

F o c u s o n t h e F a m i l y[®]

BUT MOM, I DON'T WANT TO MOVE!

Easing the Impact of Moving
on Your Children

Susan Miller



Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.
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But Mom, I Don't Want to Move!

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Foreword

The news comes in. It's official: You're going to move.

Now you've got to go in and talk to the kids. In particular, you've got to talk to that one child who has already exhibited all the warmth of barbed wire when it comes to even entertaining the thought of moving.

But Mom, I Don't Want to Move!

I love Susan Miller's title because it hits so close to home for so many of us. Susan knows from firsthand experience the challenges of making more than a dozen family moves. She knows that while packing and picking a new place to live are stressful, getting the kids to pull together can be far more draining.

For many parents, trying to get a child on board with a move—and helping him or her positively adjust after the move—is like trying to push a long rope. You push to the right, the rope bends to the left. You push to the left, the rope bends to the right.

How do you get leverage in your child's life to make the very best of a move? The answer to that question, I strongly believe, is in the book you hold in your hands. For what Susan Miller does in an exceptional way is help you face the emotions and gain the insights you need to make the best move possible. You *can* get a rope to go in the direction you want it to go, but you only do so by holding on to one end of the rope while walking in a positive direction. Let Susan guide you in the steps you need to take to get things moving and make the very best out of a challenging situation—before, during, and after your move.

On a personal note, I've known Susan and her husband, Bill, for over a decade. I've seen her bless and build up and encourage women, first at our home church, and now across our country. I feel she is without peer, and the “go to” person on making successful, God-honoring moves.

FOREWORD

You're going to love this book, but even more, I urge you to get involved in Susan's N.E.W. Ministries. This is a support system for moms just like you who are facing, or have just made, a move. You don't have to do it all alone. There are N.E.W. Ministries classes across the country as well as great resources—like this book—that can speak words of encouragement, hope, and wisdom into your life.

May the Lord bless your move, your life, your family, and especially give you the wisdom to love and lead that child who says, "But Mom, I don't want to move!"

JOHN TRENT, PH.D.
President, StrongFamilies.com
Scottsdale, Arizona

Introduction

Dear Moving Friend,

I knew in my heart that writing this book was eventually going to happen. Over the years, I have listened to the cry of your heart. As a parent, you desperately want to help your children in their transition and adjustment of moving. In some way, you want to protect them from going through the very things you have experienced in moving: your fear of leaving behind all that is familiar to face the unfamiliar; your pain when you have to say good-bye to close friends, family, and community; your overwhelming feeling of loneliness and loss of identity as you move to a new place. In other words, you want to prepare them as best you can with ways to cope and adjust and handle the many changes that moving brings. For some of you, it takes all your energy just to deal with your own emotions that are raw and confusing.

I know what you are thinking and feeling at this very moment, whether you are getting ready to move, or if you have recently moved. After uprooting 14 times since I've been married, 10 of those times with children, I've been where you are mentally and emotionally in the maze of moving. I have been angry, depressed, sad, and just plain weird sometimes. I've felt happy and excited about going somewhere new and different. I have cried bucketsful of tears and grieved over all the losses that come with moving. I have laughed at the silliest things in order to keep a perspective on all the change and chaos around me. I've blamed God and praised God for circumstances beyond my control.

It all started when my husband, Bill, chose a career in hotel/restaurant management. Climbing the corporate ladder meant moving every two to three years. For many years we relocated within the southern states. Then came a company transfer to the Wild West! With the move

from Atlanta, Georgia, to Phoenix, Arizona, came the most difficult transition and adjustment I had ever encountered. It was a change point emotionally and spiritually in my life that soon evolved into a passion to encourage other women in their journey of moving.

That passion eventually became the stepping-stone for starting Newcomers Enfolding Welcoming (N.E.W.) Ministries. This ministry now reaches women all over the world who move, and impacts them with the love, hope, and encouragement of Jesus Christ. God also used that move as a catalyst for me to write the book *After the Boxes Are Unpacked: Moving On After Moving In*. It is based on my moving experiences, coupled with the biblical principles I know and trust. It was written especially for you, from my heart.

I never cease to be amazed at how God took the moves in my life and used them all for His glory. And I know He wants me to travel with you one more time down the road of moving. This time it will be to encourage and equip you, as you in turn encourage and equip your children through their journey of moving. Believe me, I've made my share of mistakes in parenting each time we uprooted our children to move. I didn't always do the right thing or say the right thing, and I wasn't always there for them emotionally. I can, however, share with you what I have learned along the way, and even what I would have done differently.

I want you to hear more than just my voice, so N.E.W. Ministries sent a national survey to parents, teachers, and counselors asking for their input on how to help children in the transition and adjustment of moving. You'll get their perspective as well. More importantly, you'll hear from children and teens as they share their heart about moving. More than 10 million children ages 1 to 14 and over two million teenagers ages 15 to 19 relocate each year, and they have significant input on the subject!¹

At the end of each chapter you'll find questions that you can discuss together as a family, with your child individually, or use as personal

reflection. Hopefully this will promote open communication with one another and a clearer understanding of each other's feelings and emotions. It will also present the opportunity for vulnerable sharing to take place and God's Word to encourage each of you. Included is a chapter on how to pray for your children with prayers for specific needs.

My purpose in writing this book is twofold. It will equip you to help your children and teens before, during, and after a move. It will include practical tips, stories from those who have been down the same road, and lots of encouragement along the way. However, it's not only about knowing what to do; it's also about what God will teach you through the process and the experience. Biblical principles and Scripture will be your road map. By knowing, trusting, and living out the biblical principles of an immovable God, you will have a profound effect on the life of your child. And in the process, God will change *you*.

Never lose heart and never give up! (Galatians 6:9) This book will not only equip you, but will give you the hope and encouragement you are looking for. I'm standing on the sidelines cheering you on!

FROM MY HEART,
SUSAN MILLER

PART I

Before the Move . . .
“Do We Have to Go?”



CHAPTER ONE

Preparing the Rooms of Your Heart for a Move: First Things First!



I was so wrapped up with my own feelings, as well as the details and planning of the move, that I felt like I wasn't there to listen and talk to my children. I wish I had been there more for them.

MARY, A MOVING MOM

“I am emotionally and physically exhausted,” said Chris with tears in her eyes. Her three children were in school, and she had come by to tell me they were moving in three weeks. “I feel like I’m being pulled in a hundred directions, and there is nothing left in me to help my children through this move. Where do I begin?” she said in desperation. As I sat and listened to her all-too-familiar story, my heart ached for her. I could see the anguish in her eyes and sensed her feelings of helplessness. I couldn’t fix things or change her circumstances, but I could give her encouragement and comfort to help ease the pain. Somehow just being together seemed enough for her at the time.

Her words *Where do I begin?* have often come to mind. I thought of the familiar instructions heard so many times on an airplane: “In case of an emergency, secure your oxygen mask first, then help your child!” Before you can begin to help your child through the transition and adjustment of moving, you need to take a deep breath and take care of yourself. So many times during the moving process I would run on empty, with nothing left over to fill our children’s needs. This brings me to the question, “How are you doing?”

Keep in mind that moving is much like an emotional roller-coaster ride. One minute you’re going up, the next minute you’re going down, and you’re never quite sure what the next curve will bring. Right now you may be hanging on to the roller coaster of moving, not sure how you are going to land. Have you even stopped for a minute to check your emotions about this move? Before we begin to focus on your children, let’s take some time together just for you. I want to go beyond your smile. After 14 moves, I know so well how a smile can cover a multitude of feelings. I want to go straight to your heart.

Preparing Your Heart

Picture your heart as a home with many rooms. You prepare the rooms of your home for moving out and for moving in. Have you prepared the rooms of your heart for this move? Perhaps you have closed off a room that holds the sadness of leaving behind beloved friends and family. Maybe there is a room of fear for what the future holds, and that fear is keeping peace from your heart. There could be a room of chaos filled with to-do lists, or a room of exhaustion that prevents joy from entering in.

It doesn’t matter how much information you have on preparing your children for their move. If you haven’t taken the time to prepare your heart emotionally and spiritually, you will be like an empty vessel unable

to pour out the love, care, nurturing, and encouragement your children need during this time.

Where do you begin? Here are 10 steps to prepare your heart for a smooth move. The first four steps are the foundation for all the rooms in your heart.

Step 1: Remember Who Accompanies You

The most important thing for you to remember in your transition is that you are not going through it alone. It's very easy to slip into a pattern of thinking you're carrying this overwhelming responsibility all by yourself! If you are a single mom moving, you might feel especially alone. Even though I was married, at times I felt very much alone in the moving process. Yet God assures us that His presence goes with and even ahead of us. He will never leave us, fail us, or forsake us. Even now when I feel alone and overwhelmed, I am reassured through God's Word that He is with me! You can prepare a room in your heart with this scripture: "The LORD is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed" (Deuteronomy 31:8).

Step 2: Recall God's Faithfulness

Oh, how easily we forget! I can become so consumed in seeing only what's happening around me right now and how it's not going according to the "plan of Susan" that I quickly forget God's faithful track record with me in the past. He has always met all my needs, although not necessarily all my wants (Philippians 4:19). It is all according to His plan, not mine!

I remember one time when we were making two house payments because our house in Atlanta had not sold before we moved to Phoenix. I could not understand why we had to endure such a financial hardship. After one year, the Atlanta house finally sold. Somehow God faithfully

provided a way financially for us to make it month by month. I learned some faith-building lessons that year in trust, patience, and God’s provision. Prepare a room in your heart with faith, not sight (2 Corinthians 5:7).

Step 3: Count Your Blessings

Regardless of your circumstances, I know you can find the blessings in your life. Put aside all the “what ifs” and the “if onlys” and start counting. Instead of having a pity party, have a praise party!

On one of our moves during early marriage days, we lived in an apartment complex that was still under construction. Each day all I saw was the dirt and mud that surrounded us. Every time someone came inside they tracked in more mud. There wasn’t anything that wasn’t covered with dust inside. My “if only” list grew and spilled over into a bad attitude and a grand pity party.

Then one day as I looked out the window, my eyes shifted from the ground to the sky. The sun was gleaming through the trees, and the sky was bright blue. I caught a glimpse of a bird high on a treetop, singing his heart out. Suddenly I realized how I had been looking down and seeing only the negative circumstances. What I needed to do, instead, was simply “look up” to see the positive. I slowly began to count my blessings in spite of the mud, dirt, and dust.

Try looking up instead of down. It’s amazing what you’ll see. Changing your focus can make all the difference in the world. Wallpaper a room in your heart with Psalm 118:24 (NIV): “This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

Step 4: Stay Grounded in What’s Important

A lot of things are going on in your life right now. To-do lists are getting longer, as well as all the suggestions on what to do and how to do

it. You are probably being pulled in a lot of directions and feel somewhat scattered. As I have said many times in the upheaval of moving, “I’m bouncing off the walls. Watch out!” Sometimes I need to be pulled back to the center and get my feet back on the ground before I can move forward.

Are you listening to the voice of the world telling you all the things you have to do and say? Are you listening to society telling you how to look and act to make this a smooth and easy transition in your life? Try listening to the voice of God as He tells you to follow His direction and listen to His wisdom. God’s to-do list is short, just “Come, follow me” (Matthew 19:21, NIV). He also says, “Abide in Me” (John 15:4) and everything else will fall in place. Prepare a room in your heart with God’s Word to keep you rooted and grounded in His love (Ephesians 3:17).

Step 5: Stop and Smell the Flowers

In other words, take time to be good to yourself! Schedule some self-care by taking a break to rest your body, renew your mind, and restore your spirit. Whether it’s before or after your move, the whole transition is hectic and exhausting. Emotions are high and nerves are on edge. You will need an extra measure of energy in the days ahead, so I am giving you permission for a little Rest, Renewal, and Restoration (R, R & R). Some of you won’t slow down otherwise! Because I care about you . . .

Get a good night’s sleep. You don’t have to stay up all night cleaning out drawers or straightening up the house for the movers to come. True confession: I’ve done it! I even had a moving friend who dusted everything before her move!

A 10- or 15-minute nap would always restore me. Love those naps!

Take a walk—a long walk. It will help to clear out the cobwebs in your mind.

Enjoy silence by turning off the television. It will help to settle your thoughts.

Eat right even if you are on the run. This is not the time to eat junk food and skip meals.

When all else fails, turn to comfort foods. We all have our favorites. Mine is peach ice cream!

Take your vitamins and drink lots of water. (Do I sound like your mother?)

Do some light reading with a good book or a magazine.

Listen to soothing music on a CD or cassette.

Pamper yourself and have your toenails painted a pretty color.

Sing your favorite song and maybe do a little dance along with it.

You might want to start journaling your thoughts and feelings about this move. Add some personal prayers. It will be good to look back and see how God has answered them.

Make the time to read your Bible. It will renew your mind with God’s truth at a time when things may seem confusing. He will speak to your situation through His Word. One verse can change the course of your day and your life.

Prepare a room in your heart just for yourself!

Step 6: Ask for Help from Your Friends

I was always so hesitant to ask anybody to help me when we were in the moving process. I didn’t want to impose or inconvenience anyone. Oh, how I could have used an extra pair of hands, a listening ear, or lunch shared over a cardboard box.

Over the years I’ve learned that by not asking for help, I was denying my friends the blessing of being a part of the process of our leaving.

Don't be afraid to ask for help. Part of saying good-bye can be expressed through the gift of serving. The time spent together is priceless. The memories will be cherished. You will be doing them a favor by picking up the phone and saying, "I need you." Prepare a room in your heart for a friend to come and "bear one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2).

Step 7: Be Prepared for the Blues Clues

Recognize the clues when you get the blues! You may feel sad about leaving a great job, dear friends, or a home that's become a part of you. You could be feeling depressed and overwhelmed about uprooting and starting all over again. You might be angry at your husband or even his company for a move you didn't want to make. The fear of going to a new place, not knowing if you will like it there or whether you will fit in, may loom in the back of your mind. Anxiety about choosing the right house, school, community, church, doctor, and even a hairdresser could keep your thoughts preoccupied.

My dear moving friend, you are so normal! With over 40 million people relocating each year, you can count on the kaleidoscope of feelings shared by others like you. When your life becomes unraveled from

Five things you can do in five minutes for a quick refresher

- Put on some lipstick.
- Stop and sit down.
- Make a cup of tea.
- Walk outside and take a deep breath.
- Say a prayer for five things you are thankful for.

a move, you are going to have a flood of emotions and feelings. As the tapestry of your life is woven together again, it is my prayer that it will be with threads of peace, contentment, and joy. “The LORD bless you, and keep you; the LORD make His face shine on you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace” (Numbers 6:24-26). Prepare a room in your heart where you can acknowledge your feelings and seek God’s peace.

Step 8: It’s Okay to Cry If You Want To

Moving is change. With change comes loss. With loss comes grieving. With grieving come tears. When you move, grieving is a natural progression of what happens when you lose someone or something that is a meaningful part of your life. The loss of your friends, community, home, job, and even your church family can fill you with grief even before your move takes place.

Marlena stopped by our office to say good-bye before she moved to Japan. “I’m sorry,” she said. “Every time I talk about moving, I can’t seem to stop crying.” Even though she was looking forward to this move, she was grieving over the loss of dear friends and moving so far away. Saying good-bye was bittersweet for her.

Kendra, whose husband found a new job in Kansas, said to me, “I should be so happy because this is a great move for my husband’s career and I’ll be closer to my family, but I can’t stop crying.” She had put down roots in the community and church for the short time they were there. Having to uproot and transplant so soon was not easy.

For both of them, the inescapable grieving had begun. The release valve was tears. I comforted each friend as I shared in her loss and held her as we cried together.

Prepare a room in your heart for tears to flow. It’s okay to cry. “After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you

to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you” (1 Peter 5:10).

Step 9: When the Heat Is Up, Stay Cool

There will be times when the stress is rising and the pressure is on. Nothing will go according to plan: You are late for a farewell get-together; you can't find the house documents you put in a safe place; the people who might buy your house are coming back and bringing their relatives; and the school just called for you to come and get your sick child. Sound familiar? At times like this, keeping a sense of humor and being flexible are your only chances for survival. Humor can release stress and help put chaos in perspective. Being flexible with a to-do list or a tight schedule can help ease tension and pressure. Prepare a room in your heart to cool down when the heat is up! “A cheerful heart is good medicine” (Proverbs 17:22, NIV).

Step 10: Rise to the Occasion

You can do it! I am excited about what God is going to do in you and through you on this journey. You may take a few detours along the way and even get off on the wrong exit ramp occasionally, but God is right there with you, always ready to guide you back to the right path. He will stretch you beyond your comfort zone and give you the resilience and strength to go through all the bumps along the way. Trust Him on this journey. Seek Him with all your heart. Turn to Him for your stability and security. Embrace the changes this move will bring as an opportunity to learn and grow personally in ways beyond what you could ever imagine.

I will be your cheerleader along the way. I believe in you! I'm standing on the side of the road cheering you on.

And now, with each room you have prepared in your heart, you can move on with confidence. You go, girl!

Moving Right Along

Hopefully, by first taking the time to prepare your heart emotionally and spiritually, you are ready for the chapters ahead as we begin to focus on your child’s journey of moving. However, you may still feel you want to learn more about how to personally go through the process of letting go, starting over, and moving ahead with your life after a move. If so, I encourage you to read my book *After the Boxes Are Unpacked: Moving On After Moving In* (Focus on the Family Publishing).

In the next chapter, let’s begin to take some steps that will prepare your child for the big moving adventure ahead.

Moving Closer Together

1. Which room will you prepare in your heart?
2. What specific thing will you do to take care of yourself?
3. Share your feelings about this move with someone this week.
4. Acknowledge your fear(s) to God. Then release the fear(s) to Him.
5. Call a friend and share a need.
6. Give yourself permission to cry.
7. What Scripture verse(s) will encourage and comfort your heart?

Appendix 1

Prayers from Moms Who Move

To guide you in praying effectively, I've included some prayers from moms who move. Consider using one or more of these prayers to pray for your children during this time of transition. Personalize the prayer you choose by inserting your child's name and including your child's own specific needs.

X

O Lord, restore my children's hearts. Heal any hurts that may have come from all the times we've moved. Lord, remove from their hearts any bitterness or anger they might feel, and replace those feelings with good memories from all our moves. I pray You would bring forgiveness to their hearts for all of the mistakes we made as parents during the times we moved and were insensitive to their needs.

When they look back, may they see that the things You taught them through moving are things they couldn't have learned any other way. Thank You, Lord, that not only do You work in the present and prepare the future, but You also heal the past. In Jesus' name, Amen.

X

I come to You again, dear Lord, on bended knee. I am overwhelmed by my own sense of grief at what we left behind when we moved. Father, my heart is broken for our children. They also miss everything and everybody we left behind when we moved. I know Your Word teaches

that You work all things out for our good, but our children are suffering through this move.

May I be a cup of encouragement to them today. Help me to minister to them in a way that would soothe their hurt. Equip me to understand their hearts and know when to be quiet and listen, when to speak up and instruct, and when to encourage or correct them. Please, Lord, let someone be kind to them today at school. Be a Friend to each of them, Lord. May they feel Your presence throughout the day. In the name of Jesus, I come to You. Amen.

X

Dear Lord,

Please guide and protect our children as they start the first day of school in a new place. Surround them with your angels and help them to not be afraid. Lead them to Christian friends. Please let someone sit with them at lunch and play with them on the playground. Give their teachers an extra measure of patience, kindness, and sensitivity since they are new to school. I pray this will be a good year for them, and that they will walk closely with You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

X

Father God,

Thank You for who You are. Thank You for allowing this wonderful opportunity to stretch us as we move. I ask for Your guidance as I try to be an example for my children during the transition of moving. I pray for patience and a willing spirit that can come only from You. Through my example, I pray that my children will look to You for their security. I pray they will understand that You have a plan for their lives that includes this move.

Please protect them, and guide them toward new friends and activities that will glorify You. I'm reminded of the many times that I've looked back at our moves and always seen Your hand in the situation. You continue to bless us through these difficult times.

I ask for all this in the name of Your precious Son Jesus, Amen.

X

Heavenly Father,

Thank You that You care about all the details of my family's life. Thank You that You gave us peace and direction in this move. Lord, I thank You for Your promise that You will be with us, that You will never leave or forsake us. Your Word says to be strong and courageous, to not be terrified, to not be discouraged. Thank You for the assurance of Your Word.

I lift up my children to You. I pray a hedge of protection around them. I pray that they will be drawn to new friends who know You. I pray that they will not be attracted to evil and will not be led into temptation. I pray that they will stay on Your straight path and not swerve to the right or the left. I pray that they won't give in to peer pressure, but that they will see themselves through Your eyes as a child of God, valued and loved.

I thank You for the plans that You have for their lives—plans to prosper them and not to harm them, plans to give them a hope and a future. I pray that they will catch a vision of the purpose You have for their lives.

Help me as a mom to keep Your Word in my heart and my eyes on You and not on my circumstances. I thank You that You have Your hand on all of us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

X

Dear Lord,

You know the weight on my heart for my children. Give me the wisdom to guide and direct them through every aspect of this move. Give me the discernment to know if they're hiding or stuffing their fears and hurts. Give me the grace not to wrongly react to any anger or frustration. Give me the words of truth to ease their anxieties. Give me the sensitivity to calmly and quietly listen and to clearly understand what they are going through.

Give me the strength not to weigh them down with my own hurts and concerns. Give me the courage not to sweep anything under the rug, or to blow anything out of proportion. Give me inner peace as I stand on Your promises and trust that You are with my children every step of the way. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

X

Dear Lord,

Thank You for these precious children that You have given me. I pray that You will be a real part of their everyday lives. When they are scared or confused, I pray they will go to You first and ask for Your help, then come to me. Help them to be generous and kind to others and make friends easily. As they grow, give them a servant's heart to serve You in some way.

Let the family always be a safe place to come and share their problems and concerns. Help me to give wise answers to the hard questions. Help me to teach them right from wrong at an early age, and instill in them the love of Christ. May they come to know You and love You with their whole hearts, and follow You all the days of their lives. In Jesus' precious name, Amen.

X

Dear Lord,

I pray for our children—that You would be their rock and their shield in this move. I pray they would turn to You to meet their needs, and not to the first friendly face. Protect them from evildoers. I pray they would be friendly to everyone but discerning in whom they choose for friends. Let them not succumb to peer pressure, but be able to find great Christian friends that will last a lifetime. I pray that they would not get into the wrong crowd, and that Your Holy Spirit would direct their every step.

Help me to keep my mouth shut and not to constantly nag about things of little importance. I need to choose my battles wisely and fight only the ones that really matter for eternity. Give me strength to let go of mothering (smothering) and give them room to grow to be the children that You designed them to be. I give my children up to You and know that Your plan for their lives is better than any plan I could devise. In Jesus' name, Amen.

X

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank You, Lord, for these wonderful children You have given to us. I pray, Lord, that You will keep them very near and dear to You as they start going to a new school. I pray for protection as they move about the campus. I pray they will make wise choices in the friends they choose. I pray they will have wisdom to discern when they are in an unhealthy situation, and that You will give them the strength and courage to walk away from those situations. Lord, help them to recognize their gifts and talents from You, and to find places where they can use them. I pray they will choose to study hard and be brave when they need to ask for help. Surround them with Your love, Lord, and let them know how much we love and care for them. Amen.

X

Dear Lord,

I thank You for the very life of my children and the joy of their presence. Through them, You have allowed me to understand unconditional love. As we move, Lord, help them to recognize the difference between what is worldly and what is godly. Guard and protect their thoughts and their hearts. May Your presence surround them, and may You always hold them close. May they learn in the days ahead to turn to You in times of need. Thank You, Lord, that You have given them a spirit of joy. Thank You for all the joy they bring to our family. With a grateful heart, Amen.

Appendix 2

Letters to God from Kids Who Move

I could feel the heartbeat of kids who move as I read through their letters to God. You will get a closer look at moving from their perspective as you read excerpts from some of their letters. It might even help you better understand your own kids' thoughts about moving. You will catch a glimpse of their humor and their sadness, their victories and their defeats, their joy and their pain. (These letters are unedited to preserve the original spelling and punctuation.)

X

Dear God,

I am very happy wherever you put me. I think my house is okay. I just don't like the stairs. I love my teachers and school a lot. So everything is fine.

Talk to you soon. Amber, age 10

X

Dear God,

Our cat did not like the long car ride to Texas. I like my new school. I have mad a lot of friends. We have not found a church yet but we are still looking.

I love you! Sierra, age seven

X

Dear God,

I hate moving because we have to leave all are freindes behind. It was hard to make new freindes. When I moved I did not like it becace I missed my freindes. I missed ever buddie in the naberhood. Savannah, age six

X

Dear God,

I'm only eleven and I have lived in six different houses and four different schools. The hardest part of moving is leaving friends. Not just any friends, but friends who you've shared secrets with, and have become very close to. It seems really unfair to have to move just because of parents work. The first day at a new school is really scary and lonely, because you don't know anyone and it brings back memories of your old friends.

Love, Margaret, age 11

X

Dear God,

Most families don't move around like my family has. This will be my 7th school in 11 years, and this move feels like the hardest one yet. The worst part is how lonely I feel. I am dreading having to start all over again. I don't want to make my parents feel bad so I try to act like it is no big deal, but inside I am nervous and worried. Julie, age 15

X

Dear God,

Please let me go back. Zack, age 11

X

Dear God,

Why did you bring me here? It is so lonely here. I have no friends. I don't like my room. Please fix these problems and if that doesn't work I want to go back home! Megan, age nine

X

Dear God,

I know you care but I sure could use some more help. I am mad at Mom and Dad, mostly Dad for taking this job. I miss my friends. Please help me to like it here. Love, John, age 10

X

Dear God,

I would ask you to guide me so I not a lot scared. That's all. Carly, age six

X

Dear God,

It is so hard being the new kid. Thanks for listening. Riley, age nine

X

Dear God,

When you move it is cool that you end up with new friends. Adam, age eight

X

Dear God,

We read the Bible together and pray. But I am still lonely. Brian, age eight

X

Dear God,

We moved in with my grandpa until my mom and dad find the house they want. It was 2 years before we found a house. We did a lot of house hunting. Now I have my own room and my grandpa doesn't get in my hair about eating a healthy breakfast. Sarah, age eight

X

Dear God,

Please let the other kids like me. I will be nice at the same time. Please let me have nice teachers, and I will respect them. Love, Alix, age 10

X

Dear God,

When I was moving I was nervous about my new school and new friend and new home. Love, Emma, age seven

X

Dear God,

When I moved I missed my old friends but I got new friends. I missed my old house but I got a new house. Brett, age eight

X

Dear God,

Adjusting to a new school is nice because everyone pays attention to you but after a while it wears off. Love, Jennifer, age 15

X

Dear God,

When we moved I was mad, sad, and angry. My sister had no trouble with it but I did. Love, Jessica, age 13

X

Dear God,

At my good bye party at school people were hugging me and telling me how much I was going to be missed. I wanted to race home to tell my Dad I wasn't moving anywhere. Sincerely, Katie, age nine

X

Dear God,

The best thing about moving is that I got a new cat. Brenda, age six

X

Dear God,

Thank you for three bathrooms in our new house. Brianna, age nine

X

Dear God,

We moved cause my Mom thought our new house was cute and better. Savannah, age seven

X

Dear God,

I am trying to keep my head up high since we moved. Thomas, age 11

X

Dear God,

We have to move cause my dad got laid off and couldn't find a job. Please help him find a job. Mark, age seven

X

Dear God,

I wish my parents would look at things from my point of view a little more when we moved. Dottie, age 13

Appendix 3

Finding the Best School for Your Child

Where Do You Start?

Since school will be the hub of your child's life, that's where we'll begin. If you haven't moved yet, hopefully you have already set the wheels in motion to find the best school for your children. The Internet is a great tool for research, as is the library. When possible, many families will select a school first and then the area or neighborhood where they will move.

First, Check It Out

These are some things you will want to consider as you inquire about a school in your new area:

- Curriculum. Find out what the school will be teaching. Ask about the basics that are covered. Inquire about electives and extracurricular activities, like sports or clubs.
- Policies. Ask about rules on discipline and homework. Ask for a copy of the student handbook and a school calendar for the year. How is school spirit built among the students?
- Facilities. Look for adequate classrooms, cafeteria, physical education facilities, playground, and an auditorium or large room for performances and meetings. Does the school accommodate children with special needs?

- Staff. Find out the student/teacher ratio. Inquire about the number of teachers on staff and their educational requirements. Ask if there are counselors and gifted or special education teachers on staff for any specific needs your child might have.
- Academic standards. Ask to see past test scores. How are students prepared for SATs? Your local education authority (LEA) produces a booklet that lists all the schools in your area with lots of information on each school. Also check out The School Report at www.homefair.com.
- If you have a child with special needs, contact the National Parent Network on Disabilities for a local chapter in your new area (1727 King Street, Suite 305, Alexandria, Va. 22314).
- If you homeschool your child, contact the National Home School Association for a group in your new area (P.O. Box 290, Hartland, Mich. 48353).

Note: Although many of the factors you would consider in a public or private school situation do not apply to homeschooling, the emotional and social adjustment needs that come with moving apply to any child.

Second, Scope It Out

Here are some hands-on things to do to help your children become more comfortable with their new school. It will also give them a sense of security and reduce anxiety.

- Register as soon as you can. Personally deliver copies of academic and immunization records.
- Make an appointment to meet with the principal and the teacher(s) before your child's first day.
- Tour the campus with your child. Scope out the key places they will go on the first day—the classroom, cafeteria, and bathrooms. Locate the office, the gym, the library, and the playground.

- If your child rides the bus, find out the bus number and where the school buses pick up and drop off students.
- If you drive your child to school, or if your teenager drives to school, find out the rules and where to park.
- Ask what your child will need to bring to school the first day.
- Ask about any additional costs for supplies or activities.

Finding Homeschool Groups

There is a worldwide organization for homeschooling called Home School Legal Defense Association. Their Web site, www.hslda.org, can link you to national and international homeschooling organizations and connect you to support groups in your new area. HSLDA will also inform you of the laws in the state to which you are moving.

Notes

Introduction

1. Kristin A. Hansen, *Geographical Mobility: March 1995 to March 1996*, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, P20-473, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1997.

Chapter 4

1. Serenity Prayer, source and author unknown.
2. Leslie Levine, *Will This Place Ever Feel Like Home?* (New York: Contemporary Books, a division of McGraw-Hill, 2002), 218.

Chapter 5

1. George MacDonald, quoted in *A Celebration of You*, compiled by Larissa Nygren (Uhrichsville, Ohio: Barbour, 2002), 37.

Chapter 7

1. Audrey McCollum, M.S.W., Nadia Jensen, Ed.D., Stuart Copans, M.D., *Smart Moves* (Lyme, N.H.: Smith and Kraus Publishers, Inc., 1996), 127.
2. Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families* (New York: Golden Books, 1997), 216.

Resources

Organizations

Focus on the Family; Colorado Springs, CO 80995; 1-800-A-FAMILY (1-800-232-6459); www.family.org

Hearts at Home; 900 W. College, Normal, IL 61761; 1-309-888-MOMS; www.hearts-at-home.org

Moms in Touch International; P.O. Box 1120, Poway, CA 92074-1120; 1-800-949-MOMS; www.momsintouch.org

N.E.W. Ministries; P.O. Box 5692, Scottsdale, AZ 85261-5692; 1-480-991-5268; www.justmoved.org

Young Life; 420 N. Cascade, Colorado Springs, CO 80903; 1-719-381-1800; www.younglife.org

Internet Sites

www.artofmoving.com

www.mapquest.com

www.move.com

www.tckworld.com

www.single-parent.family.org

Publishers

BR Anchor Publishing; Wilmington, N.C.; www.branchor.com; a relocation information publishing house providing domestic and international books for adults, teenagers, preteens, and young children