

Mama and Papa Know Best
By Margo Fallis

Mama and Papa never stayed too close to home. They flew off to visit flowers and gather pollen and nectar, or to watch the fish diving in and out of the stream. The problem was that they had ten babies who didn't like to be left home alone.

"We want to go to the pond and to see the flowers," Lily whined.

"But you can't. You'll get lost. You babies haven't left home since you were born. Papa and I know our way around." Mama picked Lily up and gave her a big hug.

"Maybe it's time we taught the children how to find their way." Papa wiggled his antenna.

"You're right, Papa. They are much too young to fly, but we could teach them to find their way on the ground. You stay here with them and I'll make a trail. In an hour you can let them try to come and find me." Mama smiled at Papa and ran through the grass. She ran behind the flowers, across the grass, behind stones, over puddles and under tall willow trees. When she felt she'd gone far enough, she stopped and waited.

Papa gathered his babies around. "It's time. Lily, you lead the way and help your brothers and sisters find their way to Mama. Be careful, follow her trail and let's see if you're ready to venture out on your own." Papa gave each of them a kiss. "Goodbye Lily. Goodbye Lisa, Larry, Lynn, Laura, Lucy, Lester, Loren, Leslie, and Louise." Papa waited until they'd all gone and then he followed. He'd keep his eye on the stragglers that lost their way.

Lily rushed down the trail. "This is easy. I know where Mama went."

Some of the others didn't have as easy a time. Loren and Laura got lost and ended up stuck in a spider's web. Papa pulled them out, put them back on the trail and told them to hurry on their way.

The little bugs ran over the flowers, around the bushes and trees and swam across the stream. When Lily came out of the water, she couldn't find the trail. "Oh no! I've lost the trail to Mama." She opened her red and black polka dot wings, flapped them up and down and then started to cry. "Mama, where are you? I wish I could fly."

All of the other little bugs crossed the stream and sat next to Lily. If she couldn't find her way, then none of them could either. When Papa got there, he found all his children sobbing. "Come on, babies. I'll help you find Mama."

Mama looked at her unhappy children. "I tried to tell you that you weren't ready to leave home yet. Let's go home. I'll make you all a honeybee milkshake. Maybe next week we can try this again."

Mama and Papa led their family home. They feasted on honeybee milkshakes and nectar sandwiches. None of them complained about staying home again. Mama and Papa knew best, for now.