

# CONNECTIONS

SPRING 2002

## STRUGGLING WITH FORGIVENESS

Over several years of leading and directing Coffee Break Julie began to see a common thread in women's lives—the need to understand forgiveness. Many of them were stuck in their spiritual journey, sometimes refusing God's gift of grace or pushing him away in anger, because they didn't understand the power of forgiveness. Julie shared her concern with me. "We need a study on forgiveness," she said. She went on to explain. Many, maybe even most, of the women from the community who came to her Coffee Break had broken relationships in their lives. Betrayal, abandonment, abuse, and conflict were everyday realities. And as they struggled to understand and accept Jesus' gift of forgiveness to them, they also struggled to understand what it meant to extend that gift to others—and to forgive themselves.

Julie planted the seeds for a new Coffee Break study. But fleshing out an outline for the study and examining the passages to be covered was no small matter. It soon became apparent that this study was needed for leaders as well as attendees of Coffee Break. Leaders too need to understand forgiveness. Those leading Coffee Break, Story Hour, and Little Lambs often struggle with the same brokenness their group members do. Some of them have been in abusive relationships. Some have themselves abused others, verbally, emotionally, and sometimes physically.

Forgiving is hard work, especially when there is no acknowledgement of

wrong-doing and no repentant spirit on the part of the person who has wronged us. A deadly pattern sets in—the right to be offended, the right to feel wronged.

Sometimes our "forgiving" the wrongs of others is as sinful as the wrong they inflicted on us. Lew Smedes, in his book *Forgive and Forget*, tells a fable about Fouke, an upright baker whose cold "righteousness" drove everyone away, even his loving wife, Hilda, who longed for warmth from him.

When Fouke found Hilda in the arms of another man, he appeared to forgive her, but inside he hated her. "He only pretended to forgive her so that he could punish her with his righteous mercy."

An unforgiving spirit breeds on itself. Often unforgiveness carries from one generation to the next. Living Christ-like lives doesn't come easy, and "the sins of the fathers (and mothers)" get passed on (Jeremiah 32:17-19). Philip Yancey, in *What's So Amazing About Grace?*, tells an all-too-familiar story of ungrace being passed from generation to generation. When Daisy's alcoholic father tears her family apart, she resolves never to forgive him, even though God and all her siblings do. Daisy's ungrace is passed on to her daughter Margaret, who cannot forgive her rebellious son, Michael, and lives separated from a son who longs to draw near. The cycle of pain and separation seems never to end.

All of us, in some way, need to understand the power of forgiveness. It is the road to healing and freedom. Studying God's forgiveness is one way to forge new beginnings. As Lew Smedes so aptly sum-

marized it: "When we forgive, we set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner we set free is us."

Betty Veldman, Director of Small Group Ministries

*Editor's Note: Discover the Power of Forgiveness Bible study will be available toward the end of January. See details in the Small Talk section of this newsletter.*

## FINDING JESUS IN JAIL

Evangelist Ravi Zacharias's words were in my head as I traveled back from a Florida church last fall where I had led a Lifestyle Evangelism workshop: "The older you get the more it takes to fill your heart with wonder, and only God is big enough to do that." After thirty years in small group ministries God is still filling my heart with wonder. This time I was marveling over my weekend stay with a Coffee Break director.

There was something about Joan's manner that immediately impressed me. She warmly welcomed me into her home, and as we talked and shared our stories, she not only revealed her testimony, but also a great deal about herself as a person. I observed a kind and gracious woman who exhibited an extraordinary ability to forgive.

In a rather matter-of-fact way during our conversation, Joan mentioned she had spent time in jail for committing a felony. While there she was invited to attend a Bible study. Initially, the reason she joined the group was to escape her cell for awhile. Joan admitted she would ask questions just to be difficult, until one day she

*continued*

*Not forgiving is like drinking rat poison and then waiting for the rat to die.*

Anne Lamott



Coffee Break



Small Groups



Story Hour  
Little Lambs

realized she was asking questions in order to get answers. **Joan did get her answers—in Jesus, in jail.** And it was there she began her relationship with him. She began to see answers to her prayers and as time went on, God miraculously delivered her from the addictions that had controlled her life.

As compelling as her story was, it was her ability to forgive that overwhelmed me. For example, soon after her release she was hired for a part-time position—a government job she did well. When Joan’s employer asked her to work full time, she knew that inevitably this would cost her her job. Full-time work for the government requires a complete application form that includes an answer to the question, “Have you ever been convicted of a felony?” What surprised me as Joan recounted this incident, was her sympathy for the woman who fired her.

A deeper wound happened in her family. At first, Joan thought it was a mistake that the relative taking care of her son

would not accept the collect calls from jail. So she kept dialing. The refusal was not a mistake, and amazingly, Joan could relate this deep hurt without self-pity or anger toward the family member who at that time had rejected her.

I was astounded at Joan’s genuine ability to forgive and at times to even empathize with the people who had hurt her. She understood at a deep level that since Christ forgave her, she had to forgive others. This forgiveness was not exercised out of some kind of duty, but rather because she had experienced grace. In fact Joan seemed to overflow with grace.

I left Florida awed with what God could do in a person’s life and challenged with my own unforgiveness at times. I promised God I would remember Joan’s story and try to be more gracious and forgiving. I was fully aware I had experienced the miracle of a changed life, a grace-filled life being used for God’s glory.

Diane Averill, Small Group Ministry Representative, East Coast



“Where the river flows, everything will live,”

Ezekiel 47:9b

## REGISTER FOR JULY CONFERENCE

Enclosed with this issue of *Connections* is a registration brochure for the **Small Group Evangelism Conference for Women** that will be held in St. Paul, Minnesota the weekend of July 12-14, 2002.

- Early bird registration of \$199.00 US saves you more than ten percent. Register before March 30.
- Speakers include Ray Vander Laan, David Stark, Nancy Leigh De Moss, and Stephanie Fast.
- Music will be led by Colleen and Grace.
- Sunday will be a day filled with worship, prayer and Bible study.
- Optional training workshops will be offered Friday afternoon.
- Cruise the Mississippi, shop the Mall of America or enjoy an historic tour of Minneapolis.
- Find registration forms on the web site, [www.coffeebreakministries.org](http://www.coffeebreakministries.org).
- Link from the web site to maps, speakers, workshops, and expanded tour information.
- Be inspired.
- Be challenged.
- Be part of kingdom building.
- Be there—on the banks of the Mississippi.

Registration Form Enclosed!

## UNFINISHED STORY

The Coffee Break/Story Hour flyers had been prayerfully delivered to all the front porches in a small, mid-western town. Now it was up to God. Who would he send to Coffee Break and Story Hour this year?

Linda, a rookie director, was still on a “high” from the Coffee Break Convention. It had been a life-changing experience for her, and she so wanted the Spirit to use her to reach people for the Lord. That can be a scary thing, especially when you know of one unbelieving person living right next door! Linda really wanted to invite her neighbor Melody to Coffee Break, but fear kept getting in her way.

One day though, she mustered up the courage to invite Melody to the Coffee Break kick-off event. She stepped out of her home and comfort zone and initiated a conversation with Melody. While they talked, the familiar feelings of fear crowded in; Linda said her good-byes and with a good measure of guilt headed back home. Before she reached her door, Melody called out, “Say, Linda, isn’t that your name and phone number on the Coffee Break flyer I found on my porch?” Linda realized then, “God helped me out big time and gave me one more chance!” Melody accepted the invitation to Coffee Break, joined an evening group at another church, brought along two of her single-mom friends and asked Linda if there would be anything wrong with attending two Coffee Breaks!

We’d all love to hear that Melody made a commitment to Christ, is still going to Coffee Break, and will probably be a leader next year. What a wonderful story ending that would be! But this story is still unfolding. Melody enrolled in a night class, dropped out of both Coffee Breaks and distanced herself from her neighbor. When the two did talk several months later Melody shared how she always felt so encouraged by the Christian people around her. She went on to say that she attended church recently. A past acquaintance, someone she had admired during her school years, shopped at her garage sale. They got to talking and Melody accepted the offer to try church.

Evangelism can be an oh-so-slow process. But we must keep praying for the Melodys and continue waiting to see how God writes the rest of their stories.

Ruth Kelder, Small Group Ministry Representative, South Central U.S.



## CONFERENCES ARE WORTH IT

Just ask Coffee Break Director Deanne Arnott from Burnaby in BC, Canada. After the Boston convention she was so encouraged to pray for newcomers and bold enough to ask God for ten. She writes that nine arrived the first day, followed by another eleven that season. Last month at a regional conference in Bellingham, WA, Deanne was again challenged. Her bottom line: conferences are worth your time.

## PRACTICE "MIKVAH" HEART CLEANING

Children are so much fun to be around. The way they express themselves can be priceless. Some of my favorite conversations have been as my children chattered their thoughts from the back seat of my van. I remember when one of my sons said excitedly, "Look! There's God's fingernail!" Out of his back window he was looking at a sliver of the moon, and I'm still thankful that a three-year-old child helped me *see* that God holds the whole world in his hands.

The other day I was driving my four-year-old granddaughter Jordyn to gymnastics after the morning at Story Hour. Her next sentences seemed to come out of the blue.

"Jesus was hanged up and put on a cross where he died. Then he made our hearts clean, didn't he, Grandma?"

I'm not sure exactly what visual picture Jordyn has in her young mind of Jesus being "hanged up" on a cross, but her connection between that event and our hearts being made clean is right on.

The Hebrews of the Bible were also very concrete, visual people. Notice the many visual examples Jesus used in his teaching. Most of the Jew's religious practices were visual rituals with deep spiritual meaning. The Old Testament priest practiced "mikveh." He went to the Bronze Sea (large basin with water) in the temple and put water on his head, heart, hands, and feet. By Jesus' time the practice of the Bronze Sea was observed in the synagogue. When the Jews went to worship and pray they would first stop at the basin and put water on their head, heart, hands and feet to ask for cleansing and forgiveness, also symbolizing a total devotion to God of the *whole* person.

Is asking for forgiveness something we've done so routinely that we take it for granted? Does a quick, "Forgive me for my sins" cover us with a holy and perfect God? God requires obedience and purity in every part of our being, not just the external but the internal, not just the intellectual but also in the every day living of our

lives. In your mind, practice "mikveh." Give God your head (your intellect), your heart (your inner self), your hands (your service) and your feet (your daily walk). Ask for cleansing and forgiveness, and then commit to obedience in every part of your being.

How do we teach children to give their head, heart, hands and feet to God? By modeling our lives after our teacher, Jesus.

*"He has taken our sins away from us as far as the east is from the west."*

Psalm 103:12

Jesus not only talked the talk, but he walked the walk. And finally, in a moment of ultimate forgiveness on the cross, the blood flowed from his head, his side, his hands and his feet. Praise God for the total and complete forgiveness he offers to people like you, and me, and Jordyn. And yes, because of the blood shed on the cross, our hearts can be made clean!

Diane Dykgraaf, Story Hour/Little Lambs Specialist

## OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES

### Who's In Charge, Jordan?

Four-year-old Jordan from New Covenant Church in North Hampton, New Hampshire, had been going to Story Hour for about three months. It was time for his checkup with his pediatrician. The doctor, while conducting a very thorough exam, asked the boy the question, "Who is in charge of your body?"

Jordan replied, "Jesus!"

Diane Averill, Small Group Ministry Representative, East Coast

### "But They Couldn't Keep Him in There!"

Holy Week has become the most spiritually significant week of the year for me. Early in our ministry I learned from some of my former Catholic brothers and sisters how to "do lent." It seems that the more time I spend reflecting on the sufferings of Jesus and allowing myself to spend plenty of time at the foot of the cross, the heartier my joy on Easter Sunday.

I had an experience this past Sunday that keeps playing through my mind and has made my reflections this week even more meaningful. Of course, the words came from the mouth of a young child. I was teaching our church preschool class the combined story of Good Friday and Easter. As I talked about Jesus' death I noticed the sad expressions on many of those little faces. I had just put the Play-Doh rock in front of the tomb when little Blake jumped up and declared, "But they couldn't keep him in there!" I didn't feel like I needed to say a whole lot more.

What a wonder that they couldn't keep him in there! What a God we have! And to think that's not the end of the story. Have a wonderful, joyful celebration of the fact that they couldn't keep him in there.

Ruth Kelder, Small Group Ministry Representative,  
South Central U.S. Written in March, 1999.

*Editor's Note:* Tell the Easter story with the Story Hour resources, Year One, Unit 3, Session 7, p.333 or Year Two, Unit 6, Session 2, p.287. And share your stories with us! We'd love to hear from you. Please send your experiences with Story Hour and Little Lambs to [dianedyk@aol.com](mailto:dianedyk@aol.com).



Story Hour  
Little Lambs

STORY HOUR

# idea share



Coffee Break

## FREE CASSETTE

Questions, Questions, Questions

**B**rush up on how to develop questions in an inductive Bible study such as Coffee Break. Ask for *Questions, Questions, Questions*, product #152062CT, when you call Faith Alive Resources, 1-800-333-8300. Orders for this helpful tool, offered at no charge, will be filled on a first come, first served basis through March 30. Call early. There are 445 cassettes in inventory.

## VIDEOS ON FORGIVENESS

**T**hree videos are available from The Back to God Hour's Primary Focus TV program, [www.primaryfocus.tv](http://www.primaryfocus.tv), click on "Archive." Video costs: 1 - \$20; 2 - \$32; 3 - \$48.

**Forgiveness: A Journey to Hope (105)** - Hear the incredible stories of two men confronted with forgiveness and find out

## WEB RESOURCES

**T**he following are several web sites that I've found to be easy to access. They contain free and practical ideas for crafts, games, coloring pages, etc.

**[www.kinderart.com](http://www.kinderart.com)** - This site has arts and crafts projects for children preschool through high school.

Also available are free coloring pages you can print.

**[www.crayola.com](http://www.crayola.com)** - Here you'll find simple projects and crafts using supplies you already have. Click on the "Inspiring Ideas" crayon or the "Educators" section.

Then fine-tune your search by specifying your theme.

**[www.makingfriends.com](http://www.makingfriends.com)** - This site contains a "Bible Crafts" section. There are projects you can do with supplies you have on hand. Also available are low-cost supplies that can be ordered.

## "WE CARE" CARDS

**T**he winter and early spring months are often accompanied with colds and flu.

how you can experience this same miraculous healing power.

**From Fury to Forgiveness (106)** - Feel the pain and the fury of a mother whose seven-year-old daughter was kidnapped during a family vacation. Marvel at her resolve to forgive the man who terrorized and changed her family forever.

**From Vengeance to Victory (107)** - Two rival gang members learn new rules when God shows up in their lives. The survival rules of "defend your turf and get even" are now replaced with "love your enemies."

## PRAYER: A CROSS OF CANDLES

**R**ead Tricia Maier's "Cross of Candles" article in this issue, under *Small Talk*. She has a great prayer idea for small groups.



## NEW WORKSHOPS

**R**emember the last workshop you attended? No? If it has been three or more years, it's time to refresh. We've recently refreshed our formats to give you and your leaders more scheduling flexibility. The Coffee Break Workshop includes leading an inductive Bible study, understanding small group principles and keep-

Help your children care for each other by noticing when someone is missing from your group. Have a small box or folder ready with several simple supplies, such as cardstock or construction paper, stickers, markers, and cutouts ready to glue on from previously-used cards. As a group, prepare a card that says, "We Missed You." Have the children sign their names on the card, and then mail the card that same day.

## SHORT STAFFED?

**R**ecruit a retired gentleman to assist with Story Hour. It's working at Lakeside Community Christian Reformed Church in Alto, Michigan. The kids love their grandpa. And he's having a pretty good time too.

ing the evangelistic focus of Coffee Break. Check the training schedule on the web, [www.coffeebreakministries.org](http://www.coffeebreakministries.org) to see if there is a workshop coming to your area, or call your Small Group Ministry Rep. If you're not sure who that is, ask Heidi Moreno in the main office, 1-800-266-2175, ext. 771.

## RESOURCES

Available through Faith Alive Resources  
1-800-333-8300  
[www.FaithAliveResources.org](http://www.FaithAliveResources.org).

## DISCOVER LUKE (PART 4) - REVISED

**Jesus' Death, Resurrection, and Ascension (2nd edition)**  
*Carol Veldman Rudie*

**T**his study is the third in a newly revised, four-part study of Luke's gospel. The study of Luke is ideal for new students of the Bible. Group members gain a complete understanding of the life and ministry of Jesus and are challenged to follow him. 10 lessons.

*Study Guide*  
#152590CT \$3.45<sup>US</sup>/5.00<sup>CDN</sup>  
*Leader's Guide*  
#152595CT \$5.10<sup>US</sup>/7.40<sup>CDN</sup>

## DISCOVER RUTH

**T**he book of Ruth shows what can happen when people take God at his word. Despite overwhelming obstacles and some real heartaches, Ruth and Naomi come through with flying colors because of God's help. 4 sessions.

*Study Guide*  
#152270CT \$2.95<sup>US</sup>/4.30<sup>CDN</sup>  
*Leader's Guide*  
#152275CT \$4.10<sup>US</sup>/5.95<sup>CDN</sup>

## RESOURCE NOTES

- Discover Luke has been completely revised in four study books.
- Discover Ruth, Discover Psalms and Discover Comfort have been updated to include optional opening share questions and a Good News lesson.
- Discover Peter and Discover Ephesians will be available later this year. Call 1-800-333-8300 in August for more specific information.



Story Hour  
Little Lambs

## CONNECTIONS

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Betty Veldman,  
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# SMALL TALK

## FOR SMALL GROUPS

SPRING 2002

### THEY TRIED PRINCIPLE-BASED SMALL GROUPS

According to Jean Dykshoorn, “Principle-based small groups really work.” New Life Church in Abbotsford, British Columbia, Canada has successfully organized around small groups for several years, but after hearing David Stark present the principle-based strategy at a Day of Encouragement for church leaders, Jean decided to give it a try. By switching to principle-based groups over the past year, she found that participation in small groups increased by 100 people. People really do “own what they help create,” says Jean. Just by allowing people to design small groups according to their passions and interests, more people joined and group leaders had greater enthusiasm for their groups.

As a staff member in charge of small groups at New Life, Jean divided their small groups into learning, caring, being, and doing groups, as well as mixed agenda groups, those that include all four agendas equally. She produced a brochure listing all the

groups available and indicated which groups were open to new members.

Small group registration cards were available for people to fill out indicating their preferences and whether they would call the small group leader

directly or wanted to have Jean connect them instead. She funnels new people into groups as they express interest

and in consultation with the small group leaders.

“I’m convinced this is the way to lead small groups,” says Jean. “It really works.”

If you would like more information on how to get principle-based small groups started in your church, contact the Small Group Representative nearest you by calling 1-800-266-2175.

Betty Veldman, Director of Small Group Ministries

**People really do own what they help create.**

### THE JOURNEY OF HEALING

*“The deeper the wound, the longer the journey.”* –Lewis Smedes

People don’t need to feel it’s urgent to forgive a deep hurt immediately. It’s not that easy. “Forgiving 70 x 7 takes awhile!” says Beth Swagman, Director of Abuse Prevention for the Christian Reformed Church in North America. “The urgency is to heal.”

“A period of healing needs to happen before forgiveness is appropriate and even possible,” Swagman continues. It is during this healing process that forgiveness

What about your interactions with members in your group: Are you sensitive to those who may be struggling with past pain and fresh wounds? Do you wonder if you’ve chosen the right words of encouragement for him or her? Do you find yourself making excuses for an offender? Do you downplay the damage that was done by using a phrase such as, “Well, it’s a good thing kids



can occur. And at some point the question becomes, “Am I willing to forgive? If I am to become more like Christ, am I willing to forgive and forgive generously?”

For those of you who lead small groups, at what point are you, personally, in this journey? How willing to forgive are you? How do you model forgiveness?

are so resilient” or “What is your part in all this?”

Forgiveness can occur as you take these three steps, says Swagman.

**1** Identify the damage that was done – This includes damage that extends far beyond the actual event. In breaking the silence you name the offense along with the hurt and anger. Feelings are valid, God-given and need to be identified. What were you feeling? Powerless, controlled, demeaned, belittled, betrayed? In this step you talk about and allow others to talk about the pain and loss.

#### DISCOVER THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS

Edi Bajema

Forgiveness is a tough topic. All of us are challenged to understand the wonder of a forgiving God while at the same struggling to forgive others who have wronged us. This insightful, encouraging Bible study by Edi Bajema leads us down the path of healing as we grapple with this always-timely topic. 6 lessons.

Study Guide

#152610CT \$2.95<sup>US</sup>/4.30<sup>CDN</sup>

Leader’s Guide

#152615CT \$4.10<sup>US</sup>/5.95<sup>CDN</sup>

1-800-333-8300 or shop online at [www.FaithAliveResources.org](http://www.FaithAliveResources.org).

NEW RESOURCE

  
Small Groups

# SMALL GROUPS

continued



**2.** Place the fault on the offender – Make no excuses for the offender or the offense. Do not water down the behavior with comments such as, “She had such a tough childhood,” or “It really wasn’t his fault; you know his wife wasn’t the easiest to live with.” Do not minimize the sin.

**3.** Reclaim your personal power – You didn’t deserve to be treated that way, and even though you cannot forget the pain, the event no longer controls your life and your decisions. You can hold your own and not be intimidated. You forgive the offender while acknowledging the damage done. And while you still own the whole event with all the emotions, it no longer has power over you.

Your journey has begun.

Marjo Jordan, Co-Editor

#### MORE THAN SMALL TALK

This *Small Talk* is part of a larger newsletter, *Connections*, that includes pertinent topics for small groups. Read Betty Veldman’s article, “Struggling with Forgiveness” on the front page of this Spring issue of *Connections*. You can view this newsletter on line, [www.coffeebreakministries.org](http://www.coffeebreakministries.org), or you can subscribe to the entire *Connections* publication. Let us know: [morenoh@crcna.org](mailto:morenoh@crcna.org), 1-888-644-0814.

## Forgiving

Reluctantly,  
I put down  
my hatchet.

Hesitantly,  
I picked up  
the harp.

Cautiously,  
I plucked  
the strings.

Awkwardly,  
I moved  
my feet.

And then,

I danced.

I danced  
unencumbered.  
I danced  
free of the weights.  
I danced  
a new song.

There were others,  
dancing, too,  
rejoicing with me—  
so glad  
to see the harp  
replace  
the hatchet.

Marjo Jordan

Based on Dr. Timothy Brown’s illustration at the Coffee Break Convention, Grand Rapids, MI, July 13, 2000.

## WHAT A NOVEL IDEA



Consider reading a novel as a small group. A

few that tackle the forgiveness struggle are Victor Hugo’s *Les Miserables*, C.S. Lewis’ *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*,” and Jan Karon’s *A New Song*.

## TRAINING AVAILABLE

Small group representatives are available to schedule and conduct workshops, to provide consulting, to provide counseling on specific concerns, and to answer your small group questions. For more information call 1-888-644-0814.

## IMPORTANT TOOLS ON THE WEB

Two free resources, *Small Group Readiness Assessment* and *Small Group Profiles*, are on the web, [www.coffeebreakministries.org](http://www.coffeebreakministries.org). Check it out!

## RESOURCES

### DISCOVER PSALMS

**Hope When We’re Hurting**  
Carol Veldman Rudie

In light of world events, this is an excellent evangelistic 5-session study for your group. The new revised leader’s guide now includes optional opening share questions. Sessions topics are From Longing to Hope; From Sickness to Shelter; From Distress to Deliverance; From Desperation to Dancing; and From Sinfulness to Salvation.

*Study Guide*

#152370CT \$2.95<sup>US</sup>/4.30<sup>CDN</sup>

*Leader’s Guide*

#152375CT \$4.10<sup>US</sup>/5.95<sup>CDN</sup>

### DISCOVER COMFORT

This honest study looks at the hard questions believers face when they experience pain or hardship. 11 sessions.

*Study Guide*

#152260CT \$3.45<sup>US</sup>/5.00<sup>CDN</sup>

*Leader’s Guide*

#152265CT \$5.10<sup>US</sup>/7.40<sup>CDN</sup>

Call 1-800-333-8300  
or shop online at  
[www.FaithAliveResources.org](http://www.FaithAliveResources.org)

## A CROSS OF CANDLES

### Small Group Prayer Idea

Before our small group prayed together one evening we set up unlit votive candles in the shape of a cross and dimmed the lighting as much as possible.

We explained that just as the arm of the cross depends on the upright for support, we depend on the character and strength of God to answer our prayers. Therefore, the vertical candles would represent our praises and thanks to God, while the horizontal candles would represent our specific prayer requests.

One by one group members prayed and lit a corresponding candle. Slowly the cross became visible. We allowed a time of silence between each prayer for meditation and reflection. The result was an incredibly sacred experience. When the cross was completely lit, no one from the group wanted to speak or leave but preferred to sit in silence, savoring the awesome glory of God.

Reprinted with author’s permission from *Candles of Prayer*, Discipleship Journal, Issue #126, 2001 by Tricia Maier.



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