

Mothering in Mozambique

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Missionary, with her husband Jeremy, to Mozambique
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Being a Mom here in Mozambique is very different from what it's like when we are in the U.S. Each time I go to the States for a time and come back I am hit again by this stark contrast. There are so many unusual circumstances that require creative parenting. I would like to share with you some of the ups and downs of motherhood here.

The first Sunday after we got back in February we went out to Upacho. I was proud to show off my brand new baby. This excitement quickly wore off when I was surrounded for the whole church service by over 50 children trying to get a good look at the baby and our other two boys. I had forgotten the importance of leaning against a wall so they can't surround me like that. Anyway, many of the kids were coughing right on us and I started getting worried that my 7-week old baby would catch some terrible disease. Trying to balance taking care of Joshua while making sure Luke and Andrew stayed content and quiet was quite a challenge. This included trying to keep them clean even though they were sitting on a mud floor. I gave up on that. They looked VERY dirty by the time we got home, which also points out a major difference in parenting here. We give our children baths here because they are dirty. The water looks brown when they are done.

When we are out in people's homes here, food is an interesting issue. The boys "ooh and aah" over the xima (cornmeal mush) and other food served to us. When we are served tiny dried, whole fish I have to carefully take the meat off the bones for each of the boys. When we are served unknown cuts of meat we give the boys the "choice" pieces of fat and skin. They are thrilled! We are usually served on a mat with the food there on the floor beside us. Trying to keep the boys' feet out of the food and keep their hands from touching the floor etc. presents a huge challenge and often leaves me quite frustrated.

I feel strongly about trying to keep the boys somewhat clean because of all the disease around us. If the kids do get sick there is no good health care anywhere near us. I can't run them over to the emergency room or to see the doctor. Even when the boys have needed stitches we've had to make do with butterfly bandages.

An interesting aspect of having a baby here is that I have to keep a good eye on women when they are holding Joshua. This is so that they don't try to nurse him. We have suspected this a time or two in the past and take extreme measures to prevent it. Also, when I nurse Joshua in the U.S. people avoid looking. Here women and men alike try their best to get a look. Of course, having a baby here also means using cloth diapers since we can't easily get disposable diapers.

A few more differences in mothering here is that the other team moms and I have to rotate teaching Bible class and preschool since there's nothing else available. There are no Mothers' day outs or McDonalds playgrounds to take the kids to. I will also start home schooling the kids soon.



There are lots of positive aspects of raising kids here, too. It is wonderful for them to get the experience of traveling around and living in other cultures. They are exposed to Portuguese and Makua constantly. We also have lots of quality family time since there isn't much else to do at night. The boys have wonderful life-long friendships with the other kids on the team as well as missionaries in other areas. They also play hard outside all day everyday, since the weather allows for this year round.

Please keep us and the boys in your prayers as we live here in Mozambique. Pray that God would give us an extra measure of patience and wisdom as we deal with unusual circumstances. Pray that the boys will enjoy their life and home here.