

Getting Along with the Other Mother

By Liz Curtis Higgs

A greeting card, fresh flowers, or dining out may take care of business on Mother's Day. But how can you win your mother-in-law's heart the other 364 days of the year?

Brag about her son.

At any age, mothers long to know they did a good job. Sincerely compliment your husband's fine character or commendable actions and watch his mother light up.

Praise her good points.

Just as you may wonder if she likes you, your mother-in-law may think you don't like *her*. Say something nice when she least expects and help put her unspoken fears to rest.

Forget the m-i-l jokes.

Humorists have milked the stereotype of the overbearing mother-in-law for ages. (What's the definition of *mixed emotions*? Seeing your mother-in-law drive over the cliff in your new car.) However funny, such humor hurts rather than heals. Look for laughs elsewhere.

Request a favorite recipe.

Gourmet or everyday, her meals fed your growing husband. Find out one of his favorite dishes and ask his mother for her special recipe. You'll earn two-for-one brownie points.

Learn the family lore.

Every family has well-rehearsed stories and private jokes. Instead of feeling left out, get caught up. Ask for details, look through photo albums, and watch old family videos. Include your kids and keep the stories going for another generation.

Give thanks.

If you love your husband, find ways to express your gratitude for the woman who raised him. She wasn't a perfect mother, but she was *his* mother. Still is. And always will be.

Who knows? Someday *you* may be a mother-in-law. Treat your husband's mom the way you'd like to be treated, and you might discover why that simple rule is golden.



Liz Curtis Higgs is the author of 27 books, including *Here Burns My Candle*, a Scottish historical novel based on the biblical story of Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi. Liz lives with her husband in Kentucky. Visit her website: www.LizCurtisHiggs.com.