

# The.. Resource Review

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## A Childlike Faith...

by Cindi Eckert,  
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Recently, I took a trip and met up at a cabin with my sisters. Amidst all the fun of catching up and the utter craziness of an Italian family, the subject of faith came up...and trust in the Lord. I was surprised to learn that two of my sisters are struggling pretty hard with this concept. We grew up in home filled with faith and a strong belief in God. But as I listened, I could understand their questions and concerns. What saddened me was the anguish of the struggle they were having, between knowing and believing in God, but somehow trying to bridge *that* in a world which is full of chaos and struggle, pain and uncertainty. Would God the almighty really protect their little ones given the constant threat of danger? How *just* is a world where good people...even innocent children, are hurt or even worse... by human predators? How does one establish trust in God when so much contrary to His promises happens in our broken world? These were the question posed to me by my sisters. And they were not easy ones to answer. I dug deep into my soul...pleading with God to be with me as I pondered them, and asked that He would help me respond with His grace and knowledge, that the Holy Spirit would speak to my heart.

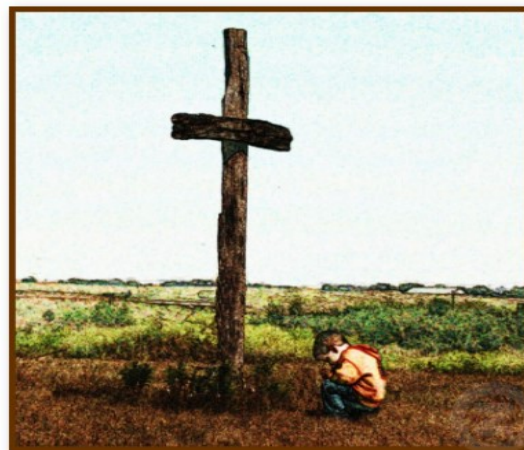
I felt a calmness come over me when I thought of the faith and love I have for God. I know that He undeniably walks beside me each day and truly lives in my heart. However, I wasn't sure when and how that happened, for I too, can remember a time when I felt that was not so. But I was changed by God on my own journey when life was most difficult. Out of the blues one summer day, I suffered a debilitating brain aneurysm. Nearly dying, and through the course of

the healing process, I depended on God with all my heart and soul just to open my tired eyes and live for one more minute, one more hour, and one more precious day.

After the "dust" cleared, and the healing was in full throttle, I noticed that something had changed. I was left with a childlike trust in God and heart full of love for His grace and mercy. The struggle to live was something I cannot even express in words, yet the whole time I knew He had planted Himself right into my heart, that He had carried me when my broken body couldn't even move. No doctor in the universe could have provided that kind of comfort and warmth. In the midst of uncertainty, I sensed His peace and strength, and I knew no matter what course this horrific event would take, He would be there with me through it all. Without that, I would have never been able to handle the possibilities I was facing...

In going back to my conversation with my sisters, I sensed that perhaps they don't really believe they (and the world) hears much from God anymore. But God promises we in fact, do! There is a great sense of peace that comes with trusting God, opposite of the confusion and frustration I witnessed that day at the cabin, when trust for God is absent. The Bible promises us that we will know we are hearing from God: "...let the peace from Christ rule in your hearts..." Colossians 3:15. In other words, if we follow the laws of God and trust in his rule, we will have peace.

I believe God has a plan for all of us, but we cannot live that plan if we fear the things of the world so much that it encompasses much of our minds.



I wish peace for my sisters...in their journey to find the answers they are seeking. I am confident that the Lord will speak to their hearts...and allow them to see their great worth in the eyes of our King. He is here, there, and everywhere. I know this without a doubt.

May God bless you with His amazing grace, peace and assurance that He really *is* among us as we live here on earth in these latter days.

Cindi



Malawian companions  
remind us regularly:  
Malawians have time and  
Americans have  
watches...



If you could save time in a bottle...what part of life would you save? Thought for the day: Make every minute count!

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Remember  
the things  
I have done  
in the past.

For I alone am God!  
I am God, and there  
is none like me. -  
Isaiah 46:9

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## *The Most Talked About Resource This Month: “The Greatest Story: Jesus”*

This course is a journey through the four Gospel narratives in 16 sessions for adults and young adults. It looks at the story of Jesus from the perspective of each of the Gospel accounts, and offers ways for participants to connect his story with their own stories. Be sure not to skip reading the Forward, written by Mark Allan Powell. It frames the book and offers great tips on storytelling, which will be useful beyond this particular course. Powell also shares his personal devotional practice. There is a lot of worthwhile content here.

I featured *The Greatest Story: Bible Introduction* in a past Resource Review, and the feedback has been that many people are fascinated with the sand art (by Joe Castillo), and that the “Mark It” portion of the sessions could also work for confirmation. The “Creative Corner” activities are also recommended for younger learners. You

will be delighted to know that this new curriculum comes with more of Joe Castillo’s sand art! Please note that if 16 sessions is too long for some congregations, you could easily break it down into four 4-week courses. as it might be easier for people to make commitments for shorter courses like these, and eventually go through all of the material. The Leader Guide includes many useful resources. The author makes it clear that the goal is to have participants *encounter* Jesus, rather than simply learning facts about him. The use of personal experience is valuable as a basis for the course to make it inclusive to all levels of individuals, from those who have a wealth of Bible study background, to those who have little or no background at all. The Leader Reference CD (maps, charts, learning aids from Lutheran Study Bible) has been popular even with groups that aren’t using

the Lutheran Study Bible. Leaders are able to make handouts or to project information on an overhead during the class.. The maps are also easy to incorporate into a PowerPoint presentation.



*Speaking of Author Mark Allan Powell...the Resource Center just got **Biblical Stewardship: Our Duty and Delight**. It's already checked out too, so if you want it, let me know and I will reserve it for you!*

## **Veggie Tales!**



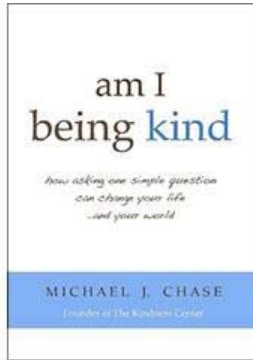
Princess Poppyseed's life on her family's farm is far from the glamorous world of her favorite pop singer Vanna Banana. While Princess milks the cows and dreams of a life on stage, Vanna has her own dreams of a life far from the hectic pace of stardom. On a chance meeting Vanna & Princess cross paths and realize they look almost exactly alike which leads to the crazy notion that maybe they could switch lives! In a flash the girls secret plan is launched but as Princess tries to live up to the demands of being a diva and Vanna learns how to milk the cows each girl realizes that the life they longed for doesn't fulfill all their dreams after all and the life God gave them is the one for which they were uniquely and lovingly designed.



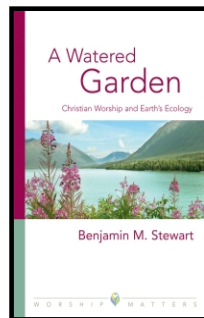
In this Veggie-version of a holiday classic, Junior Asparagus stars as The Little Drummer Boy, a lonely child who finds the true meaning of Christmas when he stumbles upon the birth of the baby Jesus. A story of generosity, hope and love, this timeless tale



Mark Johnson is a man with a mission. He wants to bring the world together with music and build an organization that will use technology to enable people all over the world to play together, even if they are thousands of miles apart. Part of this vision was introduced to the world on Playing For Change – Songs Around The World; a CD/DVD set that featured the talents of hundreds of musicians from all over the globe. Johnson and his crew filmed and recorded dozens of musicians and spliced them together into videos that seamlessly blended

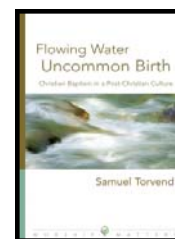


***am I being kind:  
how asking one  
simple question  
can change your  
life...and your  
world*** (an intriguing book  
by Michael Chase... now at the  
Resource Center!)



*A Watered Garden: Christian Worship and Earth's Ecology* explores the progressing awareness of Christianity's environmental consciousness as reflected in worship. Author Benjamin M. Stewart delicately interweaves our practice of faith with natural cycles and the world around us giving a renewed perspective of our walk with God and the home that has been provided. Ecologically resonate and spiritually insightful, this book offers a fresh look at our relationship with the Lord through creation.

*If you have an overdue  
Resource...please kindly return it  
to the Resource Center! Others  
may be waiting for it...*



Author Samuel Torvend wonders, "how is our baptismal preparation, the celebration of baptism, and ongoing baptismal and eucharistic formation shaping a people who will not only survive but flourish - perhaps in small ways - in a culture which remains skeptical of religion, religious people, and religious communities?"

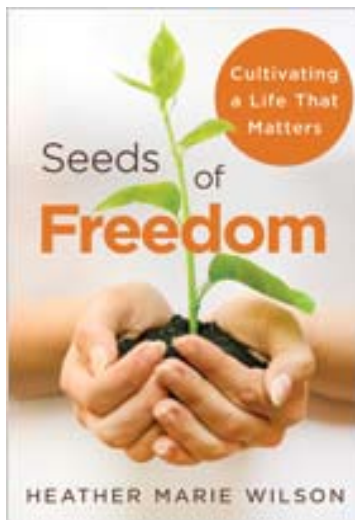
## Humor Corner



*I'm getting so old that all my friends in heaven will think I didn't make it*



The Resource Center has many items resources you can check out on special interest and personal growth topics. like below!



## Broken Toys Broken Toys



As children bring their broken toys, with tears, for me to mend  
I brought my broken dreams to God because he was my friend.

But then, instead of leaving Him in peace to work alone  
I hung around and tried to help . . . with ways that were my own.

At last I snatched them back and cried, "How can You be so slow?"  
"My child," He said. "What could I do? You never did let go."

An elderly Chinese woman had two large pots, each hung on the ends of a pole which she carried across her neck.

One of the pots had a crack in it while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water.

At the end of the long walks from the stream to the house, the cracked pot arrived only half full.

For a full two years this went on daily, with the woman bringing home only one and a half pots of water.

Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it could only do half of what it had been made to do. After two years of what it perceived to be bitter failure, it spoke to the woman one day by the stream.

" I am ashamed of myself, because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your house."

The old woman smiled, 'Did you notice that there are flowers on your side of the path, but not on the other pot's side?' "That's because I have always known about your flaw, so I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back, you water them."

" For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate the table.  
Without you being just the way you are, there would not be this beauty to grace the house.'

