address and phone number.

Do you know of a great park for toddlers or preschoolers? Please let us know! Are you and a group of moms getting together with your kids somewhere this summer? If you want to invite the rest of our group, send an email to tammyianderson@yahoo.com with the details, or call her at 815-980-8202. We're working on rain location options too—details will be emailed later.

If you're headed to a pool, park, festival, or anywhere else with kids, take some brochures and tell other moms about your MOPS group. New brochures with next year's information will be available in June. Stop by First Free Church's main office to pick up some. **Let's make sure no mom is left mothering alone!**

Things you need to know ...

- The childcare rooms open up at 8:45am. You are welcome to come at that time, drop off your children, and join us in the meeting room for coffee and conversation before MOPS begins at 9am.
- In case of bad weather, MOPS will be cancelled if Rockford Public

School District 205 is closed.

- In an effort to protect the safety of our little ones, the childcare doors (entrance B) will be closed and locked at 9:45am. If you are later than 9:45am use entrance A.
- To keep all of our children and staff

healthy please wash your children's hands with soap and water before placing them in their rooms.

- Refer to the childcare Health and Wellness Policy sheet in your folder when your child is ill and for items to bring.
- Babies 3 months and younger are welcome during the meeting. Children older than 3 months should be in childcare.

The Mission of First Evangelical Free Church is to bring people into a life-changing and growing relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

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