

About This Book

This book was written to inspire and encourage families with true, original stories from the different chapters of my life. My desire is for families like yours to enjoy reading these exciting, firsthand testimonies while learning how to recognize the little lessons that God is teaching you daily. As you continue to teach Christian values to your growing family, *Skunk Tales* will challenge you and your children to turn the untold experiences from your lives into faith-building lessons that you will always remember.

In the year 2002 my son Alex and I lived and worked at a retreat center in the Hill Country area outside of San Antonio, Texas. Living in the country was a challenging and harrowing experience for a family like ours who had lived in a big city. With the abundant wildlife there in the country we were often confronted with opportunities to parallel our life lessons with the habits and indulgences of the wild animals. In God's providence, these day-in and day-out occurrences lent to the writing of these experiences.

Skunk Tales

During the four years we lived at the retreat center we strangely had more encounters with skunks than the normal household. The inquisitive animals showed up at our home on a somewhat continual basis. Moving from the camp was not a possibility at the time and the skunks were not going to leave. After all, they were wild animals. After one particularly stressful day of concern about the skunks, I called a girlfriend to express my ongoing frustration and discontentment. “Is this another skunk tale?” she asked. She always encouraged me to hold fast to my faith no matter what and scolded me for worrying about the smelly critters. The story “Bench Press” is where the quote first appears that became the title of the book.

It was at that time I began to pull together notes and entrees from my journals of the miraculous ways that God had been with us from the beginning, through all the circumstances of our lives. Those written lines had preserved well the memories of the daily communion with my Heavenly Father and how He heard the outcries and prayers of a mother and her son. Prayers from when I was a little girl that were answered. The stories reveal the day-by-day childlike faith between a loving Father and our young family. Our theology was the Bible, prayer, and God.

Through the next thirty-six chapters, you will laugh and cry with Alex and me as we learn lessons from our encounters with animals of all different shapes, sizes, and scents. The first two chapters take place when we arrive at the retreat center. The next few chapters flash back to my childhood where I share stories about my family. The remaining stories tell about memories I made with Alex throughout his childhood as we homeschooled together and encouraged each other in the Lord.

Follow the small paw prints in the shaded box at the end of each chapter, and you will discover a fun animal fact, scripture reference, or trivia. Last, but not least, at the end of each chapter you will find Pooky’s Time Out which I hope will become a familiar delight to you. Alex thought that it would be a good idea to have a time of reflection or “time out” after each story and specifically challenge children. There are an array of activities to choose from that pertain in some way to each tale. The worship songs for each chapter were chosen to help you remember the meaning of the stories. You will benefit and enjoy the practical hands-on activities in Pooky’s Time Out that have been inspired by the true events in the stories.

These incidents may be unique to me as I tell about them from my point of view, but they are common occurrences to those who live in and about the country where skunks are most commonly found. Today I appreciate how God made skunks so unique, and I can be grateful as I look back at all that I have learned from them. These Skunk Tales highlight the experiences that have taught me what is most important in life.

I invite you to join me and share in these light-hearted yet life-giving adventures. You will benefit from these true examples and glean a fresh perspective of the unchangeable circumstances of life. Learn how God can triumphantly take you from scents to sense. It has been a joy writing these tales for you. I hope you enjoy the stories.