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Cedar Springs of Inspiration

A publication dedicated to providing ideas, inspiration and resources to use in ministry.

Major June Newbury

Coordinator of Women's Ministries Resources, Canada and Bermuda Territory

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**MESSAGE FROM THE WORLD PRESIDENT
OF WOMEN'S MINISTRIES**

Dear Sisters in Christ,

**New Year Message for 2009
'EVERY TRIBE AND EVERY NATION'**



Greetings in the Name of the Lord Jesus! We thank God for the unity in Christ which binds us together as women from every part of God's world. At the same time, we recognise that there are still many people who have not heard the Good News of the Gospel.

I would therefore like to share with you our Women's Ministries theme for 2009, which is 'every tribe and every language' (Revelation 7:9). This thought was placed in my heart particularly during the All-India Women's Leadership Seminar in India last year. I knew God was speaking to me about a theme for 2009. You are welcome to take up the theme if you feel you should. Otherwise, just let it open your eyes and ears — and your hearts — in the coming year.

Let us:

- **Reach out** ... with the language of love to communities who are still un-reached
- **Listen** ... to the heart cries of those around us
- **Translate** ... our teaching into the language of the people
- **Overcome** ... the barriers of culture or mistrust that hinder the spreading of God's word
- **Communicate** ... the Good News of Jesus wherever we go

With love in Christ, and warm greetings for 2009,

Helen Clifton
Commissioner
World President of Women's Ministries

**MESSAGE FROM THE TERRITORIAL PRESIDENT
OF WOMEN'S MINISTRIES**

Dear Women's Ministries Enthusiasts:

What a joy is mine to share this exciting 2009 Cedar Springs! *Unfolding Grace* will be a theme that through the year will wrap around our hearts and minds enfolding us with fresh ideas and inspiration.



It is by the *grace* of many who labored with love and the investment of their time that we have this tool. How thankful we are for the *grace* each gave through the participation from a willing heart. Much appreciation to each one of the contributors. As they have shared, so we now will utilize to the best of our ability these programs, so that we will make a difference in the lives of women where we are. And it will be done, only by *His Amazing Grace*!

The programs have been designed to help you in your work as you reach out to the women in your community. We are in perilous times. Women we know are hurting. It will take the *Grace of God* to meet their needs. However, Christ works through us. He has no hands, but our hands. He has no feet but our feet. He has no eyes but our eyes. By *His Amazing Grace* working through us, women will see the light and love of Jesus Christ.

Now the year ahead is fresh and new. Only by the Grace of God will we be able to be '*grace-ious*' and '*grace-FULL*!'. It is through His Amazing Grace that we are saved. He will work through each of us as we allow Him to. So join me as we open our hearts to His fresh anointing and to the fresh infilling of '*His Overflowing Grace*.' As we do, the *Amazing Grace of God* will perform the miracles He is already planning to do in and through each one.

*Grace Alone, which God supplies
Strength unknown, He will provide.
Christ in us, our Corner Stone.
We go forth by Grace Alone!*

Yours in Christ,

Marilyn D. Francis
Commissioner
Territorial President of Women's Ministries

Message from the Coordinator of Women's Ministry Resources

Dear Friends:

It is with joy that I greet you with this new edition of *Cedar Springs of Inspiration 2009*. It is a privilege to serve the Lord through Women's Ministries. As leaders, we have the wonderful opportunity to introduce ladies to Christ and encourage each other to use the gifts God has given, as we reach out to our communities with the love of God.

I have been reminded recently that we are **'called to a people not a place'**. Jesus lived out this approach to ministry in a profound way and, as a result, responded to the needs of others with gentleness, kindness, mercy, and above all a deep love. When we recognize that our call is to a single mother raising her children, the hurting woman who's lost a child, the elderly lady down the street who spends her days alone, we see the faces of the very people needing to know the deep love of Christ. What an honor for us to have the opportunity to influence others with His grace and His love. It is only by his grace that we are able to see the wounds of others and respond to the needs of His people with Christ-like love.

I am grateful for those who have contributed resources and submitted programs to this year's publication. The gift of creativity shared is one way of celebrating God's abundant blessing in our lives, for we all have gifts to enrich the ministry to which God has called us. An amazing opportunity awaits us this year — opportunities for Worship, Education, Fellowship, and Service as we respond to the leading of Christ in our lives. My prayer is that the Lord will guide your heart to serve Him in new and innovative ways just where He has placed you.

May God richly bless each of you as you serve Him.
In Christ,

June Newbury, Major
Coordinator of Women's Ministries Resources

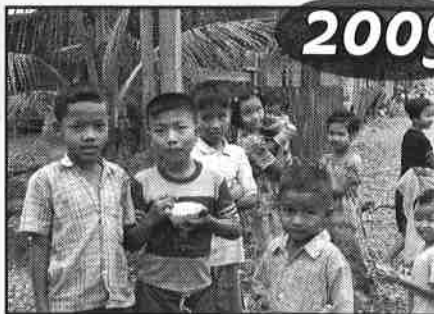
Women's Ministries Territorial Project

With funds raised in 2009, Women's Ministries will support two of our Partner in Mission Territories.

2009

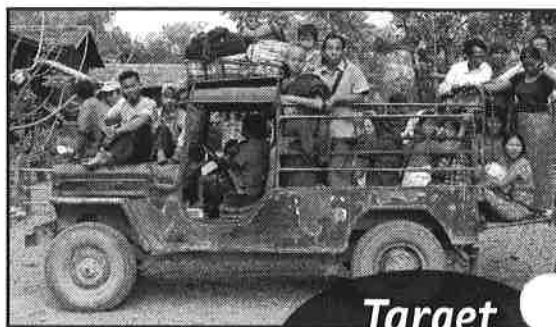
Myanmar

In a country where poverty is widespread our project will give help and hope to these gentle people for whom life is very difficult, and lacking in the basic services that we take for granted.



Our funds will support community ministries in the Central District for these four new corps plants Mandalay, Myingyan, Taunggyi, and Tacheleik:

- Community Health Care Teaching,
- A Mobile Clinic and basic medical care for women in remote areas
- School fees for orphans and vulnerable children due to HIV/AIDS



Target
\$75,000

Spain

While the *country* of Spain is not poor, The Salvation Army is relatively small and lacking in funds to meet some very basic needs.

Funds from our Territorial Project will enable them to train officers in a non-residential program by providing tuition and books, child care and equipment.



With our funds they would also like to provide extended training and ministry materials for leaders and soldiers, as well as cadets, through spiritual retreats and leadership conferences.

A major focus for Women's Ministries is outreach to South American and Muslim immigrants.

Many of these services and ministries have only been dreams because funds were just not available.





Christ calls us to make a difference in our world. To love, as He loved and to respond with loving action to the needs of others. Here are some suggestions to get you started. Check those that sound the most "do-able" for your community and circumstances.

Your first question may be, "Where do I find the poor?" Become a detective. Track down worthy programs in your community. Many phone books have a "community services" section that can guide you to opportunities to serve. Other great sources of information are local churches and public libraries.

Adopt an elderly shut-in with limited income and become her hands and

feet. Offer to do her grocery shopping once a week. Drive them to doctor appointments. Assist with housecleaning either with your own elbow grease or by hiring a service.

Some urban churches provide after-school programs for latchkey kids.

Such programs need tutors, people to prepare snacks for the kids, etc.



Open your home to people in need.

This may mean taking in a pregnant teenager for several months, or inviting foreign exchange students to stay with you. Others who may need hospitality are college or seminary students, refugees or immigrants, ex-prisoners, and homeless families. Give disadvantaged teenagers opportunities to earn money.

Need your yard raked? Need help cleaning your garage? Painting the house? "Hire" a teen to help you.

Offer to mentor a new single mom who's struggling financially. This might involve visiting with her for an hour each week to give practical tips and help in caring for an infant, to serve as a sounding board for her fears and frustrations, and to cheer her on. A crisis pregnancy center may be able to match you with a new mother.



Soup kitchens are obvious places to serve the poor. Place a fresh slant on this ministry by focusing on getting to know the people you're feeding. Try to volunteer for jobs that will give you face-to-face serving of meals, refilling water glasses, etc. Learn names. Show an interest by asking non-threatening questions such as, "Where are you from originally?"

Every time you buy a new item of clothing, give a piece of used clothing that's still in good shape to a homeless shelter.

Give gift certificates for goods and services, groceries, an oil change, etc. When you go food shopping, take advantage of two-for-one deals, then give the extra one to a family you know is suffering financially.

Invite people to dinner. For a struggling family, a meal in someone else's home can be a wonderful provision.

Donate your services to those in need. Or swap skills. If you're a financial planner, offer help with budgeting. Carpenters could provide free home repairs. Teachers could offer tutoring in basic English and math skills for aspiring job applicants. The list is endless.

Be a friend. One of our staff visited a halfway house for the homeless weekly and just sat around and chatted with people. "The poor" cease to be a nameless blob and become individuals God loves when you take the time to build relationships with them.

Invite a small group or neighbors to a sandwich party. Set up an assembly line and make a few dozen sandwiches. Then deliver them to a homeless shelter, or a park where the homeless are. Don't just pass out sandwiches then run; stay around and talk with the people you're feeding.

For more practical, creative ideas, read:

- *50 Ways You Can Feed a Hungry World* by Anthony Campolo and Gordon Aeschliman (InterVarsity)
- *Cup of Water, Bread of Life* by Ronald Sider (Zondervan)

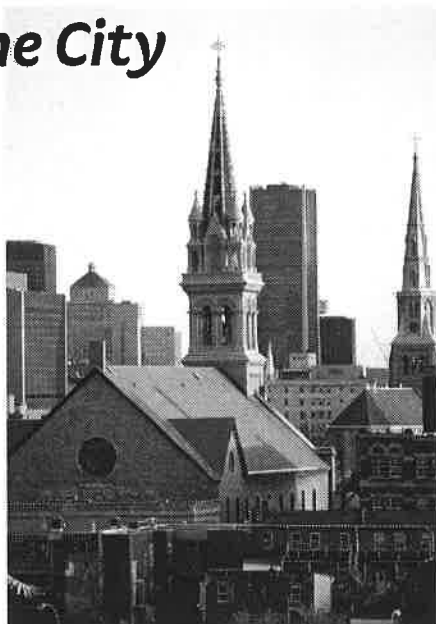
God's Agents In The City

Adapted from Discipleship Journal

Take a look at the area surrounding your church. What do you see? Empty streets, businesses that close on Sunday, trash blowing across the pavement, a sense of emptiness? If you look more closely, you may find loneliness: people searching desperately for friendship and compassion.

You will probably see homeless families who yearn to sleep in a warm building rather than over a subway grating. You may be confronted by people struggling to survive on minimum wage, or no wage at all, while their neighbors who sell drugs seem to flourish. If you keep your eyes open, you may even find "yuppies" searching for meaning in their vocations and possessions. They may only be vaguely aware of the void in their lives as they stay on the move, trying to emulate the lavish lifestyle in the latest television commercial. Yet they are empty, and their only fulfillment will come in the filling of the Holy Spirit.

The Church holds out the only hope to the people of the city. It is God's catalyst for change and regeneration. God gave us a commission in Matthew 28:19-20, a commitment in Luke 4:18-19, a prophetic calling in the book of Amos, and examples in Jesus and Paul. From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible is filled with urban realities and God's intervention. The Lord of the harvest altered the direction of a king-sized city such as Nineveh with one prophet, as unwilling as he was, and one message. The gospel is greater than the city, and more powerful than its complex and overwhelming structures. It is this gospel, preached by Paul in Philippi, that altered the life of Lydia, transformed a young girl exploited by the system, and as a result created an uproar in the city



and transformed a jailer — the faithful servant of the city — into a compassionate soldier of the cross (Acts 16:11-34).

This is what the Church in the city is to be, speaking and displaying the love of Christ to all who need His unfailing salvation. It is this gospel, which we have been entrusted with as stewards of God, that will alter the history of humanity. The Church is God's agent in the city for healing and wholeness. It is not self-centered but cross centered. Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). Let us get involved in the city. Why? Because God is.

Know Your Neighbors

To become part of God's agenda for the city, we must first know our city, especially that section in which the Lord has placed us. As we learn about our communities we will discover where people are being denied the basic necessities of life. We will also begin to build personal

relationships with our new friends—mutual relationships in which we have something to offer each other. Learning about the community will also help us develop an appropriate strategy of ministry that will deal with the present and future needs of the people, one that recognizes both the needs and the causes of the

needs. To gather information, begin with the people of the community. Develop three or four questions that will provide data as well as detect feelings, for example, "What do you enjoy about your community?" or "What are the areas of your community you would like changed?" Feelings often speak louder than facts. Poor education is one problem, but what it does internally to families is yet another issue. In the process of gathering information, try to make distinctions among responses from different groups — for example, men and women, and people of different generations. This will be helpful when computing the information. After forming initial impressions, supplement your research with statistical data. I often leave this approach until last because it has a tendency to produce biases.

Move To The City

If we are really serious about becoming efficient servants in the city, we will consider moving into the community we want to serve. Jesus did not shout from a distance, He dwelt among us. We must make a visible commitment to the community, and one way is to relocate. As John Perkins explains in *And Justice for All*, "Their needs become our needs. Our shared needs then become the starting point of our ministry." This removes the stigma of "absentee church" and moves us into an incarnational ministry. Moving into the city will not be easy. But we need to remember that

*Jesus did not
shout from
a distance,
He dwelt
among us*

we are voluntarily displacing ourselves for the cause of Christ. Relocating enables us to embrace the community God has given us to serve. Embracing requires participating in the life of the community. Our neighbors will become aware of our presence and our desire to know them.

A Plan For The City: Six Steps to Finding and Meeting Needs

- 1. Discover your own biases.** Examine the stereotypes and prejudices you may hold toward the city, multi-cultural communities, and the poor.
- 2. Discover the life of the community.** You can only do this by participating in community life.
- 3. Discover community themes.** Such as homelessness, drugs, and poor housing and medical services. Gather information from the people of the community about issues that are important to them.
- 4. Discover demographics.** Study census tracts and other data available at city hall or libraries. Many real estate agencies and fast-food companies can also provide assistance.
- 5. Discover God's perspective.** Discern God's involvement and concern for the community by visiting other ministries. Ask pastors how the Lord is meeting the needs of His people. Recognizing how God is working in the community will be an encouragement.
- 6. Formulate and interpret the information you gather.** Putting together all the information in order to develop a strategy for ministry in the community is no easy task. If possible, work with a team, preferably one that includes one or two members of the community. *Manuel Ortiz*

Welcome Your Neighbour

Susan Millar, Just Between Us, Summer 2008

Here are a few practical suggestions on how you can welcome a new neighbor:

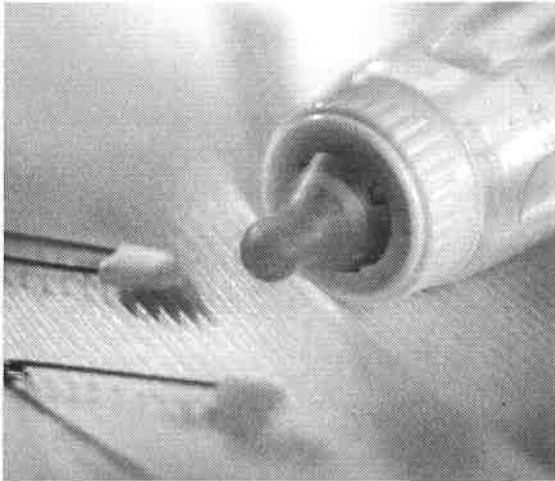
- Give a 3x5 card with names of everyone in your family for easy reference. Include your address and phone number, along with your children's ages.
- Take one of your family's favorite meals or a food that represents the state you live in. I love sharing a chicken enchilada dish for a southwest favorite!
- Attach a note to a blooming plant that reads "To encourage you to bloom where you are planted!"
- Fill a welcome basket with any number of helpful things from a coffee mug with a bag of coffee or tea bags, to a local magazine, a welcome sign, a city map, a packet of seeds, an address book, be creative. What would you like to receive in a welcome basket?
- Share a list of babysitters with phone numbers.
- Offer to run an errand for the family.
- Have a neighborhood drop-in to "meet and greet." It can be as casual as setting up a table and chairs outside in the garage or driveway on a Saturday morning and inviting the neighbors to drop by for coffee and doughnuts.
- Ask how you can help or if there is any particular information about the community she would like to know.
- Let her know neighborhood necessities such as when the mailman comes and



garbage pickup day, etc.

- Add your own ideas to this list based on what would minister to you as a new neighbor.
- Your kindness, sensitivity, and effort in making a new family feel welcome are important factors in their adjustment and transition. Never let your busy schedule keep you from doing the things that will impact another life for Christ. You may be the very person God will use to "move" that new neighbor closer to Jesus!

Susan Miller is America's Moving Coach and Founder/President of "Just Moved"! Ministries. Just Moved! is a non-denominational Christ-centered outreach ministry that is committed to the spiritual growth and emotional well-being of women who are going through the transition of moving. She has also authored After the Boxes are Unpacked, But Mom, I Don't Want To Move!, and My Journal of 52 Weeks After a Move.



Sharing Of Cultures

Michelle Mercer, Spryfield, Nova Scotia

the expected Mom and one of your ladies to prepare a recipe traditionally shared for the occasion in their country.

Gifts: In addition to providing gifts for the new baby bring along a few gifts for the other siblings in the family. This will help the family feel a great

sense of welcome to Canada.

There are many ways to share fellowship. How about using the two ideas provided below for the purpose of connecting women who are new to our country.

Host a baby shower for a new Immigrant to Canada

Invite your ladies to share in a special evening to welcome a new immigrant family expecting a baby. The ideal venue would be the home of the expected Mother, however, if that isn't possible one of your ladies may open their home.

Sharing of customs: Learning how a new baby is welcomed in another country would add a special touch to the evening. Arrange with the new Mom in advance to either share or conduct an interview (prepare questions in advance). This would be a good time to share how Canadians welcome a new baby. This would benefit the family as they get to know new people.

Refreshment Idea: Invite

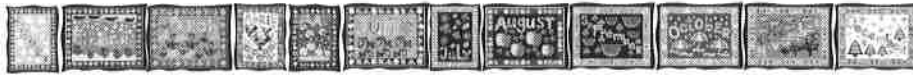
Host a 'House Warming' shower for a new Immigrant to Canada

Invite your ladies to share in a welcome celebration for the family to their new home. Inquire as to what small items are needed to get their home feeling comfortable for the family. Create a list prior to the event so ladies can select items to purchase. This way there won't be duplicates. Don't forget the children. There are a lot of simple things that can help to make the children feel at home. Again create a list of small items which can be purchased from the dollar store suitable for the children's bedrooms.

Refreshment Idea: Prepare recipes that the family will enjoy along with a few Canadian treats.

Gifts: House warming gifts can be new or a little used. Request that all used items are cleaned and ready to use.





Love By The Month

Julie Carabini, Discipleship Journal 2000



Our small group — all moms — thrived on park dates, poolside fellowship, the occasional girls' night out, and other bonding activities. After a while, however, we experienced a greater desire: We wanted to give a touch of love to those who needed it. We discovered that acts of charity brought us closer to each other and, even more important, humbled us before God's throne of grace. Below is a year's worth of ideas your group could do, adapt to the needs you see in your neighbourhood.

January

Look for a family in need because of job loss, medical crisis, or other circumstances. On occasion take them dinner and offer encouragement.



February

Bake or buy valentine cookies (with or without sugar), and take them to a convalescent home. Call ahead for an appointment, and make sure to set aside plenty of time to visit.

March

Throw a baby shower for the local crisis pregnancy centre.

April

Give the gift of spring cleaning or house repairs to an elderly friend.



May

Plant a vegetable garden, and make a list of local nonprofit food organizations that will receive your bounty at harvest time. Schedule delivery with these groups for sometime during the summer.

June

Volunteer to handle one area — such as snacks, games, or story time — for a vacation Bible school outreach.





July

Hold a backyard barbecue and invite the neighbours. Groups that meet in a church can throw an open house for neighbouring businesses or residents.



August

Adopt a missionary. Pray at each meeting this month for a missionary (and family, if applicable). Mail them a box of treats such as magazines, gourmet chocolates, and toiletries. Let them know your group has prayed for them all during the month.



September

Drop off a large box of doughnuts to the teachers' lounge at a local school. Leave a note telling the staff members you are praying they will have a fantastic year.



October

No tricks, just treats! Purchase high-quality sweets/candies, label them with personal notes such as "Jesus loves you" or a Scripture verse, and deliver them to neighbourhood kids.

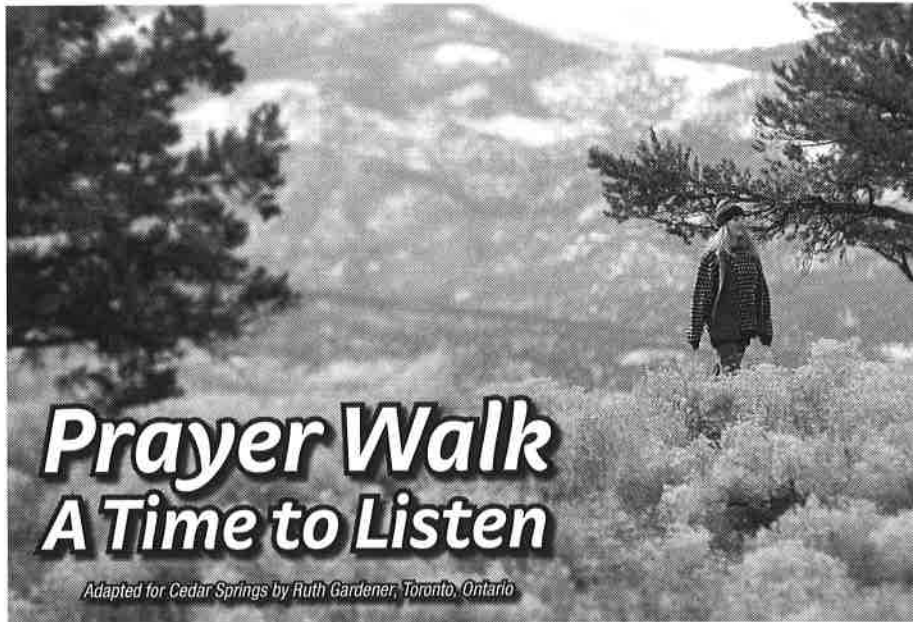
November

Volunteer to serve dinner at a local rescue mission the weekend after Thanksgiving, once all the holiday helpers have gone home.

December

During the Christmas season, wearing Santa hats, deliver to needy families boxes of non-perishable food and gifts collected/donated by your Church.





The following *Steps* provide helpful aids for you to use during your prayer walk. You are encouraged to walk in pairs and share the journey together. It may be helpful to walk to a new site for each of the *Steps*. I pray that your time of communion with God will be a blessing to you and will strengthen your walk with Him.

First Step: Preparation

"I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me." (Psalm 131:2)

Listening

As I begin to pray I am aware that I have far too much to say, and listen far too little.

Catch hold of me in this time of prayer, Lord. So much of what I say is simply a going through the motions,

a speedy repetition of phrases, but they leave me still wanting more.

Break into my wandering thoughts, Lord. Drive out the money changers from this temple of Your presence. Father, make me pure... holy, set apart for You.

Interrupt my fevered chatter, Father. Replace my empty noises with the fullness of Your silence. And in that silence let me hear Your simple word of truth that calls me into life...

***"I have stilled
and quieted
my soul..."***

Psalm 131:2

The truth that I am Yours, and not my own; the truth that Your faithfulness will never abandon me; that even in the most painful and desperate moments all of Your love, all of Your power is on my side, forever.

The truth that there is work for me to do, to share that love and

power, to make it a reality, not only in my life, but in the life of those around me, and especially those in need.

Let me hear, and know, and live Your truth, Lord; then send me forth to do Your holy will. In Jesus' name, Amen.

J. Barrie Shepherd, Diary of Private Prayer (Adapted)

When the whole world around me is rushing You are my anchor. You keep me stable, steadfast and secure.)

Richard Peace Meditative Prayer: Encountering God's Presence

Third Step: Confession

"In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength..." (Isaiah 30:15b)

Consider the last few days and ask God to reveal areas where you need to ask forgiveness. Present those areas to Him now, seeking cleansing, healing, and renewal ... It may be helpful to write a word or phrase below that represents a key area that you are struggling with.

Lord, I need You!

*Lord, I need Your power.
Help me to claim it,*

*And not go in my own strength;
Seeking Your glory instead of my own.*

*Lord, I need Your grace.
Remind me of it, Lord, because I so often forget;
And in forgetting I only see my failure
Instead of You, my Saviour.*

*Lord, I need Your Spirit
To guide my ways, to reveal to me Your truth;
And show me, Lord, how I may glorify You
Instead of seeking my selfish gain.*

*Lord, I need Your forgiveness
Which You so freely give, moment by moment,
That my heart may be pure and clean;*

Second Step: Adoration

"Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name ... the Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth ..." (Isaiah 40:27-28)

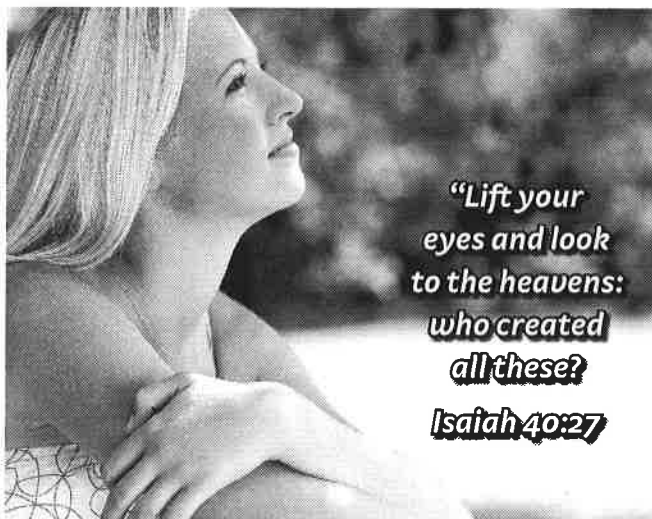
Writing a "Prayer Blessing"

Write your own prayer of blessing:

- Start with the phrase "Blessed be the Lord"
- Think of a characteristic or action of God for which you want to give praise.

Blessed be the Lord ...

(Example: Blessed be the Lord, my ROCK.)



*Ready to do and be what You want
me to be.*

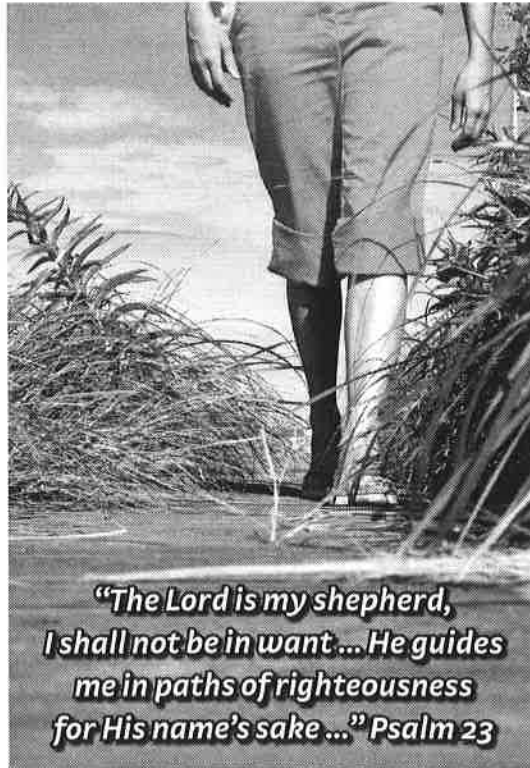
*Lord I need You
And I love You because You are a
God of power,
Of grace, of Spirit, and forgiveness
R. Russell*

Fourth Step: Intercession

*"I looked for a man among them
who would build up the wall and
stand before me in the gap on behalf
of the land..." (Ezekiel 22:30)*

Take some time now to share
prayer concerns and to pray for
each other ...

- Concerns about the future...
- Areas where there may be
struggles or obstacles to
overcome
- Family concerns
- Personal concerns



Psalm 23

*"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be
in want. He makes me lie down in green
pastures, He leads me beside quiet waters,
He restores my soul. He guides me in paths
of righteousness for His name's sake. Even
though I walk through the valley of the shadow
of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with
me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence
of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love
will follow me all the days of my life, and I will
dwell in the house of the Lord forever."*

Fifth Step: Dedication

*"... a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God
... your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1)*
Discuss with your prayer partner obstacles that
may be preventing you from having a more

meaningful, consistent prayer life.

A Personal Covenant

*Blessed Saviour: I pace back and forth at the
altar of commitment. I really do want a fixed
habit of prayer. At least, that is what I want
at the moment. I'm not sure if that is what I
will want two weeks from now. I do know that
without some kind of consistent communion
with you I will not know holy obedience. So,
as best I can, I promise to set aside time
regularly for prayer, meditation and spiritual
reading. Strengthen me in this covenant. Help
me to delight in your presence that I will want
to come home to you often.*

*In your name and for your sake I make this
covenant. Amen.*

Richard Foster, Prayer: Finding The Heart's True Home

Helping Others Unmask

Adapted from "Just Between Us" – Sandy Sheppard www.justbetweenus.org

It is important for us to unmask, but is also important that we become people with whom others feel safe to unmask. Here are several suggestions for becoming godly confidants.

Be Sensitive To People's Needs. At a recent conference, a woman I hadn't seen for a few years sat beside me. I commented that she had lost weight. "Things have been pretty tough lately," she responded. "My husband left me five weeks ago."



I promised To Pray For Her. She thanked me and left to sit with her friends. Later the Spirit nudged my conscience. "Why did you offer to pray for her instead of asking to pray with her?" I vowed I would do so if I had another chance. After lunch I saw her again and asked, "May I pray for you right now?" Her eyes lit up, "Oh, would you?" she asked.

Her gratitude showed me how I tend to go through life with spiritual blinders on, oblivious to the needs around me. I was grateful that God gave me another chance to be a friend to this woman.

Be Trustworthy. It's often tempting to divulge knowledge under the guise of "sharing a prayer request." But if a friend entrusts me with private information so I can pray for her, I should not conclude that she would be happy to have my entire Wednesday study group praying, too.

Proverbs 26:22 says, "*The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts.*" I might feel important when I pass along "choice morsels," but my friends have a right to expect confidentiality from me.

Be Available. We all find ourselves in time crunches. We need to make time for developing honest relationships, even if it requires shifting our priorities and manipulating our overcommitted schedules.

Be A Good Listener. Proverbs 18:13 sums up the need to be a good listener. "*He who answers before listening — that is his folly and his shame.*" I enjoy a weekly lunch date with my husband, who is a good listener. He has a way of looking into my eyes while I'm talking to him that makes me feel he values what I have to say. He listens without interrupting and waits until I finish talking to respond.

Be A Grace Giver. If our friends are afraid to tell us their deepest needs, maybe it is because we're too quick to judge the "*speck of sawdust in (our) brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in (our) own eye*" (Matthew 7:3). Admire someone who refuses to become involved in gossip or negative talk. Whenever you hear someone criticizing someone else try to say something good about them. Practice grace rather than judgement.

Personal Retreat: A Special Date with God

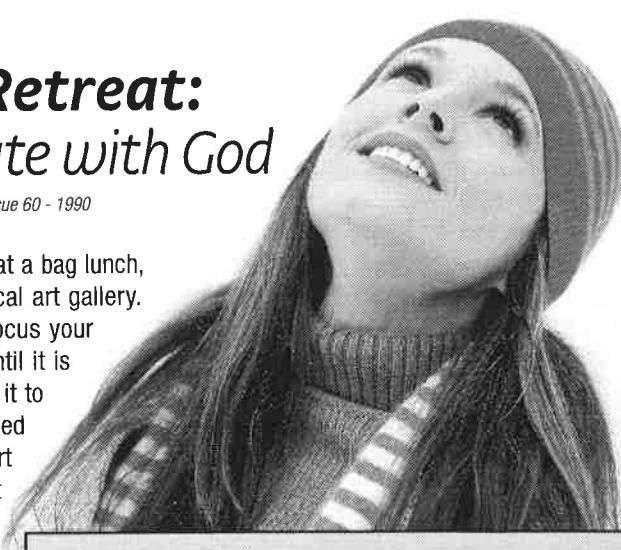
Adapted from Discipleship Magazine Issue 60 - 1990

Choose a quiet place to eat a bag lunch, a good place is your local art gallery. Then, in silence, you can focus your attention on one painting until it is time to return to work. Limit it to one painting, because you need plenty of time to appreciate art or expect to understand what you are looking at. Works of art, literature, music, and even the glories of creation seldom yield themselves to the casual observer.

We need to purposely slow our pace and narrow our focus, or we will miss the marrow of life. This is especially true of our relationship with God. If our experience of God is bare boned (perhaps structurally sound, but lacking marrow), life can become drudgery, as we try to obey, convinced that living the Christian life is a heavy but necessary burden. But when we take time to gaze at God, our experience is transformed.

David understood this truth. He said, *"One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek Him in His temple"* (Psalm 27:4).

David sharpened his focus. He sought one thing: to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord. In



"Work is not always required of man, there is such a thing as sacred idleness, the cultivation of which is now fearfully neglected" *George MacDonald*

his Psalms, David made it evident that he knew what it was to gaze unhurriedly at God. And the result, David said, was that his soul was satisfied as with marrow (Psalm 63:5, KJV). Taking time to focus on God and your relationship with Him is called personal retreat. The dictionary defines 'retreat' this way: *"to draw*

back, withdraw to a safe or private place; a period of retirement or seclusion, especially one devoted to religious contemplation away from the pressures of ordinary life."

Personal retreat is time with God, beyond daily quiet time. It isn't meant to replace the daily meeting with the Lord,

but to enhance it. Retreat, then, is a special date with God.

**Retreat ...
to draw back,
withdraw to a
safe or private
place; a period
of retirement
or seclusion**

Why Do We Need A Personal Retreat?

If plants that have been growing indoors are put outside and become dried up, it becomes necessary to put them back indoors and spray them with a little water to give them a chance to recover before putting them out again. Eventually, they will be outside plants. This is a process of preparing them for life in a harsh environment.

In personal retreat, you can find a more favorable climate for your spiritual health.



***Jesus
modeled
and taught
regular
withdrawal
into God's
presence***

Temporarily withdrawing from the drying winds, baking sun, and freezing nights, in a world that by its very nature can put you off course and stunt your spiritual life, will be a time to prepare for your return to the everyday world outside. Personal retreat provides a semi-controlled climate for spiritual growth and development.

With all the great needs around us and the opportunities for service so compelling, it could be felt that taking time out for personal retreat could mean being removed from where the greatest need lies. We reconcile that thought by the assurance that it is precisely because the needs are so great and life so short that we should take a personal retreat. Retreat is the

way to advance. We know this is true because when Jesus lived on earth, He found it necessary to take time aside in the quietness.

Life for Jesus was short and busy, too. He lived on earth fully aware that He had only three-and-a-half years for public ministry, but this didn't keep Him from taking personal retreats.

Jesus modeled and taught regular withdrawal into God's presence. The Gospel of Mark, the most action-packed account of the life of Jesus, shows Him continually pulling back from opportunities to minister so that He could pray and listen to His Father. His life illustrates the perfect life: one of retreat followed by intense involvement in the world.

Jesus summed it up when He said, "*He will come in and go out, and find pasture*" (John 10:9b). Jesus gives two clarion calls: 'Go' and 'Come'. He sends us to a needy world in His name, and

He calls us to come and draw near that He might reveal Himself to us and through us.

A fast-paced life can become an opiate. We seemingly thrive on activity and pressure, and think if we are busy, we are doing well. Not until we have to pause do we face the sobering realities that inactivity and silence bring. Busyness saps spiritual vitality and may in fact mask spiritual laziness. Spiritual vitality is possible only when we take the time to let God's presence recharge us.

In Hebrews, believers are commanded to enter into the *rest* prepared for them. Rest signifies a state of spiritual health and well-being, not an escape into nothingness. Retreat is taking time

to break the intensity of activity, to slow down, to regroup. Christian retreat is meeting with the living, personal God. It is a time to learn about God and to delight in that revelation, which is the heart of worship.

Benefits of Personal Retreat

Retreat times are "re-times"—times of refreshment, replenishing, and reflection.

Retreat rekindles our spiritual fervor for God. Scripture admonishes us, *"Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor"* (Romans 12:11). Time set aside to seek the Lord heightens our love for Him, and He promises to reveal Himself to the ardent seeker (Jeremiah 29:13). Seeking is for our sakes. It prepares us to receive His revelation and provides uninterrupted time to respond in joy and worship to this revelation.

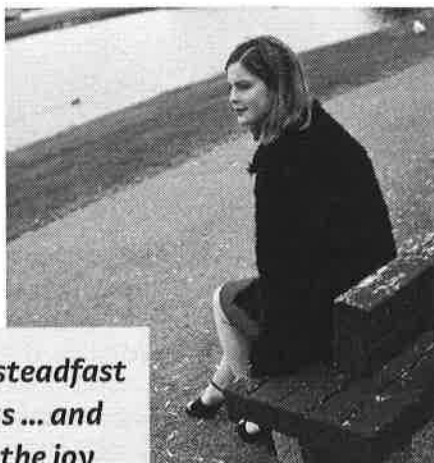
Personal retreat *"renews a steadfast spirit in us"* (Psalm 51:10) and restores the joy of our salvation (Psalm 51:12). It also refocuses our vision and refines our perceptions by reshaping our thinking according to God's Word (Romans 12:2). It allows us to see our tendency to drift so that we can make course corrections.

Taking The Time For A Personal Retreat

Personal retreat squeezed into a busy life requires commitment and planning. How ironic that when we need a personal retreat the most, it is most difficult to find the opportunity. The pressure of a new job, or a move, or a house full of young children, or a time of caring for the ill uses up our time as well as our personal resources. But with creativity and commitment we can often carve out the

needed respite time.

Parents with children at high school, who have only one car, can often find themselves behind the steering wheel much of the day as they try to accommodate them in a busy schedule.



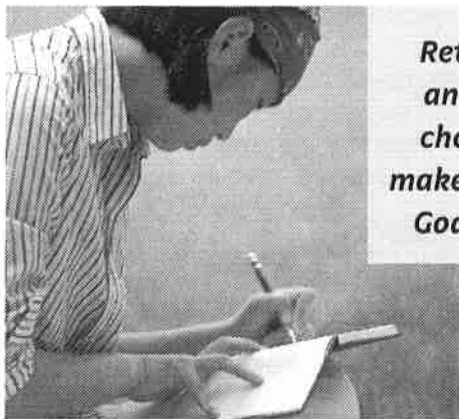
*"renews a steadfast
spirit in us ... and
restores the joy
of our salvation"*
Psalm 51:10-12

Their schedule can break your days into frustrating segments, often with insufficient time between

runs to return home. A picnic table in the park, a booth in a fast food restaurant, an isolated table at the library can provide a place apart to nurture your soul. These times can recharge your batteries, refreshing you physically and spiritually.

Personal retreats can be measured in days or minutes. Consider setting aside a lunch hour once a week, or block some time on the weekend. Perhaps a spouse or a friend can cover for you to allow a secluded Saturday morning away. Mothers of young children can trade child care for an uninterrupted date with the Lord.

When the leap from rushing to get the children delivered to a friend's house to the tranquility



**Retreat ...
an active
choice we
make to know
God better**

take the time, and where you will go. Have Plan B ready in case an emergency comes up so that you don't postpone your retreat indefinitely. Next decide on a Bible passage and collect other reading materials to complement the theme. Take along a notebook or diary.

Finally, consider sharing the results of your personal retreat with someone who will hold you accountable for any decisions that result from your time.

of sitting with an open Bible seems too great a chasm for us, we can bridge the gap by a little bit of planning. Lay out a loose plan for your retreat the night before and decide what materials you'll take with you. A time-proven book, one that warms your heart and primes your spirit, can help you to transition from bustle to stillness. Read only the amount necessary to move you from your hectic, temporal thoughts to the place of quiet fellowship with Christ. Then open your Bible and notebook. However you define it, wherever you take it, and whatever length of time you allot, personal retreat is not luxury or indolence. It is a time of renewal to experience flavour and power in our public lives. It is also an active choice we make to know God better. Just wanting to know Him is not enough.

Planning A Personal Retreat

First determine what you want it to accomplish. Do you want to know God better? Do you need perspective on a particular problem? Is it time to evaluate different areas of your life and then do some strategic planning? Maybe you just want some refreshment for your soul.

When you have determined your goal, decide how much time you will need, when you will

Here are two sample plans for spending time with God

Purpose: To know God better

- Time: Saturday 9-11 a.m.
- Location: Local park (library if raining)
- Read introduction to Knowing God by J. I. Packer
- Pray and meditate verse by verse through Psalm 103
- Make notes of thoughts about who God is, and how these ideas apply to your current situation

Purpose: Sort out all the problems I'm facing

- Time: Sunday evening 8-9 p.m.
- Location: a quiet room in my house
- List each problem on paper
- Read 2 Chronicles 20
- One by one, present each problem to God in the attitude of 2 Peter 5:7
- As you present each problem, ask God if there is any action you should take; then wait quietly for His response
- Make notes of anything He brings to mind
- Assume that if no thoughts come to mind, no action is necessary
- Thank God for His help

A Private House Of Prayer

Adapted for Cedar Springs by Ruth Gardener, Toronto, Ontario for Cedar Springs.

Preparation

Gather the following items for each room.

- 1 Print the Scripture verses as written for room number one.
- 2 Have a basket filled with individual flowers for the activity in number two
- 3 Container filled with sand
- 4 Display a water fountain with rocks.
- 5 Have tray of wet wipes for activity
- 6 Place a basket of artificial leaves beside a small tree for the activity
- 7 Print the prayer included in room number seven for individuals to take.

A Private House of Prayer

"When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen".
(Matthew 6:6)

Jesus instructs us to pray privately. Public prayer is not wrong, however it is wrong to pray publicly if we are not in the habit of praying privately ...

... welcome to a Private House of Prayer

This is not a house built with wood and stone, but a house built with prayer; a house composed of seven prayer rooms. As you enter this house, pause in each room. Do not rush through all of the rooms looking for God. He can be found in every one.

Room 1 — Affirm the Presence of God

When you pray do you sometimes feel like you are talking to nothing or that there is no one there? We cannot engineer feeling, but in this first room we can assert the fact that God is present.



Kneel or sit before God, and acknowledge His presence by repeating or praying the following verses:

Psalm 139:7-12

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

Joshua 1: 5,6,9,18

As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and courageous, Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will

be with you wherever you go. Only be strong and courageous!

Acts 2:25

I know the Lord is always with me. I will not be shaken, for He is right beside me. As I bow in the quiet room I have made in my heart, O Lord, let the hush of your presence fall upon me. Amen

Room 2 — Praise, Adore & Thank God

Assured of God's presence with you in this house, you are now entering the room of bright sunshine. Keep your mind away from worries and fears and weaknesses and sins. You will get to those later. In this room focus your thoughts on God. Read aloud Psalm 111. As you do, personalize the verses so they become your prayer of praise, adoration and thankfulness.



Psalm 111

I will thank the Lord with all my heart as I meet with His godly people. How amazing are the deeds of the Lord! All who delight in Him should ponder them. Everything He does reveals His glory and majesty. His righteousness never fails. Who can forget the wonders He performs? How gracious and merciful is our Lord! He gives food to those who trust Him; He always remembers His covenant. He has

shown His great power to His people by giving them the lands of other nations. All He does is just and good, and all His commandments are trustworthy. They are forever true, to be obeyed faithfully and with integrity. He has paid a full ransom for His people. He has guaranteed His covenant with them forever. What a holy, awe-inspiring name He has! Reverence for the Lord is the foundation of true wisdom. The rewards of wisdom come to all who obey Him. Praise His name forever!

Before you leave this room think of something specific for which you are thankful.

Take a flower from the box and use it to represent something for which you are thankful. Place your flower in the basket and offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God.

Room 3 — Confession, Forgiveness and Unloading

Place your hand print in the sand.

Remember that nothing is hidden from God. He knows every detail of your life, just as He knows this handprint belongs to you alone.

Start in this room by confessing your sin, being honest and specific. God is always ready and willing to forgive you, for ...

... if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

Read aloud Psalm 51 in the Bible provided. Next, in the stillness of this room tell God what is troubling you. You cannot prevent fears, worries and anxieties from entering your mind, but you can tell God about them instead of dwelling on them. If you...

... Cast your cares on the Lord ... He will sustain you. (Psalm 55:22)

As you leave this room, let the streaming light of loving forgiveness and acceptance flood your heart. You are loved, understood, forgiven and accepted. And remember to ...

Forgive Those Who have sinned Against you.
(Matthews 6:12)

Room 4 — Affirmation & Reception

Cleansed by forgiveness you are now ready to receive. God is waiting to give.

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. (Mark 11:24)

Listen to the sounds of the water gently flowing over the rocks and picture the blessing of God gently flowing over you.

Say out loud:

- The peace of God is mine.
- God is giving me His power now.
- In God I am one with the Spirit of Love.
- I am safe within His care.
- The everlasting arms are round about me and will not let me fall.

Psalm 23

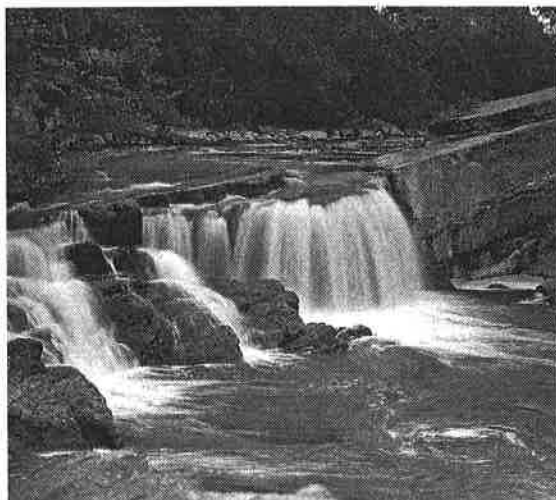
The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet waters, He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow

me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Amen

Room 5 — Purified Desire & Sincere Petition

We know our strongest desires. Here we purify them by looking at them again in the light of God. Instead of expressing our desires to get ... in this room we express our desire to be used.

Come near to God and He will come near to you. Wash your hands ... and purify your hearts ... Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up. (James 4:8, 10)



Take a wipe from the container and use it to cleanse your hands. As you do, let this symbolize God cleansing the desires of your heart.

Fill in the blanks below as you pray
I want...

- ... to love God more
- ... to love others more
- ... to be used by God to help others
- ... _____
- ... _____

Ask God for...

... renewed trust

... stronger faith

... more tolerant love for those who are different than us

*** _____

*** _____

God, please make me ...

*** _____

*** _____

Room 6 — Intercession for Others

In this room you will pray for someone else. It is good to pray for people by name...

I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers. (Philemon 4)

Take a leaf from the basket and write their initials on one side. Thank God for that person.

If this person has a specific need, ask God to meet that need according to His will.



My God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

(Philippians 4:19)

If you are not sure how to pray for them, read the following words of Paul:

This is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of

insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

(Philippians 1:9-11)

Now hang the leaf on the tree as a symbol of your faith; for just as you see this leaf on the tree, you know that God has heard your prayer and will answer according to His sovereign plan.

Room 7 — Meditation

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light. (1 Peter 2:9)

In this last room, take a few moments to meditate on the following prayer:

God of my life, you are always calling me to follow you into the future, inviting me to new ventures, new challenges, new ways to care, new ways to touch the hearts of all.

When I am fearful of the unknown, give me courage ... when I worry that I am not up to the task, remind me that you would not call me if you did not believe in me.

When I we get tired, or feel disappointed with the way things are going, remind me that you can bring change and hope out of the most difficult situations.

Throughout this day, help me to hear and heed the finest whispers of your voice. Amen.

Adapted from: the Pattern of our Days, The Iona Community, Wild Goose

Before you leave your Private House of Prayer, take one final opportunity kneel or sit before God. Rededicate yourself to God; offering Him your love, your devotion, your life.

Spiritual Development

Margaret Wickings, London, England. Global Exchange, April 2003

Spiritual exercises to try together and develop alone

There are many ways to approach prayer — as many as there are people. Here is a series of spiritual exercises to try with a group. They can also be used during personal prayer times.

Focusing

It is important first to relax in God's presence, to focus on Him. Sometimes we rush in, demand, complain or offload, and then rush out again. In any relationship, quality time requires relaxation and focused attention together.

Exercise 1: Give Him Your Attention And Time

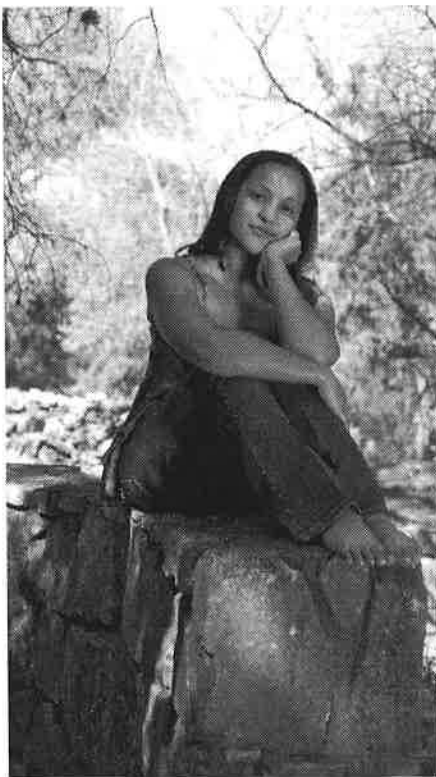
This exercise consists of five stages, designed to be followed in the order given here. It is important not to rush any stage. Take all the time you need before moving to the next stage.

- As you sit, find a comfortable position for your body to be relaxed but your mind alert.
- Tighten and then consciously relax your muscles, beginning with your toes and working upwards.
- Listen intently to the sounds around you in the quietness.
- Become aware of your own breathing.
- Gently lengthen your breaths, by counting perhaps, until body and mind are still.

Now we are relaxed and focused — and prepared for the next exercise.

Exercise 2: Praying The Jesus Prayer

Begin to focus on Jesus, using repeated words. For example: Say the name 'Jesus' very slowly,



in time with your breathing. As you breathe in, say the first part of His name, as you breathe out, say the last part: 'Je ... sus...'.

Alternatively, repeat the following sentences several times very slowly, again in time with Your breathing. Take a long, slow breath, in and out, between the first and second lines: 'In You ... my Lord ... I live ... and move ... and have ... my being In me ... my Lord ... You live ... and move ... and have ... your being...'.

Notes for leaders: Each person's breathing will differ in length. Therefore, when using this

exercise within a group it might be better for each to say the words in her own mind rather than aloud. (When using it alone, of course, it does help to say them aloud.)

When we have repeated this exercise until we are settled in heart, at peace, and in tune with Jesus, we will be ready for the next group of exercises.

Symbols

Visual objects and actions help us to express our feelings to God or to realise what He wants to say to us.



Exercise 3: Looking At Nature

A waterfall or river, the sea, a large shady tree, animals grazing or chickens pecking for food, through any of these and more — God can speak to us. If none of these is available, a picture, or a clay model or carving, can be used instead. Still with relaxed body and slow breathing, take time to gaze at the scene. What does it say to you about God's strength ... love ... beauty ... power ... gentleness ... or patience?

Perhaps a Bible verse will come into mind. It might lead you naturally to prayer as you

allow God to speak to you.

Note to leaders: After spending some minutes in quiet reflection like this, it is helpful for individuals to share voluntarily the thoughts and verses that have come to their minds.

Exercise 4: Expressing Feelings Through Gestures

We can also use our bodies to express feelings, desires and yearnings for God. This helps us to communicate with Him as whole people. We have reflected on nature in Exercise 3. Now, as we respond, try some of these:

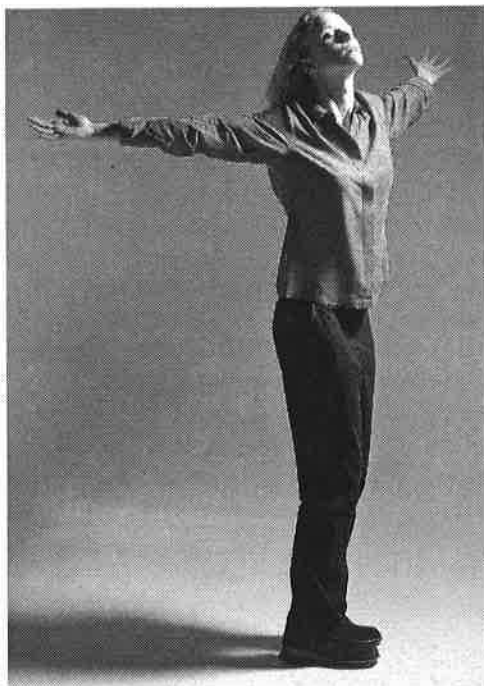
Hands: Place them in your lap, with palms facing upwards, to express your openness to Him, while you think of Him. Or raise them to chest level, or above your head, in worship. Or stretch them out in front of you, palms upwards, reaching out to God in longing for Him.

Eyes: Close them if you wish, to help you focus on God. Or, as you worship

Him, open your eyes and continue to gaze on the world around you — His world, which he made. Tell Him what you feel about His creation.

Whole body: In some places people honour a king or chief by kneeling, or even stretching themselves on the ground in his presence. Why not in honour of God — who is King of all kings, Chief of all chiefs? If that seems the most appropriate way for you to respond to God just now, do it. Or sit in His presence, as a child with the Father, or friend with Friend. Or sit on the floor, with your arms on a chair

seat or bench, and rest your head on your arms like a child sharing love with a parent.



Note to leaders: This is personal and individual. It is important for each one in the group to find her own way to express herself, not just to do what others do. Encourage each to feel comfortable and free to use the ways most helpful to her. Allow time for each to truly worship.

It is possible that some in the group might become very sleepy as they work through the exercises. Please do not worry about this. It shows that they are relaxing in God's presence. If it happens by the end of this exercise, bring them back to reality gently. The next exercise will help them to become alert again.

Exercise 5: Movement

Responding to God, talking with Him, can be helped by movement. Here are some ideas:

Walk: Alone, around the room or outside, as you talk with Him. The rhythmic action of walking, together with prayerful thoughts, can make you alert to His voice or still your heart, if it is restless. Or walk in twos, like the disciples walking to Emmaus. Read together Luke 24:13-15 and then, as you walk, share with each other some of the blessings and thoughts which have come to you during these spiritual exercises.

Dance: David did it (2 Samuel 6:12-15)! For some it comes easily and naturally, others can feel shy. If dancing expresses best your response to God just now, feel free to dance.

Note to leaders: Here, also, allow time for group members to respond in whichever way is appropriate for them. It is not always necessary for everyone to do the same.

And so we reach our final exercise.

Exercise 6: Singing

This you all can try together. Choose a song which all will know and which summarises your collective response to God today, as you conclude this spiritual exercise period.

Note to leaders: All the exercises outlined here can also be used very effectively in personal prayer. Encourage the group members to continue using them at home, or to develop new spiritual exercises for themselves.

Acknowledgements

Some of the ideas expressed here contain influences from the following sources: Coming to God in the Stillness, Borst, Jim 1992, Guildford (UK): Eagle; Open to God, Huggett, Joyce 1989. London (UK): Hodder & Stoughton; Heaven on Earth: A Personal Retreat Programme, Ramon, Brother 1991. London (UK): Marshall Pickering.

Major Margaret Wickings is the Director of the School for Faith Education, William Booth

How Do You Keep Your Faith Fresh?

Adapted from Today's Christian Woman

Look To The Heavens

I enjoy photographing spectacular sunrises and sunsets, which I make into greeting cards for my loved ones. The vibrant yellows and oranges that fade into pastel pinks in the clouds are God's message of love to me. The beauty He creates never fails to lift my spirit and restore my faith.

Pass It On

There's no better way to keep your faith fresh than to share it. Going the next step and teaching someone how to become a bold witness and share her faith with others is the most exhilarating of all.

Pray Through The Day

I pray short prayers as I go through my day, such as, "Please help me do the Right thing"; "Thank You for this blessing"; "Please bless that person in a wheelchair." This keeps me mindful of God and helps me make a positive impact on others.

Say "Yes" To God

I keep growing spiritually by continually saying "yes" to God when He asks me to do something. It could be pausing to pray for someone He brings to mind or agreeing to teach a Bible study. As my pastor once told me, "If I'm not in over my head, I'm not trusting God enough!"

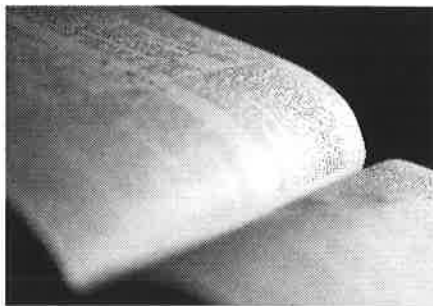
Lean On Me

When I feel myself getting in a rut, or when it seems the world is on my shoulders, I turn to one of my prayer warrior friends who holds me accountable. God wants us to lean on our friends. says, *"Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good*

deeds." (Hebrews 10:24)

Find Sanctuary

In our pressure-cooker world, I need to get away and spend extended time with God. Whenever possible, I clear my calendar for three days and go off alone with my Bible, journal, guitar, Christian books, and worship CDs. Whether it's camping at a park or somewhere else, I love this time of seeking God's face and listening to His voice.



Blog It

I write a daily blog, so I have no choice but to keep my faith fresh because my thoughts show up every day in people's in-boxes. I want to show my readers what it's like to live as a Christian mom in the twenty-first century; how my faith sustains me and helps me keep an eternal perspective. My readers often encourage me with their feedback and insights.

Stay In The Word

Daily prayer and Bible study build my relationship with Jesus so it's a constant, living faith, not something I have to "get" in a crisis. God's Word is fresh every day; it encourages, teaches, and inspires me. I'd collapse under the weight of life's trials without a foundation of faith.

Learning to Talk to God

Adapted for Cedar Springs by Linda Bradbury, Atlanta, USA

How to use the Scriptures to mentor a new Christian in prayer

Every growing baby needs to learn to talk in order to navigate his new world. Likewise, learning to pray is a foundational building block in every believers relationship with God.

Prayer is learned the same way a child learns to talk. Children learn to speak by mimicking words and sounds, not by formal instruction.

Jesus knew that the disciples would need words to "mimic" if they were going to speak the language of prayer. So He said, "*When you pray, say ...*" (Luke. 11: 2). He taught them to pray by giving them a prayer.

Prayer For All Seasons

God has recorded prayers in Scripture for every occasion. Just as Jesus offered His disciples a model prayer, so the Scriptures are full of prayers we can use to mentor others in how to talk to the Father. If someone is burdened by excessive stress, for example, take him/her to one of David's prayers, such as Psalm 57 or 63. Both were written while David was running from Saul. Or if someone has a wayward child, look at Exodus 32 to see how Moses prayed as he led his rebellious people. If someone wants to pray for the ongoing spiritual needs of others, the prayer of Jesus in John 17 or the Apostle Paul's

intercession in Ephesians 1.

Keeping in mind that prayer is a language. Encourage others to imitate the words of Moses or David, Paul or Jesus. Then work on putting these prayers into their own words, for their specific situation. For example, when David was fleeing from Saul, he prayed, "*I cry out to God Most High ... I am in the midst of lions; I lie among ravenous beasts-men whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongues are sharp swords*". Palm. 57: 2, 4

These words perfectly describe what David



was facing. Others have their own unique struggles. Encourage a new Christian to pray something like this: "Father, I am in the midst of a lot of uncertainty and stress. I feel as if my life is being drained out of me". It's important to be specific.

Through The Eyes Of Prayer

The next step is to help others observe the heart and vision of the person whose prayer is recorded in the Bible. This can be done by asking several questions.

What were the circumstances surrounding the prayer? What caused the person to cry out to God?

What did the person believe about God? What titles did he use for God? What kind of attitude did he display toward Him? What did he recall about God?

These are critical questions because our concept of God will determine how we talk to Him; it determines what we can believe Him to accomplish.

In the Lord's Prayer Jesus believed that God was the Heavenly Father. This concept spurred Jesus to ask for the Father's will to be done on earth as in Heaven. It also caused Jesus to believe that the loving Father would give his children food, forgiveness and protection.

What is the major content of the prayer? What did the person praying spend most of the time talking to God about?

The praying people of the Bible took time to review who God was and what He had done in the past. When the early disciples' lives were threatened, for example, their prayer began by focusing on how God had ruled in sovereignty throughout history.



They raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them". Acts 4:24, 29-30.

It is essential to take beginners in prayer to passages such as the above. That's how they learn to pray about what's on God's heart rather than praying in a self absorbed way.

What, if anything, did the person ask God to do? It can be surprising to see what someone in the Scriptures requested in light of his apparent needs.

What did the person expect to see changed as the result of prayer? This question is closely related to the preceding one. It's valuable to examine Scripture to see how God answered a particular prayer.

The goal in this exercise is to help others become attentive to God and to grow into people who long to communicate openly, and live in utter dependence upon Him. When these things happen, prayer becomes the rich, organic language it's meant to be.

An Evening Cruise

Aux-Captain Sue McGulgan

This program can be as much fun as you desire. Allow your ladies to be as creative as they wish. Invite friends to join in fellowship.

Preparation

Decorate like a departure lounge with streamers/balloons, etc, and posters of various destinations (gather posters from your local travel agent). Borrow books or video's from you local Library. Ask your ladies to bring items they have collected from other countries.

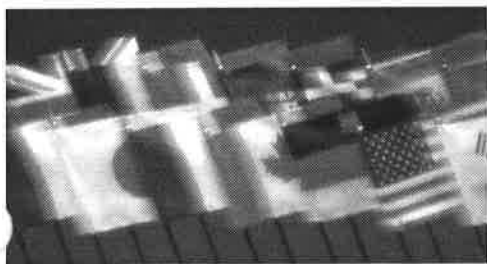


Introduction

Take a trip around the world in an imaginary luxury liner, stopping at different ports/countries to sample food from that country. These food stops make for segments in the night that can be filled in various ways. In the weeks leading up to the event issue tickets with the date and time, dress style (e.g. formal or casual). On arrival, ladies can proceed into the "departure lounge" and be served cheese, crackers and juice.

Here are some ideas for stops along your journey:

- North Queensland — tropical fruits
- Mexico — salsa dip and crackers
- America — hot dogs
- Asia — spring rolls/sushi
- France — cheesecake and coffee ... *a good finishing place!!!*



Gather video's to view on the chosen destination, or invite a guest to speak on one of the ports of stop. At each port of call, conclude your visit by sharing a light snack representative of that country.



Games

Questions: I am going ...

- To see the Eiffel Tower
- To see the Pyramids
- To see the Dead Sea
- To see Shakespeare's Birthplace
- To see the Taj Mahal
- To see the Kremlin
- To see the Grand Canyon
- To see Disney World
- To see Westminster Abbey
- To see the Golden Gate Bridge
- To see Victoria Falls
- To see the Leaning Tower of Pisa
- To see Buckingham Palace

Answers

Paris, France
 Egypt
 Israel
 Stratford-on-Avon, England
 India
 Moscow, Russia
 Colorado, USA
 Orlando, Florida
 London, England
 San Francisco, USA
 Africa or Zimbabwe
 Pisa, Italy
 London, England

Game 2: Divide group into teams and have a packed suitcase of clothing for each team — shirts, coats, ties, socks, shoes, hats, trousers, etc. One person from each team to stand on one side of hall with suitcase (the dresser). Other members of



team (the dressers) to stand on other side of hall and take turns running to the dresser and put on one item of clothing — until all items are gone from the suitcase. Fastest team wins.

For prizes purchase small travel items e.g. hand cream, hand sanitizer, tissues, wipes, shampoo etc.



Invite someone to speak about child sponsorship in developing countries either through The Salvation Army or some other Christian agency.



Obtain list of Army personnel (officer or lay persons) serving overseas. Do something practical — send a "thinking of you" card, if feasible send a "care package", initiate a prayer circle, correspond by email.



Conclusion

Create an 'Everyday Survival Kit' to depict our spiritual destination — Heaven. A small Bible and Praying hands. Share Philipians 3:12-20 focusing on our goal is to reach heaven.



Song: SASB 42/TB 186, *This is my Father's World*

Benediction Prayer



Mirror, Mirror On The Wall

CONNECT Adult and Family Ministries Resources - 2007. THQ, U.K. Territory

Display

- Different types of mirrors
or
- Ask members to bring objects from their home that contain a mirror

Mirrors

How many mirrors do you have in your home?

- Originally a mirror was a polished surface intended to reflect objects, especially the face.
- Ancient mirrors were made from molten brass or alloy of copper. Later they were made from tin, or, for the rich, silver or gold. Early mirrors were mainly hand held.
- With the advent of sheet glass, mirrors were made with silvering on the back.
- Now mirrors can be made of plastic.
- The quality of mirrors made today means that a true reflection can be given. Mirrors are used in making all kinds of precision instruments in engineering, in medical instruments, horticulture and navigation, as well as everyday objects like torches and car lights.
- Mirrors come in all shapes and sizes to decorate our homes and give an illusion of space.
- Mirrors are first mentioned in the Bible in Exodus 38:8 (a bronze bowl and stand was made for the Tabernacle out of ladies' mirrors).
- More than a thousand years later a mirror is mentioned again by St Paul when he talks about a mirror giving a dim reflection (1 Corinthians 13:12).

Myths, Legends And Beliefs

In Japan a bronze mirror is kept in the nation's



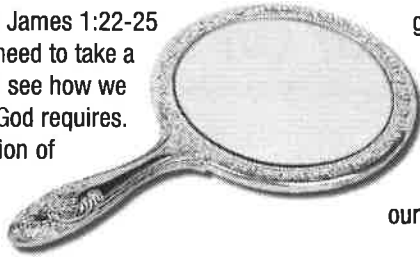
most important Shinto shrine, representing the return of the sun goddess to the world. According to legend she was tempted from her hiding place by a magical mirror, which led her to believe that the world could reflect her own goodness. Shinto legend has it that a giant mirror can detect evil-doers and chooses who enters hell!

There are various legends about magicians looking into mirrors to predict the future as Merlin did.

An ancient Christian myth was that a mirror could drive away evil spirits. Superstition about breaking a mirror is rooted in primitive times when people thought that the reflection they saw was their soul. Therefore breaking a mirror was thought to be harmful to a person's soul. Such a thought is presented in Tennyson's poem, "The Lady of Shalott".

Reflection: Read James 1:22-25

James says that we need to take a look at ourselves and see how we measure up to what God requires. How does the reflection of our life measure up to what we see in the life of Jesus?



goes away and forgets what they look like.

May our prayer be that the love and beauty of Jesus' character will shine from our lives.

The more we read and consider the word of God, the Bible, the more we see of the Lord. The more we see of Him, then the closer we come to Him. And the closer we get to him, the more we see the imperfections in our own life.

However James says we mustn't leave it there — we have to put into practice what has been shown us, otherwise we are like someone who has seen a reflection of themselves then

Suggested Songs/Choruses

- SASB Chorus 61 *Come Beautiful Christ*
- SASB 178 /TB 678 *I Love To Sing Of The Saviour*
- Chorus SASB 77 *Let The Beauty Of Jesus Be Seen In Me*
- SASB 28/TB 305 *For The Beauty Of The Earth*

Benediction: SASB 962/TB 487 *This, This Is The God We Adore*

Mirror Quiz

If a mirror is broken, how long is bad luck supposed to last? *7 Years*

Which ancient mythical character fell in love with himself when he saw his reflection in a mirror? *Narcissus*

In the first Harry Potter book what did the 'Mirror of Erised' show? *Your heart's desire*

What beam of light, enhanced by a mirror, shines out across the sea? *Beacon (Lighthouse)*

What does a mirror never do? *Lie*

When the dog in Aesop's fable sees his reflection in a puddle, what does he do with his bone? *Drops it*

What instrument, with mirrors, helps you see above you? *Periscope*

In the 16th century, what was the French lady Catherine de Medici shown in a mirror? *The fate of her sons*

Who said, 'Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?' *The wicked Queen, Snow White's stepmother*

In Shakespeare's Hamlet, to whom did Hamlet say, 'You may not go until I set you up a glass that you may see the inmost parts of you'? *Queen Gertrude, his Mother*

In one of Lewis Carroll's novels, who went through the looking glass? *Alice*

Shawl – A Hug From God

Deborah Coles, Simcoe, Ontario

Introduction

The “prayer shawl” is either the latest fad in “Spirituality”, or a great tool for ministry. A shawl can be used as a practical gift to let someone who is sick/dying/grieving/struggling know that they are being “hugged”. For me, it is also a wonderful object lesson: as I wrap the shawl around my shoulders, I picture myself being held in the Everlasting Arms of my Father in Heaven. Matthew 23 provides another image which is that of Jesus, I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under his wings. These ideas led me to look up some of the many references in Scripture to our being “under His wings”.

Preparation

Gather a variety of shawls and scarves along with a few items which include hens to decorate the room. Display a few patterns of shawls. Check the internet for free patterns. Try www.knittinggeek.com/howto/shawlworkshop.htm

Scriptures related to the theme:

Ruth 2:12 *“May the LORD repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge”.* (Boaz to Ruth)

Lots of good shawl references — for example, Boaz fills her shawl with 6 measures of barley and put it on her.

Psalms 17: 8 *Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings.*

Psalms 36:7 *How priceless is your unfailing love! Both high and low among men find refuge in the shadow of your wings.*



Psalms 57:1 *Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, for in you my soul takes refuge.*

I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed.

Psalms 61:4 *I long to dwell in your tent forever and take refuge in the shelter of your wings.*

Psalms 63:7 *Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings.*

Psalms 91:1, 4 *Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; His faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.*

Matthew 23:37 *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing....*

Suggested Worship Songs:

- SASB 66/TB 394 *Precious Name, O How Sweet*
- SASB 396/TB 202 *Count Your Blessings, Name Them One By One*
- SASB 645/TB 451 *What A Friend We Have In Jesus*
- SASB 768/TB 715 *What A Fellowship, What A Joy Divine*
- SASB 954/TB 506 *God Be With You 'til We Meet Again*

Song: Under His Wings

*Under His wings I am safely abiding,
Though the night deepens and tempests
are wild
Still I can trust Him; I know He will keep me
He has redeemed me, and I am His child.
Under His wings, under His wings
Who from His love can sever?
Under His wings my soul shall abide,
Safely abide forever.
Under His wings, what a refuge in sorrow!
How the heart yearningly turns to His rest!
Often when earth has no balm
for my healing,
There I find comfort, and there
I am blessed.
Under His wings, oh, what precious
enjoyment!
There will I hide till life's trials are o'er;
Sheltered, protected, no evil can harm me,
Resting in Jesus, I'm safe evermore.*

William O. Cushing/Ira Sankey (Found words on internet)

Reasons to make a prayer shawl:

- *We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.* Ephesians 2:10
- *Comfort with the comfort you have received.* 2 Corinthians 1:3-7
- *... that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from*

the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself... Colossians 2:2

- *Use your gifts (craftsmanship, cf. "Bezalel and Oholiab" Exodus. 35:30 – 36:1; cf., Tabitha, always doing good and helping the poor/made clothing Acts 9:36-43; Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth Acts 16:13; 2.*
- *Use what you have at hand, what you know. 'The LORD said to him (Moses), "What is that in your hand?" And he said, "A staff."'. Exodus 4:2 – using what you know to serve God with.*

Weaving, knitting verses

Knit together in mother's womb — Psalms 139:13-15 (woven in secret place)
Hearts knit — David and Jonathan — 1 Samuel 18:1.



Meditation: Jesus our Mothering Hen, Luke 13

The Bible presents us with many pictures of God to help us understand His nature or His power or His actions. Sometimes He is the Good Shepherd, sometimes He is the King of the Armies of Heaven. Sometimes He is the Rock who gives us sure footing. Often He calls Himself our Heavenly Father. Today, we will hear one of the ways Jesus describes Himself. It is one of the most unusual pictures

we have of God! Jesus describes Himself as a Mother Hen.

Listen to the reading from God's Word: Luke 13:31-35. Jesus feels sad in this passage, not just because people have disobeyed Him, not just because He knows they are going to kill Him, but also because the people haven't given Him the chance to love them as He wishes to, with a love that is warm, tender, and soft. He feels frustrated because He wants to love us.

"I want to be your Mother Hen, and you to be My chicks. And I want to open my wings so that you can come run under them, and I can keep you warm, safe, dry and loved." It is a love that is tender and motherly. It is a love that worries itself sick over us.

Not only is a Mother Hen loving towards her chicks, she is also vulnerable. Earlier in our passage Jesus says Herod is like a "fox." Now I don't know how much experience you have had with hens, but the hen-fox relationship is not a pretty one.

Has anyone here ever kept chickens? Has anyone ever seen the damage a fox can do to a hen? Then you know just how vulnerable hens are.

When Jesus calls Herod a fox, and just seconds later describes Himself as a hen, He is giving a graphic picture of the tragic reality of his situation. Jesus doesn't picture Himself as

a mother hen, who also deeply loves her chicks, but actually as a chance of surviving a predator's attack. No, Jesus chooses the metaphor of a helpless hen, defenseless but fearlessly loving her chicks — us. The hen makes her special clucking noise but the chicks, rather than gathering to her, scatter themselves.

We have the choice. Jesus waits, wings outstretched, inviting us, hoping we'll crawl underneath safe and secure, but it is we who must choose that safety; it is we who must turn our footsteps towards Him.

In our passage Jesus is pained to think that despite His greatest hopes, His people have not come to Him as chicks would to a mother hen.

Instead, He dejectedly admits "and I tell you, you will not see me again ..." But the story doesn't end there. Instead He continues — "you will not see me again until the time

comes when you say "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord."

You see, the invitation remains open, the choice remains ours. We are free always to say those words and Jesus will be there, the Mother Hen, wings open wide, welcoming us home.

Spoken Benediction: SASB 671

*Glory to Thee, my God, this night,
For all the blessings of the light;
Keep me, O keep me, King of Kings,
Beneath Thine own almighty wings.*



Holy Hobbies

Developed from an article found in Discipleship Journal 2000.

Jesus taught spiritual principles as He drew His listeners' attention to common activities. Why not do the same while enjoying fellowship and getting to know your ladies. What do your ladies do in their free time? Take a survey to learn their favourite hobbies and create a fellowship evening linking Scripture passages to highlight the gifts God has given.

Sports

Build a fellowship evening around sports. Invite one or two of your ladies to demonstrate the sport she has mastered or a sport that captivated her in her younger years. Use 1 Timothy 4:7-8 to challenge the ladies to train in godliness. train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

... train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. 1 Timothy 4:7-8 NIV

**"We are God's
workmanship created
in Christ Jesus to do
good works ..."**

Art

Share a cup of tea or coffee around tables while an artist creates a work of art. Have the artist share what she is painting and her thoughts behind the painting. This can be a very relaxing evening to invite ladies



from the community. Prepare a short talk based on Ephesians 2:10 "We are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

Gardening

Invite an avid gardener to teach her secrets for success. A demonstration of planting flowers, and herbs would be interesting. A time for questions and answers would be beneficial for those ladies interested in gardening. The parable of the sower as recorded in Luke 8 would be a great conclusion to the evening.

Music

Create an opportunity for your ladies to share their musical talent. You will want to have at least three ladies to share as this will provide a variety of music styles. The Psalmist wrote of making music unto the Lord as an act of worship. Conclude the evening by creating a few thoughts from Psalm 98.



"Secrets"

by Steve Pavey, Toronto, Ontario

Drama is a wonderful gift from God and can be used in a variety of ways in Women's Ministries. Please consider this effective and often under-used tool for an evening of fellowship around coffee and dessert.



Purpose: To show the potential damage caused by gossip

Time: 4-6 minutes

Theme: Pure in heart

Props: Drinking glasses; potato chips; small portable radio with two headsets; (Secrets 2000); larger radio (Bob's)

Scripture: Proverbs 16:28;
2 Corinthians 12:20

Costumes: Casual party wear

Cast: Salesman
Bob
Bruce
Dave
Girl 1
Girl 2

Lighting: General

Sound: Soft party music (*optional*)

Setting: House party



Girl 1 and Girl 2 stand off to the right, holding drinks, while talking to each other. Bob stands off to the left, wearing headphones. Enter Bruce and Dave.

Bruce: *(To Bob)* Hey, great party, eh Bob? *(Bob nods in agreement, but continues to listen to headphones.)*

Dave: What's with him? *(They shake their heads.)* Bob. *(motions for Bob to take off headphones)* What are you doing, bud?

Bob: Oh, Hi Bruce. Hi Dave. *(gestures to girls)* I'm just listening in on their conversation with this great device. *(shows his listening device)*

Bruce: Really? You devil. What are they saying?

Girl 1: *(to girl 2)* And then all day my computer kept crashing. To top it off, I was late for a dentist appointment.

Girl 2: Wow! That's too bad.

Bob: Something about her computer crashing, and being late for the dentist.

Dave: *(sarcastically to Bob)* Wow. That's really exciting. *(Dave and Bruce laugh and walk away, further upstage.)*

Enter Salesman

Salesman: *(to Bob)* Tired of same dull conversation?

Bob: Huh? Who are you?

Salesman: Put away your old eavesdroppers, and try the new "Secrets 2000". *(hands it to Bob)*

Bob: Well, how is it different from mine?

Salesman: *(holds device to audience)* It's sleek new design gives way to more discreet listening. And, with it's new computer technology, the "Secrets 2000" will spice up any conversation.

Bob: How does it work?

Salesman: Like a charm. The "Secrets 2000" contains a revolutionary computer program which takes fragments of ordinary conversation, words and phrases, and turns them into juicy gossip. Contrast it with your brand name listener. *(Bob listens again with his own device.)*



Girl 1: I tried a new gel today. I think it helps spruce up my hair. *(She waves her head around.)*

Salesman: Now try "Secrets 2000". *(Bob plugs his headset into new device.)*

Girl 1: *(still waving hair, and moving fingers through)* I think Bruce had an affair.

Girl 2: Wow! Are you sure?

Girl 1: Yeah. Apparently with the girl down in accounting. I always knew she was like that.

Girl 2: And look at Bruce over there. Acting like Mr. Innocent.

Bob: This is amazing. But, that's not what they really were saying, right?

Salesman: What does it matter? As long as it spices up the conversation. It'll give you hours of listening pleasure. And why listen alone? "Secrets 2000" new dual plug lets you bring others in on the fun.



Bob: *(to Dave)* Hey, Dave. Come here. Check this out. Did you know that Bruce was having an affair with that girl in accounting?

Dave: What? Let me check it out.

Girl 1: What do you think of this dip?

Girl 2: *(bites into a potato chip)* It's a little tart.

Girl 1: Yeah. Kind of like the little tart that Bruce has been seeing. What a floozy.

Dave: Wow, I can't believe this. Better not let Bruce hear.

Bruce: *(joins Bob and Dave)* Hey, what are you guys up to?

Bob: Uh, just listening to the hockey game. *(Bob and Dave snicker to each other)*



Bruce: Well, let me hear. *(puts head by Dave's headphones, and pulls away one side to listen)*

Girl 1: And what about that Bob guy? I understand Stella is going to leave him. *(girl gasps)*

Bruce: Bob, that's you they're talking about. *(Both Dave and Bruce look at Bob, who looks worried.)*

Bob: What?

Girl 1: Apparently, he's been passed up for a few promotions, and started hitting the bottle.

Girl 2: Well, I guess their marriage hasn't been the same ever since their daughter became addicted to drugs.

Bob: That's not true.

Girl 1: Apparently Stella has had it with Bob and is thinking of moving on.



Bob: And I know that's not true. That can't be true. *(thinking)* Can it?

Bruce: Gee, Bob. I'm sorry. I never knew.

Bob: *(throws off headphones)* Stella! *(runs offstage yelling)* Stella!

Salesman: The new "Secrets 2000". Putting the edge back into your conversation. And your life.

Curtain.

Creating Space

Discipleship Journal, Jan/Feb 2005

Stick With Decisions

Making decisions costs us in both time and energy. There is seldom a compelling reason to revisit a decision frequently. If you have decided against cable TV, for example, don't re-decide weekly. If you decide not to attend R-rated movies, stick with your decision. If your insurance costs too much, research the options and make an informed decision—but not quarterly; that's too much decision stress.

Simplify Your Decision Making

Having too many choices can overwhelm us. Decide to limit choices rather than continually expanding them. When I got tired of deciding what to wear to the office each day, I simplified: either brown or blue pants, and either a white or blue shirt. Everything matched, and I could get dressed in the dark. Similarly, when traveling, I have a "speaking uniform": gray slacks, a blue shirt, and a blue blazer. I don't own a suit. Einstein, it seems, owned several outfits exactly the same. On his way to discovering relativity, he did not wish to waste time deciding among trivialities.

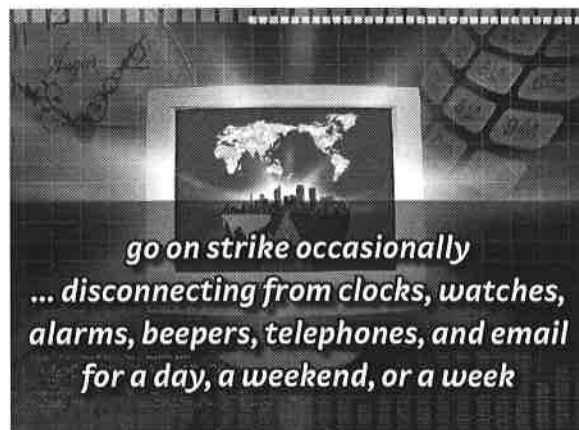
Count To Eight

Inhaling slowly, take a deep breath as you count to eight. Now, hold it for another eight seconds. Then exhale very slowly for the count of eight. This Simple breathing exercise forces us to slow the hurry for a brief time and to think about our breathing instead of our stress.

Through physiologic mechanisms I don't fully understand, it seems to release tension.

Tame Technology

Remembering that technology is responsible for much of our time famine, go on strike occasionally. Try disconnecting from clocks, watches, alarms, beepers, telephones, and email for a day, a weekend, or a week. Stop giving people the number to your cell phone,



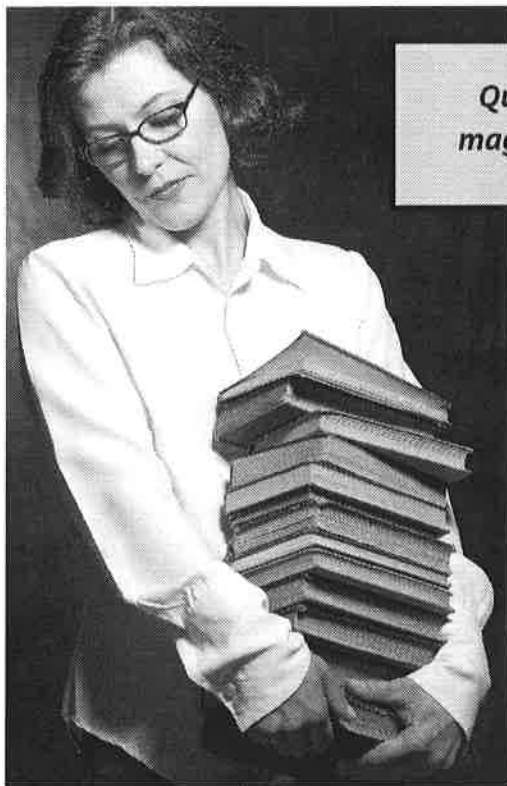
and instead use it to make calls rather than receive calls. During a medical trip to the developing world, my wristwatch of 20 years gave out. When I returned to the United States, I decided not to replace it. True, I was handicapped in a certain way without my watch. But I also experienced an interesting sense of freedom. (After a year, I finally purchased an inexpensive watch because my patients didn't quite know what to think of a doctor who had to borrow their watches to measure their pulses!) A man from Mali, West Africa, told me, "You Americans have all the watches, but we have all the time."

Retreat to a motel

If you can afford it, this is a periodic option that the entire family might enjoy. Use an indoor pool during the winter. Order a pizza, cuddle on the bed, and watch a family movie. Thirty years from now, it might remain one of your children's most vivid memories.

Grant Grace

I don't think we realize what a weighty emotional burden it is to judge others and to be judged. It is a form of emotional and spiritual suicide. Grace, on the other hand, treats people not as they deserve, but better than they deserve. When we extend grace to our enemies, they receive a shockingly



*Quit stockpiling journals,
magazines, and newspapers*

unexpected glimpse of the kingdom. And, at precisely the same time that our adversary is released, we are as well. Why would anyone wish to be harsh when he could instead be free? Grace not only revives emotional margin, it lifts it to heaven.

Value Sleep

"I can eat anything and sleep anywhere." That's a tremendous freedom. The Apostle Paul couched this in terms of contentment. "I have learned the secret of being content," he wrote in Phil. 4:12. To Timothy, he wrote, "Godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Tim. 6:6). If we can teach and model biblical contentment

to our children, the result will eventually be a "great gain" for them.

Pitch the pile

In nearly every home or office is a stack of unread journals and magazines. Cancel publications you don't have time to read. Quit stockpiling journals, magazines, and newspapers. If you don't have time to read them today, you will not somehow have time next month. My suggestion: If the stack is more than six inches high, save the top inch and throw the rest away. If the stack is more than two feet high, toss the whole pile.

Anticipate—And Relish

Calendar congestion has robbed us of the pleasure of anticipation. Without warning, the activity is upon us. We rush to meet it; then we rush to the next. In the same way, we lack the joy of reminiscing. On we fly to the next activity. For this reason, our family plans fishing trips at least six months in advance.

One trip to Alaska began with anticipation 18 months in advance.

You can't imagine how much fun we had just thinking and planning. When the activity is over, tell stories. Tell them again. And again. Frame a picture. Mount a fish. Make a special effort to remember the funny happenings. We don't have to do a lot; we can do a little and remember it a lot.

Set Boundaries

People have the right to establish and defend the atmospheres in their own homes. For example, we do not answer the telephone during the dinner hour. We're not trying

*When traffic is snarled ...
we get a late start, or the car is
out of gas, we begin to worry*

to be rude, and we hope people will call back. But whatever is happening around the table is more important than whoever is calling. Similarly, when the boys were young, we would not allow the telephone to disturb our evening routine of reading to them, praying with them, and tucking them into bed.

Tune Out Ads

Since most ads are nothing more than avenues of discontent, wage war against them. Perhaps the most powerful way to accomplish this is to control the television. When ads came on, we used the remote control to switch the channel. Our children disliked this annoying habit, but it accomplished two things: It kept us from seeing and absorbing the content of the ads, and it taught our kids that we were serious about the false content of advertisements.

Subtract From Your Needs

List all the things you need, and then start crossing things off. It might be painful at first, but after a while it becomes fun. "There are two ways to get enough," G. K. Chesterton has painted out. "One is to continue to accumulate more and more. The other is to desire less."

Set An Earlier ETA

Moderns do not like to arrive early and barely agree to arrive on time. But when traffic is snarled, or unexpected snow falls, or we get a late start, or the car is out of gas, we begin to worry. The experience erodes into yet another urgency-induced panic attack.



To short-circuit such routine disasters, plan to arrive early. With an earlier estimated time of Arrival (ETA), you can slow down the driving, enjoy the day, and begin to anticipate with pleasure the event in front of you. The best way to accomplish an earlier ETA, of course, is to have an earlier estimated time of departure.

These are just a handful of the practical ideas contained in The Overload Syndrome and margin by Richard A. Swenson. Copyright 1998 and 2004, respectively, by Richard A. Swenson. Used by permission of NavPress.

Are You Getting Enough Water?

Resource for Women – Southern Africa Territory

Pinch the skin on the back of your hand. Does it spring right back into place? If not, it could be a sign that you need to drink more water. Doctors say we should be drinking at least two litres of water a day, but recent research showed that the majority of us drink less than half this amount — and one in 25 people aged 16-24 showed signs of dehydration when they did the pinch test.

By drinking too little we risk every-day health problems such as:

- Constipation
- Headaches
- Lethargy
- Mood swings
- Indigestion

Long term, we risk problems with our kidneys, heart and even our brain. Chronic dehydration can also contribute to asthma, high blood pressure, backache and joint pains.

If you work in an office, you're even more susceptible. One in eight offices are estimated to be as dry as the Sahara Desert, so drinking only at your tea break is woefully inadequate.



The majority of sufferers of workplace dehydration only experience symptoms such as headaches and lethargy between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. while they're at work then catch up on their fluids when they get home in the evening, if we didn't, we'd be seriously ill.

It is bad for the body to go through these phases of dehydration. It's far better to keep on drinking regularly throughout the day, so you don't get those lulls when everything seems like too much effort.

Dealing with Anger

Adapted for Cedar Springs — Singapore/Malaysia/Myanmar Command

Decor

Create a relaxing atmosphere by dimming the lights and burning fragrant candles. Play soft background music.

Refreshments

Nothing is more soothing than a bowl of home-made soup with fresh, fragrant bread. Serve chamomile or peppermint herbal tea, which are known for their relaxing qualities.

Program Ideas

Speaker

Invite an expert on anger management to share statistics on anger-related topics as well as techniques on dealing with anger.

Group discussion

Break into groups of four or five and discuss the following:

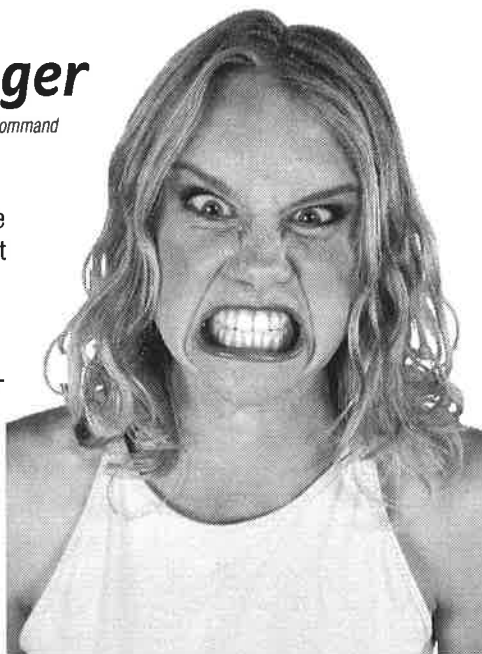
- What makes you angry?
- What were the consequences of your anger?
- What could you have done to address this anger?

Controlling anger

Anger is a natural emotion, experienced by all, but how we handle anger is important. It is perfectly normal to feel angry, but, mishandled anger is the cause of many problems in our lives. We need to learn appropriate ways to handle it.

Admit you're angry. It is tempting to deny your anger. But this doesn't help. Identify the problem, and then find a friend you trust and share your feelings with them.

Accept the blame. Often we attempt to blame



others for our anger. The Bible doesn't tell us that it's wrong to be angry, but it is wrong to express our anger in ways that hurt others.

Recognize the cause. There is rarely one cause for anger, but often a combination. We get angry to hide our feelings of being hurt, worried, and criticized or of feeling inadequate. These feelings may be too difficult for us to admit and deal with and so we express them in anger. Examine what makes you angry. When you become aware of those hidden feelings, you are on your way to controlling your anger.

How do you respond? Watch out for what triggers your anger. Wait until you cool down and then decide on a course of action. If the problem is small, it is usually a good idea to deal with it immediately. For larger problems, you should think through all of the issues before taking action. Try to stop hostile thoughts, feelings and actions. When they deserve no further attention and are not effective.

In all situations, pray. God knows all about our anger and invites us to talk to Him about it. His Holy Spirit can help us to do what would be impossible in our strength. He will guide us in our actions.

Check Websites for more information to help with this program.



If Jesus came today to cleanse the spiritual house of His people ... would He be angry or pleased ...?

Devotions: The Anger of Jesus

Our Lord was not given to tidy explanations. He was righteously committed to revealing the righteous nature of His Father. His words were clear strong and angry when anger was called for. Jesus was known to rebuke the disciples, the Pharisees, the crowd who denied children access to Him, false teachers, even the weather.

God is angry when the righteous are persecuted and clearly states that He will avenge their blood (see 2 Thessalonians 1: 6-20). Mark tells us that Jesus is angry with those who attribute God's power to Satan, sternly warning that this sin would be unforgiven. It would be unforgiven, not because God would refuse forgiveness, but because those engaged in it would be condemning themselves.

Jesus' anger was displayed on two occasions connected with the Temple, once at the beginning of His ministry and at the end. Such repetition and focus reinforces the importance

of the event, pointing not only to the edifice at Jerusalem but to the temples of our souls which God demands to be clean and filled with prayer.

Does sin — our own and that of others — make us angry? God hates sin, and we should, as Jude put it, "despise even the very appearance of it". When children copy their elders and mistreat others, or carry out bullying of other children etc., we should be angry enough, if we witness this, to demand that something be done to ensure it will not happen again. When our Christian

brothers and sisters are persecuted by godless governments and terrorists, we should be angry and muster all of our resources to help them. When we ourselves do something that we know God hates, we should be angry enough to stop our wrong behaviour and cast ourselves upon God's grace. And we should remember that the longer we make excuses, both for ourselves and for sinful behaviour in others, the more we incur the wrath of God who hates sin. God hates sin because it destroys people whom He loves.

Too often we are angry about personal insults. We sometimes vow revenge over things as small as being cut off in traffic or gossiped about over coffee break. This is not the kind of anger that marked the walk of Jesus on earth. When He was personally attacked, we read that He answered not a word. When He was nailed to a cross, the prayer on His lips was for forgiveness for His attackers.

If Jesus came today to cleanse the spiritual house of His people (our hearts — the place that should be His dwelling place), would He be angry or pleased with what He found?

Health Care Helps

New Zealand, Fiji & Tonga Territory



Common problems/Possible cures

- **The aloe vera plant with tall spear-like growth and saw-tooth edges brings healing to burns.** This plant is of great benefit in any home. Cut aloe leaves and apply juice to minor burns. This will prevent blistering



- **Help to avoid winter colds by washing hands frequently and keeping them away from your face.** The delicate membranes of the eyes and nose are particularly susceptible to cold germs. Occasionally use rubbing alcohol to disinfect telephone and computer keyboard.

- **Lift your mood by massaging your right palm in a circular motion with the thumb of your left hand.** Change hands after five minutes.
- **Often the dirtiest thing in a room is the doorknob.** It also holds many germs. Always remember to wash with an anti-bacterial cleaning agent.
- **Sleeping well is very important to health.** Try to lessen stress since a relaxed person can fall asleep more easily than a tense person. Exercise. It will decrease stress, anxiety and insomnia. Eat healthy. Reduce caffeine intake and do not drink coffee, tea or caffeine drinks within four hours of bedtime. Take a warm bath before bedtime, which will help to make you feel relaxed and drowsy. No cats or dogs should be allowed in bed as their actions can disturb your sleep.
- **Establish a bedtime ritual.** Reading for pleasure just before turning off the

lights will take your mind off the concerns of the day. Keep a relaxing atmosphere associated with the bedroom. It should not be used for watching violent or exciting television shows, for arguing, for eating or for working.

- **A new study indicates that very high-heeled shoes may be the cause of arthritis in the knee.** The report states

that osteoarthritis is twice as common with women, compared to men, and it is thought that high heeled shoes may account for this.

- **If you have low energy for cleaning, play lively music.** Studies show that when the part of the ear responsible for balance is stimulated by louder noises, the spinal chord signals the muscles to move.

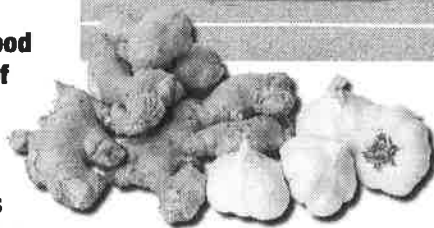
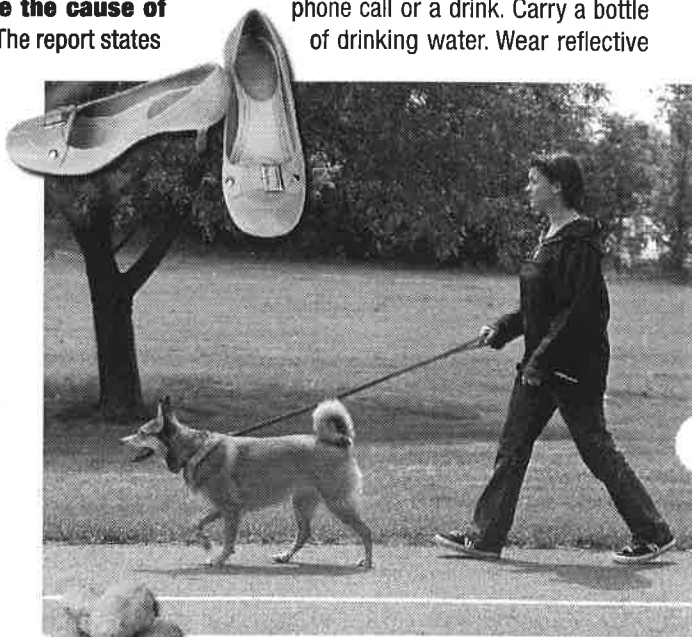
- **Ginger is very good in the treatment of colds.** Ginger tea

warms the body, treats the common cold and soothes coughs. A strong spicy drink may be made by boiling grated ginger root in a cup or two of water. Add sugar or honey to this mixture to treat a cough.

- **Pick up the phone and call someone in order to encourage them.** Reaching out to care for another person can be as beneficial to you as to that person .

- **Walking is great for your health.** It

can tone muscles, lower blood pressure, burn calories and helps you to know that you are contributing to your own good health. Walking is not only stimulating for the body but for the mind as well. Take a small notebook with you to write down the great ideas that come your way. Always carry identification and coins for a telephone call or a drink. Carry a bottle of drinking water. Wear reflective



clothing at dusk, night or dawn. Stay alert if using earphones. It is very important while walking on the road to walk on the side that faces the traffic and watch for cars.

- **Pray.** Prayer can be one of the greatest remedies for stress. Human help is not enough. There are many resources available in seminars, counseling and books. Prayer invites God into our lives and our circumstances to direct, instruct, intervene, solve the problems and to heal.

Ways To Praise A Child (or anyone else)

From the resource 'Pacific Link' a monthly publication linking the women of New Zealand, Fiji & Tonga to encourage, inspire and equip for mission.

FANTASTIC!

Good Job!

Wow!

YOU'RE THE BEST!

AWESOME!

- Wow • Way to Go • You're special • Outstanding
- Excellent • Great • Good • Neat • Well done • Remarkable • I knew you could do it • I'm proud of you
- Super star • Nice work • Looking good • You're on top of it • You're catching on • Now you've got it • How smart • Good job • That's incredible • Remarkable job
- You're a winner • You make me happy • Hip, hip, hooray • You're important • Magnificent • Beautiful • Fantastic • You're on target • Nothing can stop you now • Awesome • Fantastic job • You're real trooper • Outstanding performance • You mean a lot to me • You're incredible • I respect you • You're sensational • You brighten my day • You make me laugh • You're wonderful • You mean the world to me

• P.S. Remember a smile is worth a thousand words •

FANTASTIC!

Good Job!

Wow!

YOU'RE THE BEST!

AWESOME!

Just for Fun

By Julie P. Cantrell. With permission from MOMSense Magazine

Celebrate friends or family. If your extended family can't get together, host a "family friend" reunion and celebrate friends who have drawn close in community.

Keep it simple and cost-effective. Ask everyone to pitch in with potluck dishes.

Plan family-friendly games such as hide-and-seek, tug-of-war, scavenger hunt and water-balloon toss.

Set up a quick game of croquet, badminton or volleyball for a little more competition.

Put a unique spin on Trivial Pursuit by creating specific questions about each guest, such as "How many children does Aunt Helen have?" or "How old is Uncle Bob?"



Set out kiddie pools, sidewalk chalk, bubbles or a craft table to keep the little ones happy and safe.

Provide a video camera for guests to record their personal histories or funny stories and disposable camera to capture candid snapshots throughout the day. Mail copies with "Glad You Could Make It" notes of the event.

Create Your Safety

Sally Edwards. Reprinted with permission from MOMSense Magazine

I encourage every mother to create her own safety net. A support network will open doors of opportunity and provide the resources you need to help your life run smoothly.

Begin by recognizing and listing your needs (whatever they are).

Don't be surprised if you find yourself delving into unexpected areas such as your personal growth and education. I signed up for a local writing course and met people there who told me about health care, toddler groups and where to get English food. Like a snowball set off down a hill, my network started that day and hasn't stopped growing since.

Write a list of people you know and from where you know them.

This will help you see you're not alone and help is available. My network includes: my neighbors, MOPS group, doctor, babysitter, dog walker, local grocery with online and delivery service, preschool, garage with roadside service.

Next, identify any missing areas.

Be creative and think about how you can connect with other people. The Internet is a marvelous tool to use. Talk to other mums, your church, doctor, town hall and schools. Be imaginative, and you'll be amazed where you'll find help. I talk to people wherever I go.

My networking experience has helped me understand I have so much more to offer. I'm now a significant part of several different communities such as MOPS, the radio show where I'm a presenter and several toddler groups. I have something to contribute outside



the home. And I have a voice that gets heard. This happened because I recognized the need to connect and network. This realization has been so important to my self-worth and well-being. And I feel more fulfilled as a mother and as a woman.

Networking Tips

To network successfully you have to be out there meeting people. Don't reject an event or a person as unimportant. You never know what information you'll need or when.

Be prepared to give and take. Networking is a two-way information flow.

Be organized. Start an address book and keep details about the people you meet so you can contact them again.

Be polite. Follow up a first contact with a short e-mail saying how pleased you were to meet that person.

Child Abuse Registry Committee Canada and Bermuda Territory

Things Your Kids Should Know

- Full name and name of their parents.
- Complete phone number, street address and postal code.
- Know how to make a collect call.
- Know how to call the police.
- Know the name, address and phone number of someone they can call if their parents are not home.
- The difference between good secrets and bad secrets.
- Must ask permission from parents before going anywhere.
- Always ask a parent's permission before accepting candy or gifts or going somewhere with anyone.
- Do not allow anyone to take their picture without their parent's knowledge.
- Openly discuss with your children to not allow anyone to touch them in any private places or areas covered by a bathing suit.
- Never let a stranger into your house.
- Encourage the children to tell their parents about the new people they meet each day.
- Require your children to always tell someone where they are going and when they are going to be home.
- Use well travelled streets, avoid back alleys and empty lots, especially at night.
- If you are going door to door, to collect payment or accept donations, never go inside the house. State that you are happy to wait outside.
- Do not approach people from cars that ask directions; step back and tell the occupants that you do not know and walk away quickly.
- Do not believe people who promise you a TV or modelling career.

Tips For Parents

- Set an example of good safety habits for your child. For example, when away tell your child how long you will be gone and where you can be reached.



- Allow your children to talk freely about themselves and their feelings. Children who are listened to and have their needs met at home are less vulnerable to abuse or exploitation.
- Don't put children's names on outside clothing.
- Define a stranger. An ice cream man seen every day is still a stranger.
- Don't leave your children alone in a shopping mall.
- Keep a current photo of your kids in your wallet.
- Discuss common situations where your children are at risk and what to do when in danger.

- Go with your children when using public washrooms.
- Be alert to adults who take an interest in your children.
- Everyday, ask your children about school and other activities they are involved in.
- Know who your children spend time with.
- Listen to your children.
- Teach your children how to use a telephone, including area codes, collect calls, pay phones and 911 calls.
- Post emergency numbers near your phone.
- Establish strict procedures regarding who will pick up the child from school and be consistent.
- Know your child's routes to school, their friend's house etc.
- Teach your child to avoid walking alone through empty fields, parks and school yards.



- When your child is home alone, instruct them to say that you are home but unable to come to the phone.
- Talk about sex and sexuality with your child. A naïve child is more vulnerable to predators
- Be taught that it's all right to say 'no' to an adult if the person wants them to do something you've taught them is wrong
- Discuss "low risk" adults with your children ... those adults they can approach when

lost or afraid such as a police officer in uniform, store cashier, a pregnant woman or a woman with children.

- Always accompany your child on door-to-door activities, i.e. Halloween, school fundraising campaigns, etc.

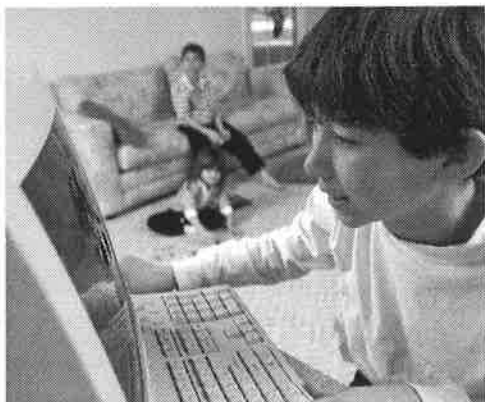
Tips For Teens

- Do not run away from home, even if it feels unbearable. Find someone to talk to. There are people who want to help.
- Talk it over with a friend who cares.
- Be careful of offers of friendship from strangers. Because you are lonely and unhappy, do not be misled by signs of affection from strangers.
- Do not accept job offers that require you to go to off beat, lonely areas. Be cautious of job offers that seem to offer too much pay. Use legitimate channels, such as student placement offices, for your part-time jobs.
- Do not accept offers to take your photograph even with a promise to make you famous. Report any such offer.
- Do not get into cars with strangers for any reason or approach near enough to be grabbed.
- Do not hitchhike.
- Travel in groups or with a friend. Do not go into lonely areas at night.
- Do not take dares to do foolish things, such as going into a bad area alone.
- Tell your parents where you are going to be and let them know when the situation changes.
- Do not baby-sit in a home you do not know.
- If any one tries to caress or fondle you in a way that you do not like, leave immediately, tell someone.
- Report any incident of attempted molestation



or someone hanging around your school or play areas. Learn to give good descriptions of the person to the police.

- If attacked for money, jewelry or clothing give it up rather than risk injury.
- Do not tell people you are alone.
- Do not accept offers of alcohol, cigarettes or drugs.



Internet Safety Tips

- Keep the computer in an open area, such as a family room.
- Do not tell anyone on-line your last name, address, phone numbers, school name or location.
- Do not use email names or addresses that indicate if you are male or female i.e. "tennis chick, golf kid etc."
- Do not give out your password.
- If you receive e-mail that makes you feel uncomfortable, trust your feelings. DO NOT REPLY.
- Never agree to meet someone you have met on-line.
- Never send photos on-line without parental approval.
- If someone tells you to keep an on-line secret, tell a parent.
- Never agree to call someone you met on-line by phone ... especially if they ask you to

call collect or with an 800 number.

- Show your kids what to do if they stumble onto a bad site.
- Set up ground rules for the computer and stick to them.
- Realize that everything you read on line may not be true.

Communicating With Your Kids

Communication is more than "just talking". Our words, tone of voice and body language all speak volumes to our children.

Positive words - vs - Negative words

I like the way you ... - **vs** - Don't be ridiculous!
Tell me about it? - **vs** - Are you crazy?
How can I help? - **vs** - You never ...
That must have hurt - **vs** -

Try

Being Empathetic: "I understand how you are feeling, I have felt that too, it hurts doesn't it?"

Validating Feelings: "You have a right to feel that way. If it happened to me, I probably would feel the same way."

Identifying Feelings: "Sounds like you feel _____," or "That must feel _____," or "Are you feeling sad?"

Listen Intently: Make direct eye contact and listen for what is going on in her life. Listen as if it were your best friend talking to you. "I am listening. I am interested in what you are saying."



Being Curious: "That's interesting, I want to know more about how you are feeling about that." or "How could you handle that next time?" or "Anything else?"

Affirming Feelings: "You're feeling really sad!" or "I can see how angry you are!"

Inviting Expression of Feelings: "Tell me more. I want to know how you feel." "I'm on your side."

Working With Other People's Kids — How To Protect Yourself

- Make a point of showing affection to all children in open places where others can see and share in the warmth.
- Touch children in safe places on their bodies, avoiding private places. The back, the head, shoulders are acceptable; the buttocks, groin, thigh and breast are not.
- If a child is hurting or ill and needs to be examined, get them professional help if you are not a doctor.
- If a child is sad and needs to be comforted, show affection by placing your arm around a shoulder and giving a gentle hug or squeeze from the side.
- If a child needs to have a private conversation with you, remove yourselves the necessary distance for the others but stay in view of the group or leave the door ajar.
- Establish safeguards if you are alone with a child or establish a two-adult rule.
- Respect the policy of The Salvation Army (or organization).
- Don't be alone and naked with a child. If changing at a pool, use discretion.
- Be cautious about any conversations involving sex. Joking around with kids in a way that promotes promiscuity or acceptance of sexually explicit material is not acceptable.

How To Handle A Disclosure

- Believe in the child ... For most children, sexual abuse is NOT a fantasy.
- Trust that the child is speaking from a great

need and open your heart to believe what you hear. It is NOT easy for any child to come forward.

- Listen openly and calmly. Be emotionally available to the child and LISTEN. Give the child your full attention and nod under-



standingly as the story pours out. Do not be judgmental of the child or the parents. Do not allow your own emotions to get in the way or hearing what is being said.

- Reassure the child. Let them know that you believe in him or her. You must be honest with the child by saying that you cannot keep this a secret, that there are other people who need to know. Explain that you are going to do your best to help.
- Write down the facts. Record all the details of what the child has reported to you including time, date, place of disclosure and the content of the child's disclosure, using the actual words that the child used.
- Report immediately to the Child Abuse Authorities. Let the child welfare authorities handle the investigation and decide what they need to do.

For further information contact Nancy Turley, Territorial Abuse Advisor The Salvation Army Canada and Bermuda Territory.

10 Tips for Flying with Toddlers

by Erin Gilday. Reprinted with permission from MoMSense Magazine

Arrive at the airport two hours early. Allow extra time to get to the gate especially when toting along a kid or two. Many airports have play places in the terminals near the gates. Ask for a "gate pass" for an unticketed friend or family member to go through security and help you to the gate.

When booking your flight explain that an infant/small child is flying with you, and you **MUST** be together. Re-check your seat assignment when checking in. Do not let them tell you that you can "fix" the seats at the gate. You may be standing in the aisle playing let's make a deal to get people to change seats.

If you're bringing your car seat on the plane tell the agent when booking your flight and checking in at the counter. If you're purchasing a seat for your infant, it's nice to have the car seat for when he or she falls asleep. Car seats must be placed in a window seat and not in an emergency exit aisle.

Do NOT sit on a bulkhead row. Although the extra foot room and no passengers in front are tempting, there's no under-seat storage. Everything you'll need for baby will have to be

put in the storage above the seats and can't be accessed during take-off or landing,

Bring an umbrella stroller they're cheap; you can pick one up at a second hand store.



Umbrella strollers fold up when going through security. Hang a few bags on the handles for the walk to the gate. Check your stroller as you're getting on the plane, and it will be waiting for you when you land.

Pre-board. All airlines offer pre-boarding for those flying with infants and children under 4 years old to give parents extra time to get settled. Don't be shy; if you hear pre-boarding announced get up in line.

Use a backpack to carry supplies. It's much easier to navigate down the narrow aisle of the plane than with a shoulder bag.

Pack the following books, snacks, empty child's cup and/or pacifier (drinks/juice can be purchased once you get through security). Sucking can help kids with ear pressure during take-off and landing. Include a small blanket and stuffed animal, extra diapers (nappies), wipes in case there's a delay or unexpected layover, a few large zip lock bags (for soiled items/clothing), a change of clothes for you and your kids, coloring books/ crayons for older toddlers (avoid toys that make noise).

Check your airline's website before leaving

since security regulations change frequently. At the time of printing, liquids are not allowed through security, including water bottles and juice. Infant formula/milk is allowed, but the parent must be willing to take a drink. Also, be sure to check your baby's bag for nail clippers/ scissors as those items are not allowed.

Ask nicely for help the first several times however, I've learned that sometimes "the squeaky wheel gets the grease" and when traveling with your child/infant sometimes you have to speak up to get the help you need.

Summer Boredom Busters

Adapted from The Family Manager's Guide to Summer Survival (Fair Winds Press 2006) / MomSense

Make real people puppets by cutting out photos of family members and friends. Glue to Popsicle sticks or tongue depressors.

Hide your pre-schooler's stuffed animals around the house under the bed, peeking around a chest or in a closet. Turn off the lights and use a flashlight to go on a safari to capture the animals.

Spray paint ten (2 litre) soda bottles to make bowling pins. Put a little water or sand into each to weigh it down. Turn your patio into a bowling lane.

Make quick costumes from old pillow cases. Help your child cut a hole for the neck and arms. Use markers, paints,

fringes or lace to decorate the pillow case. Ribbon or heavy yarn can be used for a belt. Pretend characters are unlimited.

Buy sample carpet squares at a flooring store for a nominal price. Children enjoy jumping from one square to another. Or line up stuffed animals on carpet squares and play circus animal trainer.

Punch holes in the bottom of an oatmeal or shoe box. Shine a flashlight in the box toward the ceiling in a darkened room. (This is excellent for toddlers who resist nap times.)

Turn an ordinary walk in the park into an alphabet hunt. On a pad list all the letters of the alphabet. While you are walking, check off the letters when you spot something that starts with the letter you are looking for.



Bad Sweater Party

Cora Smith, Trinity Bay South Corps

Preparation

Ladies compete for “worst sweater” of the night. Advertise 2-3 weeks ahead for “creativity”.

Decorations

Construction paper “sweaters” hung on “clothesline” with mini clothespins. Large sweater buttons threaded onto pipe cleaners can be arranged in “bouquets”. Teddy-bears or dolls wearing sweaters would make a great display of knitted.

Chorus: SASB 151 *Christ Is The Answer To My Every Need*

Prayer

Devotional

We all have comfort clothes hanging in our closets, on the shelf or in a dresser drawer. Maybe it's a sweater, a pair of jeans or sweat pants or that piece of clothing we love to wear for comfort. There's special warmth when wearing comfort clothes and as a result we often hang onto items for years. Many children have a blanket, or a stuffed animal which they take with them for their naps during the day, and for a good nights sleep. Many adults have that special quilt that's been in the family for years which brings a deep warmth to the heart and comfort when resting.

We all have images of “comfort” that come immediately to mind when we focus on the word ... “comfort”. There are many words and terms in the English Language that mean different things to different people, but the word “comfort” — whether as a noun or verb



— conjures up the image of warmth, safety, eased minds, peace and love.

What is the source of our comfort? Money, friends, material possessions, family and health are just a few. These are part of what we all long for in our earthly lives.

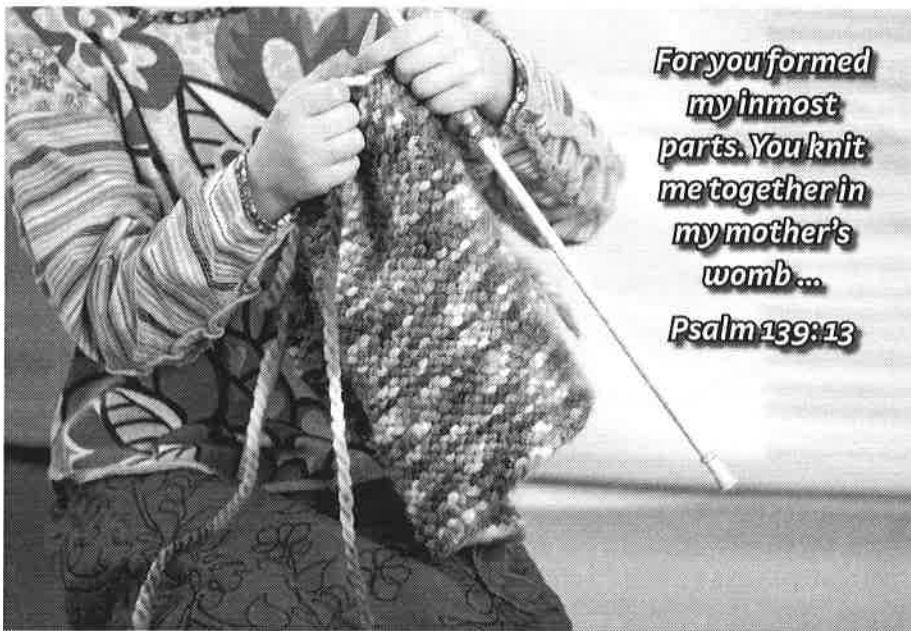
When we focus on spiritual comfort, we are focusing on God's love. Amid the storms we all face in life, God is ever-near and only His tender mercies can calm our weary souls when we face life's most challenging moments. He never promises us easy, simple and comfortable lives, but He does promise that we do not have to face difficult times alone! He is always with us, and He will carry us through ... if we trust Him. God's love provides comfort ... like a warm sweater on

a cold winter evening.

The Psalmist, in Psalm 139: 1-18 provides a beautiful picture of the love and care God took in His creation. Verse 13 "For you formed my inmost parts. You knit me together in my mother's womb. I will praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made"

comfort. "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God."

When we embrace God's loving comfort for us



*For you formed
my inmost
parts. You knit
me together in
my mother's
womb...
Psalm 139:13*

This is a wonderful illustration of creation for each and every one of us. Through the mysteries of creation, He has formed, designed and created us individually and uniquely. There were no pattern books or needles or looms, just a loving, comforting creator whose works are truly masterpieces! Different in appearance, personalities, and needs, we are each truly "unique".

When we face situations that are anything but comfortable we have the promise of God's comfort to our hearts. The comfort that Christ brings is lasting, satisfying and abundant. Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 1: 3-4 (NIV) of that

in the midst of life we find that He is faithful with His love, joy and peace to our hearts. His tender mercies wrap around us like a comfort blanket. I'm reminded of the words of song SASB 983 Great Is Thy Faithfulness.

Game

Wrap a small "gift" in layers of paper. On each layer of paper write a poem verse. The leader will read the first poem verse, and then pass the gift to the appropriate person. That person will remove the first layer and read the second poem-verse and give it to the appropriate person. Continue until the last verse is read, then this person is the winner.

This is the poem-verse to be used for this game:

*Take this gift, with a sigh look around;
then give to the woman with a
sweater that's brown*

*Take your time, don't rush ahead; pass
this to the closest with a sweater
that's red.*

*A sweater with snowflakes, we're looking
for now; if you're wearing it, stand
up and bow.*

*The sweater with pink buttons, look
around and you'll find; the wearer
is the one who gets the parcel this
time.*

*Now don't get cross, and please don't
fight; give this to the ugliest sweater
on your right.*



*Look around closely for someone close to
you; who's wearing a sweater in a lovely
shade of blue.*

*You might think you're fortunate! (for a mo-
ment.) now pass this to the wearer of a
hand-knitted sweater.*

*Maybe this clue doesn't make any sense;
but this is for the wearer of a sweater
with "a fence".*

*For someone close by as sharp as a tack;
who's wearing a sweater that's mostly
all black.*

*Pass this on to the person, the poor distressed
soul; who's wearing the sweater with the
biggest hole.*

Look around smartly, is someone trendy

*and hip? Give this to the person with a
sweater to zip.*

*No time now to argue or gossip or chat; pass
this to the wearer of a sweet kitty-cat.*

*Somebody ... somewhere, so lonely and
mellow; is wearing a sweater that's mainly
all yellow.*

*Look around closely, cast a keen eye; there's
a woman who's wearing, a sweater knit
for a guy.*

*Take a look all around, take your time if you
will; find the ugliest sweater with a fringe
or a frill.*

*We have to stop sometime, now don't you
agree?; this gift is for you, so just accept
it with glee!*

Game: A Pile of Old Sweaters

Unscramble the words relating to sweaters.

KINT	KNIT
EHTTICSS	STITCHES
RBGIBNI	RIBBING
ESEVLES	SLEEVES
TUBNTSO	BUTTONS
PEZIPR	ZIPPER
OHDO	HOOD
MSASE	SEAMS
RTOFN	FRONT
KCAB	BACK
LNWEOOL	WOOLLEN
CALEB	CABLE
EDANWAHSLBAH	HAND WASHABLE
FCROTSLA	COLORFAST

Reading: "A Familiar Sweater Story"

I hear them all calling me into the store (Even though my closet doesn't need any more)

I'm completely drawn in ... and I should know better than to heed the call of the lovely new sweater. Cashmere, soft, not too clingy ... cool green. Well, this is the most beautiful sweater I've seen! I know I must have it to add to my pile so I joyfully take it and trudge up the aisle.

Now ... in the dressing-room mirror I see a glamorously soft (and well-fitted) me!

The sleeves fit so well, the shoulders ... and surprise ... just look how that colour does bring out my eyes! I hug it so closely 'til I'm back home at last. Fold it so lovingly as my mind races fast.

I'll wear it tomorrow ... at dinner ... and then I'll wear it to that party for my very best friend!

This sweater's so lovely ... it just fits to a "T" everyone raves how it looks sooo good on me.

But after two wearings and two messy misdeeds I discover my sweater has some real laundry "needs". Oh ... it can't be washed in the washing machine ... It needs to be "hand washed" if it's to be clean. It can't go in the dryer or be hung on a line. The sweater must "dry flat" and "reshape" with time! I'm losing my patience with this wonderful sweater. Why don't I read labels? (I ought to know better!)

I'm squishing and pressing ... in mild laundry soap then reshaping the sweater to dry right (I hope!) Then suddenly I decide that I've just had enough. Who knew that one sweater would need all this stuff? Hand washed in mild soap ... its own drying rack.



Well, my time is my own ... and I'm taking it back! I open the closet and push things aside "Here you go sweater ... let's get you inside!" I'll just avoid wearing you as long as I'm able and the next time I'm tempted ... I will read the label! Cora Smith

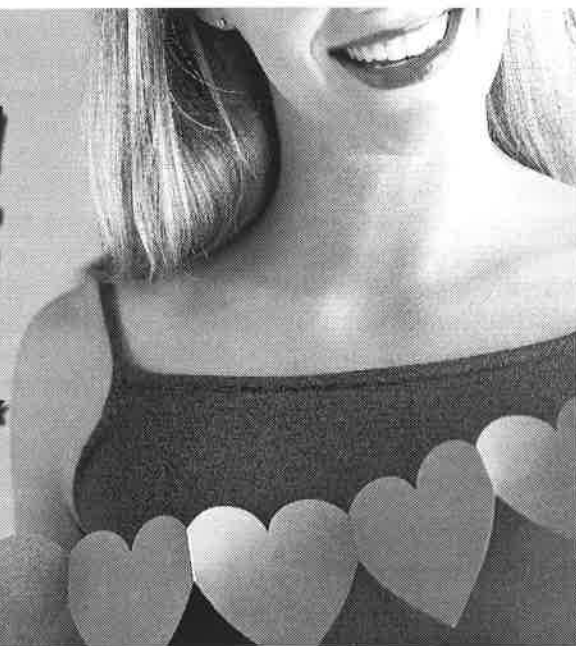
Parade of Sweaters

Ladies wearing a 'bad' sweater to model before a team of judges with a prize to be given for the worst sweater.

Conclude with a time of fellowship

Help a Heart Week

Adult and Family Ministries Resources UK



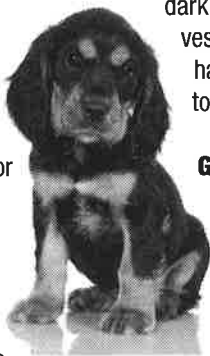
Preparation

Check the www.heartandstroke.com for ideas that will assist in finding a wealth of ideas, items that can be copied, recipes, and decorations, etc.

Have healthy snacks for refreshments instead of cookies, e.g. unsalted nuts, pieces of fruit, raw vegetable sticks, wholegrain bread or crisp breads with cottage cheese.

Keeping a Healthy Heart

Experts say 15 minutes of laughter each day, combined with 30 minutes of exercise three times a week is good for you.



High blood pressure, which can be caused by stress, can lead to heart disease. Laughing may reduce blood pressure if practiced often. Laughter helps you get rid of all the anger and frustration that can make you feel stressed.

Eat chocolate! Too much of it won't do your arteries any good, but opting for real dark chocolate from a chocolatier may be beneficial for your heart. A study has found that eating dark chocolate seems to make the blood vessels more flexible. This helps prevent hardening of the arteries, which can lead to heart disease.

Get a pet. Research suggests that stroking your pet regularly can help relieve stress and the heart problems it can cause. Walking a dog will help you get your regular 30 minutes of exercise a day. Even a playful kitten will keep you on your toes.

Eat fish, nuts and tomatoes. If you want a healthy diet, oily fish, nuts and tomatoes are just three key ingredients that will help look after your heart. Fish is a valuable source of protein without the high levels of saturated fats found in some meat.

Keep your body active. As the saying goes, if you don't use it, you'll lose it. Walk in the fresh air if possible. If you are able-bodied and enjoy company while you are walking, then join a walking club. Gardening combines the benefits of fresh air and exercise, and the results can give you immeasurable pleasure. Dancing is a great source of exercise. Swimming is good exercise for all parts of the body with the added advantage that the water is supporting you with no weight on the joints. Have some simple exercises for members to participate in. These can be used during the songs.

Material used with permission from www.bhf.org.uk



Heart Quiz

How many times does the average human heart beat in a day?

- a. 1,000
- b. 10,000
- c. 100,000
- d. 1,000,000

The nearest answer is C. Each day, an average of 5,000 gallons of blood will be pumped through the body with those 100,000 beats.

How much more likely are physically active people to survive a heart attack than people who are sedentary?

- a. it doesn't make any difference
- b. 25 per cent more likely
- c. twice as likely
- d. five times as likely

The right answer is C. A person who is physically active is twice as likely to survive a heart attack compared to a person who has not been physically active.

Which of the following physical activities is best for a healthy heart?

- a. yoga
- b. press-ups
- c. tai chi
- d. swimming

The right answer is D. The best exercise for a healthy heart is 'aerobic' exercise — any prolonged activity that uses the main muscle groups and gets you slightly out of breath.

Why do fruit and vegetables help to keep your heart healthy?

- a. because they are high in fibre
- b. because they contain vitamins and minerals
- c. because they are high in water
- d. we don't know exactly why

The honest answer is D. Experts are unclear as to why fruit and vegetables are so good for your heart, but medical studies consistently show that diets which include lots of fruit and vegetables are associated with a lower risk of heart disease.

The direct cause of a heart attack is ...?

- a. high blood pressure
- b. high cholesterol
- c. a blockage in an artery

d. the heart just stops beating

The most accurate answer is C. Heart attacks occur when there is a blockage in a coronary artery. However, both A and B are important risk factors that increase the chance of a blockage. By reducing blood pressure and bad cholesterol levels, you can make a heart attack less likely.

Heart Thoughts

Traditionally we think of our hearts as the seat of our emotions, and our language reflects that. We speak of heartache and heartbreak, of our heart singing, of something doing our heart good.

This thinking goes back in history and is embedded in Jewish thought in an even deeper way.

“The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart”. (1 Samuel 16:7 NIV)

God is not impressed by outward show. He looks at our motivation for behaving in a certain way, our attitudes towards others. These are the things that matter to Him. We cannot ‘pull the wool’ over God’s eyes — He sees us for who we really are.

“The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart”. (1 Samuel 13:14 NLT)

These were words spoken about David, the shepherd boy destined to be king. God saw that David was sincere in his desire to

worship Him and follow His leading. David made many mistakes in his life but he always returned to God.

“God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God”. (Matthew 5: 8 NLT)

No one but God can see what we are thinking,



or what we allow to take root in our mind or spirit. God commends people who allow the good, the wholesome, the encouraging and the positive aspects of living to become established in their thinking.

Just as we need to take care of our physical heart, let us be mindful of the need for a healthy ‘spiritual heart’ too.

Suggested Songs

- SASB 389/TB 690, There's A Song That's Ringing In My Heart Today.
- SASB 394/TB 786, What A Wonderful Change In My Life
- SASB 395/TB 580, When My Heart Was So Hard

To: _____

This coupon is good for: *One stamp for a note of encouragement you are sending*

Expiry Date: _____ **Signed:** _____

To: _____

This coupon is good for: *One over-the-phone prayer together*

Expiry Date: _____ **Signed:** _____

To: _____

This coupon is good for: *One tea date (must be scheduled in advance)*

Expiry Date: _____ **Signed:** _____

To: _____

This coupon is good for: *One hug (redeemable in person)*

Expiry Date: _____ **Signed:** _____

To: _____

This coupon is good for: _____

Expiry Date: _____ **Signed:** _____

God My Redeemer

Deborah Coles, Simcoe, Ontario



Ask ladies to bring coupons they don't need or use, to share among the ladies.

Songs and Choruses

There is a Redeemer, Jesus God's own Son
SASB 180/TB 380, *I Will Sing of My Redeemer*

Song

*Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it,
Redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb!
Redeemed through His infinite mercy,
His child and forever I am
Redeemed, redeemed, redeemed by the Blood
of the Lamb,
Redeemed, redeemed, His child and forever
I am.*

Chorus:

*I've been redeemed by the Blood of the
Lamb (x 3)
Saved and sanctified I am,
All my sins are under the blood,
I've been redeemed!*

Idea

Display a bowl of roasted corn (from Bulk Store) to symbolize the corn Boaz shared with Ruth.

Hand out: Coupon Book

Have a coupon book for each lady, *see page 38*

- good for 1 hug
- good for 1 coffee date
- good for 1 prayer-over-the-phone
- good for 1 stamp for a card you are sending to encourage someone

Have a blank, that they could fill in and give someone.

Bible Study: God my Redeemer - A Study of Ruth

Redemption! Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress (James 1:27, NIV).

Read Ruth 4

*Naomi was right; Boaz can be trusted
To follow through on all that must be done.
He has made the necessary sale arrangements
And with Naomi's property he has won
My hand and heart and all that's in my future
I know he'll care for Naomi and for me.
How wonderful to know the God of Israel
Has touched my life in love so tenderly!*
—Ruth

Boaz is not pictured as a dynamic personality, but his name means strength — the kind of quiet, reassuring strength that stands firm and is totally dependable through any crisis situation. According to the custom of the day, Boaz redeemed Ruth and Naomi. Redemption involved purchasing Elimelech's property and marrying

Ruth in order to raise children to inherit the land and carry on her husband's name.

Boaz of Bethlehem is a type of Christ. Christ redeemed each one of us by buying our freedom from sin. Our gratefulness should surpass that of Ruth's ... Does it?

I love Him ... I love Him ... because He first loved me ... and purchased my redemption on Calvary's tree. Thank You, Father, for loving me that much.

Reading: They Were Women, Too

(By Joy Jacobs, Christian Publications, publishing house of The Christian and Missionary Alliance, Pennsylvania, 1981)

"If one of your countrymen becomes poor and sells some of his property, his nearest relative is to come and redeem what his countryman has sold". (Leviticus 25:25)

This kept the land in the possession of the clan, and made it easier for the poor family to get back their property when they had more money.

Boaz realizes that he has a better chance of helping Naomi's family if he links this kinsman-redeemer law in the property sense, to the other law — found in Deuteronomy 25:9ff. Her (late) husband's brother shall take her and marry her and fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to her. The first son she bears shall carry on the name of the dead brother so that his name will not be blotted out from the land. (Read a few more verses from Leviticus 25 for context)

Boaz persuades the closer kinsman that 2 obligations — redeeming the land and caring for the widow are intertwined. Not strictly correct!

The story of Ruth

Ruth 3:12, 4:5. These are the key verses on

the kinsman-redeemer.

Isaiah 59:17-21 God is called the true Kinsman-Redeemer of Israel.

Note on the precarious life of widows: Bible times widows had no form of social assistance other than their families. Since Naomi was not only widowed, but bereft of her sons, she would have had very little security.

A Prayer

(hand-out and have ladies fill in the blanks for themselves)

O Lord, my Redeemer, even as the people of Israel so often disappointed You, so I have _____. Yet, You have time and again _____. Even as Ruth was the Gentile, the widow, the needy, so I, Lord, am _____. But, just as she bowed by faith at the feet of Boaz to be raised, redeemed, and sanctified to become his wife, so I now in Your presence _____. Amen

(Notes and prayer are taken from Scripture Press: Adult Teacher, Studies in Judges and Ruth, June-August 1983)

Other

- Psalm 44:26 — Why does God redeem us? (Unfailing love)
- Psalm 49:7 — Here is a hint of why Jesus had to die.
- Psalm 130: 7-8 — Why do we need a Redeemer?
- Titus 2:14 — Take a moment to thank Jesus for doing all this for us!
- Psalm 107:1, 2 — Why should we be ready to give our testimony?
- 1 Peter 1:18, 19 — What did our redemption cost?
- Job 19:25 — What makes this a great verse for Easter time?

Conclude with fellowship and refreshment

He is God of Enough

Sharon Rowsell, Midland, Ontario

Introduction of Theme

One of the greatest lessons for the soul to learn is that God, and God alone is enough for all that we need. In Scripture we read of many occasions where God's people experienced provision for their needs. Psalm 73: 23 ... *Yet I am always with you*, v.25 *Whom have I in heaven but you?* Ephesians 3:20... *He is able beyond our imagination ... In Christ, we have everything for life.*



Woman's Footprints

*One night a woman had a dream
She walked by the sea on the strand,
And images of her life appeared
Along with some marks in the sand.
Just as her footprints and the Lord's
Two sets, but sometimes one;
It seemed as if this happened
When there was the most to be done.
When she carried so many burdens;
And there was so much to do,
She wondered why the Lord had not
Been there to help her through.
She questioned the Lord about it;
You said You'd be there for me,
But it seems whenever I needed You most,
Your footprints I do not see .
The Lord replied,
My daughter, I did what I promised to do
When you see just one set of footprints,
The opposite is true
While you were carrying everything else,
It was then that I carried you.*

Jill Wolf

Choruses

- *Able To Save, Able To Keep*
- *He Is Able, More Than Able*
- *God Is So Good*

Prayer

Responsive Reading: God Is Our Sufficiency, see page 42

Sharing: Prior to the meeting arrange with some of the ladies to share a specific time in their lives when they proved God was enough.

Devotional

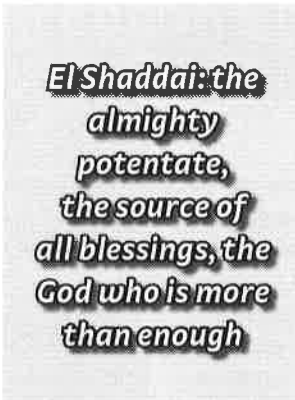
GOD IS ENOUGH is first introduced in Genesis 17:1-9. In this chapter, we find Abraham hearing God speak to him. God promises him that he will be the father of many nations, but in the natural world, things don't look very

hopeful. Abraham is 99-years old, much too old to father a child, let alone several nations, and to top it off, his wife is barren. There is just no way he can see how God's promises could ever come true.

Seeing the odds stacked against him, Abraham knows he isn't sufficient to make God's promises come to pass. So when God speaks to him in verse 17: 1, God uses a new name for Himself. In English, it is "Lord." In Hebrew, it is "El Shaddai," meaning "the Almighty One, the All-Sufficient One."

When Abraham saw he wasn't enough, God

said "I am All-Sufficient." God is saying that He is "THE ENOUGH".



Later, in Exodus 6:1-8, Moses is going to the Hebrew Children in Egypt to preach a sermon of hope to them. God says that He is going to lead them out of bondage. He commands Moses to go to Pharaoh and demand the people's release. The ten plagues are about to begin, but the Israelites upon hearing the words of

Moses will not listen in their suffering (v. 9). They doubted God's plan. God, however, had said to Moses that He would keep His word, and He gave him confirmation in a reminder in verse 3.

God Is Our Sufficiency

Leader: Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust.

Response: You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy;
At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Leader: Uphold my steps in Your paths, That my footsteps may not slip.

Response: I have called upon You, for You will hear me, O God; Incline Your ear to me,
and hear my speech.

Leader: Keep me as the apple of Your eye; Hide me under the shadow of Your wings

Response: As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I
awake in Your likeness.

Leader: Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, The Holy One of Israel; I am the Lord
your God, Who teaches you to profit; who leads you by the way you should go.

Response: In an acceptable time I have heard you;

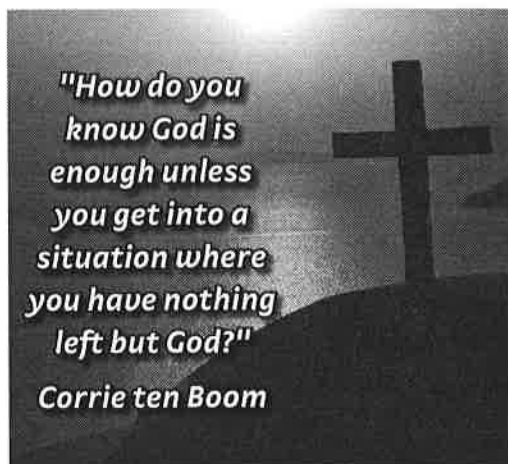
Leader: Sing, O heavens! Be joyful, O earth! And break out in singing, O mountains!
For the Lord has comforted His people, And will have mercy on His afflicted.

(Psalm 16: 1, 11; Psalm 17: 5,6,8,15; Isaiah 48:17; Isaiah 49: 8,13)

These great miracles would be accomplished because He was Jehovah (Yahweh: the I Am, the Self-Existent One, the Everlasting God), and as He revealed Himself to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, He was the God Almighty (El Shaddai: the almighty potentate, the source of all blessings, the God who is more than enough). He would deliver from Egypt by whatever means necessary, because whatever means that were necessary were not outside His abilities. Jehovah is the I Am; El Shaddai is more than enough. He is telling us, "I Am More Than Enough!" He still is the El Shaddai.

Corrie ten Boom incarcerated in a prison camp suffered all kinds of atrocities. She watched her sister die. Her father also died. Corrie was released from prison and became a powerful witness that the Lord was enough. She, who had experienced God's love in the pit of human depravity, asked, "How do you know God is enough unless you get into a situation where you have nothing left but God?"

The Scriptures are filled with examples of people who have proven that God is enough. His love and grace poured into the lives of His people is witness that we never have to face life alone.



Song: 773 SASB /TB 708, *Keep On Believing Jesus Is Near*

Benediction: Followed by fellowship and refreshments, *God Is So Good.*

God Was Enough For ...

1. God told me I would have a child in my old age. At first I laughed
2. God answered my prayer for a son after I prayed long and hard
3. God protected His men who I hid on my roof
4. God gave me courage to lead His people into battle even though I was a woman
5. God gave me His plan at the burning bush
6. God told me how to conquer the city of Jericho
7. God gave me the privilege of being a special mother
8. God came to me on the road to Damascus
9. God told me I would be a rock, even though I was always putting my foot in my mouth
10. God used me to lead an Ethiopian Eunuch to Himself

Answers: 1. Abraham/Sarah; 2. Hannah; 3. Rahab; 4. Deborah; 5. Moses; 6. Joshua; 7. Mary/Jochobed; 8. Paul; 9. Peter; 10. Phillip

And God Created Lavender Wordsearch

ANTISEPTIC
BATH
BLESSING
CALMING
CLEANSING
FLOWERS

HEALING
HERB
HYSSOP
LAVENDER
MEDICINAL
PERFUME

PURPLE
REPELLENT
SCENT
SOOTHING
SWEET
USEFUL

A	J	C	N	L	T	X	P	O	C	K	F	L	M	Q
V	N	K	A	N	H	E	Z	R	L	R	L	U	G	T
G	B	T	E	L	R	L	H	T	E	E	O	F	Z	E
T	N	C	I	F	M	R	I	P	A	D	W	E	U	C
P	S	I	U	S	K	I	E	N	N	N	E	S	R	N
C	O	M	H	N	E	L	N	G	S	E	R	U	B	G
X	E	S	D	T	L	P	Z	G	I	V	S	Q	N	D
W	P	J	S	E	O	K	T	W	N	A	N	I	I	O
H	O	L	N	Y	C	O	R	I	G	L	S	H	W	L
O	Y	T	E	N	H	Q	S	A	C	S	W	E	E	T
L	A	N	I	C	I	D	E	M	E	L	P	R	U	P
H	E	A	L	I	N	G	B	L	E	U	A	B	R	K
F	U	H	W	V	B	M	B	A	P	Z	S	H	X	C
P	E	B	O	S	V	K	T	V	T	R	K	N	M	D
E	W	S	Q	D	U	U	L	B	H	H	L	Z	F	B

And God Created Lavender

Deborah Coles, Simcoe, Ontario

Decorations

Use lavender coloured shower curtain to drape over white tablecloths with napkins and candles to match. Adding lavender coloured candles (unscented) will give your room a lovely touch.

Prepare

Invite the ladies the week before to wear something in the shade of lavender.

Program ideas

- Word scramble
- Make lavender sachets for H.L. sale, or as gifts
- Make dried flower cards using lavender

Song: SASB 306/TB 328, *What Can Wash Away My Sins* (note the word cleansing)

The Gift of Lavender

- Some people believe that the lavender we know is the same as the "hyssop" of the Bible. Psalm 51:7 says, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."
- The ancient Romans used lavender as a perfume for the bath. It seems that the plant derived its name from the Latin lavare, to wash
- There are many uses for lavender besides bathing and perfuming. For example, to keep away mosquitoes, use lavender oil on ankles and wrists.
- Lavender is used to freshen linen closets. It repels moths and other insects, who do not like its powerful aroma.
- Lavender is used to help us relax. The



soothing scent of a lavender sachet under your pillow is said to help you sleep. Fussy babies and tired moms find a lavender scented bath calming and relaxing (according to an old apothecary book, it even makes the lions and tigers in the zoo docile!) Lavender oil is useful for massage as well.

- Lavender has disinfectant qualities — for example, you can gargle with it if you have a sore throat.
- Lavender is very attractive to bees, so it provides a good source of honey.
- You can use small bags of dried lavender instead of dryer sheets — it freshens clothing AND prevents static cling!
- Queen Elizabeth I used lavender tea for her migraines. Lavender has healing qualities.

So we see that lavender is a wonderful creation of God, which can be used for our good in many ways.

Word Search: And God Created Lavender

See page 44, photocopy and give to ladies.

Choruses

- *He's Able, He's Able I Know He's Able*
- SASB 46(Chorus section), *Now The Fruit Of The Spirit*

Devotional: Lavender Words for a Sick Woman

Cleansing and Healing — Text: Luke 8:43-48

There was a woman who had suffered for 12 years with a discharge of blood. She is not named in the Bible, but I'd like to call her "Rose". She was weak and tired due to her illness and found each day filled with loneliness. In those days, it was believed that ill health was a sign of sin. People often wondered what she had done to be sick for so long. She wasn't allowed to worship at the Temple, because she was ceremonially unclean. Rose had spent her money paying doctors seeking a cure but there was no success.

When Rose knew Jesus was in town, she saw her chance. She wouldn't speak to Him because she was tired of rejection, rather she quietly mingled in with the crowd, working her way closer to the Teacher. When she reached Him, she bent down a little lower — not hard when you are bent over anyway — and touched the edge of His robe. Immediately, Rose felt better. Filled with joy, she straightened up with the thought of heading home when suddenly she heard Jesus ask, "Who touched me?"

The "duh-ciples", (as Liz Curtis Higgs calls them) not understanding as usual, say — look at the crowds, Jesus! Anybody could have touched you! Jesus says, no, somebody

touched Me — somebody has tapped into My power.

Rose comes forward, trembling. Has she done wrong? Will the Teacher be angry?

What does Jesus say to her? "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace".

He calls her daughter — she has been so lonely and isolated; she hasn't been part of the community for 12 long years — and now she is family again!

He assures her that her faith has made her well — she is no longer ill. She has been made whole, cleansed of her disease. Here Jesus displays love for her and encourages her to live in peace.

If you wanted to press the point, you could say that Jesus' words that day were like lavender for that woman! Lavender — cleansing and healing, settling and soothing. "Daughter, you took a risk trusting me, and now you're healed and whole. Live well, live blessed! (Message) The words Rose heard that day changed her life forever. The touch of the Lord upon our lives enables us to live in peace.

Chorus: *Create In Me
A Clean Heart, O God*



Closing Prayer

Refreshments

Perhaps try some lavender tea! It tastes bitter and perfume-y. Have some available for brave testers! A more palate-pleasing treat is crackers spread with lavender honey.

Footprints

Denise Spurrell, Pembroke, Ontario

Preparation

Decorate with footprint items and have a display that will help the ladies visualize themselves in the setting of the poem 'Footprints in the Sand'.

Introduction

Several times in the Gospels Jesus said to His disciples, "where I am going, you cannot come". They did not understand that He was referring to the Cross and the fact that He was going back to the Father. This theme 'footprints' is to focus our attention on four footprints that were left by Jesus.

- The Footprint of Prayer
- The Footprint of Forgiveness
- The Footprint of Love
- The Footprint of Service

These footprints are symbols of our pattern for living so that others may catch a glimpse of the love of Christ. A verse of song 628 in the SASB says,

*'Saviour of light, I look just now to thee;
Brighten my path, so only shall I see
Thy footprints, Lord, which mark the way
for me;*

*Light of my life, so surely thou wilt be,
O Man of Galilee!'*

May our pathway be such that people will see Christ's footprints evident in our living.

Song: SASB 510/TB 378, *Mine To Rise
When Thou Dost Call Me*

Prayer: The Footprint of Prayer

Hebrews 7:25 says, "Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God



through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them".

Prayer should be the most important part of the Christian's life. It gives us a one to one relationship with our God. It is a refreshing and strengthening time. Jesus gave us a supreme example of a life of prayer. Sometimes He went apart from the crowd to commune with His heavenly Father. Sometimes He prayed all night. He prayed before He was nailed to the Cross; He prayed for His disciples and for all who would believe in Him. Hebrews 7:25 tells us that "He ever lives to make intercession for us".

Song: SASB 106/TB 228 or 224, *Arise,
My Soul, Arise*

The Footprint of Forgiveness

Matthew 6:12-15 "Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

Jesus' whole life was an act of forgiveness. He forgave men's sins, even when He was being

abused and treated unkindly. But when Jesus prayed from the Cross 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,' it was the greatest act of forgiveness ever. Even in the midst of such pain and suffering He forgave and prayed for others. How closely do we resemble the Master? Are we always ready to forgive or, maybe, sometimes a little reluctant. Matthew 6:12-15 tells us, quite plainly, that unless we forgive others, our Heavenly Father cannot forgive us.

Chorus

*My lovely Jesus came and He
has set me free*

*I thank you Jesus for Your glorious
liberty*

*When I was lost in sin with no one to deliver
me*

*My lovely Jesus came and He has set me
free.*

*He set me free, He set me free
He broke the bars of prison for me
I'm glory bound, my Saviour to see
Glory to God, He set me free.*

The Footprint of Love

John 15:12-14 says, "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command."

We can never even begin to understand the kind of unconditional love which Jesus expressed to mankind. Because of that great love, He extends compassion and mercy even when we don't deserve it. How does our love measure up to that standard of Christ? Jesus commands us to "Love each other as I have loved you."

Song: SASB 357/TB 577 or 558, *My Jesus, I Love Thee, I Know Thou Art Mine*

The Footprint of Service

Mark 10:45 says, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many".



John 13:16 says, "the servant is not greater than his Lord". Jesus Christ came to be the servant of all. He came not to be ministered unto but to minister. What an example He set for us when He washed the feet of the disciples! Here were

people with tired, dusty, dirty feet. Christ saw the need for service and, without any fuss, did what needed to be done! Are we always ready to be a servant? Do we take not only the concerns of others to our Heavenly Father, but also do whatever we can to be of service to them?

The song, 'Find Us Faithful' sung by Steve Green would be appropriate to play here.

To follow in the footprints of Jesus requires a complete and sincere commitment. Jesus informed His disciples that where He was going, they could not follow. Jesus went all the way to Calvary for each one of us. If we are faithful in following in His footprints, He will lead us BEYOND Calvary to receive the crown of life.

Poem: Footprints

Song: SASB 483/TB 644, *Down In The Valley With My Saviour I Would Go*

Benediction

Revealing the God Colour of Love

Daphne Jacobs, Springdale, Newfoundland & Labrador West

Preparation

Prepare a display of items that express love. Pictures of family, roses, Bible, cross, family ring, etc. When everyone has arrived, 'on the sly' remove one or two of the items.

Welcome

After the opening, refer to items on the table. Ask the women if they notice which items are missing. If someone was observant in noticing the missing item(s) ask them to name them — have a prize ready!

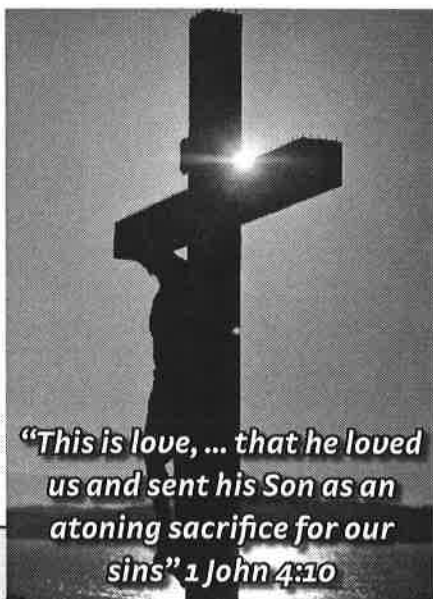
Chorus Sing

- *Isn't He Wonderful, Wonderful, Wonderful*
- *Father In Heaven, How We Love You*
- *Oh How He Loves You And Me*
- *Thy Loving Kindness Is Better Than Life*

Activity: Love Links Paper Chain

To encourage love in action create a paper chain of 'love' messages to be taken to someone who is ill, is absent, or who needs

encouragement. In advance of the meeting, cut strips of construction paper, 2x8 inches. Have the women write their message(s) on the strips of paper, leaving 1" free on each end, then glue them together to form a chain. Ask for volunteers to deliver these chains to the women being remembered.



Responsive Reading: Psalm 36:5-10

Leader: "How deep and wide your love, O God."

Response: O God, your steadfast love is as great as all heavens, your faithfulness reaches beyond all clouds; your justice is solid like the mountains, your decisions as full of wisdom as the oceans are with water; people and animals alike are in your care, how precious is your constant love.

Leader: "How deep and wide your love, O God."

Response: We take shelter in the shadows of your wings. Feast on the abundant food you provide, and drink from the river of your goodness; you are the source of all life, and because of your light we can see; continue to pour out your unfailing love to those who know you; never stop saving those who long to do your will.

Leader: "How deep and wide your love, O God".

(Lectern Resources, January/February/March 1995, pg 9)

Solo: SASB 182/TB 364, *O The Deep, Deep Love Of Jesus*

Devotional

February is called the love month, a special time set apart for honouring those we love. Hallmark expresses love through a variety of



cards. Some are sent for fun, but for the most part, cards expressing love are sent for sentimental reasons. God wanted to say 'I love You' and did so in a way that has changed the world forever. He sent not just a written message, rather He demonstrated His love by sending His only Son into the world to love us.

In 1 John 4:10 we read "This is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins". This is indeed the highest kind of love we will ever experience. It's a love beyond the human love our families express to us.

John wrote "Greater love hath no one than this that a man lay down His life for his friends". This is the kind of love that welled up in the heart of God for mankind. A love that was willing to go to any length to be expressed.

We all need to experience love in our lives. A baby needs a mother's love. Children need the love of parents in order to build a foundation for their lives that encompasses love. As our parents grow older in years they need the love and care of their children. We all need the love of family and friends. Every expression of love is important, yet the love of Christ is greater, and more precious than any other. The card Christ wrote, to the world, as the WORD who became flesh, expresses the deepest love we will ever know.

When we experience God's love deeply, we are better able to fulfil the greatest commandment of all as recorded in Mark 12: 30 -31 "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this; "Love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these".

The overflow of God's love in our lives can be expressed toward our neighbour. There are many ways to show love, such as speaking words of encouragement. Listening to the broken hearted and praying for the lonely. Write a card expressing your love and concern.

The words written by Miriam Richards in song #706 found in The Salvation Army song book poignantly express that "Just where He needs me my Lord has placed me."

The love God extends to us must be like a continuous stream of water. Water that refreshes and encourages the soul of another. May we all find a meaningful way of reaching out to our neighbours in love this coming week.

Song: SASB 47/TB 738, *God's Love Is As High As The Heavens*

Closing prayer and refreshments

Dogs Best Friend!

Joyce Yetman, Charlottetown. NFL & Labrador East

Preparation

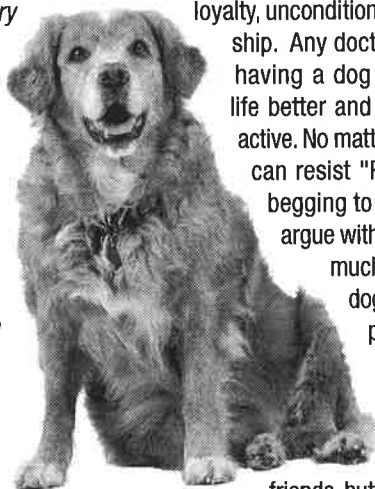
Have a Doggy display pictures, ornaments, toys, magnets and calendars, etc.
For prizes: Small items depicting "Dogs" — calendars, key chains, stick on notes, fridge magnets. (Shop at the Dollar or Pet Store)

Introduction

*If you can start the day without caffeine,
If you can get along without pep pills,
If you can always be cheerful ignoring aches
and pains,
If you can resist complaining and boring people
with your troubles,
If you can eat the same food every
day and be grateful for it,
If you can understand when
your loved ones are too
busy to give you any time,
If you can overlook it when
those you love take it out
on you when something
goes wrong though it was
no fault of yours,
If you can take criticism and
blame without resentment,
If you can ignore a friend's
limited education and never
correct him,
If you can resist treating a rich
friend better than a poor friend,
If you can face the world without lies and
deceit,
If you can conquer tension without medical
help,
If you can honestly say that you have no
prejudice against creed, colour, religion,
or politics, then you have to be a DOG, one
of the kindest, gentlest creatures on the
face of the earth! (Source The Internet)*

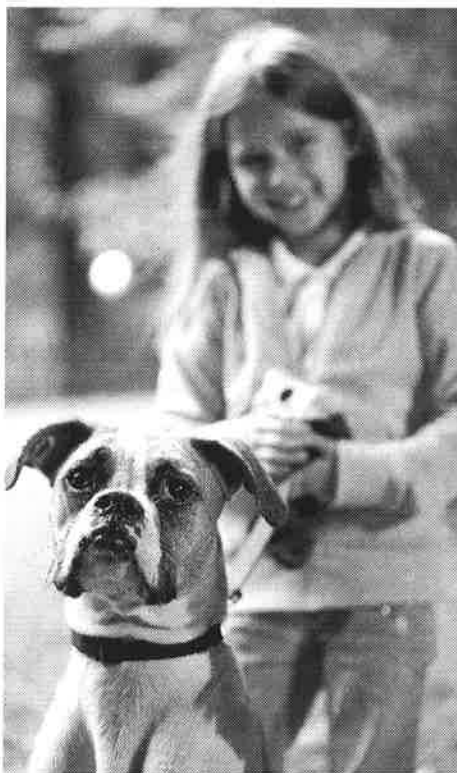


Dogs are adorable creatures that greet us with a wag of their tail. There are hundreds of breeds found throughout the world some very large, others very small and they quickly become a member of the family. They give loyalty, unconditional love, and companionship. Any doctor can also tell you that having a dog makes helps to make life better and healthier, and be more active. No matter how lazy you feel, who can resist "Rover" when he comes begging to go for a walk. You can't argue with the fact that we become much more relaxed, when our dog comes to us for a gentle pat on the head.



Dogs are amazing creatures! Not only can they be incredible friends, but trained dogs can provide humans with much needed assistance. So many make wonderful service dogs faithfully doing tasks from being their eyes, to helping them get around in wheel chairs. From picking up a dropped pencil to warning the deaf that something needs their attention. Dogs are indeed a kind, faithful, loving friends.

Song: SASB 645/TB 451 or 438, *What a Friend We Have In Jesus*



The Creation of Dog

*When God had made the earth and sky
the flowers and the trees,
He then made all the animals
the fish, the birds and bees.*

*And when at last He'd finished
not one was quite the same.
He said, "I'll walk the world of mine
and give each one a name."*

*And so he traveled far and wide
and everywhere he went,
a little creature followed him
until its strength was spent.*

*When all were named upon the earth
and in the sky and sea,
the little creature said "Dear Lord,
there's not one left for me."*

*Kindly the Father said to him
I've left you to the end.
I've turned my own name back to front
and called you DOG, My friend."*

Author Unknown

Game: All answers found in the phrase
DOG, MAN S BEST FRIEND

Our Creator — *God*

Fancy eating — *Dine*

It needs calcium — *Bones*

Peel of an orange — *Rind*

Roman Numeral X — *Ten*

A man s accessory — *Tie*

Seen in the sky — *Star*

A long way — *Far*

A child s game — *Tag*

Marshy ground — *Bog*

University residence — *Dorm*

Part of the foot — *Toe*

A grown up male — *Man*

A fruit — *Fig*

To make salt fish they have to be — *Dried*

It helps to cool you off — *Fan*

A male cat — *Tom*



Chorus: (Tune: *Burning, Burning*)

*Friends today and friends tomorrow,
Friends in joy and friends in woe,
Friends who help us in our sorrow,
Friends when others come and go,
Love and joy and peace and patience,
Faith and meekness, goodness too,
Gentleness and temperance showing,
In a friend of radiance true.*

Poem: "The Creation of Dog" (Author
unknown), see above

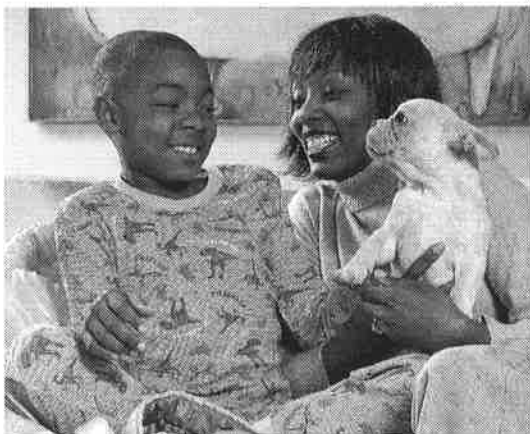
Scripture: Selected Verses

Proverbs 17:17; Proverbs 18:24; Proverbs 27:
10; Exodus 33:11; John 15:14; John 15:23

Game: Mixed up Breeds

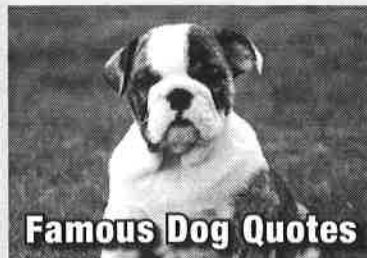
(unscramble the dog breeds)

derhgnouy	Greyhound
mareng deerhphs	German Shepherd
ykhsu	Husky
doelpo	Poodle
rrretie	Terrier
ooudldohbn	Bloodhound
abeleg	Beagle
gobdull	Bulldog
barenodm	Doberman
shiri teetsr	Irish Setter
fewnoddanaul	Newfoundland
corkec lapsine	Cocker Spaniel
illeoc	Collie
orebx	Boxer
targe ande	Great Dane
tinaz darernb	Saint Bernard
itorepn	Pointer
nmnaaoreip	Pomeranian
sinkpeee	Pekinese
hztis ush	Shitz Shu
dol hinglse heepgods	Old English Sheepdog



Devotional

For thousands of years dogs have been companions for people. Even our ancestors who lived in caves had their dogs, dogs were one of the first animals to be tamed by man.



Famous Dog Quotes

Heaven goes by favour. If it went by merit, you would stay out and your dog would go in. *(Mark Twain)*

A dog is the only thing on this earth that will love you more than you love yourself. *(Josh Billings)*

Dogs are such agreeable friends, they ask no questions, they pass no criticisms *(George Elliot)*

The reason dogs have so many friends is because they wag their tails instead of their tongues. *(Anon)*

The dog was created especially for children. *(Henry Ward Beecher)*

Did you ever notice that when you blow in a dog's face he doesn't like it. But when you take him out in the car he sticks his head out the window! *(Steve Bluestone)*

My neighbour had two dogs. One said to the other, Woof! the other replies Moo! The first dog is perplexed, Moo? Why did you say moo? The other dog replied, I'm learning a foreign language! *(Morey Amsterdam)*

The other day I saw two dogs walk over to a parking meter. One of them says to the other, How do you like that? Pay Toilets! *(Dave Starr)*

Some other animals may be important to us such as sheep, cows, pigs, and hens etc. as they supply us with food and other necessities of life. As man's friend, the dog comes first. A dog is an intelligent animal, devoted and loyal to its master. Sometimes a child may quarrel with his or her playmates who will go away and leave them alone but their dog will stay with them and lick their hand or face to say, I'm still here, I still like you. A dog is faithful and loyal, he watches over his friends. A dog is always there for you with a listening ear, a dog will stand by you no matter what.



As you know we have an even greater friend than our dog who is loyal and faithful in every circumstance of life. If we are feeling discouraged, or if some human friend has hurt us or let us down, then our BEST FRIEND, JESUS, is there. He is saying to us, "Here I am, I still love



you." He is a true Friend who never fails us, a Friend who paid the highest price He could by giving His life as a sacrifice for our sins so that we could have eternal life. May we always try our best to let God's love shine through us and may we remember how much God loves and cares for us. The dog is a trustworthy loyal animal who is considered to be man's best friend here on earth; but Jesus is our Friend on earth as well as in heaven.

Prayer

Lord, we thank you for our friends, our animal friends as well as our human friends; who bring us comfort and enjoyment. We thank You Father for our greatest Friend of all — Your Son Jesus. A Friend when other friendships cease, a Friend when others fail, a Friend when we are sick, a Friend who gives us peace and joy and who will see us through life's journey. Tonight, Lord, we pray for all those who may need a friend at this time, may You meet them at their point of need just now and may they find all they need in You Lord. Amen.

Game: All answers begin with dog

- A swimming stroke — *dog paddle*
- I.D disk attached to dog's collar — *dog tag*
- Impounds stray dogs — *dog catcher*
- Ruthless or competitive — *dog eat dog*
- An aerial battle between fighter planes — *dog fight*
- Any of various small sharks — *dog fish*
- Followed — *dogged*
- When you're in trouble you're in the — *dog house*
- A type of tree — *dogwood*

Closing Song: SASB 709/TB 84,
Friendship With Jesus

Friends – God's Way of Taking Care of Us

Barbara Pearce, Napanee, Ontario



Welcome & Introduction

Quote

*"It is a good thing to be rich,
And a good thing to be strong,
But is a better thing
To be loved by many friends."*

What is a Friend?

- A friend is someone who goes with you in the "good times and bad times".
- A friend is a person who comes and won't judge a flower by its color.
- A person who will never give up on you.
- A person who will comfort you when storms of tears are in your mind.
- A person who will just have some fun with you and give you a good laugh.
- A person that doesn't mind expressing their happy or sad feelings to you.

Song: SASB 645/TB 451 or 438 *What A Friend We Have In Jesus*

Poem: New Friends and Old Friends

*Make new friends, but keep the old;
Those are silver, these are gold.
New-made friendships, like new wine,
Age will mellow and refine.
Friendships that have stood the test —
Time and change — are surely best;
Brow may wrinkle, hair grow grey;
Friendship never knows decay.
For 'mid old friends, tried and true,
Once more we reach and youth renew'.
But old friends, alas! May die;
New friends must their place supply;
Cherish friendships in your breast —
New is good, but old is best;
Make new friends, but keep the old;
Those are silver, these are gold.*

Friendship

The dictionary says is: A person whom one knows, likes and trusts. A person with whom one is allied in a struggle or cause; comrade. One who supports, sympathizes with, or

patronizes a group. An acquaintance.

So then what is this magic called Friendship?

Is there a magic wand that silently transforms you and those special people on a journey into, what sometimes can be a lifelong relationship? Is it mutual admiration, common interests, the need to be a friend? Or is it just an enduring tie that bonds you together, allows you to almost think as one and gives you one of life's greatest joys.

Friendships are precious jewels. Treat them as such. Enjoy them! Celebrate them! And never take them for granted.

(Source – Internet)

Scripture Reading

Promise box – each lady selects a promise to read. Ask if anyone would like to share from their “promise”.

Who is my neighbour?

Our friends are the people whom we choose; usually friends are the same sort of people as ourselves. My neighbor is the woman whom I do not choose; she is the woman whom God gives to me. She is a woman who happens to sit opposite to me in church; she is the clerk who works at the grocery store. I have no right to say that she is no concern of mine, because, if I am a Christian, I know that she is the woman whom God has given me.

Song: SASB 709/TB 84 *A Friend of Jesus*

Famous Words on Friends

- Go often to the house of thy friend, for weeds choke the unused path. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)
- If we build on a sure foundation in friendship, we must love our friends for their sakes rather than our own. (Charlotte Bronte)
- So long as we love, we serve; so long as

we are loved by others, I would almost say we are indispensable; and no man is useless while he has a friend. (Robert Louis Stevenson)

- As old wood is best to burn, old horses to ride, old books to read, so are old friends always most trusty to use. (Leonard Wright)



- A friend is a person with whom I may be sincere, before him I may think aloud. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)
- Stay, is a charming word in a friend's vocabulary. (Amos B. Alcott)

Devotional: Recipe for Friendship

Friendships are wonderful gifts to our lives straight from God. There are several references to friendship in the Bible. The relationship of David and Jonathan stands out (1 Samuel 18-20, 2 Samuel 1). Those chapters in Samuel are great reading. Jonathan and David had a great love and respect for each other, in their friendship.

I think of how God called Abraham, “friend” (James 2:23). Moses also comes to mind. Remember how God spoke to him, “face to face, as a man speaks with his friend” (Exodus 33:11)

When it comes to our friends in Christ, friendship takes on a special quality. Friendship between Christians is especially sweet because

of the bond of Christ. We are enhanced by those special friendships. Building those friendships is a wonderful way to encourage and lift up others in the Lord.

Friends are one of the ways God takes care of us. We need all the things friendship entails from other human contact such as encouragement, companionship, love, honesty, loyalty, understanding, and so much more.

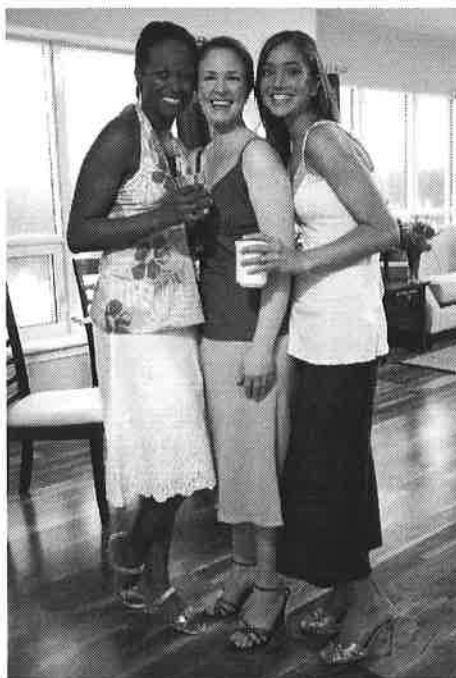
Friendships are like recipes, they bake us something special. You may have heard that saying, "In the cookies of life, friends are the chocolate chips". Friends are that sweet extra in life and even sweeter is friendship among believers in Christ.

Friendship Recipe

- **Shortening** - Provides texture. Our fellowship and friendship can add much depth and texture to our lives. We blend together in unity as part of the body of Christ.
- **Sugar** - Adds sweetness. Our fellowship with our friends adds such a sweet taste to our lives. If we didn't have sugar in our cookies, we'd sure miss it. The same is with our fellowship with our friends. We can't leave it out of our lives.
- **Eggs** - Holds ingredients together. Friends are someone to lean on. We are held together by fellowship with them. We are stronger because of them, their prayers, and their love in the Lord. We have a special bond in Christ.
- **Vanilla** - Adds flavor. Friends add that flavor we need. They give us that extra sensation. Without friends and fellowship we become kind of bland.
- **Flour** - Adds substance. We need the substance a friend can add. They give us many things by way of mentoring us when we don't even know it. Their shared testimonies, and the way they live their

lives has an impact on us.

- **Baking Soda** - Leavens. Leavening agents in baking helps to lighten the dough. Friendship lightens our burdens through their prayers and encouragement.
- **Salt** - Enhances flavor. We know that friendships add flavor and just when we need it, they help improve the tastefulness and quality of our lives. Friends are the type of people that know just what we are going through and are there when we need them.
- **Semi Sweet Chocolate Chips** - The kind of chocolate chips usually added to cookies is semi sweet. Our friends tell us what they feel and think and that's okay. They can be honest and truthful to us. "Iron sharpens iron" (Proverbs 27:17).
- **Nuts...Optional** - Just a little craziness in a friend is great! Sometimes a little craziness in our friends can be just the ingredient we need.



Conclusion

Friendships take a lot of time, the same with recipes that take a lot of effort to bake but the end result is worth it and we sense the sweet aroma and special bond they bring to our lives. Friends that have Jesus in common will have lasting relationships, not just here on earth, but will dwell with Christ together throughout eternity. "A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend that sticks closer than a brother." (Proverbs 18:24. NIV)

I wonder if I'm the type of friend that I should be to others. Am I doing all those things that I should be doing, like lifting burdens, adding flavor, helping hold things together with my prayers, and all those other things? I hope I can improve in this area.

Is your life a good recipe for friendship?



Game: Know Your Friend

- Is your friend wearing glasses?
- Is she wearing more than one ring?
- What colour are her shoes?
- What is the colour of the purse she has with her?
- Does she come from a large family?
- Does she have children? How many?
- Does she have grandchildren? How many?

- Did she come by car to the luncheon today?
- What is her favorite meal?
- What is her favorite time of the year?
- What is her favorite colour?

Game: From the letters found in the word 'FRIENDSHIP' fill in the blanks:

A part of the body	(Hip)
To transmit	(Send)
A coniferous tree	(Pine)
A useful nursery item	(Pin)
To polish	(Shine)
To eat	(Dine)
Conclusion	(End)
To drink slowly	(Sip)
Of good quality	(Fine)
A sacred or hallowed object	(Shrine)

Game: Friendship – do you know your friend?

- Name two jobs she has worked at
- Name two places she has lived
- Name two places she has visited
- Name two of her favorite foods
- Name two places she would rather be right now

Closing

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving present your requests to God." (Philippians 4: 6)

Ask for prayer requests from the ladies — for friends, family, those who once part of the fellowship, those who are unwell.

Chorus of Song: SASB 709/TB 84

*Friendship with Jesus, fellowship divine,
O what blessed sweet communion,
Jesus is a friend of mine!*

Share in fellowship with refreshments



Handkerchiefs

Marlene Dale, Working With Women Resources Australia East Territory



Preparation

The week before, encourage the ladies to bring along a handkerchief that is of special significance to them and share their story.

Decoration

Display as many handkerchiefs as possible and bring one of your own that is very special to you, such as a wedding handkerchief. If possible make small gifts for display made from handkerchiefs lavender sachet, soap sachet, bonbons (fill centre with sweets etc.).

Think about the range of patterns, styles, materials and uses for men, women and children, striped, checked, floral, spotted, initialled, embroidered, crocheted edges, lace edges, scalloped edges, souvenir, children's motifs, etc., and also tissues.

Some handkerchiefs are totally decorative, such as nylon, organ-dies, or silk.

Craft: "Hankie" Bunny (see diagram on page 62)

Introduction

A History Of The Handkerchief

When we see a snow white or coloured handkerchief, it does not strike us that this piece of material might have a history. Yet this small object has a longer history than many other fashion accessories. The first known mention is by Catullus (87-57 BC) who speaks about them in his poems as if they were in general use. However, he gives no informa-

tion on their frequency or their previous use. Handkerchiefs have performed a variety of functions throughout history, and included cloths that were used for absorbing perspiration, for veiling one's face, and frequently for covering the mouth for protection against adverse weather conditions or infectious diseases.

During the first century BC, these cloths were used almost exclusively by members of the highest social and ruling class as a fashionable luxury. This was the result of linen, the fabric of choice, being very expensive. Only after imports of flax had increased and following the growing demands of the middle classes and simpler people, were handkerchiefs used more generally in the centuries following the birth of Christ. These cloths were kept in the fold of the garment on the chest, as neither the masculine toga, nor the women's garments had pockets as we know them today.



In approximately 300 AD, we find our first reference to a cloth which served only for cleaning one's nose. However, during the same period it became customary to wave handkerchiefs to greet the appearance of high ranking persons in the theatre or to express applause.

Throughout the Middle Ages, we find only rare references to these cloths. However, at the start of the 14th century we begin to see more frequent references, although we initially see it only in those countries in Europe where a



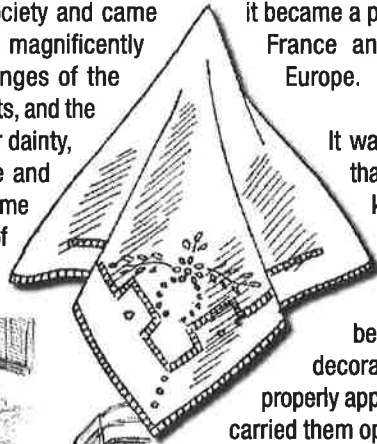
pronounced courtly culture had fostered the feeling of richly decorated cloths, especially in Italy and France.



wanted to take snuff had to use large coloured squares on which the brown tobacco stains were less visible.

In the course of the 16th century, the decorative handkerchief gained increasing importance in European Society and came to be even more richly and magnificently decorated. The knotted fringes of the seams, the simple edge picots, and the small scallops made way for dainty, fancy designs in sewn lace and pillow lace. Therefore, it became a display and fashion object of the greatest importance.

In the 18th century, the handkerchief found public use in the theatre, where it became a prerequisite for tragedies in France and eventually throughout Europe.



It was during the 19th century that ladies regarded the handkerchief as an indispensable accessory for an elegant costume. No longer did it disappear into their bags because it was an artistically decorated article which had to be properly appreciated. There, most ladies carried them openly in the hand. Handkerchiefs became so commonplace that everyone carried one whenever they went out.



An entirely new task was in store for the handkerchief when tobacco made its triumphant entry into Europe during the 16th century. In the 17th century tobacco was rarely smoked as the taking of snuff was considered to be more elegant. However, what could be done with the eternally little brown noses of the beautiful ladies, which didn't match their elegant clothes at all? For this, only a handkerchief could help, but the small square decorated with lace was entirely unsuitable. Those who

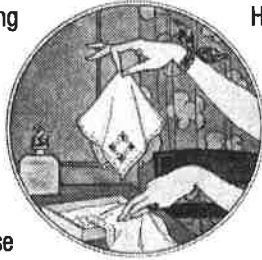
This custom made it easy for young people — even though carefully chaperoned — to work out a system of signals that enabled them to carry on a conversation across the room. For instance, if a young lady drew the handkerchief across her lips, while looking at a young man, it meant that she was desirous of making his acquaintance. If she already knew the young man, signals could get personal, such as:

- Drawing a handkerchief across her cheek meant 'I love you!'
- A handkerchief held to the right cheek meant 'yes'.
- Yet if it was held on the left cheek it meant 'no'.
- A handkerchief drawn across the forehead signalled 'we are being watched'.
- And, if thrown over the shoulder, the message was 'follow me'.



Handkerchiefs continued to diversify. Some were made completely out of lace, others embroidered and edged in lace, and many were made with simple tatted borders.

Handkerchiefs were considered the perfect gift for everyone including mere acquaintances. As a result, handkerchiefs were made and exchanged by the thousands.



Discussion

Discuss the many uses of handkerchiefs besides wiping one's nose or drying tears.

Some examples:

- Wiping mouth/hands
- Temporary bandage for a cut or scratch
- Sprinkled with oil of lavender and placed on the forehead for relaxation
- Men's hankie tied with a knot in each corner and used as a head cover
- To keep small coins safe by tying them in a corner
- Used to put a sweet or chewing gum in
- Boys made them into parachutes
- A mask to cover identity
- A blindfold
- A surrender flag

Think of as many games as you can that use hankies

- Blind man's bluff
- Three legged race
- Pin the tail on the donkey
- Drop the handkerchief
- Cowboys and Indians

Devotional

It can be seen that handkerchiefs have been and are still used for many and varied purposes. They



can be used quite frequently to dry tears of both joy and grief.

Tears of Joy

Think about how in their old age Sarah (Genesis 21 :1-7), Hannah (1 Samuel 1:1-28) and Elizabeth (Luke 1:5-25, 57-66) felt when they were told that they would conceive and give birth to a child. Surely there were tears of sheer joy at this news.

Also the young Virgin Mary was visited by the angel Gabriel (Luke 1: 26-56) and told that she too was to have a child. (Luke 2: 1-7) How must Mary have felt at giving birth to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ?



Tears of Sorrow

Jesus wept in sorrow at the death of His friend Lazarus (John 11:35). How Mary must have wept as she witnessed the crucifixion of her beloved Son (John 19:25-27). In John 20: 10-18 we read of Mary Magdalene's sorrow as she stood outside the empty tomb crying for Jesus. Further thoughts — Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8 "A time for everything".

No more Tears

The Christian assurance that God will live with His people forever (Revelations 21: 1-4).

Handkerchief Bunny Craft

Suitable for Easter

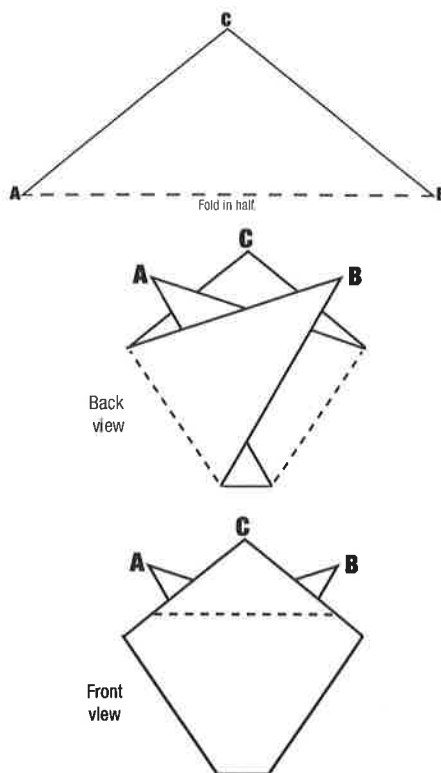
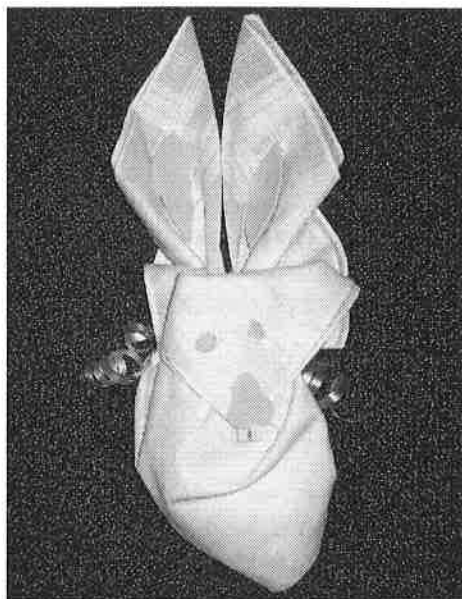
What you need

- 1 man's white handkerchief
- 2 pink buttons
- brown wool scraps
- pink felt scraps
- fabric glue
- scissors
- pink ribbon 1/4" to 1/2"

Instructions

Follow diagrams below for folding procedure and fold handkerchief accordingly.

- Fold in half as shown.
- Cross 2 corners (back view). These will be the ears.
- Turn down corner "C" at dotted line for face (front view).
- Sew pink buttons to face for the eyes.
- From pink felt, cut a nose and two (ear shaped pieces) for ear inserts. Glue nose close to tip of corner "C" on face.
- Cut two small pieces of the brown yarn and separate the plies (strings of yarn) until you have 4 thin plies of yarn.
- Glue two strips of yarn on both sides of the bunny's nose.
- Glue the two, pink, felt strips inside of the ears.
- Use a black pen to draw a small line at the very tip of corner "C" (face) where it comes to a point. This should look like two teeth.
- Gather the handkerchief under the face and tie with the pink ribbon making a bow at the front.
- You may fill these bunnies with gourmet jelly beans and pin the pouched section of the hankie so that the bunny is plump.



Sunflowers

Gwen Hickman, Toronto, Ontario

Sunflower Facts: Did you know?

Sunflowers got their scientific name *Helianthus*? It comes from two words, *Helios* meaning sun, and *Anthos* meaning Flower. The sunflower often follows the sun and this characteristic is how it got its name.

The Sunflower is not one flower, but a cluster of more than 3000 tiny flowers growing together. So you have a closer look when you are face to face with one.

The tallest sunflower grown on record was 25 feet tall, and was grown in the Netherlands.

Song: SASB 32/TB 348, *God Who Touches Earth With Beauty* – Verses 1, 2, 3



Prayer

Encouragement for the Ladies

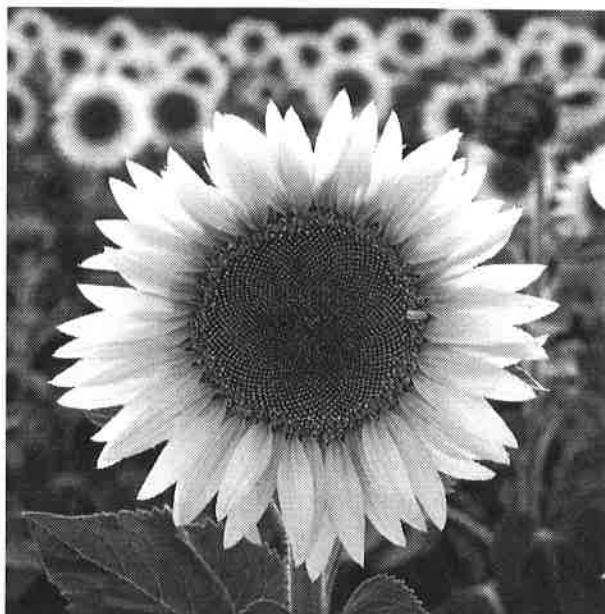
It is very interesting how the sunflower relates to this truth.

- Read God's Word every day, don't just wait for the pastor to preach to you each Sunday, or only read books on what others have studied. These are important, but don't neglect what the Holy Spirit has for you to gain from directly reading the Word. The Holy Spirit will reveal to your heart just what you need.
- Learn to do cross-referencing and word studies. Get a good concordance. It will tell you what the real meaning of the Greek and Hebrew words mean in the Bible. You will have blast learning!
- Have a piece of paper ready to write down what you find. Put a date at the top of the paper to help you see how God used certain verses and subjects at special times in your life to help you grow.
- Now go out and show God's glory to the world around you at work and play. Your children, spouse, extended family and friends should be the first to see the Son on your face.

Solo: SASB 270/TB 829, *There Is A Message*

Meditation: Turn your eyes upon Jesus – The Discipline of a Fixed Focus

"I have given up all but my intercessory prayers to focus my attention on remaining in (God's) holy presence. I keep my attention on God in a simple, loving way. This is my soul's secret experience of the actual, unceasing presence of God. It gives me much contentment and joy". Taken from *The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence



Brother Lawrence's words, "I keep my attention on God..." reminds us of the words of the apostle Paul as he wrote to the Colossian believers: "Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God". (Colossians 3: 2-3 NIV)

There is a secret to the Christian life that many overlook. Paul, however, understood it and often wrote about it. Jesus practiced it daily

and taught it to His disciples. It is the discipline of maintaining a fixed focus on God.

If Peter had practiced this he would have never noticed the raging waves billowing at his side that night on the stormy Sea of Galilee. But we often do what Peter did; we start out with our spiritual gaze set on Christ, only to have it drift over to the varying circumstances of life. When this happens, we fall to feelings of insecurity, fear, anxiety, anger and more.

The writer of Hebrews also admonishes us to "fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2 NIV). Again, Paul advises us to "fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:18 NIV, emphasis added).

Focusing on the troubles of your life only diverts your attention away from God. Apart from Jesus Christ, nothing has the

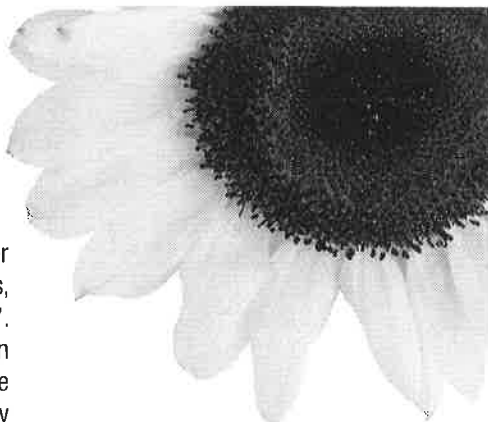


power to heal what is hurt or to correct what has been damaged. Only God has the ability to calm your fears, lay to rest your suffering, and bring peace in place of frustration and sorrow.

A few years ago, Steffi Graf, a women's tennis champion, was asked the secret to her game. She didn't hesitate as she told reporters, "I keep my eyes fixed on the (tennis) ball". She went on to explain that her concentration was so refined that while she was playing she actually could see the lettering of the company that had made the ball.

Neither the movement or reaction of her opponent, nor the crowd, affected her game. Her mental focus was fixed on one object and that was the secret to her success.

What is the object of your life? If it is Jesus, then you ultimately will experience victory



instead of defeat, and spiritual growth instead of stagnation.

The reason Peter's thoughts betrayed him was because they were set on himself. He felt the power of the storm-driven sea and his mind buckled. Panic swept over him because he had taken his eyes off of the Lord.

On an earlier trip across the Sea of Galilee, Jesus had proven that He was in control of the elements. Why did Peter doubt His ability? Never become discouraged when you bypass a spiritual lesson. God is faithful, and He will create another situation in order to refine your faith.

When you face life's difficulties, keep your eyes on the Saviour. He is the One who holds your course steady. And He will complete His work in your life. First Thessalonians 5:24 reminds us of this very fact: "Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass". Therefore, even when you experience life's victories, keep your eyes on Jesus. Praise Him for His care and faithful love for you. He is the author and perfecter of your faith.

One day a friend showed Helen Lemmel a tract that was entitled "Focused." Helen, who was a noted Christian singer and voice teacher, was

Sunflowers

*Sunflowers are obedient
To the Sun's eternal light
Draw upward by the sun's warm rays
They praise Him day and night.*

*Their constant obedience
To the radiance from above
Is seen in their growth and beauty
A reflection of their love.*

*They are a simple flower
Not chosen for their frame
Yet other flowers follow them
And look upward just the same.*

*Yet the glory of the sunflower
For it is not a lowly weed
Is often seen by man and beast
For they bless us with their seed.*

Val John Jennings



immediately touched by the words written on the tiny piece of paper. Later she wrote the words and music to a hymn that we have grown to know and love, "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus."

The discipline of focus is not difficult, though you may experience the enemy's reproof as he tries to distract and draw you away from time spent alone with God. Persevere in your devotion by asking the Lord to provide and protect time alone with Him.

Allowing Him to become the focus of your life will free you from worry and doubt. When you trust Him with the entirety of your life, you can rest in the fact that He has the complete ability to take care of your every need. He loves you and He will do what He has promised to do in and through your life. Abundant blessings await all who see the Saviour through a focused heart.

Prayer

Song: *Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus*
O soul, are you weary and troubled?
No light in the darkness you see?
There's light for a look at the Saviour,
And life more abundant and free!

Through death into life everlasting
He passed, and we follow Him there;
Over us sin no more hath dominion
For more than conquerors we are!

His word shall not fail you — He promised;
Believe Him, and all will be well;
Then go to a world that is dying,
His perfect salvation to tell!

Refrain:
Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely
dim
In the light of His gory and grace

Closing Thought

My heart is now God's garden fair
And heavenly things are planted there,
Lillies of purity, roses of Love
Flowers that bloom in God's garden above.

Benediction & Refreshments



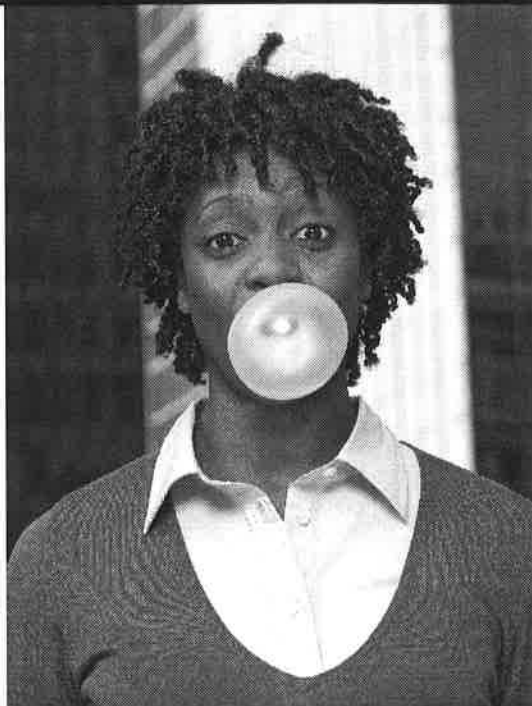
GUM - GUM and MORE GUM

Ann Copple, Toronto, Ontario

Preparation

Create a display using different varieties of gum. As the ladies are welcomed invite them to choose their favorite gum or try a new type of gum from the display (to be chewed later!)

There are many references to the song made famous by Lonnie Donegan (April 29 1931 — November 3, 2002) — “Does your chewing gum lose its flavour on the bed-post overnight” on the Internet. This song, with words and music can be downloaded from the internet and would certainly, for many, bring back memories of the late fifties when it was a “big hit”. You may be able to obtain a “live” recording to play and even sing-along to!



Introduction

Invite ladies to share a humorous story (of gum etc.) they experienced/participated in as a young person — be honest!

Question: What Is In Chewing Gum?

Answer: Originally, chewing gum was made from the latex sap of the sapodilla tree (native to Central America). This sap was called chicle, sometimes beeswax or paraffin wax is used as a gum base. After World War II, chemists learned to make synthetic rubber, which came to replace most natural rubber in chewing gum (e.g., polyethylene and polyvinyl acetate).

Brief History

Ancient Greeks chewed Mastiche - chewing

gum made from resin of the Mastic tree.

Another nation chewed chicle - which is the sap from a sapodilla tree.

Early American Indians - chewed gum from spruce sap and beeswax.

1848 - the first commercial gum was sold — called State of Maine Pure Spruce Gum

1850 - the selling of flavored paraffin gums

1869 - first patented gum

1874 - first gum machine

1880 - gum invented to be able to chew for longer periods.

1888 - Tutti-Frutti gum sold in vending machines, New York Subway.

1899 - Dentyne gum invented by a druggist.

1906 - first Bubble gum

1928 - first pink Double Bubble Gum

Gum Helps

- Ice helps to harden gum and makes it easier to remove
- Chewing gum after a meal helps to prevent heartburn
- Chewing sugarless gum has been shown to prevent tooth decay and reduce cavity and odor-causing bacteria in the mouth. Some studies have shown chewing gum to be related to improved memory. The basic concept is that people who chew gum are able to recall words faster than non-chewers!

his projects until he found just the right piece to make Megan's box — a gorgeous plank of mahogany that he had originally purchased to repair a drawer front on his wife's favorite dresser. He had made a mistake and marred the beautiful piece of expensive wood and it had become a castoff. As he fingered the marred wood, Henry had a wonderful idea for a spiritual teaching moment. After he lovingly made a beautiful box, he carefully placed a note to Megan in the bottom of it: "This box has been made from a special piece of wood I intended to use to make something for your



The Bubble Gum Box Story

Adapted from "Seasons of Life" Central Territory, U.S.A.

My friend Henry, a talented woodworker, has a decades-old tradition in his family. The grandfather makes a special wooden bubble gum box for each grandchild when they reach school age. As his first granddaughter was approaching that magic age, Henry searched through the pile of wood he kept for

grandmother, but I made a mistake and damaged it, so I put it aside. I thought I might be able to redeem this special piece of wood to make your box. I trimmed it, sanded it and made it into something beautiful. But it's not perfect — you can still see a small spot where I couldn't trim away the entire mistake. The same is true in our lives," the note continued. "Sin damaged us so we couldn't be what

God intended us to be, but God didn't leave us there. He redeemed us and fashioned us into something beautiful. Sometimes we still have the marks of our past sins, but God will forgive them and make something beautiful out of our lives." Henry ended the note with a reminder that every time Megan looked at her box, she should not only remember how much her grandfather loves her, but how much more God loves her.

What a precious reminder of God's infinite grace. No matter what mistakes we've made in the past, no matter how marred and distressed the wood of our lives may have become, we can be redeemed by our Heavenly Father through the blood of Jesus. He uses His Holy Spirit in our lives to trim away the ugliness, to sand the rough spots and make us beautiful. We're not perfect, but that's okay, because we've been made perfect in God's sight through His undeserved and bountiful grace. Besides, His view of us is the only one that really matters!

Chorus: *I'm So Glad I'm A
Part Of The Family Of God*

Bubble Gum Trivia

An accountant who worked for a chewing gum company invented bubble gum in 1928. The new gum sold out in a single afternoon. He was promoted and taught the company's salesmen how to blow bubbles for sales demonstrations. *True*

One of California's most unusual tourist at-

tractions is Bubble Gum Alley. For over 40 years, gum chewers have added their wads to the walls along both sides of an alley in San Luis Obispo. *True*



Cows and other cud-chewing animals, like giraffes, just love gum. Many farmers and zoos keep it in stock for their animals so they don't get bored and chew on things that would be harmful to them. *False*

In Singapore, it's illegal to chew gum. You can spend up to a year in jail or pay high fines if you are caught. *True*

In Sweden, a gum made from the spruce tree resin was thought to cure many diseases.

True

Early New England loggers made small hollow boxes from blocks of wood and filled them with the fragrant spruce gum for their families. *True*



Song: SASB 308/TB 70, *Amazing Grace*

Scriptural Thoughts

"You are like salt for everyone on earth. But if salt no longer tastes like salt, how can it make food salty? All it is good for is to be thrown out and walked on. You are like light for the whole world. A city built on top of a hill cannot be hidden, and no one would light

a lamp and put it under a clay pot. A lamp is placed on a lamp stand, where it can give light to everyone in the house". Matthew 5: 13-14 (Contemporary English)

Our world — God's Creation — man His crowning Glory. We have been created in God's image for the single purpose of bringing glory to Him in a dark world. Our days should be filled with a passion to live out our faith in a way that our Father is glorified.

You and me — God's plan for relationship. Our life in Christ is about relationship. God's plan for relationship unfolds in Salvation. The entire gospel comes to a focus in John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life". We have the promise of life everlasting while at the same time the experience of an abundant life in the here and now.

Today — God's flavor. We are to spread the flavour of God through living as bright lights. Just as the light from a city can not be hid we cannot hide our light. The flavour of love, kindness, gentleness, longsuffering, peace, self control must be the flavor of our Christian walk. Jesus' words in Matthew 5:13-14 challenges us to live every day spreading His flavour in a dark world.

Closing Song: *Shine Jesus, Shine*

Benediction and Refreshments



The Harvest Basket

An adaptation of the well-known story of the Christmas Pudding

Gwenyth Redhead, Orillia, Ontario

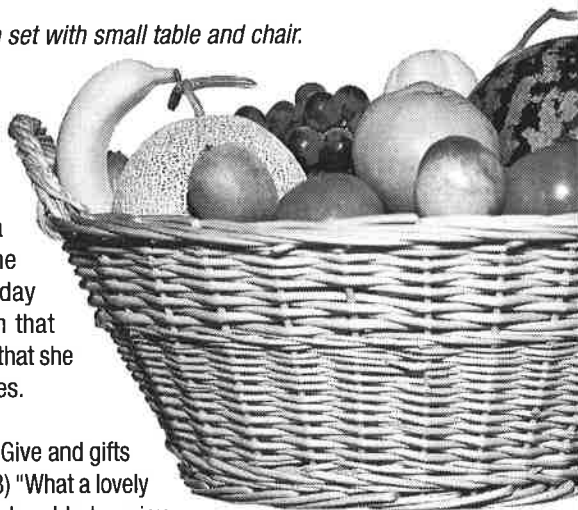


This is a novelty item in free speech, which means that only a rough guide is given below of five simple scenes with a simple layout.

Monday Morning — Room set with small table and chair.

Older Woman

Enters and tidies' around. Answers a knock at the door. A church representative comes to deliver a basket of fruit following the Harvest Festival held the day before. He tells the woman that he hopes she'll enjoy it, and that she will find a text inside. Leaves.



She sits and reads the text: 'Give and gifts will be given you.' (Luke 6:38) "What a lovely idea. What a pity I shall not be able to enjoy it. In a few minutes my son will be coming to take me for a holiday on his farm. He will have a fruit crop of his own. But if I leave it here it will all go bad. Now what can I do? I know — I'll follow the advice on the text, and give it away. I'll give it to the young woman next door. I'm sure she'll be glad of it with six mouths to feed."

Young Mom

Enters with bottle, diaper, etc., in hand. Expresses annoyance at a knock on the door, she is so busy. The older woman enters and delivers the fruit. The young mom thanks her, but decides the kids can't eat fruit for various reasons: e.g. oranges bring Danny out in spots; apples make the twins sick. She decides that the easiest thing to do is to give it to the elderly man next door; he is sure to appreciate it, because he won't get many presents, so she takes the basket to him.

Elderly Man

He enters and sits asleep in the chair with paper over his face. The young mom knocks loudly several times. He finally answers — he is deaf and there is some misunderstanding. He finally accepts when she says she must get back to the kids. He decides the fruit



will upset his indigestion: will have to give it away! Thinks . . . he can give it to the posh lady next door, Mrs. Fortesque-Brown. Always moaning about the dog spoiling her flowers — perhaps he'll get some peace if he gives her a present.

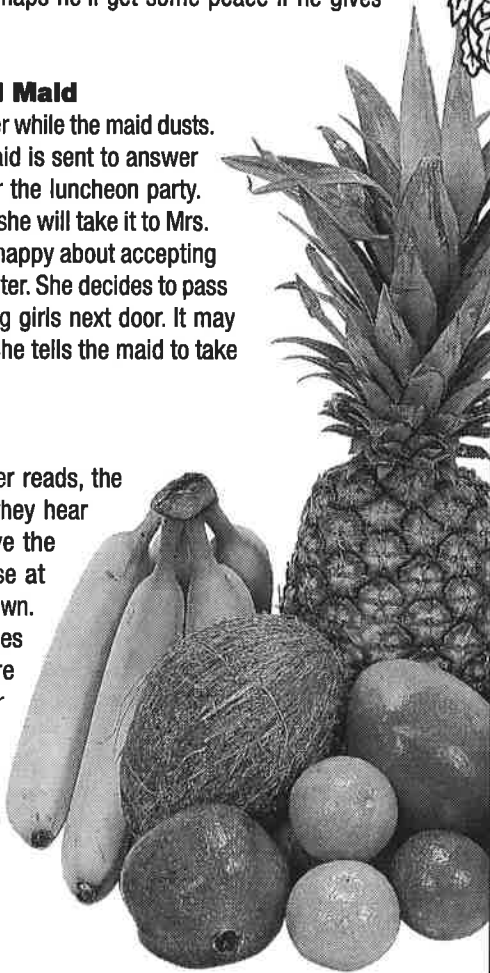


Mrs. Fortesque-Brown And Maid

Mrs. Fortesque-Brown reads the paper while the maid dusts. Old man knocks on the door, the maid is sent to answer it. Perhaps it is the fresh salmon for the luncheon party. The maid accepts the fruit and says she will take it to Mrs. Brown. Nice idea, but she is not too happy about accepting gifts from such a disreputable character. She decides to pass the fruit on to those two noisy young girls next door. It may help them to be more considerate. She tells the maid to take the basket to them.

Two Young Girls

One dances to music while the other reads, the other turns down the music when they hear the knock on the door. They receive the fruit from the maid, express surprise at receiving a gift from Mrs. Fortesque-Brown. They examine the contents. One decides she can't eat bananas as they are fattening and she must watch her figure. The other one decides oranges give her spots. They ought to give it away to someone who would appreciate it more. The elderly lady at the other end of the road would enjoy it.



Older Woman

She enters with coat and hat carrying suitcase. The telegraph boy delivers a telegram. Reads: 'Sorry, can't come for you — car broken down — will come later in the week — Love, Jim.'

Older woman comments 'Can't get there alone, farm too isolated — will have to wait. She notices the text: she hasn't any food in the house, even gave away the basket of fruit, so much for following the advice of the text. The girls then arrive. The elderly woman accepts the basket of fruit: So the text was right after all, 'Give, and gifts will be given you'.

Celebration of Light

Marie Goulding, Toronto, Ontario

Candles can be lit by persons representing the Old Year, New Year and each month of the year. Candles are lit from the lighted candle representing Christ, the Light of the World.

Leader: Living Candles

*I want to give myself to witness
To my Lord who loved me so
To be a light, a hope, a beacon
And to shine where're I go.*

*To be a candle, that's mission
To serve the Lord is my great aim
As I spread the gospel story
This is my prayer—others catch the flame.*

*To shine to glow is still my purpose
For the Lord has loved me so
How can I help but share Him
When there's inward praise and glow.*



*Dear Lord, I'll keep my candle burning
For others depend on me
Other lives I'm touching surely
As I share my life for Thee.*

*My candlelight is so important
For my Lord, he understands
That I give my cup of water
With a loving heart and willing hands.*

*I dedicate afresh my candle
To let it shine my work to do.
As it shines in leading others
It lights my own pathway too.*

Douglas Hefford

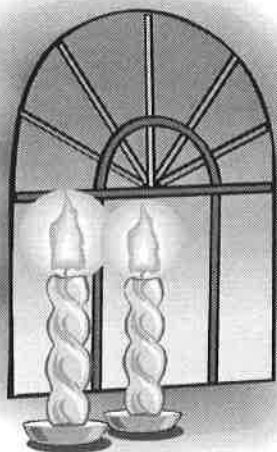
Song: SASB 190/TB 21 (music for verse only). *Come, Gracious Spirit, Heavenly Dove*

Scripture: John 1:4 & John 8:12

Chorus: *This Little Light Of Mine*

Old Year

I represent the old year. I am broken dreams and failures. I am a burnt candle (*light candle*).



I have felt the crushing weight of men's hatred, intolerance, greed and indulgence. It seems that the world is one battlefield. My greatest fear is that because of the failures and mistakes of last year I will fail to look ahead to a new and shining future.

- My greatest claim to success is the essence of a faith in the things that matter and in that faith, I am strong.
- Faith that the failures of the past year are but stepping stones to the future.
- Faith that the memory of failure can be landscaped by the successes of the future.
- Faith in the Divine plan of God that gives us confidence to trust Him for whatever lies ahead.
- I am the old year. I point you to the New Year in confidence that upon the foundations of the past your future can be built.

Chorus

I know the Lord will make a way for me,
(Repeat)

To shun the wrong and do the right,

To live a pure and holy life,

I know the Lord will make a way for me.

New Year

(Light candle) I am the New Year. I am the one unspoiled part of the beauty in God's Universe. I represent romance, glitter, high resolutions and dreams. My only handicap is the dead weight of old habits and hard-set ways of doing things that I must carry over from the past into the ministry of what is new.

My only hope is in your faith. Faith that what has proven impossible by experience can be



attained. Faith that He who said, "Behold I make all things new" will bring you a new year filled with all the good blessings of God.

Chorus: to the tune of:

Lord, Lift Me Up

Shine on me, Lord, new life impart,

Thy Spirit kindles in my heart

Thus may my life forever be

A lamp to light the way to Thee.

Leader

Opening up before us are twelve months as each month will bring us opportunities to do well. In our Christian experience each month demands will wrestle for our time, ability and finances.

During each minute, hour, day and week may we seek the guidance of Christ, the Light of the World for we can trust Him to lead us.

Who will carry the Light of personal consecration into all walks of life, home, family, ministry? This is the great challenge — let us light the monthly candles in our hearts that we will be lights of truth, purity, strength, courage,



friendship, generosity, humility and a high purpose. To accomplish this we must place our hands in His.

Solo: SASB 732/TB687 *I'm In His Hands*

Candle to be lit prior to each reading

January: As I begin this New Year with God, may I also begin each new day with Him, reading His word and praying for His guidance.



February: In February we think of love. May our hearts this year be so filled with His love that we will want to serve Him supremely.

March: Just as the farmer sows seeds to produce a plentiful harvest, so may all of us sow seeds this year that will live for eternity.

April: April is the month of rain showers. May we all be willing to allow the spirit of the living God to shower His blessings upon us.



Chorus: *Showers Of Blessings, Showers Of Blessings We Need.*

May: I pray that the God who created the world

with all its beauty will create within us the things that make for beauty of character.

June: As the beauty of nature unfolds before us, may we each aspire to radiate the matchless love of the Christ we serve.

July: As we thank God for our Nation let us pray that when we are finished with this life we will become a citizen of His Kingdom.

August: May the warmth and brightness of sunny summer days make us more conscious that no earth-borne cloud can over shadow the Son of Righteousness.

Chorus: *Heavenly Sunshine
Heavenly sunshine, Heavenly sunshine
Flooding my soul, with glory Divine;
Hallelujah, I am rejoicing,
Singing His praises, Jesus is mine.*

September: School bells ring in September calling students to return to the halls of learning. Let us make it our sincere prayer that we will be endowed with the wisdom that comes from on high.



October: It's harvest time. May we be willing to witness to our faith that the harvest of souls we pray for will become a reality.

November: Despite the chill of the coming winter may we so live that we constantly feel the warmth of His Spirit.



December: Christmas! May we seek to bring to the world the real meaning of the Season. As we worship the baby in the manger let us remember that the manger is but the beginning of the path to the cross.

Chorus: *O Come Let Us Adore Him*

Leader:

We can be victorious in our Christian living if we keep our lights brightly burning and keep trusting in the good Shepherd who also said, "I am the Light and you are the light."

Responsive Reading: see below

Chorus

To the tune of: *Coming This Way*

*Show me the way, Lord
Let my light shine
As an example of good to mankind
Help them to see a pattern of Thee
Shining in beauty, Lived out in me.*

Benediction

Responsive Reading

Use two people to read to the following — **first phase in bold** — *response in italics*

The Lord is my shepherd — *that's relationship!*

I shall not want — *that's supply!*

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures — *that's rest!*

He leadeth me beside the still waters — *that's refreshment!*

He restoreth my soul — *that's healing!*

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness — *that's guidance!*

For His name sake — *that's purpose!*

Yea, though I walk through the valley of death — *that's testing!*

I will fear no evil — *that's protection!*

For thou art with me — *that's faithfulness!*

Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me — *that's discipline!*

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies — *that's hope!*

Thou anointest my head with oil — *that's consecration!*

My cup runneth over — *that's abundance!*

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life — *that's blessing!*

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord — *that's security!*

Forever — *that's eternity!*

I Walked Today Where Jesus Walked

Corinne Cameron and Terri Wallace, Regina, Saskatchewan — Bible references from the Message Paraphrase

"The footprints of Jesus through His last week"

Words Of Welcome

Welcome to our prayer room. It is our hope that as you work your way through this room you will draw closer to God, and through that closeness you will discover in a new and deeper way, all that Jesus has done, is doing and will do for you. In Matthew 11:28-30 we discover the following invitation: *"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me — watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."* Please come and keep company with Jesus as you go on this prayer journey.

Station One: Jesus stays at Bethany

Have pieces of incense available at this station.

John 12:1-3

Six days before Passover, Jesus entered Bethany where Lazarus, so recently raised from the dead, was living. Lazarus and his sisters invited Jesus to dinner at their home. Martha served. Lazarus was one of those sitting at the table with them. Mary came in with a jar of very expensive aromatic oils, anointed and massaged Jesus' feet, and then wiped them with her hair. The fragrance of the oils filled the house.



Jesus stayed within walking distance of Jerusalem, we know that in this town his very good friends lived, and we read in the verses above that these friends cared for Jesus. Mary came to Jesus in a very special way, his feet were tired and worn from the journey, he was aware that within the week he would be arrested, tried, convicted and executed. In this meal Jesus experienced a time to slow down and rest.

Today you are entering this room — are you experiencing different sources of stress in your life? Are there things you are worried about? In this station we invite you to slow down, and to rest for a while in the presence of God.

We invite you to take a piece of incense, to smell it, and to think how the perfume which

Mary rubbed into Jesus' feet brought to him relief and comfort. Jesus is here to offer you relief and comfort. After smelling the incense, we invite you to rest with Jesus for a while. Close your eyes, and sit quietly for one minute, and rest in the presence of Jesus.

Station Two: Jesus throws the moneychangers out of the Temple

Provide paper, pencils and coins at this station.

Matthew 21:12-13

Jesus went straight to the Temple and threw out everyone who had set up shop, buying and selling. He kicked over the tables of loan sharks and the stalls of dove merchants. He quoted this text: "My house was designated a house of prayer; You have made it a hangout for thieves."

Jesus was very distressed to arrive at the Temple and discover how many people were being distracted from worship by everything that was happening in the outer courtyard. This courtyard was the only place where women and Gentiles were permitted to worship God, but they were surrounded by "wheeling and dealing." Jesus was also distressed to see how the Law had been distorted and rather than people bringing a heartfelt offering, were being forced to buy "acceptable" offerings once they arrive.

For each of us there are many times when we enter worship (either a church service or personal devotions) very distracted. This distraction stays at the forefront of our worship. Therefore we end up not spending quality time with God.

We invite you to think of different things that distract you as you approach worship: a person cutting you off in traffic, a song that you don't like, your children arguing on the way to church or in the background, a cross word spoken to your spouse, and the list continues ...



*"My house
was designated
a house
of prayer ..."*

Now with that thought in mind, we invite you to take a pencil and a sheet of paper and to trace the outline of the coin ... do you see how, even though you are

not holding the coin, it has stayed with you? Our distracted thoughts are often like this in worship, we think we have left it behind, but the upset is still with us.

Now we invite you to spend some time in prayer to ask God to help you leave your distractions behind, and to cope better with upsets that happen, so that they don't turn you away. Please read quietly to yourself:

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of life will grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and grace.*

Station Three: Jesus washes his disciples feet

Place bottles of hand sanitizer at this station.

John 13:1-5

Just before the Passover Feast, Jesus knew that the time had come to leave this world to go to the Father. Having loved his dear companions, he continued to love them right to the end. It was suppertime. The Devil by now had Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, firmly in his grip, all set for the betrayal. Jesus knew that the Father had put him in complete charge of everything, that he came from God and was on his way back to God. So he got up from the supper table, set aside his robe, and put on an apron. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the feet of the disciples, drying them with his apron.

Jesus humbled himself before His disciples, and he donned a towel, and knelt before those he loved, and washed their feet. He poured out his love upon them and He served them.

Jesus recognized that even though they were clean in their bodies, they had picked up dirt through their journey. In that way, we too need to be cleansed ... we invite you to take some hand sanitizer and as you rub this cleansing solution into your hands think about different things that you have done today that have not made God happy (that have made you unclean).

If you are journeying through this room with others, we now invite you to turn to each other, and to "serve each other" by taking some hand

sanitizer and washing each other's hands.

Station Four: Jesus shares in the Passover meal

Have pieces of string available at this station.

Matthew 26:26-29

During the meal, Jesus took and blessed the bread, broke it, and gave it to his disciples: Take, eat. This is my body. Taking the cup and thanking God, he gave it to them: Drink this, all of you. This is my blood, God's new covenant poured out for many people for the forgiveness of sins. "I'll not be drinking wine from this cup again until that new day when I'll drink with you in the kingdom of my Father."



Just before Jesus was arrested, He literally became the Passover Lamb; Jesus shared in this very symbolic meal with His disciples. This meal is a meal which celebrates how the Israelite people were set free from their bondage of slavery in Egypt.

Each of us also struggle with being bound by different negative patterns and coping mechanisms in our lives. We may not have metal chains on our ankles and be forced

to work for no wage, but we have spiritual chains, forged by decisions we make, different ways we react, negative tapes we play. Jesus came to the earth, lived here for thirty-three years, and died a very painful death – to break the chains of our sin, our bondage. Not only did Jesus die, he also rose from the dead three days later and that power over death, is available to each of us, to break free from our chains.



We invite you to take a piece of string, and to ponder upon different things in your life that bind you ... it could be an addiction, a relationship, a negative response to certain people and situations ... for each of us they will be different. For each negative you are able to identify we ask you to tie a knot in your string, look upon these and see how you are being bound.

Now, through prayer, please give these sins over to God, and as you do, untie the knot

in the string and claim the freedom that is available to you.

Station Five: Jesus prays In The Garden of Gethsemane

Place blank cards at this station.

Matthew 26:36-39, *The Message*

Then Jesus went with them to a garden called Gethsemane and told his disciples,

"Stay here while I go over there and pray." Taking along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he plunged into an agonizing sorrow. Then he said, "This sorrow is crushing my life out. Stay here and keep vigil with me." Going a little ahead, he fell on his face, praying, "My Father, if there is any way, get me out of this. But please, not what I want. You, what do you want?"

*Going a little ahead,
he fell on his face,
praying, "My Father,
... not what I want.
You, what do you want?"*

In this time of prayer we see Jesus experience deep spiritual anguish as He knows that He is just about to be arrested and that He will die, but He also knows that this death is a spiritual death and He will be separated and forsaken by God, His Father. Jesus knows what He must do, but in complete obedience, He prays that God will find another way. Yet as we listen to this prayer, we also discover complete and utter surrender, as He says "Not what I want, but what you want ..."

It is one thing to read those words; it is another to actually pray them. We invite you to think of

areas in your life that you are having a hard time giving over to God, and to spend some time in surrendering them to Him.

Another aspect of this time in the Garden is that Jesus did not go alone. Jesus took with Him, three of His disciples. Yet even though He was physically not alone, Jesus was spiritually isolated, for those He asked to come with Him and pray with Him, fell asleep. As Christians we are called on to be intercessors, to take the time to pray for other people, to support them in their ministry through prayer, to support them in times of trial through prayer, to support them with family situations through prayer.

The words "I'll pray for you" can be easily spoken, yet let us not "fall asleep" as the disciples did, let us take the time to pray for them.

We invite you to take a card, and to list the names of people in your life that you can pray for. We invite you to take some time in prayer for them, but to take this card away with you, and to continue to pray for them.

Station Six: Jesus is arrested

Matthew 26:47-50

Judas (the one from the Twelve) showed up, and with him a gang from the high priests and religious leaders brandishing swords and clubs. The betrayer had worked out a sign with them: "The one I kiss, that's the one — seize him." He went straight to Jesus, greeted him, "How are you, Rabbi?" and kissed him. Jesus said, "Friend, why this charade?" Then they came on him — grabbed him and roughed him up.

Jesus was handed over by one of those that



*Judas ...
showed up, and
with him a gang
... brandishing
swords and clubs*

was very close to Him, one of His disciples. When we look back at this story we know that Jesus was aware this was going to happen, we know that Jesus had to be arrested in order to bring about our salvation.

But today, we invite you to spend some time trying to picture how it would have felt for Jesus to be betrayed this way, by a person He had spent such a long time with in His personal ministry.

We can look back on Jesus' arrest, with the knowledge that Judas traded in Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, and think to ourselves, how did Judas do this? Yet, each day we make decisions where we choose something over Jesus, and in that way we "trade him in."

Different things we choose each day could include a television show, magazines, a video game, food and the list goes on. For each one of us, it is different ...

We invite you to ask the Lord to show you if

there is an area in your life where He is not included or invited. We invite you to ask the Lord to show you if there is something He would like you to give away for Him ...

With these in minds, please take a chocolate coin (symbolic of the payment Judas received) and to ask Jesus to give you the courage to invite Him into each part of your life.

Station Seven: Jesus carries His cross and is crucified

Place a cross, small pieces of black cloth and thumbtacks at this station.

Matthew 27:31-46

They stripped Him and dressed him in a red toga. They plaited a crown from branches of a thorn bush and set it on His Head. They put a stick in His right hand for a scepter. Then they knelt before

... After they had finished nailing Him to the cross and were waiting for Him to die

Him in mocking reverence: "Bravo, King of the Jews!" they said. "Bravo!" Then they spit on Him and hit Him on the head with the stick. When they had had their fun, they took off the toga and put His own clothes back on Him. Then they proceeded out to the crucifixion ... Along the way they came on a man from Cyrene named Simon and made him carry Jesus' cross. Arriving at Golgotha, the place they call "Skull Hill," they offered Him a mild painkiller (a mixture of wine and myrrh), but when He tasted it He wouldn't drink it ... After they had finished nailing Him to the cross and were waiting for Him to die ... Along with Him, they also crucified two

criminals, one to His right, the other to his left ... From noon to three, the whole earth was dark. Around mid-afternoon Jesus groaned out of the depths, crying loudly, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"

Jesus died on the cross for each of our sins



... He died in order that each of us may be in relationship with God, and have all of the freedom and blessing. This relationship is a gift that is available to each of us.

We invite you to take a black piece of cloth, which symbolizes the sin in your life, and to nail it to the cross, and leave it there.

Jesus died on the cross for each of our sins. We now may live forgiven, free and

New Year's Program

As submitted to Cedar Springs of Inspiration

Old English Blessing

*God bless Thy year! Thy coming in, Thy going
out,
Thy rest, Thy travelling about,
The rough, the smooth, the bright, the drear,
God bless Thy year.*

Song: SASB 916/TB 237, *Father, Let Me
Dedicate This New Year To Thee!*

Poem: A New Year Has Begun!

*As we meet at the beginning of a New Year
yet untried,*

*We can trust God's loving guidance, as new
mercies open wide.*

*NEW CREATION He has promised, unto all a
new name gives,*

*Who accept His great salvation, and through
Him a new way lives.*

*He will grant us greater blessing, a new song
put in our hearts;*

*And our spirits will be quickened by the joy
which He imparts.*

*Oh what peace and great rejoicing shall be
ours as we obey,*

*For we know that He shall lead us into realms
of endless day!*

Song: SASB 566/TB 299

Simply Trusting Every day

Prayer Chorus

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow

Because He lives, all fear is gone

Because I know, He holds the future

And life is worth the living,

Just because He lives!



Prayer

Prepare index cards with a clock graphic with the following sayings: Distribute to several ladies to read as a time of Scriptural reflection.

- Take time to be friendly! Proverbs 18:24
- Take time to give! 2 Corinthians 9:7
- Take time to read! Revelations 1:3
- Take time to laugh! Proverbs 17:22
- Take time to pray! James 4:2

Others could have the following sayings:

- More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.
- Prayer means power — power to live above the cares and frustrations of contemporary life.
- The Bible should have first claim on our time and then other good literature should be read!

As the old saying goes, take time to think.

- Some people sit and think; some just sit!
- Right thinking means right living

- Sow a thought; reap an act; sow an act reap a habit, sow a habit reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny.
- A big soul is an unselfish soul. This speaks of time, love as well as other gifts.
- A good sense of humour is a great asset. If it is sanity you are after, there is nothing like laughter!

Game: Day Search

DDMAREYA	Day dream
KAAEWYD	Day wake
TRESEYYAD	Yesterday
YLHDIOA	Holiday
AAYYDN	Any day
HDTBIYAR	Birthday
YSAODEM	Someday
EDMYATI	Daytime
YD TOA	Today
RUOBALYDA	Labour Day

Poem: Questioning

I asked the New Year: "What am I to do the whole year through?"

The answer came: "BE TRUE"

I asked again: "And what am I to say to those who pass my way?"

"The kindest words."

Game: What's New?

A Province of Canada — *Newfoundland or New Brunswick*

A part of the Bible — *New Testament*

Prints current events — *Newspaper*

Just married — *Newly Weds*

A city in the U.S.A — *New York*

A country 'down-under' — *New Zealand*

Someone coming for the first time to an event — *Newcomer*

A person who gossips — *Newsmonger*

A large Shaggy Dog — *Newfoundland dog*

Song: SASB 919/TB 502 or 495

O Saviour Now To Thee We Raise

Poem

*I do not know, I cannot see what God's kind hands prepare for me,
Nor can my glance pierce through the haze, which covers all my future ways;
But yet I know that o'er it all rules He who notes the sparrow's fall.*

I know the Hand that hath me fed and through the years my feet has led!

I know the everlasting arm, that hath upheld and kept from harm.

I TRUST Him as my God and Guide and know that He will still provide!

So at the opening of the year, I banish care and doubt and fear

And, clasping His kind hand, essay to walk with God, from day to day.

Trusting Him who has me fed, walking with Him who has me led!

Farewell Old Year, with goodness crowned, a hand divine hath set thy bound

Welcome the New Year, which shall bring fresh blessings from my God and King

The old will leave without a tear, the new we hail without a fear!

Discussion

Following the reading of this poem ask if anyone would like to share their joys, even doubts or fears experienced during the year past and their hopes for the New Year.

Close with this blessing:

I said to the man, who stood at the gate of the year:

"Give me a light, that I may tread safely into the unknown"

And He replied: "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God!

That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way!"

Harvest Bread

Jane Shirran, Toronto, Ontario

Bread Dough — use any good bread recipe (Robin Hood Bread Mix) that will make about 4 regular loaves of bread.

Once dough has risen — punch down, turn out onto a floured board.

Grease large baking sheet and use parchment paper so bread won't stick (most times the sheaf tries to out grow the pan)

Divide the dough into 50 balls rolled into long logs.

Roll out two balls fairly thin about ½ inch in diameter and at least 20-24 inches long and lay across baking sheet horizontally — the ends will hang over the sides of the pan while you are constructing the sheaf. These will become the ties for the sheaf of wheat.

Roll out:

12 balls 18 inches in length

10 balls 15 inches in length

9 balls 12 inches in length

7 balls 10 inches in length

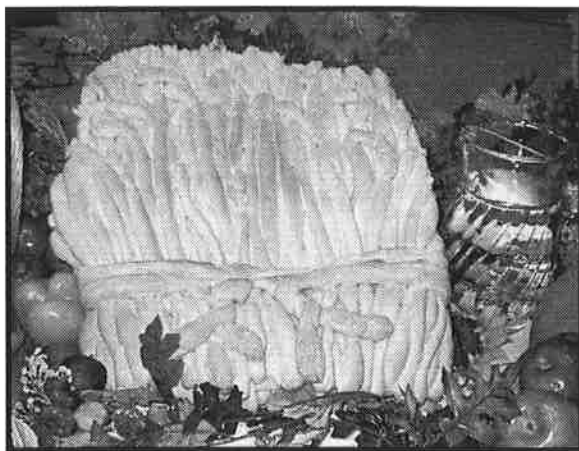
5 balls 9 inches in length

5 balls 7 inches in length

Dough should be 1 inch in diameter.

Don't worry about being exact — they will grow!

Lay the longest rolls touching each other on the baking sheet length wise over the two that are going to be the ties. Fan out the top so



that they are taller in the centre and shorter on the sides.

Allow space for the bread dough to rise and spread — stay at least 1-2 inches away from all sides of the baking sheet. If your pan is smaller — make your rolls shorter and use fewer.

For the next and subsequent layers — place the long rolls on top of and in between the rolls beneath ... keep the tops of the sheaf staggered so it looks like a bundle of wheat. Twist and bend some tops to look more natural.

Build your sheaf using three or four layers, especially if you want to use it for display.

Use kitchen scissors and make little snips at the top two inches of each roll. This is what makes it look like wheat grains.

Take the two strips that are to be the ties and bring them up over the top and front of sheaf. Twist or tie them so that they look like they are holding the sheaf of wheat together.

Cover and allow to rise for about 45 – 60 minutes until doubled in size

Pre-heat oven to 350, brush top lightly with a thin egg wash (1 egg with 3 tbsp water mixed well) Bake for about 30 – 40 minutes on middle rack — watch that it doesn't burn at the edges. Cool completely before removing from pan

If using bread for dinner — brush with melted

butter as soon as it comes from the oven.

If used for display only do not brush with butter. For display prop bread on a wire rack covered with a white cloth.

For further information email: Jane_Shirran@can.salvationarmy.org

Commitment Card

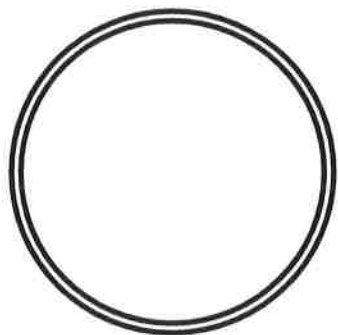
Maritime Division

Preparation of "Commitment Card".

Small mirror can be purchased from your local craft store.

Make copies on card stock, glue a small circle shaped mirror in the space provided.

Prepare a time of devotion using this small card.



***I see a reflection of the woman God created.
I know that God sees not only what I am, but what I can be.
... "men and women look at the face,
but God looks into the heart" ...
(1 Samuel 16:7, MSG)***

***Lord, I covenant with You to pursue
my full potential, to be the 'real' woman
You intended for me to be.***

Date: _____

Tears Are God's Treasure

Taken from The War Cry, Western Territory, Lloyd F. Stoops, Surprise, Arizona.

Tears were very sacred to people in Jesus' day. Each family member would have a bottle: for collecting their own tears or those of other family members. These tear bottles were usually made of thin, beautifully decorated glass with a broad base and a narrow neck. Remnants of these small tear bottles have been ... found in ancient tombs in the Middle East and in Egypt. Poor people sometimes possessed tear bottles made of simple pottery, not baked or glazed. Tear bottles were often carried around the neck on some type of chain or necklace.

Holy Possessions

These tear bottles were exceedingly sacred to the people of that day. They represented all the heartaches, sorrows and bereavements of a family, from the oldest grandparent down to the youngest child.

Wherever families would get together at times of grief, there would be a lot of weeping and each family member would go around and collect the tears that fell so freely. These tears would be saved throughout the years and preserved until the death of that person. The tear bottles would then be buried with the deceased as a sacred possession.

In Luke 7:36-50, we read of a sinful woman who entered a Pharisee's home and washed the feet of Jesus with her tears. When Jesus had entered the house, the Pharisee had done none of the usual customs commonly



*She opened the bottle and poured
out the tears on Jesus' feet
and then dried them with her hair*

extended to guests. He had not provided water for the washing of feet; he had not given a kiss to the guest; nor had he anointed his head with oil.

Anointing Jesus

The sinful woman had brought along her bottle of tears, that sacred bottle containing her tears and the tears of her family members. Instead of keeping this bottle for her own death, she opened the bottle and poured out the tears on

Jesus' feet and then dried them with her hair. She then poured out perfume and anointed His feet. When the disciples and those gathered with Jesus questioned Him as to why He would allow such a sinful woman to do this to Him, He promptly rebuked the Pharisee for his lack of hospitality: "You provided no water for my feet, she has washed my feet with her tears, You did not give me a kiss when I entered your house; she has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head; she has anointed my feet with perfume."

This sinful woman had sacrificed her bottle of tears and had used it on the body of Jesus in anticipation of, and preparation for, His coming death and burial.

God's Tear Bottle

Now, the words of Psalm 56:8 take on new meaning. When David talked of God collecting our tears in His bottle and recording them in His book, he was saying that God has a book and a bottle for the tears of His people. People may shed tears of sorrow for their sins, or tears of grief for their afflictions, but God collects them all. He observes with compassion and tender concern those things which trouble His people. He is afflicted by that which afflicts us. Just as the blood of His saints (Psalms 72:14) and the death of His saints (Psalms 116:15) are precious in His sight, so are the tears of His people, and none of them shall fall to the ground unnoticed. Just as the hairs of our heads are numbered (Matthew 10:30),

so are our tears. He records them so that He can store them among His keepsakes. He will not, and cannot, forget the sorrows of His people. The tears of sorrowful, persecuted and afflicted people are bottled up and recorded and stored among God's treasure.



***He will wipe every
tear from their eyes.
There will be no more
... crying or pain ...
Revelation 21:4***

When our faith is weak and we are tempted and tried, we can remember that God knows all about each heartache and sees each tear that falls. Just as He sees every sparrow that falls to the ground (Matthew 10:29), so He sees and takes note of each tear that we shed.

No More Crying

When God's people die, their tears will be buried with them and they will be no more. God has promised a home in heaven for those who

follow Him, where there are no more tears. Revelation 21:4 says: "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

The promise of no more tears is only true for God's people, for the Scriptures record that those who have not followed the Lord will be sent to a place where there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 8:12). In that place there will be no loving God to collect the tears, but only Satan who cares not that those who followed him are in torment and punishment. May we all be prepared for the eternal home where there are no more tears.

Networking

Major Ron Cochrane, Australia Southern Territory

There was a period in my life when I felt I didn't have the time, energy, for commitment to make networking succeed. Yet I also realized that I couldn't do everything; anything I wanted to do was limited to my own ability, imagination and time. I was actually stifling what could be achieved by not involving other groups or individuals. I needed them to help to multiply the results of my own efforts.

So, the life lessons I have learnt are the need for i) patience, ii) compromise and iii) perseverance:

I) Leaders, while pursuing their responsibility of dreaming dreams and seeing visions, need to exercise patience. Leaders need others to come with them on this journey from vision to reality, via the implementation of values and behaviors etc., but are frustrated if others don't share their enthusiasm.

Don't despair — casting vision takes time. Bring others with you slowly, don't expect a change of heart overnight. The other person's journey is just beginning, their vision may still be blurred.

II) It takes compromise to realize a dream, as there is more than one way to reach your goals. Changing behaviours, and perspectives, is crucial.

Compromise is often the hardest lesson to learn. I have come across people who say 'unless you do it my way I am not going to be part of this'. Yet teams are stronger and richer if their members see the strength in diversity,



**Networking ... patience,
compromise and perseverance**

III) Perseverance implies persistence, never giving up no matter what the obstacle.

Networks — and the people in them — are worth the time to develop. Persistence is necessary to create a network or to be included in one.

Personal politics can come into play, yet a network is bigger than the people in it, because of the belief in what it can be. Collectively you can accomplish more for the kingdom and society inside a network than you can outside of one.

Planning for Women's Ministries

Kathie Sharp, Brampton Ontario

This monthly format allows each lady to choose events of interest.

First week — Women of Grace. This dessert and coffee evening includes devotions and prayer requests using an invited speaker of interest with a soloist from a church in the area. Set tables using linen tablecloths, candles and china dishes. Concentrate on making the ladies feel comfortable and important when they come. This event is geared toward outreach.

Second week and fourth week — Scrapbooking. Helping women create family memories has proven to be an enjoyable experience for those who choose to use their creative talents in preserving memories. A great opportunity to invite ladies from the community to enjoy fellowship. Bring punches, decorative scissors, and cutting systems. What do we achieve? Some evenings we may only get one page done, but the fellowship and group participation is wonderful. Getting to know each other through the sharing of the photos is delightful.

Third week — Bible Study. Chose a study (i.e. "God's Portrait of a Beautiful Woman"). The women who attend are not necessarily involved in the other evenings. Studying God's word is key to spiritual maturity.

Forth week — Outreach

Building bridges with Family Services is a great way to reach out to women in the community. Sponsor a SPA DAY! Distribute written invitations to 20 women clients from Family Services. Provide a program for the children so the Mom's enjoy their day without worrying

about their little ones. Have ladies arrive at 12:30 p.m. for registration.

Moms were given an appointment time to have their hair washed, cut and styled, make-up applied, foot massages and manicure. Have a craft area prepared should the ladies choose to participate and set up a movie room. The



ladies would enjoy an uninterrupted movie. Conclude the event by serving a turkey dinner with all the trimmings. If money isn't an issue prepare a bag of personal pampering items. (Bath salts, body spray, nail polish, lipstick, etc.) Local stores in your area may be willing to donate small beauty items for this endeavor.

All the services for the pampering were donated by the women of the church.

Whatever

Simone Robertson, Australia Southern Territory

**Whatever will be,
will be, the future's
not ours to see,
que sera, sera.**

Whatever Jesus!

Whatever — the question

Jesus is the Answer.
John 14:6

Whatever — the Problem

Jesus is the Solution.
Matthew 11:28-29

Whatever — the Hurt

Jesus is the Healer.
Luke 4:18

Whatever — the Bondage

Jesus is the Liberator.
John 8:32

Whatever — the Need

Jesus is the Supplier. Matthew 7:7-8

Whatever — the Sin

Jesus is the Saviour. Psalm 103:2-3

The idea expressed in the words of this song by Doris Day sound carefree, not a problem in the world. This type of lifestyle would be unrealistic, holding no accountability to oneself, to others or to God.

Take a journey with me and see how these words may be able to be applied to our lives in such a way that they express depth and meaning to life.



"Whatever will be"

God is our Creator, Preserver and Governor of all things and in believing this, we acknowledge that life doesn't just simply happen or coast along aimlessly.

- "In the beginning God created" (Genesis 1:1)
- "God saw that all he had made and it was very good ." (Genesis 1:27)

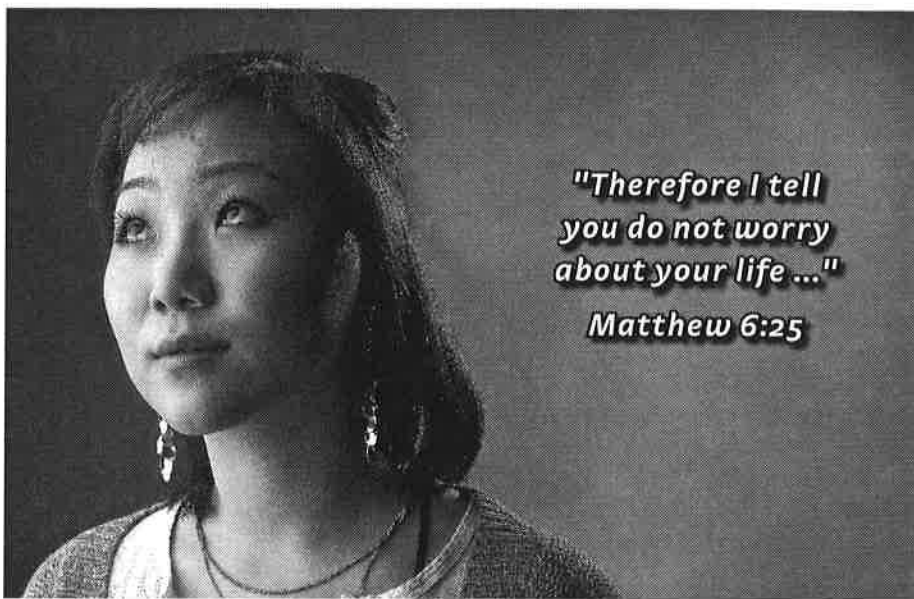
God was indeed pleased with His creation. This world is not an act of chance, it is a design by God. And as we are part of this world, it also includes us. We are not here by chance but by design.

"There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven." (Ecclesiastes 3:1) This verse reminds us that God did not created hap-hazard lifestyle but rather an ordered, rhythmic, purposeful existence.

"Whatever will be" can lead us to think, "Oh well, why bother, there s nothing I can do about it." In reality, there are some things that are out of our control and will happen regardless. Yet other things happen because of the decisions and choices that we have made.

if we knew what was going to happen to us, we would either live in fear or go to the other extreme and live a careless and meaningless existence.

Jesus encourages us by urging us not to worry, "Therefore I tell you do not worry about your life ..." (Matthew 6:25) Our life is known to God and with this knowledge he wants to care and protect us. Whatever our circumstances, Jesus said "I am the way and the truth and the life" (John 14:6) With this promise from Jesus,



"The Future's Not Ours To See"

This line in the song is something that you and I can take hold of. There are many things in our world today that try to encourage us to "tell the future", both in helpful ways like finding out the next days weather forecast and in the unhealthy and even harmful ways like horoscopes, séances, tarot cards and palm readings.

Simply, the future is not ours to see, this belongs only to God. How wise He is. Imagine

there is no need to worry or become anxious, for our eternal well being is settled if we have intentionally given our life to Him.

So remember God is our leader we are urged to follow, and when we do He looks out for us. Whatever will be, our life has meaning. The future's not ours to see God knows our tomorrows, we don't need to load ourselves up with unnecessary concerns.

"WHATEVER JESUS!"

Grace For The Morning's

June Newbury, Toronto Ontario

The only time I remember our home being quiet growing up was Sunday afternoon or following Sunday school when the TV was not on, or at night when we were all sleeping. Today we don't know what it is to enjoy silence and solitude because for many, life resembles a treadmill. I watch the lady beside me on the treadmill at my local gym building up speed as she walks faster and faster and realize — life is very much like that.

We begin our days slowly and build up to a good workout pace by mid morning. We move very quickly from one task to another and when our work day is completed outside the home, we move to family responsibilities which for many parents, takes them late into evening. Our homes are rarely quiet. Our lives are so action packed it's difficult to find the time for solitude.

The story is told of a learned professor who went to visit an old monk who was famous for his wisdom. The monk graciously welcomed him into his temple and offered him a seat on a cushion. No sooner had the professor sat down then he launched into a long wordy account of his own accomplishments, his own knowledge, his own theories and opinions. The monk listened quietly for awhile and then asked politely, "Would you like some tea?"

The professor nodded, smiled and kept right

on talking. The monk handed him a teacup and began pouring tea from a large pot. The tea rose to the brim of the cup, but the monk kept right on pouring while the professor kept right on talking. Finally the professor noticed what was happening, leaped to his feet and



demanded, "What are you doing? Can't you see that the cup is overflowing?" To which the monk replied, "This cup is like your mind. It can't take in anything new because it's already full".

Our minds are often so cluttered we are unable to embrace the presence of the Lord without going on and on about life. We struggle to spend time in solitude. The following devotions on the theme of solitude have been created using Spiritual disciplines as found in the book "Sacred Rhythms" by Ruth Haley Barton. Set aside some time each day to listen to God's voice of Grace speak into your life. Allow His presence to unfold new insights of His grace in your life.

DAY 1

A Place of Solitude

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark,
Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place,
where he prayed. (Mark 1:35 NIV)

Solitude was a priority for Jesus. In fact, there are approximately 17 references in the Gospels to Jesus and His prayer life. Jesus exemplified how important communication with the Father really is.

- He prayed often, He prayed early in the morning, late at night, all through the night.
- He prayed before critical events in His life.
- He prayed as He ministered to others.
- He prayed before His miracles.
- He prayed for others.

Luke 22:39 in the New American Standard Bible reads ***"And He (meaning Jesus) came out and proceeded as was His custom to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him."***

The words of Jesus "As was His custom" are captivating. Scripture tells us He withdrew to a quiet place. I believe it was more than a withdrawing ... just getting away from it all, but rather it was a place where Jesus experienced inner quietness and assurance in the Father's presence.

I have profoundly discovered that my greatest need is connecting with God in solitude because out of that experience I am able to open my heart, mind and soul to experience God in a new way. It is in solitude that we are able to focus on Christ which allows us to contemplate the deep things of God with new understanding.

Quietness of heart and soul before the Lord



enables us to hear the very heartbeat of God beating along with our own. God isn't as concerned about the pace of the heartbeat as long as we are beating together. In solitude, there is a deeper awareness of God's presence and our personal walk with God is strengthened.

A quote by Henry Nouwen also understood this principle. ***"Solitude is not simply a withdrawal from the world in order to be renewed and refreshed. It is also finding a new center of inner quietness and certitude from which we act in the midst of a busy and demanding world."***

Pray

Be still for the presence of the Lord the Holy one is here.

Come bow before Him now in reverence and fear.

In Him no fear is found, we stand on holy ground.

Be still for the presence of the Lord the holy one is here.

A Place of Desire

“... Earth has nothing I desire besides you ...” “He goes on to say, my flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.” (Psalm 73:25b-26, *NIV*)

Most of us are not very good at sitting at Jesus feet. But as we grow deeper in our spiritual walk, we come to realize a deeper longing that can only be filled by God ... We need a place to encounter God that is transparent, honest and raw. This will only happen when we desire to have more of God and less of ourselves.

Solitude is a place that we set a part for God alone ... a place that is separated from the noise, busyness, and stimulation that comes in the constant company of others. It is a private place that is reserved between God and myself ... A space for listening beyond words, because we only want to hear the voice of God speaking into our lives. Solitude becomes a place of intimacy that fills my desire for God.

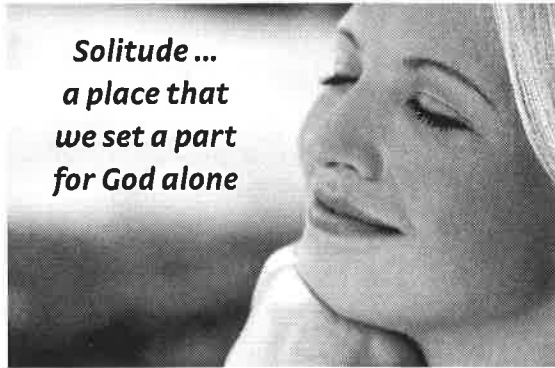
The story is told of a simple laborer named Jimmy. Each day, when returning from work, Jimmy would stop at his neighborhood church and sit quietly in a back pew for several minutes. The parish priest noticed Jimmy's regular visits and wondered what he was doing there. One day, he asked. Jimmy replied, nothing much Father. I just say "Jesus, it's Jimmy and he says, Jimmy, its Jesus, and we're happy spending some time together."

Jimmy knew something that we often forget. He knew that prayer was a response to this

invitation to relationship with God — accepting that invitation is also a reflection of our belief and obedience as Christian people.

Jimmy also seemed to know something about solitude. He knew it didn't depend on words. Often when we love someone words become less and less necessary in order to remain present with the other. Intimacy demands that talk be balanced by attentive openness in silence, and only as this happens, do we begin to know the deeper communion of shared presence that no longer depends on words.

**Solitude ...
a place that
we set a part
for God alone**



Pray

*As the deer pants for the water, so my soul
longeth after Thee.*

*You alone are my heart's desire, and I long to
worship Thee.*

*You alone are my strength, my shield; To You
alone may my spirit yield.*

*You alone are my heart's desire, and I long to
worship Thee.*

A Place to be Transparent

"Surely you desire truth in the inner parts.
You teach me wisdom in the inmost place". (Psalm 51:6, *NIV*)

"You desire truth in the innermost being".
(Psalm 51:6, *American Standard Version*)

It is in quietness we recognize our longing to find ourselves, to know what is real within us. In moments of quietness our soul is found and we understand that it is the very centre of our being that is known only by God.

We don't find it very safe for our souls to come out because our internal experience involves continual critique and judgment, and the tender soul does not want to risk it.

the disappointments and the frustrations of daily life. It's in acknowledging the pain of broken relationships, the disappointments of life, the daily frustrations of responsibility before the Lord that we are able to lay these burdens at the feet of Jesus with confidence. His heart is open and willing to restore, refresh and heal the brokenness. Solitude allows for our self-discovery so that our souls can find refreshment and that inner quietness and certitude.



There are few places where the soul is truly safe, where the knowing, the questions, the longings of the soul are welcomed, received and listened to rather than evaluated, judged or beaten out of us.

Our Father welcomes the true self with open arms. Our personal realities — the pain of relationships, the hurts of the past,

God's unfolding grace of mercy and comfort speaks words of hope into the depth of those hurts, pain, and disappointments. Isaiah 40: 31 reminds us that ... those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength, they will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint".

God's grace waits to nourish the soul with a deep love that is unconditional bringing us to a place of safety within the heart of God.

Pray

Spirit of the living God fall afresh on me.

Spirit of the living God fall afresh on me.

Break me, melt me, mold me, fill me.

Spirit of the living God fall afresh on me.

A Place to Listen

And she had a sister named Mary, who seated herself at the Lord's feet and was listening to His teaching.

(Luke 10:39, *Amplified version*)

"My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry ...

(James 1:19, *NIV*)

In our western culture the business of life makes it difficult to create a space where we can pay attention to the deeper dynamics of the soul in God's presence. With cell phones and e-mails close to our finger tips we are at the mercy of all manner of intrusion. We rarely unplug and listen.



While driving through my neighborhood one spectacular spring day I noticed three people out walking — one with a child, one walking a dog and one alone. The three had one thing in common: they were all talking on their cell phones! It dawned on me that just a few short years ago, this would have been completely impossible: a walk outdoors would be at least one time when we could count on unplugging and being fully present in the moment.

No wonder we feel disconnected from God: we are rarely able to give him our full attention in solitude and silence. No wonder our human relationships can be so unsatisfying and they get reduced to snippets of interrupted, disembodied phone conversation.

What feels like convenience is actually robbing us of those things we value most. We are left with bits and pieces of everything rather than experiencing the full substance of anything. The more we fill our lives with the convenience of technology, the emptier we

become in the places of our deepest longing. I long to be connected with my authentic self, even though it means being inaccessible, at times to others. I long to be one who waits and listens deeply for the still, small voice of God, even if it means I must disconnect myself from technology in order to become quiet enough to hear.

Solitude is an opportunity to interrupt this cycle by turning off the noise and stimulation of our lives so that we can hear our loneliness and our longing calling us deeper into the only relationship that can satisfy our craving. Pencil in your daily calendar a set time each day to unplug.

Pray

Open my eyes Lord I want to see Jesus.

To reach out and touch Him and say that I love Him.

Open my ears Lord and help me to listen.

Open my eyes Lord I want to see Jesus.

A Place of Awareness

“Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place”. (Psalm 51:6, NIV)

I love the book of Psalms because it is so honest. There were lofty times where they expressed their love for God and thanked him for their blessings. However, there were times that they called it like they saw it. The verse of Scripture for today challenges us to be honest before the Lord. David was taught that honesty before the Lord was vital yet Psalm 51 records that he acted contrary to what God desired — truth in the inmost place.

David found himself confessing before the Lord his sin and in so doing experiences restoration of the heart.

Jesus was honest with his Father in the garden of Gethesamene when He prayed, ***“My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will”***.

Matthew 26:39 NIV.

Somewhere along the way we have lost sight of honest communication with God. We seem to be afraid that if we really let God know how we feel, what we think or where we hurt, He will somehow be surprised, disappointed, or let down. But exactly the opposite is true. God desires that we approach Him with a truthful heart.

God is one who truly knows us. Psalm 139

reminds us that God is familiar with us, and He is the one holding a great amount of concern for us. He knows the words that are being formed before we speak them. He knows our very thoughts, our deepest desires, calms our fears and our insecurities.

He knows where we constantly abide, for God is one who never sleeps nor slumbers. We cannot hide from God. We cannot run

away from His never-ending sight. Since God does know all things, there is no possibility of anyone hiding anything from Him. The changes that must come in an individual life must be directed toward God, toward himself and toward his sin.

Confession is taking God's side against us, throwing away all excuses and rationalizations and facing the truth about ourselves as God see's it. When we

do this in the light of His Word, we allow Him to search our hearts and to know us for who we really are.

Pray

*Search me O God and know my heart today.
Try me O Savior, know my thoughts I pray.
See if there be is some wicked way in me.
Cleanse me from every sin and set me free.*



A Place of Rest

Be at rest once more, O my soul,
for the LORD has been good to you (Psalm 116:7, NIV).

Jesus knows how quickly our passions can wear us out. There are times when our expectations, or the shoulds and oughts of being a Christian burden us with guilt when we can't keep up. We see clearly from Scripture that Jesus taught his disciples healthy rhythms of solitude that moved them into community and ministry.

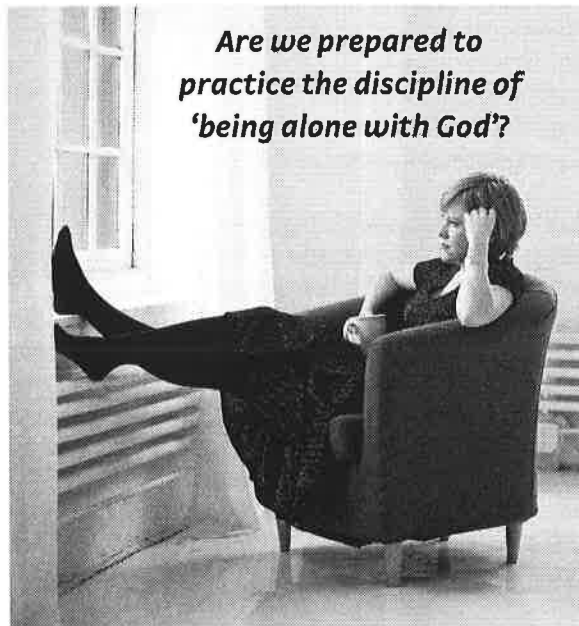
Learning to REST, means that we allow God to be with us in these places as we wait on Him to do what is needed. One of the fundamental purposes of solitude is to give us a way of entering into stillness so that God can come in and do what only God can do.

Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him (Psalm 62:5 NIV).

The question is, are we willing to take the time it requires to wait before the Lord? Are we prepared to practice the discipline of *'being alone with God'* for the purpose of resting in Him deeply?

My prayer life has been transformed in the past few years as I have focused on contemplative prayer. Being an extrovert by nature, talking has never been a problem. But I have come to realize that contemplative prayer is part of the call for all Christians to abide in God, to rest in Him.

I read recently that; 'the essence of prayer is not so much what we do, as what God does in us.' We are given a divine invitation to relationship with God so He can do immeasurably more than we imagined. Spend some time seeking REST in the presence of



Are we prepared to practice the discipline of 'being alone with God'?

God and experience grace moments of love, joy and peace which can transform your life and relationships with Him.

Pray

Find rest my soul in Christ alone. Know His power in quietness and trust. When the oceans rise and thunders roar I will soar with you above the storm. Father you are king over the flood. I will be still and know you are God.

A Place of Grace

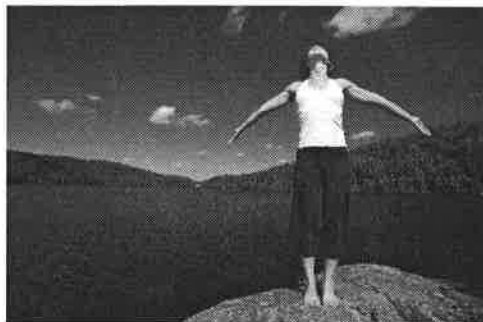
In the Messiah, in Christ, God leads us from place to place in one perpetual victory parade. Through us, he brings knowledge of Christ. Everywhere we go, people breathe in the exquisite fragrance. Because of Christ, we give off a sweet scent rising to God, which is recognized by those on the way of salvation—an aroma redolent with life (2 Corinthians 2:14-16, *The Message*).

Over the past seven days, as we have encountered places where God has revealed himself, helping us to discover that He is the One who led us to a deeper place of grace. 2 Corinthians 2:14 states that ***"God leads us from place to place in one perpetual victory parade."***

As we journey from place to place we too can celebrate victory because we have heard the voice of God. True victory is experienced as we live a life of grace. A life of grace begins with moments of grace, which become hours of grace, days of grace, months of grace and hopefully, years of grace. This victory is found when we allow grace moments to become defining moments of our lives ... changing who we are and impacting the lives of those around us.

Verse 15 of 2 Corinthians reminds us that grace transform us, so that we can be a transforming influence for others. ***"Through us, he brings knowledge of Christ. Everywhere we go, people breathe in the exquisite fragrance."*** This fragrance results from knowing Jesus Christ personally. Our personal relationship with Christ and the way we follow Him, acts as a fragrance that permeates the places in which we walk.

As His grace unfolds in our lives, we begin



to understand authentic Christ-like living. Authentic Christianity is always emitting the fragrance of Christ. Grace-filled lives, are like a lovely perfume. The gospel of grace bearing it's fruit in our lives is sweet fragrance to God.

Prayer

Spend some time in quietness before the Lord using the following poem, then offer a prayer of thanksgiving for His presence in your life.

Poem: Let your God love you *Edwina Gately*
Be silent, be still, alone, Empty before your God.

*Say nothing, ask nothing, be silent, be still.
 Let your God look upon you that is all.
 God knows, God understands, God loves
 you with an enormous love,
 And only wants to look upon you with that love.*

Quiet, Still, Be — Let your God love you.

Rivers of Grace Through Surrender

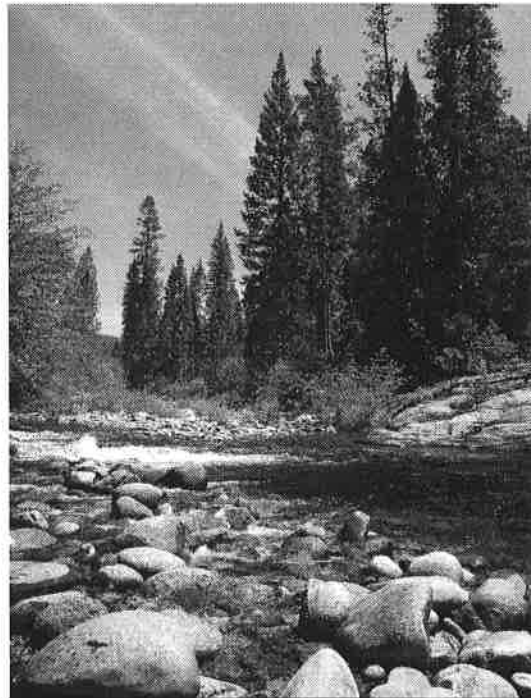
Nancy Turley, Bracebridge, Ontario

How many here today would be able to tell me that you are exactly in the centre of God's will and that you are right where God wants you to be in your spiritual growth? If we were really honest with ourselves, we'd all have to admit that there is plenty of room for improvement. I want to share today some thoughts on becoming more of what God wants each of us to be.

God's grace unfolds in our lives as we surrender to Christ. It's about leaving the shore of stagnant, disappointed Christianity and wading out into the deep spiritual waters of the surrendered life. It's about jumping into the river of Grace. I believe that many of us have become far too cautious about giving our all to Jesus Christ. We are too cautious about taking our stand for Christ; too cautious about speaking up for our faith.

On hot summer days, we would take our kids to the beach and I often found myself standing on the beach calling out "OK, that's far enough ... don't go out too far!" Often we approach our faith the same way. We get involved but cautiously say "that's far enough ... don't get too involved ... I can't get too committed..." Or we say to others, "be practical". Many of us are afraid of getting in over our heads.

Ezekiel 47 is a wonderful passage of Scripture that challenges us to wade out deeper in our



*"... he who believes in Me,
from his innermost being
shall flow rivers of living water"*

John 7:38, 39

faith. Ezekiel saw a River. It was the river of God. It was God's grace flowing. John 7:38, 39 states that *"he who believes in Me, from his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water"*. In Him is living water which flows from within us. But, the question we must answer is, what flows out of our lives? On our own, it is anger, frustration, jealousy, defensiveness. Rivers of grace will flow only when we are surrendered to Christ.

When we speak of the river of God ... The river of grace ... we're not referring to a place, a thing or an experience. We are referring to the very heart of God! The river and other life-giving water in the Scriptures represent the life that flows out from God.

To be in the river is to be in God

To drink from the river is to drink from God

To release the river is to release God

Revelation 22:1 tells us that *"the river flows from the throne of God and of the lamb."* The throne of God begins at the Cross. It all begins at the cross. We are told in Ezekiel 47:1 that the river flows from the altar ... Both are places where sacrifice was made.

It's important that we recognize the power or the force of this river.

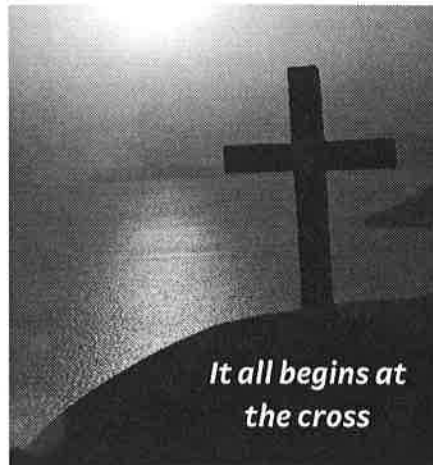
1. It Had No Feeder Streams

There was no need for anything to flow into this river to give it force, size or power. When it left the throne it possessed all that it needed. The Mississippi river is less than 3 feet wide where it begins, but after all the feeder streams flow into it, it becomes a mighty river. God's river needs no feeder streams ... It flows from the cross and everything we need to face the challenges of this life and to be the people God calls us to be begins at the cross.

2. It Could Heal (Ezekiel 47 v8)

This river made the sea water pure when it flowed into it. (If we were to drink sea water we would die!) The use of the word "FRESH" = HEALED. The reference to the "ARRABAH" was an area of land known as dry land, desert or wilderness. Perhaps this describes the lifeless condition in the world ... or your own

heart. This river of God has the power to heal broken hearts ... heal broken dreams ... heal broken relationships. Do you dare bring that which is broken in your life to this river for healing today? Perhaps the question is *DO YOU WANT TO BE HEALED?*



3. It Could Revive (v9)

Everything that the river touched was transformed with its life giving power. Verse 9 says this twice. When the Spirit of God moves into a life, there will be revival. We cannot stay the same. When God moves in, things change! That is the nature of God. He can take that which is dead and make it live. This is true in our lives, in our churches, in our relationships! Are you willing? It is important that we remember that God may not transform our circumstances, but He will transform our approach, our attitudes, and our ability to live abundantly in the midst of our circumstance.

4. It Could Bring Forth Fruit And Freshness (v12)

Every where the great river flowed, fruit sprang up along side. So it is when the Holy Spirit is present within our lives. When He moves in us, His presence will be manifested by fruit and freshness in our lives. That's what

John 7:38-39 was talking about. A harvest is waiting but it will only happen if we as God's people allow His Spirit to work and flow through us. This is really a process. Fruit doesn't spring up instantly. In order for us to have the river flowing from us, one drink at the fountain is not enough. We must drink continuously.

The Spirit of God wants to provide us with the power we need to be fully and wholly His. We can be 100% saved but walk in 30% power and efficiency. After speaking on this subject, D. L. MOODY was asked why he needed to be filled and refilled with the Spirit. "That's very simple," said Mr. Moody, "I leak". All of us do.

Keep in mind that Ezekiel states that He saw the river. Sadly, there are many who see the River of Grace ... many who hear the Gospel and see what the Spirit is doing in the lives of others, but that's as far as they get. Many see the river flowing by, but they never get wet. There are those who come to the brink of surrender and then pull back. For this river to do you any good, you have to get in.

As the man in Ezekiel's vision measured the river, he carried Ezekiel along with him. As a result, the prophet was led into deep, flowing waters ... Deep flowing rivers of grace

Each depth mentioned is indicative of spiritual growth and maturity.

Ankle Deep (v3)

This represents the initial step of faith that

saves souls. It is truly great to be saved, but salvation isn't the end. Yet, ANKLE deep is where many remain in their faith. They get saved, but they never go one step further with God. They are in the water but they are still standing firmly on the earth.

Those who get saved and refuse to grow in the Lord are waders. They spend all their time in the shallow end of the pool afraid to wade out deeper. They miss the blessings of the deeper life. These people are in total absolute control of their own lives — they have not surrendered their lives to His will for them.

They are in the water but they are still standing firmly on the earth



Knee Deep (v4a)

KNEE deep speaks of prayer. This represents a life that is learning dependence upon the Lord. This is the person who prays and is trying to live their life in faith before the Lord. *(We must remember that no one will ever stand taller than she does on her knees.)* Those at this depth know something of the power of the river. At this depth we can feel the power as it rushes past, but aren't really affected by

it. We are still standing on our own two feet. We are still in control of our lives and haven't surrendered completely to the Lord — we aren't allowing the river (the Holy Spirit) to do the supporting.

feet aren't touching bottom. The river takes Him where it wills. He has no power over it's destination. He is at the mercy of the river (Verse 5). It doesn't get any deeper than this. Once you're over your head, you are not in

control. This represents the surrendered life — one under control of the Holy Spirit.



*They are often picked up
by the river and moved
... but they are still close
enough ... to stand
if they need to*

Keep in mind that the river will always travel to the ocean ... never back to where it started. The only way you go backwards is to actually get out on your own.

When you are this deep you have gone beyond your own

Loins Deep (v4b)

The loins (waist) often refer to strength. This speaks of spiritual power in our lives. When one has waded out waist deep into the river, more of the river and less of the person is seen. (John 3:30 "He must increase and I must decrease".) At this depth, we can feel the power of the river, and others can see its effect on us. When this level of maturity is reached, you can't hide its effects in your life! Those who have reached this level of spiritual maturity have lost some control over themselves. They are often picked up by the river and moved, a few feet at a time by its power, but they are still close enough to the shore to be able to stand if they need to. They are still in control. This is still not as deep as we can go.

In Over Your Head (v5)

Ezekiel then reaches a place where the river is in control. He's in over his head — his

ability. Ezekiel was at the total mercy of the river. Far too many like the safety of the shore and the shallow water. The person who has reached this level of spiritual maturity has moved beyond himself and has placed his/her self under that control and command of God.

This is what true surrender and spiritual maturity is about ... we have come to the end of ourselves and realize God is completely in control. We have surrendered to the River!

At this depth, we also cease to support ourselves.

Ezekiel was no longer wading, he was just resting. He wasn't in charge; he gave himself over to the power of the river. This is where God wants us all to be ... resting in Him and allowing Him to support us and carry us through life. Just as God doesn't take you to the desert to stay there, God doesn't allow us to stay put in our faith when we are

in the river of God. He will continuously carry us because rivers move and flow.

At this depth, you have given yourself up to the will of the river. This is the place where we surrender our will to the river, to the point where the will of the "river" becomes our will. Ezekiel was going to go where the river took him. This is how the Lord wants us to be. He want us to loose sight of ourselves, our goals, our ambitions, our dreams and He wants us to be totally, 100% surrendered to Him and His will for our lives ... a place where our goals are His goals ... our ambitions are His ambitions; our dreams are His dreams....

SURRENDER is both the essence and the greatest difficulty of the Christian life. The best description of it is given by Jesus in Luke 9:23. *"If any one would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."*

There was a change of one simple word in church life in the mid-1960's. It was a change from the word SURRENDER to the word COMMIT.

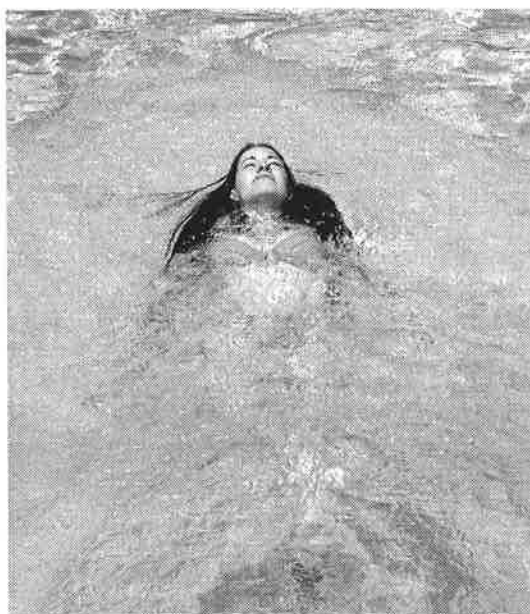
Language began to centre around committing your lives to Jesus, committing your giving to Jesus, committing your time, your service. SOUNDS OK? YES ... BUT NO!

It is a completely different concept to surrender your life, to surrender your giving, surrender your time and service. HE OWNS IT and it is HIS TO CONTROL.

Many people in churches have committed a

Sunday morning to God, committed themselves to study the Bible or to pray from time to time, committed to serve somewhere in the life of the church but JESUS IS LOOKING FOR THOSE WHO ARE SURRENDERED TO HIS WILL.

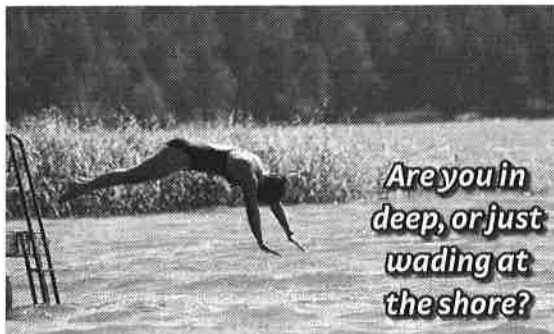
I believe that God wants His people to get to a place where they are as deep in Him as they



This is where God wants us all to be ... resting in Him and allowing Him to support us

can get. It's only when we throw ourselves at the mercy of this river and allow the Spirit of God to have the absolute right of way in our lives that we can experience true and genuine revival and power in our lives. Sometimes this can be scary, but in Isaiah 43 verses 3-4 it states *"He brought me through the waters"*. Sometimes people are afraid that if you fully sell out to Him you will drown. BUT God will

never let you down. There are many who have gone before us who have experienced some very deep waters and God has always proved faithful in bringing them through. What a promise!!!



The other thought here is **that the deeper you go, the harder it is to jump out.** When you are in the kiddie pool, you can jump in and out whenever you feel like it. Even when you're knee deep or loin deep, it's just a short hike back to the safety of the bank. However, once you are over your head, when you have placed yourself at the mercy of the river, it's a

whole lot harder to get back out again.

That's why an ever deepening spiritual life is a hedge of protection against failure in Christ. The power of God will be evident in the way we live and we will have an impact on those around us. The in-pouring to us precedes the out-pouring through us. That is how God's grace unfolds in our lives

Where are you today?

Are you in deep, or just wading at the shore?

Are you in the will of the river or are you able to jump out at any time?

Perhaps you still find yourself in the desert ... has he allured you here so that He might speak tenderly to your heart?

This river of grace is as deep, as wide, as strong and as high as is His grace and His love.

An Evening of Grace

June Newbury, Toronto, Ontario

Plan an outreach evening which involves viewing the movie "Amazing Grace" which tells the story of William Wilberforce who worked passionately to abolish slavery in Britain. We sing the words written by John Newton "Amazing Grace" with an understanding that God's grace has a profound effect on our lives. God's grace unfolds to us in salvation, setting us free from the bondage of sin. God's grace unfolds to us when life is tough and we learn to trust Him deeply. Grace unfolds in our lives through the gift of each other.

Check out www.amazinggracemovie.com to

order "Be a World-changing Church Promotional Kit". This kit is designed for small groups to learn what William Wilberforce and John Newton did to impact their world in a powerful way. The Church kit includes: *Amazing Grace DVD* *World-Changers: Live to Serve Book* (5 small Group Discussion Guide Included) *Once Blind: The Life of John Newton Book*

An evening such as this can lead into weeks of discussion with your ladies. The lessons learned can challenge the ladies to impact their community in a powerful way. Serve popcorn, treats and a beverage.

God's Unfolding Grace

Jane Shirran, Toronto, Ontario

Introduction

When you think of the word "grace" — what are you really thinking about? *(Short discussion on personal concepts of grace)*

"What's so unique about Christianity."
— "Oh, that's easy," answered C.S. Lewis.
"It's grace."

Some "Grace" Thoughts

"Grace is something that costs the one who receives it nothing, but costs the one who gives it everything."

"Grace is 'the unmerited operation of God in the heart of man, effected through the agency of the Holy Spirit'."

"The grace of God is the glue that holds man's broken life together."

"Grace is God's extensive healing for sin's wounds, grace is God's best lavished on us, grace is God's blessings showered on us, grace is God's favour poured all over our lives!"

"The unmerited love and favour of God acting on our behalf now and forever."

What is the meaning of Grace?

Word Study

The word "grace" is not always used in the same sense in Scripture. In the Old Testament we have the Hebrew word 'chen'. The noun may denote *gracefulness* or *beauty*, (Proverbs. 22:11; 31:30), but most often means *favour* or *good-will*. The Old Testament repeatedly speaks of finding favour in the eyes of God or of man. The favour so found carries with it the bestowal of favours or blessings.

Grace may often embrace other concepts, such as forgiveness, salvation, regeneration, repentance and the love of God.

Another word for "grace," in the Old Testament is '*Hesed*' — it is translated in the Authorised Version as "mercy" 149 times, "kindness" 38 times, "loving kindness" 30 times and "goodness" 12 times. '*Hesed*' is a word which can be used in two ways and can apply to both God and to humanity. When referring to God, '*Hesed*' can be translated as "grace". When it refers to humanity it is translated as "steadfast love" which is extended to another person or to God. It is also found in covenant terms. Another "grace word" is '*Hen*', is used when

referring to the action of a superior, either human or divine, toward an inferior. 'Hen' is not a two-way word, for no person can do God a favour.

The New Testament word translated "grace" — is the Greek word 'charis', from *chairein*, "to rejoice," denoting a pleasant external appearance, or "loveliness," "agreeableness," "acceptableness." A more prominent meaning of the word, is *favour* or *good-will*,



It may denote the kindness or benevolence of our God. In most of the passages the word 'charis' signifies the unmerited operation of God in the heart of man, affected through the agency of the Holy Spirit. While we sometimes speak of grace as an inherent quality, it is in reality the active communication of divine blessings by the in-working of the Holy Spirit, out of the fullness of Him who is "full of grace and truth,"

The word "grace" is found 169 times in Scripture. Paul uses it 50. And 22 of those 50 are found in the book of Romans. It is as though everything about the gospel, Jesus' saving action on the cross, even the Christian life itself, is for Paul — "grace".

God's Grace Unfolding In Scripture

Old Testament

a. The story of Creation: Genesis

Before creation, there was only God. Before time, outside of time, when nothing else existed, there was God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—complete and perfect in unity and relationship.

Then God spoke, and creation came into being out of nothing.

God did not need creation. God was not lonely. God did not require an audience to admire Him. God created for one reason and one reason only: out of love.

He created mankind in His image, and breathed into us the breath of life ... out of love.

When we rebelled, He did not abandon creation or destroy it. Instead He put into place a plan for the redemption of creation ... out of love.

From the earliest moments of creation, God knew that the cross was coming. God knew that His Son would die on that cross, and in that moment cry out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" God knew He would sacrifice His own complete and perfect unity and relationship in order to redeem creation, yet He still created.

Now that's grace!

b. The Story of Abraham: Genesis 12ff
The Bible doesn't tell us why God chose Abram. But He did, and God gave him a purpose. God made Abraham the first link in the chain that would lead to Jesus, and his plan for the redemption of creation. It is only his long walk with the Lord that transforms fearful Abram into righteous Abraham.

Now that's grace!

c. The Story of Joseph:
Genesis 37ff

Joseph was the son of Jacob. Joseph had 10 older brothers. He was his father's favourite and rather arrogant about that fact. His older brothers were jealous and sold him into slavery. Years went by, and they presumed him dead. Later because of who Joseph had become — these brothers and Joseph's family (and ultimately the nation of Israel) were saved from starvation.

Had Joseph not been sold into slavery, the chosen people might have ended quietly in starvation. There would have been no Moses, no David, no Son of David called Jesus.

Joseph learned that, no matter the circumstances of his life, from favoured son, to slave-trading block, to prison, to high position, he could trust God's purposes to be at work, not only for his own good, but for the furtherance of God's plan for the redemption of creation.

Now that's grace!

d. The Story of the Exodus: Exodus
Some 400 years after Joseph and his amazing Technicolor dream-coat, the chosen people of

God languished in slavery in the land of Egypt. Evil held them in bondage to sin and death.



There was nothing they could do. Their heritage as sons of Abraham bought them no favours. They were helpless to save themselves.

God sent Moses to lead the people of Israel. God sent plagues to display his power to the king of Egypt. The blood of the Passover lamb marked the homes of those who would be saved. And the day came when the waters of the Red Sea stood back, and the people of Israel crossed over.

God heard their cry. He acted, in history — to deliver them from bondage. And set them free.

Now that's grace!

e. The Story of Return from Exile: Ezekiel
36 ff

Over 800 years later, the chosen people of God languished again, this time not in slavery in Egypt but in exile in Babylon.

Again, there was nothing they could do. Their heritage as sons of Abraham bought

them no favours. They were helpless to save themselves.

Their own rebellion had gotten them into this mess. Their kings had set up altars on the high places to worship other gods and forgot justice. Their own sinfulness left them alienated from God, unable to make a way back.

Still, God did not abandon His people.

Listen to God's promise of reconciliation, restoration, and homecoming, as prophesied by Ezekiel: *"For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle*



clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God." (Ezekiel 36:24-28)

Now that's grace!

f. The Story of David: 2 Samuel

David knew well the grace of God. King David had commander in his army by the name of Uriah. While Uriah was away fighting for Israel against Ammon, David took his wife, Bathsheba, and committed adultery with her. In an effort to cover his guilt and still get Bathsheba, King David orchestrated Uriah's death during a fierce battle with the Ammonites. Uriah was killed. David was guilty of committing adultery and, indirectly, of murdering Uriah. Both murder and adultery were capitol offenses punishable by death. David deserved to die. However God sent the prophet Nathan to confront David about his sin. David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." Nathan replied, "The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die" (2 Samuel 12:13).

Now that's grace!

g. Grace in the New Testament: John 8:1-11 records a wonderful grace story.

The Pharisees throw a woman at the feet of Jesus. She had been caught in the act of adultery. They knew the law said she should be stoned so they thought they would tempt

Jesus by saying "Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, in the very act. "Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?" And they were saying this, testing Him, in order that they might have grounds for accusing Him. But Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground. But when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him [be the] first to throw a stone at her." And again He stooped down,

and wrote on the ground. And when they heard it, they [began] to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the midst. And straightening up, Jesus said to her, "Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?" And she said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go your way. From now on sin no more". She deserved to die. But instead she was given pardon.

Now that's grace!

In each case — grace was undeserved but freely given!

What does God express to us Through HIS Grace?

Look up the following verses

- John 3:16; Hebrews 2:9: *Because of His grace He gave His Son as a sacrifice for our sins*
- Romans 5:15-18, Titus 2:11; 3:4-5; Acts 15:11; Ephesians 2:5, 8-9: *He saves us through His grace*
- Romans 3:24; Titus 3:7: *He pronounces us "justified" by His grace*
- 2 Corinthians 8:9: *Through grace we receive eternal life* (compare Phil 2:5-11)
- John 1:14-16: *He reveals Himself and helps us to know His Son*
- John 1:16: *Through His grace we receive His blessings*
- Galatians 1:15; 2 Tim 1:9: *He calls us through His grace.*
- Ephesians 1:7: *God forgives us thru His grace*
- Romans 5:1-2: *Thru grace God allows us to enjoy a relationship with Him*
- 2 Corinthians 8:1-4; 9:8: *Thru grace He gives us not only what we need but enough to share with others*



- 2 Thessalonians. 2:16: *Thru grace we receive hope and consolation*
- Titus 2:12: *God's grace helps us to be holy — set apart for Him*

From these verses we see the Saving Grace of God, the Sustaining Grace of God and the Sanctifying Grace of God all unfolding in our lives.

BUT

The grace of God can save us only if we respond to it. The grace of God can sustain us only if we trust it. The grace of God can sanctify us only if we surrender to it.

As His children all we have or are, is centered exclusively in God and Christ, and depends utterly on God through Christ.

The grace of God not only saves us through faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, but it also enables and empowers us to love and serve Him in every aspect of the Christian life.

Grace is NOT about us and what we do or do NOT do ... it is all about Him and what He has already done for us!

Unfolding Grace Through Worship

Call To Worship

*Father, as this new day begins
We come to worship in this place,
Our hearts and voices join in song
As we focus on Your grace.*

*As we bow in prayer before You,
As we seek You in this place
You pour out Your Holy Spirit
And we receive Your gift of grace.*

*As we look and gaze around us,
You are present in this place,
Fill our hearts with joy and victory
As we share Your glorious grace.*



Songs

- SASB 319/TB 673, *I Am Amazed When I Think Of God's Love*
- SASB 579/TB 592, *He Giveth More Grace As Our Burdens Grow Greater*
- SASB 462/TB 448, *There's A Path That Sometimes Thorny*
- SASB 52/TB 826, *Many Are The Things I Cannot Understand*

Choruses

- *O Lord, You're Beautiful. Your Face Is All I Seek*
- *I'll Follow Thee Of Life The Giver*
- *Grace, There Is My Every Debt To Pay*

Special Music

- *Your Grace Still Amazes Me*
(Words and music by Phillips Craig and Dean)
- *Only by Grace*
(words and music by Gerrit Gustafon)

Theme Song: Grace Alone

*Every promise we can make
Every prayer and step of faith
Every difference we can make
Is only by His grace.*

*Every mountain we will climb
Every ray of hope we shine
Every blessing left behind
Is only by His grace*

*Grace alone which God supplies
Strength unknown He will provide
Christ in us, our cornerstone
We will go forth in grace alone.*

*Every soul we long to reach
Every heart we hope to teach
Everywhere we share His peace
Is only by His grace.*

*Every loving word we say
Every tear we wipe away
Every sorrow turned to praise
Is only by His grace.*

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by Scott Wesley Brown, Jeff Nelson

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