

# Training for Triumph E-Newsletter Issue 006 May/June 2005

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**1. Training for Triumph Events and Announcements**

**\*Look for TFT at Ohio's state home school convention Thursday through Saturday, June 23-25!**

Training for Triumph will be vending at Ohio's state home school convention in Columbus, Ohio next Thursday, Friday, and Saturday! Bring your friends to our booth and allow us to introduce them to CQLA! We will have our teaching tapes, Volume I of CQLA, some of Volume II of CQLA (and we'll be taking orders for those yet to be published this summer), our IBLP supplemental character materials, speech and debate curricula, and more. Come see us!

**\*Cottage Classes for the 2005-2006 Academic Year**

We have had a great response thus far to our 2005-2006 cottage classes. I will list them below another month for new subscribers. Email or call us to receive a registration form and complete schedule.

All classes are one-semester in length, except for Algebra I and the complete language arts classes, which are one year in length. Students may opt to attend one or both semesters. (Algebra I students will not be able to join mid-year.)

Classes will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. All language arts and writing classes will be limited to five or six students (depending on the class) due to heavy in-class editing.

Important Update: If the early section of high school composition and the advanced speech class do not fill up soon, we will probably substitute an elementary composition for one or both of these. Thus, if you are interested in any of these three, please contact us right away---even if you were told the elementary composition class is filled.

**First Semester (End of August through late November)---two locations:**

South West Fort Wayne (probably The Chapel); Thursday afternoons/evenings:

1. Elementary Composition Class
2. Junior High Composition Class
3. High School Composition Class\*
4. Research Paper Class
5. Story Writing Class
6. Elementary/Middle School Speech
7. Beginning Speech and Debate
8. U.S. Government
9. Shakespeare
10. Algebra I
11. Advanced Speech\*

\*The Advanced Speech class and one section of the High School Composition Class are subject to change (possibly to more sections of Elementary Composition) if enrollment is not high enough to warrant holding these. Call or email today to add your student's name to these sections, so we know they are needed.

Near Ossian (our learning center in Craigville); Wednesday all day/evening:

1. Early Elementary Language Arts
2. Upper Elementary Language Arts
3. Middle School Language Arts
4. High School Language Arts
5. High School Composition
6. Beginning Speech (our only speech-only class for junior high and high school students)
7. Algebra I
8. Beginning Piano Lessons (days and times will vary)
9. Beginning Guitar Lessons (days and times will vary)

## **Second Semester: January through May**

North of Fort Wayne (possible Auburn area; day and place to be announced):

1. Elementary Composition Class
2. Junior High Composition Class
3. High School Composition Class
4. Story Writing Class
5. Elementary/Middle School Speech
6. Beginning Speech and Debate (junior high and high school)
7. U.S. Government
8. Shakespeare
9. Algebra I (must have attended one of the first semester locations to come to the Auburn Algebra I class during the second semester)

Near Ossian; Wednesday all day/evening (our learning center in Craigville):

1. Early Elementary Language Arts
2. Upper Elementary Language Arts
3. Middle School Language Arts
4. High School Language Arts
5. Elementary and Middle School Speech
6. Research Paper (the only time this will be offered near Ossian this year)
7. Algebra I (must have attended one of the first semester locations to come to the Ossian Algebra I class during the second semester)
8. Piano Lessons (days and times will vary)
9. Guitar Lessons (days and times will vary)

### **\*At-Cost Speech and Debate Classes**

While TFT is offering dozens of cottage classes to help test our materials and offset our printing costs of new materials, our beginning speech and debate class at the Chapel each fall continues to be an at-cost opportunity for home school students. The charges for this three hour, twelve week class include a textbook, copy costs for handouts and evidence, and a small weekly fee to help us pay the college students who come to help us teach. (It should be noted that they would do this for free—and did so for the first three years of our classes. It is only in the past year that we began charging a small fee to allow us to pay them for their services.) Anyway, if you do not feel that you can afford our other cottage classes, keep the beginning speech and debate class in mind. It has been a ministry of the Reish family for five years and continues to be so. (Speech and debate classes in other locations may not be able to be offered at the same low cost as the one at the Chapel due to building rental costs and driving costs. We will try to keep all beginning speech and debate classes as low cost as possible

in order that all North East Indiana junior high and high school home school students can learn to “be ready to give answer.”)

**\*About Our E-Mail Address List**

We are very new in the areas of publishing our own materials and speaking to home schoolers outside of ATI. Thus, we have a small email list. If you have been sent something from us and would rather not, please either delete it, or email us asking to be removed from our list. If you receive duplicate emails, please be patient with us as we grow. ☺ Please consider helping us spread the news about Training for Triumph and our materials by forwarding our E-Catalog or one of our E-Newsletters onto a few people who might like our products or services.

**\*Free Tape for Subscribing People to TFT E Newsletter**

We are pleased to offer a free tape of your choice (see our catalog for a complete listing of tapes available; there are over thirty to choose from!) to each family who sends us twenty home schoolers to subscribe to our e-newsletter! The response to our e-newsletter has been overwhelmingly positive, and you may know other families who can benefit from our information and services. Just send us twenty complete email addresses, your tape choice, and your postal mailing address, and we’ll get your free tape out as soon as possible—to the first one hundred families!

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**2. Spotlight on *Advice for the Young Home Schooling Mother and Home Schooling With Young Children* tape sets**

**\*Announcing Our Newest Products: Two New Tape Sets for Parents---  
\*Advice for the Young Home Schooling Mother  
\*Home Schooling With Young Children**

We are thrilled to offer two new tape sets for home schooling parents---(1) Advice for the Young Home Schooling Mother and (2) Home Schooling With Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers. You can read the descriptions below for more information, but since these two sets are similar to each other, I will enumerate the differences between the two:

1. Advice...is an advice set. I took questions from a young mother and addressed these questions on tape.
2. Advice....starts with advice about babies and marriage and moves all the way up to advice for the ten to twelve year old.
3. Home Schooling With Young Children has three main age categories only—babies, toddlers, and preschoolers (including kindergarten info

too). Since this set ends with the six-year-old, I spend a lot more time on babies and toddlers than I am able to do in the Advice tape.

Advice for the Young Home School Mother includes:

Tape 1: "Advice Overview" by Donna Reish

This tape examines a child-centered home vs. a Christ-centered and parent-led home. Donna gives advice on incorporating your baby into your home school family while still enjoying that precious bundle. This tape also includes advice for maintaining the husband-wife relationship, and more.

Tape 2: "Preschoolers and Early Elementary"

This tape continues where the first one left off---incorporating the toddler and preschooler into your home school, training older children to help with the younger ones, finding time for everything, training children in diligence at young ages, dealing with interruptions, providing additional income for your family, making elementary age children responsible, and more.

Tape 3:"Advice for the Eight-Twelve Year Old"

This tape gives advice concerning the eight to twelve year old child, including making children responsible, peer influences, choosing activities, giving children a love for learning, and more.

3 hours total

Home Schooling With Young Children series includes:

Tape 1: "Babies and Toddlers"

This tape examines two extremes of parenting babies in home school circles: child centered and parent controlled. In it Donna gives a gentle balance between the two for the newborn baby---and how to keep babies and toddlers from becoming self-centered children. She explains how she and her husband gently incorporated babies and toddlers into their home school lifestyle--while still meeting the needs of the other children.

Tape 2: "Home Schooling Preschoolers and Kindergarteners"

Donna continues the parent-controlled advice for young parents and tells them how to train preschoolers and kindergarteners in character, obedience, love of learning, diligence, and more---before beginning "academics."

Tape 3: "Life in the Day of a Preschooler or Kindergartener"

Donna uses her upcoming children's book *Jonathan's Journal* to show parents of preschoolers and kindergarteners what boundaries, structure, attention, love, and learning look like in the day of her young son.

3 hours total

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### **3. Frequently Asked Questions About WBLA, CQLA, or Language Arts**

*My child gets distracted so easily, and since CQLA has all four areas of language arts (and thus requires thirty to sixty minutes per day, depending on level), how can I keep his interest while working for those long periods of time?*

As for distractions, keep your sessions short but frequent. He might be better off meeting with you for five to eight minutes in the morning and again in the evening to read aloud. He might be better off having two short language arts sessions---one in the morning and one in the afternoon---rather than having a long one all at once.

Also, be sure to mix in learning activities that utilize his strengths, such as listening to biographies or historical fiction on cassette, watching nature and science videos, etc. Do not depend on reading and even being read to exclusively for his learning. Many parents with distractible children forget that there are other avenues for learning besides sitting in one place with books and workbooks in front of the student. Do not depend on an avenue that is unusually difficult for your child for all of his learning, or he may start despising school and learning early on---something you want to avoid at all costs.

Also, help him become more responsible for his work by meeting with him on things that must be done together, then having him mark “homework” assignments with sticky notes. He should have an “independent work” time in which he copies his passage, studies his spelling words, does the vocabulary assignments, etc. During these independent sessions, he can vary what he is doing (copy the passage today, write spelling words out tomorrow, etc.). This will help his work not to be so overwhelming as it is spread out over the day.

*\*What if we do not get the whole CQLA unit done within one month?*

There are eight monthly units in one CQLA book, translating to thirty-two school weeks. Of course, most school calendars are thirty-six weeks in length. Thus, there is leeway to take longer on a monthly unit if desired. Some families spend five weeks on a monthly unit, using the fifth week to finish the original essay and read extra books about the topics introduced in the unit. Others spend the designated four weeks on each unit and use the remainder of the school year to perfect their favorite essays, read books and write book reports, or finish other subjects.

It would be better to finish only seven units in an academic year, but finish them completely than it would be to do all eight units but skip parts since all areas of language arts are interrelated in CQLA. A student will gain more from doing a unit thoroughly (and thus reaping the benefits of having all language areas interrelated) than from doing two units less thoroughly. Also, when moms skip parts of a book, we have a tendency to skip the most laborious parts! Thus, what is often skipped is the original essay and Checklist Challenge that goes with that essay. It is important that students learn to write all of the essay types in CQLA, and skipping the original essays would not help meet this goal.

#### **4. Tips for Homeschool Moms**

“On ‘Doing It All’”

At home school conferences we often get asked how we can “do it all.” People have a tendency not to believe us when I try to explain that we do not “do it all”; we let things slide, focus on the most important things, etc. Some of these thoughts can really hurt us—when we think others get it all done, and we are struggling. Thus, I will dispel all “doing it all” myths with the list below!

1. I will first of all admit that yes, our family gets TONS done. We are productive, diligent, and resourceful. We are also creative with ideas constantly spinning around in our heads. (We are NOT a lot of other things like attentive to details, neat, etc. too!) My husband is a recovering “workaholic” who puts a lot of energy into doing and serving---us, other home schoolers, and students. We are both first borns in many senses and strive to get things done. This does not mean, however, that we “get it all done.”

2. When you see someone else that “does” a lot and you feel inferior, what you don't understand is what you don't see that they do NOT do....for instance, I write a few different curriculum materials, do private tutoring, help Ray manage speech and debate in north east Indiana (and teach a class of sixty students with him), and manage our home and school our children. Plus, I spend a lot of time with our kids—and with my husband. (As in tons of time discipling and mentoring our teenagers.!)

What you don't realize is that I do NOT do daily work around the house (dishes, laundry, meal prep, daily housekeeping, etc.); I don't do much weekly type of housework (except for company preparations); I don't put my little kids in school early or teach “preschool and kindergarten” (my children usually learn to read around age eight); I don't teach Sunday School, sing in the choir, or participate in ladies' groups (although I'm strongly considering the latter; I just have to decide what I'm going to drop to add it); I don't play an instrument, shop for often or make our clothes, or craft beautiful projects (other than monthly scrapbooking sessions). I don't garden, can, freeze, dry, or otherwise put up

foods (other than freezer meals every other week). (I'm not opposed to any of that; I simply don't do it right now. Come to think of it, I am opposed to the laundry thing, but other than that, I'm not opposed to any of it!:)

So...in a nutshell, I do the priorities the Lord has led me to and my husband and I have decided upon ---but there are tons of other things I do not do. Some of them I would like to do, but I can't. It is physically impossible! I had no idea ten years ago when I was training small children to be efficient workers at home that someday I would be serving home schoolers and the diligent training of my children would not be optional but mandatory to fulfill what the Lord has given us.

3. We have long days here--and that works for our family RIGHT now, but it wouldn't have six or eight years ago! I never could have done this with toddlers and babies. We also never dreamed of doing what we do now when my husband was a plant manager in the automotive industry. He came home to spend more time with the family (by taking a much less demanding job)----and we ended up doing family ministries (through WBLA for ATI families and speech and debate) and family business (other writing projects) during his lesser hours!

I do school, discipleship, storytime, oversee daily chores, etc. from 8:00 in the morning until 4:00 most days---with two of those days including English classes for testing WBLA and speech and debate class we teach. I work from after school until dinner on my weekly list of things to do, then we have dinner and worship and it's back to work for nearly everyone. We kind of regroup at dinner, pass out assignments, and go. Right now, as I type this, the little kids are cleaning up dinner, Kayla is doing an at-home job, Cami is filling orders for customers, Ray is doing paper work for our family business with the *Picture Bible* beside him for when the little boys are done cleaning the kitchen, and I am finishing this newsletter---a month late. We work long hours because we are able to---it is the right season in life for us to be able to do that; when it wasn't that season, we didn't try to do it.

4. I'm not a perfectionist. My ten year old heads up all laundry. I wear whatever is in my closet at the time. I get frustrated and crazy because my clothes are often wrinkly and missing. He does a pretty good job and works hard, but let's face it, he's ten. (You learn to get out three pairs of socks when getting ready in the morning because you have a one in three chance of having mates together!) If we didn't put meals in the freezer every other week, we would live on frozen pizza and fast food (and have done that during rough WBLA times in the past five years!).

When we are knee deep in projects, our yard sometimes looks like the Beverly Hillbillies (before they went to CA!). Sometimes our living room looks like a tornado went through a mail room. I have lots of systems, and we do great 90% of the time keeping it all under control (with schedules, lists, charts,

and follow through), but the other 10% sometimes makes me go crazy! Then, we regroup, attack the problems and get our lives back on track. If I couldn't stand messes or projects, I couldn't do what I'm supposed to do.

5. Teaching is my gift and my love. Doing school and writing are the ways I would choose to spend everyday of my life if I could. Thus, picture how much you could get accomplished if it just so happened that you were called to do everyday the one or two things you love to do more than anything: sewing, cooking, crafting, reading, computer work, etc. Wouldn't that be great! Now, obviously, it's a strain on me often to do all that we do, but it isn't because I don't enjoy it; it's because we get our priorities out of line (work on projects day and night without reading, rocking, and talking! etc.). That's when we, once again, regroup!

6. We work well together. Notice I said "well" not perfect. We have problems just like any other family, but working and being together are two things we all enjoy, so writing, speaking, creating, etc. are what we love to do.

7. The youngest child who can handle a job does it. (We learned this at Gregg Harris' seminar fifteen years ago!) Thus, our little boys do a lot of kitchen cleaning, dishes, and laundry. Our middle child does a lot of office type work. Our older children write and edit. We train our children to do things early that people do not think a child of that age can normally do. They can!

8. We always stop to have fun. We read aloud, watch movies, play games, play outdoors, scrapbook together (females), do puzzles with the kids, have families over, and spend time with extended family. We like to sing together (at home only!), worship together, talk, and laugh. Our kids think being a part of our family is neat---even though they have to work A LOT.

9. We instill a vision for serving others in them very early. Because Ray is a server, this has trickled down to the children. They know that our goals in life are to serve others, bring people to the Lord (or draw them closer to Him), love others, and love the Lord most of all. Many times our work is burdensome, but usually there is an excitement for serving others and our family that carries over to the other members.

10. We let a lot slip. Many gals could never live with the laundry done like ours, with the yard not perfectly manicured, or tubs stacked in the living room for weeks at a time. The thought of a ten year old fixing tuna casserole for supper for the third Wednesday in a row would drive many ladies batty. I can live with it. I know I can't do everything, so I have to be willing to let things slide.

## 5. Book Review Just for You

*\*In His Hands—A Family Devotional Book*

I just recently rediscovered a book that I found a few years ago and I have been reading it for morning devotions to the boys for the past couple of months (along with one of our “staples”---*Family Bible Library, Uncle Arthur’s Bedtime Stories, or Missionary Stories With the Millers*). It is incredible and wonderful. I can’t say enough good about it, and the only thing that would make it better is for one of my older kids to have written it! (It is just the type of book that Kayla would have loved to have written.)

*In His Hands—A Family Devotional Book* is a yearly devotional with entries of one page each. Every entry begins with a Scripture then has a four to six-paragraph entry that goes along with that verse. The paragraphs all have to do with science or history---animals, rainbows, inventions, nature, scientific theories, plants, trees, people, and more. It is filled with little-known facts about all of these things---and each one is tied into a Scripture that makes you scratch your head and say, “I never knew that! What a Creator!”

My boys and I just love this book and often read two or three entries in a given morning. We are learning more about science especially than any science textbook could teach us---because it is tied to Scripture and the Lord in such a way and has such interesting tidbits of information. *In His Hands* is written by James A. and Priscilla Tucker and was published in 1999 by the Institute of Outdoor Ministry, Inc. (The Tuckers have other outdoor materials, object lesson books, and periodicals as well.) I can’t remember where I picked it up, but I’m thinking it was probably Library and Educational Services in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

## 6. To Make You Laugh; To Make You Cry; To Make You Smile; To Make You Ponder...Prose, Poetry, and Anecdotes

May brings out the dandelions in our yard, as it does any yard that is not treated. I remember when my older kids were little, and they brought dandelion bouquets in to me constantly. I used to take morning walks in a neighborhood then (since we lived on a busy highway), and instead of envying their well-manicured lawns, I always felt sorry for them. I thought it would be awful to go an entire spring without a dandelion bouquet! Now I’ve wised up some, and I secretly envy those with manicured lawns---but I still enjoy the bouquets Jackie brings me—and the promise that “there’s plenty more for the next day, too, Mommy!”

One day when Joshua was seven and Kayla and Cami were three and a half and two, I received multiple dandelion bouquets. It was such a special, wonderful day

that I didn't want to forget it. And I never have....because I wrote a poem about it that I like to reread every spring to remind me of that blessed, hectic, overwhelming time in my life. I hope it blesses you!

### Dandelions for Mother

I heard the sound, one afternoon, a noise I couldn't deny--  
"Mama," she squealed; it was my sweet two-year-old's "I want in" cry.  
I made my way to the back door, where she stood with a dandelion bunch,  
"In," she said as I opened the door, with a smile that said so much.  
"For you," she beamed proudly, holding out a dandelion prize  
I hugged her as she gave me them and scampered back outside.  
That sure was quick I thought to myself, and I turned to go back to my chores,  
I put them in a vase, as my centerpiece---I didn't know there would soon be  
more!  
"Oh Mother," I heard another sweet voice and someone opened the back screen  
door;  
It was my four-year-old, smiling from ear-to-ear, like the two-year-old had before.  
Her hands behind her back, she gleefully said, "I have a present for you!"  
I held out my hands and closed my eyes, the way she always wants me to do.  
"Surprise," she shouted, "I picked them for you because I love you so much!"  
I acted surprised, as she handed me a second dandelion bunch.  
I got a quick hug (four year olds are busy, you know), then she went on her way,  
I put them in a vase on the table; we would have two centerpieces that day.  
The next thing I knew the four-year-old was back, her hands so full once again,  
"I brought these from brother; he's guarding our fort, so now, he can't come in."  
"Oh, sweetheart," I replied to my little dear, "how thoughtfully you share,"  
"Come over here to mama's arms; let's rock in mother's chair."  
"Sorry," she said, "we're fighting the battle---the Philistines are about to attack."  
"Brother told me to give these to you, then be sure that I come right back."  
She bounced out the door like a summer breeze, and tenderly blew me a kiss--  
A sweet, long-distance one--to replace the rocking she knew I would miss.  
I got out a third vase and filled it with water and put in the brand new flowers.  
What more could a mother ask for----three bouquets within the hour!  
I always love to receive some flowers---as so many women do,  
A vase filled with roses or carnations---or perhaps a plant or two.  
I'd wait for each special occasion, with my hopes built up so high.  
Would the florist come to my house today--or would he pass me by?  
How silly I finally thought to myself; to wait for the florist's van,  
I've gotten flowers every single day---since well before spring began.  
And how wonderful these dandelions are---delivered by special hands,  
Brightening my life every spring day---as only little children can.  
And right at that moment, I realized, how vast are the endless joys,  
That come with being called "Mother" by these precious girls and boys.

## 7. In the Kitchen---Open House Tips, Ideas, and Recipes

Our graduation open house for Kayla is passed, and thanks to family and friends, it went wonderfully. I had way too much food, but this time (unlike with Joshua's four years ago), I kept good notes, so I'll be ready for Cami next year! I know this information is a little late for those of you who just went through a graduation open house, but you can save it for next time, use it for showers or receptions, etc.

I will enumerate some tips and advice below that I received from others or learned through our open house:

1. How many people? It is first hard to estimate how many people you will have, then once you think you know the number of people you will have, it is equally difficult to know how much food to have for that number. A friend gave me this information for figuring the number of guests that she received from a caterer. It was pretty close, so I thought I'd pass it on:
  - a. Start with number of invitees. (We used the number of invitations times four to get this figure. Some families will have only two and some will have ten, so this seemed to be a middle ground.)  
 $100 \text{ invitations} \times 4 \text{ people each} = 400 \text{ guests invited}$
  - b. Subtract the number of guests you know will absolutely not be coming to your open house because of distance, health, age, their own open houses, etc.  
 $400 \text{ guests} - 100 \text{ we knew couldn't come} = 300$
  - c. Figure your number of guests on this remaining number. You can plan for 75% of this number attending a graduation open house and 65% of this number attending a wedding reception.  
 $300 \text{ guests remaining} \times 75\% = 225 \text{ guests}$   
(We had around 200, so this was a fairly close calculation.)
2. Consider the time of your event when planning the food. Our open house was (1) directly following the graduation and (2) during the supper hour. Thus, people had not snacked or eaten for a while—and they expected supper. A 2:00 to 5:00 reception can get by with finger foods better than a five pm party.
3. Enlist help from others. I had six people volunteer to make food—and I forwarded them my recipes and amounts and let them do it! Better yet, start a graduation co-op where each member makes something for the others' open houses for each graduate. I have been in a graduation co-op for both of my graduates (and plan to for the next five!), and it is so nice. Also, when another gal has a graduate, it is just no big deal to whip up a recipe for two hundred for her either---especially when you know how helpful it was to you during yours.

4. Stick with the familiar. A friend kept telling me this, and I kept telling her all the cool things I wanted to have! In the end, she was right. The things that were eaten most were the things people were familiar with—the potato chips, chocolate chip cookies, cheese balls, and dip.
5. We used more cups and drinks than I expected. I planned for one cup per person, and we ran out. Keep in mind the season and the heat.
6. You can get inexpensive votive candles, flowers, balloons, bowls, paper products, and other decorations at Dollar Tree and Big Lots.
7. If you will be serving right after the graduation, consider having pre-made sandwiches rather than sandwich fixings. We made up little ham and cheese sandwiches ahead of time and heated them in the oven until they were warmed and the cheese was melted. Since we had a large number of people come directly from the graduation, it would have been backlogged to have them making up sandwiches as they came through.
8. Keep in mind the large amounts of food you are baking/cooking when figuring times. Our potato casseroles were still cold in the middle after the amount of time it takes to bake two of them at home. We needed twice the amount of time for the huge ovens and several pans of casserole. Thankfully, we started plenty early, but large amounts of food take large amounts of time!
9. Find ways to save money that do not require large amounts of time. I know that sounds like an oxymoron since saving money usually requires extra time, but we found some ways to save money without spending a great deal of time:
  - a. Buy paper products at Dollar Tree. They are half the price of the part stores (or even less than half price!). There are three Dollar Tree Stores within thirty minutes of me, so next time I will probably just plan to go to two or three of them until I get the number of plates, etc. and the colors I need.
  - b. Serving punch and water or lemonade and water is one of the biggest savings we found overall (at least a hundred dollars). By not having cans of soda or bottled water---or coffee fixings (which wouldn't add that much), we cut our beverage expenses quite a bit.
  - c. Choose less expensive meats. We served meatballs, sausage rounds, and little hot ham and cheese sandwiches (we call them hamaramas). We got the meatballs for half price at Meijer, and the other two we got at the Amish store for an average of \$1.50 per pound. This is significantly cheaper than chicken breasts or deli meats---and since these items are such a large part of the menu, will yield a big savings. (Also by having the sandwiches made up ahead of time, we saved money over having a meat and cheese tray, which people may use more liberally. We used 1 ½ oz of ham and ¾ of a cheese slice per each mini hamarama (on a dinner roll).
  - d. Forgo the mixed nuts and just serve peanuts.
  - e. Make your own cakes. We were blessed to have my daughter-in-law's mom come to help Kayla do the final decorating of the cakes,

but by Kayla making her cakes herself, we figure we saved at least a hundred dollars again.

Now for some recipes. I am including several recipes that I have used for others' showers and open houses too. Some of these are less affordable than others; some are quicker than others. Each one has its own explanation, but overall each recipe shoots **for feeding a crowd of two hundred people with a complete menu of finger foods** (i.e. the meatballs alone do not feed two hundred, but when combined with sandwiches, they do) and cake with punch. I know this will make this newsletter particularly lengthy, but since I already did all the figuring and explanations, I may as well pass them on to others to use! Note that the recipes are written as I write them for my children; thus, you may or may not use the same whisk beater on your Kitchen Aid, etc. as it says in the instructions.

### **Stained Glass Jello Squares**

These stained glass jello squares are a step up from jello jigglers! They are beautiful and delicious. By using three flavors of jello, you can have any color combination/flavor combination you desire. They add color to any open house/reception table. Have two people do the exact recipe below (so you'll need twice the ingredients and pans) at the same time to feed two hundred (with other items, of course). Be sure you have plenty of refrigerator space for while they're setting up; you can stack them (if using foil pans) once they're set.

Note: The colors/flavors of jello may be altered to get the colors and look you want for open houses, patriotic events, spring parties, holiday gatherings, etc.

12 envelopes Knox gelatin (24 packets total)  
9 oz. grape jello (or blueberry ?) (18 oz total)  
9 oz. lemon jello (18 oz total)  
9 oz. lime jello (18 oz total)  
9 c. boiling water (fill huge pan with water; boil and dip out of as you're making it) (18 cups total)  
3 c. cream (6 cups total) (not half and half)

1. Combine four envelopes of the Knox and one of the colors of jello (the one you want on the bottom).
2. Add 3 cups boiling water and stir until dissolved.
3. Pour in 1 cup of the cream
4. Pour equally into 2 9 x 13 foil pans or glass baking dishes (4 total).
5. Chill until firm.
6. Repeat with next two flavors, ending with the color you want on top.
7. Be sure each layer is firm before adding the next one.
8. Chill until firm.

9. Cut in squares.
10. Makes a large batch of four total 9 x 13 foil pans.

### **Hawaiian Meatballs**

I had more questions about this item than any other at Kayla's graduation open house. Nobody could believe that I made something with sauerkraut (neither could I!). In spite of the strange ingredients, these are delicious.

Note: You may put this over smoked sausage rounds or mini smokies or hot dogs--- or even over individual meatloaves for an entrée.

For a family:

Three pounds of cooked meatballs, sausage, or meatloaves

1# can sauerkraut, drained (process or chop it a bit if the pieces are big)

1 can whole cranberry sauce

3/4 cup brown sugar

6 oz. chili sauce (Meijer brand is cheapest - I have subbed ketchup or BBQ sauce)

1. Combine all but meatballs in big bowl. (Be sure chunks of sauerkraut are cut up.)
2. Pour over meatballs and/or sausages in baking dish.
3. Bake at 250' for an hour and a half to two hours or until sauce ingredients are bubbly and mixed. (Increase to 350' if meatballs are uncooked.)

For a group of two hundred or so when serving other meats:

20 pounds of cooked meatballs and/or sausage or smokies

7 (1#) cans of sauerkraut, drained and chopped more fully

7 cans whole cranberry sauce

5 cups brown sugar

45 ounces of chili sauce

1. Combine all but meatballs in big bowl. (Be sure chunks of sauerkraut are cut up.)
2. Pour over meatballs and/or sausages in big roaster.
3. Turn roaster on 250' for three plus hours or until sauce ingredients are bubbly and mixed. (Increase to 350' if meatballs are uncooked.)

## **Pistachio Pudding**

This dish is pretty when you want anything green—or just color. It is also a hit at Christmas time. Plus, it is the simplest jello/pudding recipe I have.

5 (3.4 oz) packages pistachio flavor instant pudding mix  
5 (8 oz) containers frozen cool whip  
5 (20 oz) cans crushed pineapple WITH juices  
5 cups chopped pecans  
7 1/2 cups miniature marshmallows

1. In huge bowl, combine pudding mix and cool whip.
2. Stir until well blended.
3. Add pineapple (DO NOT DRAIN), pecans, and marshmallows.
4. Stir well.
5. Refrigerate until ready to serve.
6. Serves two hundred with other items.

## **Mexican Layered Dip**

This is one of the three dishes that I served at Joshua's graduation and Kayla's graduation—and also made for my daughter-in-law's brothers' wedding reception and graduation open house. People really like it. This gets nearly entirely eaten when feeding two hundred. We do not use guacamole on ours because people either love guac or hate it---and if they hate it, they bypass this dish entirely if it has it. We serve it with tortilla chips (though dippable Fritos are even better, but too expensive!) and salsa on the side. We cut in various proportions for smaller occasions.

5 pounds ground beef                      3 lg cans refried beans  
48 oz sour cream                          6 medium green onions  
2 1/2 pounds shredded lettuce for tacos  
2 1.2 pounds of finely shredded cheese  
2 cups taco seasoning mix

1. Cook and drain ground beef. Add 1 1/2 cup taco seasoning and 3 1/2 cups water. Simmer for 15-20 minutes (or longer) until flavors are mixed. Drain extra water.
2. Mix 1/2 cup taco seasoning mix with 48 oz of sour cream (by hand is fine).
3. Layer ingredients (equal proportions) in the following way in either three 9 x 13 casserole dishes or 3 decorative, glass or plastic plates (over sized dinner sized)

with lips on the edges (or four of the smallest Gordon's Food Service round trays):

1. Refried beans
  2. Sour cream mixture
  3. Ground beef mixture
  4. Snipped green onion tops
  5. Finely shredded cheese
4. At serving time, sprinkle shredded lettuce over all and serve with chunky salsa on the side. Sprinkle more cheese on top of all of that for a more colorful topping.
5. Optional: Place layer of guacamole between refried beans and sour cream.
6. Makes three 9 x 13 glass baking dishes; enough for 200 guests with other items.

### **Monterey Chicken Bites**

These sound like a ton of work! It's not really as bad as it sounds with a group working together! We sometimes buy the precooked bacon at the wholesale club when making these. (It's too expensive to do it that way and buy it elsewhere.) People \*love\* these, and they are unusual; your average open house won't have them, so you can serve something unique. We also make these for an entree for guests. When we do that, we keep the breasts whole, wrap bacon around them or lay the pieces on top of each breast, and sprinkle the cheese on. I use these a lot at showers, etc, but I did not use them at Kayla's open house as I was trying to keep the meat prices down between a buck and a buck and a half per pound. This is a more expensive dish, even when breasts are on sale for half price.

8 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts

Favorite marinade for 8 pounds chicken

120-160 slices of bacon

3 pounds shredded Monterey Jack-Colby cheese (slices might stay on better but are hard to fold around the "bites" unless you use cheese produce like American slices; then they're not true "Monterey" bites!)

120-160 decorative toothpicks

1. Tenderize all chicken with meat mallet, while working the marinade/seasoning into the breasts. Refrigerate overnight or for time needed for marinade. (Ours is a thirty minute marinade, so we refrigerate every couple of pieces in a systematic order, then when last ones are tenderized, first ones will probably be ready to start grilling or broiling.)
2. If using uncooked bacon, cook all bacon. (Favorite method: Place foil on cookie sheets; line up pieces of bacon and "oven" fry at 400' until cooked but limp.)

3. Grill or broil chicken breasts until cooked through, but not overcooked as you will be reheating later, and it makes them tough if overcooked at this stage. I prefer barely done here.
4. When chicken breasts are cool enough, cut each one up into six larger-than-bite-sized pieces per breast (unless breasts are unusually large or small).
5. Wrap each chicken breast with a slice of bacon, and secure it with a toothpick. (Sometimes we wrap a piece and a half around each one.) Place in a glass 9 x 13 (if you'll be reheating in micro) or foil pans (if you'll be reheating in oven).
6. Once all chicken bites are in place in their final heating pan, sprinkle cheese over each bite, pressing it into the bites as much as possible to keep the cheese in place (may not want to do this final step until just before serving as the shredded cheese falls off easily).
7. If not using immediately, but desire to have finished product, bake in medium oven (350 °) until cheese is melted or heat in micro until cheese is melted. Do not overcook here; simply melt cheese.
8. If using immediately, heat through until cheese is melted and bites are hot.
9. Serve with ranch dip, honey mustard dip, or dressing, if desired.

### **Un Mexican Haystacks**

This is a ham salad variation that is a real hit everywhere we take it. Sometimes we make the mixture two to three days ahead of time, then assemble just before the event.

- 40 dinner-plate-sized flour tortillas
- 3 pounds cream cheese
- 1 1/3 cups Miracle Whip
- 2 pounds ground ham
- 12 medium sized green onions
- 2 medium sized green peppers
- 6 Tablespoons worcestershire sauce
- 4 teaspoons tabasco or "hot" sauce
- 4 teaspoons onion powder
- 4 cups chopped nuts (walnuts or pecans)

Ham grinding instructions for my older kids (use same method as for ham loaves mixture):

- A. Hook up the food processor to the Kitchen Aid with the shredder blade.
- B. Cut the ham into 3 inch chunks.
- C. Put bowl beneath the chute.
- D. Run the ham chunks through one at a time.
- E. Stop to dig skin out, etc. as needed.
- F. Keep fingers back!
- G. OR GO TO BUTCHER AND BUY HAM ALREADY GROUND!!!! tee hee

Recipe instructions:

1. Cream cream cheese and Miracle Whip in Kitchen Aid with whisk beater until creamy.
2. Chop green peppers very tiny and snip green onion tops fairly small. Chop nuts very finely as well.
3. Add all ingredients to Kitchen Aid bowl except for tortillas and two of the cups of chopped nuts.
4. Mix until well blended. If mixture does not seem spreadable, add cream or milk and keep blending until it can be spread with spatula over tortillas.
5. Lay one tortilla on a plate, large cutting board, or cookie trays (be sure it can fit in fridge to chill).
6. Spread mixture over first tortilla, making sure you spread all the way to the edges. (Use 1/4 cup of the mixture for each layer.)
7. Continue this for ten tortillas all stacked with mixture between each tort. End with wet mixture on top.
8. Immediately sprinkle 1/4 cup finely chopped nuts over the top.
9. Repeat this for all four sets of ten torts, making four total haystacks.
10. Refrigerate until ready to cut and put on serving plates.
11. At serving time, cut into 2 x 2 inch (or approximately) pieces and place toothpick through all layers. Place on serving trays.

### **Easy, Yummy Fruit “Salad”**

This is an easy answer to the “fruit at the open house question.” While not as beautiful as fresh fruit with dips, this recipe is fast, inexpensive, and available year ‘round. It’s a very sweet fruit “salad,” and people seem to like it a lot.

- 1 (#10) can large chunked fruit (type for fruit salad; not cocktail)
- 1 32 oz can of pineapple chunks
- 5 apples, peeled and cut in chunks
- 2 pounds strawberries, stemmed and halved
- 6 bananas, cut up (optional)
- 2 pounds grapes, washed
- 2 pounds walnuts or pecan halves (optional)
- 1 to 2 cans pineapple juice, as needed for sauce
- 4-5 large packages instant vanilla pudding mix

1. Chill cans overnight unless you will have a lot of time and space to chill all before serving.
2. Peel apples, cut in large chunks, and toss in lemon juice or orange juice to keep from browning
3. Stem and half strawberries.
4. Wash and stem grapes.
5. Save bananas until serving time.

6. Drain both number ten cans and combine fruit in large bowl (not the one you'll serve in).
7. Mix dry, instant pudding mixes with drained juice with wire whisk until no longer lumpy. Add more pineapple juice from the two optional cans as needed to get mixture right consistency.
8. Pour "sauce" over the cans of fruit in large bowl. Stir well.
9. Add rest of fruit and nuts, except for bananas, folding carefully.
10. At serving time, fold in bananas, pour into serving dishes, and serve. (If you are concerned about having a lot of leftovers, I would omit the bananas—or just add them to each bowl you set out to serve. The bananas make it less sturdy for eating leftovers for days afterwards.)

### **Easy Cheesy Chili Dip**

I just got this recipe from my beautician who says it is simple and a real hit---also much less expensive than the Velveeta version of chili cheese dip that I often make. Not sure exactly how many it feeds, but I would think a ton (two to three hundred?) as those cans of cheese sauce alone seem to go on forever.

2 #10 cans of cheese sauce or nacho cheese sauce  
 1 #10 can of Hormel chili

1. Combine ingredients.
2. Heat through.
3. Serve. (How simple is that?)

### **Simple Cheese Spreads or Balls**

This recipe yields three one-pound cheese balls or three pounds of spread. It is simple yet good.

6 bars cream cheese---3 lbs (or equal ounce for ounce with the canned cheese you will use)  
 6 jars of Kraft processed cheese---3 lbs (or equal to the amount of cream cheese; you can use American, cheddar, or other)  
 3-6 green onions (depending on how onion-y you like)  
 1 ½ to 3 green peppers (again, depending on how much green pepper you like)  
 3 TBSP Worcestershire sauce  
 Dash hot pepper sauce or two  
 Chopped bacon, dried beef, or nuts for coating balls

1. Cream bars of cream cheese in mixer. (Easier to cream if at room temperature.)
2. Add processed cheese jars.
3. Snip green onions into tiny pieces with scissors. Add to cheeses.
4. Cut green pepper very finely. Add to cheeses.
5. Add seasonings.
6. Chill, then form into three one pound balls, and roll in chopped bacon, chopped dried beef, or chopped pecans.
7. Also may serve as a spread with meat or nuts sprinkled over top.

### **Easy, Yummy Punch**

I used a simple punch recipe that was sweet and delicious. The refilling process is easy that way---and most people like it. Others I know used lemonade, which is the same idea---simple and inexpensive. We had purple and green table wear and decorations, so this green punch looked great beside the purple and green cake. You could easily use the red Hawaiian punch with pink sherbet if you didn't want the green look. In total, we used nearly seven batches of punch (more than fifteen gallons), but it was our only beverage except for water.

- 1 gallon green Hawaiian punch
- 1 2-liter lemon lime soda or ginger ale
- 1 pint to one quart lime sherbet

Mix together and serve!

### **8. Get Connected: Internet Site Review for Home Life Ministries**

Many of you using CQLA or WBLA ask us for more resources to go with your language arts curriculum. This month's internet site review will help you with that area. It is called Home Life Ministries - Home of the Character Journal. It is a web site that sells character related materials, offers a free character newsletter to help you teach character, and offers the Character Journal. Check it out this summer to supplement your *Character Quality Language Arts* or *Wisdom Booklet Language Arts* studies. The site is <http://www.hlm.org/>

## 9. This and That: Thoughts from TFT

### \*Summer Sanity

Several years ago I wrote an article for *The Teaching Home* magazine entitled "Summer Sanity." I can't find the article today, but my thinking on summer hasn't changed any since that time: **No other time in our children's lives (other than during their school years) will they be able to do absolutely nothing for three months.** In other words, when we allow our children to play day and night, stay up half the night, sleep until noon, not follow a routine, and "hang out" for three months, we are not training them for their futures. We are instead training them to be slothful, to be disrespectful of the time God has given them, to "live for" breaks (and we know as adults breaks do not come as often or as long as they do for our children), and more.

What is the solution to this "summer insanity"? I would say "summer school," but because of the nature of our lifestyles, parents need summer breaks from school even more than the kids---and not breaks to play all summer but breaks to get other things done! ☺ The following are some suggestions that we have used throughout the years to put the summer to good use:

1. Maintain a general routine and schedule. Kids still go to bed at close to the same times; they still have their morning routines to complete; they still have certain days they do the meals; they still have daily chores. The biggest differences in our summer are that I do not meet with them on all of their subjects, and they do not do all of their "normal school."
2. For younger children (fourth grade and under), keep skills alive by doing math drill pages, journaling, doing *Daily Grams*, reading, etc. Primary aged children lose many skills throughout the summer when no school is done at all. This is the reason that schools spend the first two months or so recouping the lost skills. Your elementary children do not have to "re-do" part of last year's school every fall if you build the practicing of these skills into their summer schedule. Now, you do not have to "do" school with them, nor do they have to learn "new" concepts all summer. Simply practicing what they have learned will keep old concepts fresh. I have handled this a number of ways: (1) get those "summer" drill books from the wholesale club or teacher's supply store and have them do one math and one "reading" or "language" page each day; (2) get a computer cd of fun math and fun language practice and have them do it for thirty minutes each day; (3) have them re-do an easy book (I

am having my third grader do the level below his level of CQLA on his own during the summer.); (4) use Calculadders (available from Providence Project and other suppliers) and Daily Grams (from the makers of *Easy Grammar*, I believe) as quick, pain-free daily drills; (5) do a summer reading program from a library or create your own; (6) assign certain “summer school” books that the student must read from for thirty minutes a day; etc.

3. Focus on one subject that the student needs extra help on or has gotten behind on (for older students, especially) and have him do that for summer school. Because we have written thousands and thousands of pages of language arts texts throughout the past five years, our students have often had to test multiple years of language arts in any given year. Because of this, they have gotten behind on math; thus, all three of our older school aged children are doing a year of math this summer. It’s relatively pain-free without the additional subjects screaming at them to be completed, and they will be closer to their levels when school begins in the fall.
4. Use the summer for household projects. A friend just emailed me to tell me all of the “spring cleaning” that she and her two children were getting accomplished. I immediately became jealous as I am spending most of the summer writing and editing! I am, however, assigning a pair of children each day to tackle a closet, a drawer, etc. for an hour a day (a “biggie” paired with a “little”). When children have the entire day to do whatever, there’s plenty of time to help get the household back on track
5. Use the summer to teach children new skills. I love summer! To me it means a chance to teach the children all the things I want them to be able to do in order to make our next school year run smoothly. I remember spending an entire summer teaching my older children how to do laundry when they were ten, seven, and six. They were such sweet, eager learners. I made color-coded charts and worked with them everyday on gathering, sorting, washing, drying, hanging up, putting away, etc. We continue to learn new skills in the summer. I’ll teach all of our school aged kids crock pot cookery this summer. Kayla will teach the next two girls how to grill.

Josiah will learn how to make bread. A couple of the kids will learn new outdoor skills---trimming the yard and trimming the hedges. We can be more relaxed with our time and actually teach those skills as opposed to feeling like I always have to assign jobs to those who already know them due to not having enough time to teach the skills.

6. Take advantage of summer programs offered. My older children participated in arts programs offered by art councils, summer reading programs, little league, and soccer leagues. My older kids have offered camps for young ladies, music “day camp” for children, elementary and middle school speech workshops, and more. This summer my kids will learn from others via debate camp, sign language camp, sci tech studios (at Science Central), and more. We’ve already been to the national speech and debate tournament in California, where our students learn from just watching more advanced students. With this suggestion, I have a couple of warnings: (1) Beware of filling your students’ summers with so many activities that you spend all of your summer running and have no time to do the things you need or want to get done; (2) Choose summer activities carefully; everything looks good and is probably fun, educational, and beneficial—but are they the best ways to spend your summer? ; (3) Watch out for too much peer influence; it’s the strangest thing how we keep our children home with us all school year in order to protect them from too many negative influences, then we send them off to everything all summer in which they are with peers just as much or more than if they had gone to school!; (4) Do not misinterpret summer activities as “family time.” I’ve done the little league and soccer program routine; Ray ran our city’s entire little league program during college; sitting at ball games in different parts of the bleachers watching kids play ball is great for socializing and exercise (for those playing!), but it is not family time. If it’s family time you’re looking for, plan your own sports and activities and spend time together.
7. Read, read, read! I’m a big fan of summer reading; can you tell? My older children used to be the top readers in their age groups during summer reading contests at our local library. On hot afternoons when kids don’t want to be outside (and if you don’t have a pool!), have your children read or read to them or with them. I know our

summer reading throughout Joshua and Kayla's formative years contributed greatly to their large background of knowledge. If you have reluctant readers, set goals for them. Ray signs our family up each summer for the Wizard's Baseball summer reading program in which our family gets free tickets for reading so much. In addition, we do the library's summer reading program where more prizes are awarded. We also use "talking books" while we do summer cleaning and freezer meals. We've already done *Mr. Popper's Penguins*, *Charlotte's Web*, and *101 Dalmations* (chapter book) so far this summer. Lastly, I offer a prize (last year was "Build-a-Bear"; other years have been all day outings or new books) for so much summer reading. I still like to wake my little boys up (even during summer) with devotional type books that I read to them as they awaken. Use your summer for reading!

8. Take time for discipleship. Summer is often equated with fun, and I am not opposed to fun; however, summer is also an ideal time to spend time one on one with your children. We have done what we call "day away" for three of the past four summers in which each child got to choose whatever he or she wanted to do with Mom for a full day all alone (within reason price-wise). Some chose Goodwill shopping; I spent a half day in the Indiana room at the library with Kayla one summer (and didn't even take my work in!); we've done the zoo, putt-putt golf, afternoon matinees, swimming, biking, and Amishville. We have fun on these days, but mostly we talk....then talk...then talk some more.
9. Do something you want to do! This summer I have a full schedule of writing and editing, in addition to the things I have with my own kids, but I want to be sure to scrapbook every other week or so—after all, it's summer!

☺

## 5. Article from Training for Triumph

Kayla and Cami, along with their partner-in-ministry and friend Lindsay Smith, recently held their "second annual" retreat for young ladies ages twelve through sixteen, Called, Chosen, and Faithful (CCF). They saw the Lord work wonderfully in the lives of fourteen young ladies as they challenged the girls to closer walks with the Lord, better relationships with their families, purity, and service. Below is Cami's testimony of this event. (Hopefully, in a month or so, Cami will have another testimony of her work with disabled children at Joni and Friends and deaf children at deaf camp. Watch this spot for encouraging words!)

## Testimony From Called, Chosen, and Faithful 2005

### **“We asked God for great things, He did even more...”**

If I don't start writing this soon, I will totally forget about all that God has done. This is my testimony of CCF 2005.

If you don't know what CCF is, it's a camp for young ladies ages 12-16 years old that my sister Kayla; a friend, Lindsay Smith; and I created last year. It's based off the verse in Revelation that says, "He is king of Kings and lord of Lords, and those who are with Him are called, chosen and faithful." CCF stands for Called, Chosen, and Faithful.

Last year was our first CCF and there were eleven girls at the camp. This year there were seventeen. At CCF we have sessions where we as leaders get to share with the girls what God has taught us.

A short overview of CCF this year would be that, "We asked for God to do great things, He did even more." The overview is that God is good, so good, and He showed me more and more of His faithfulness. My faith has been stretched, and I feel a lot more bold in my faith. God does answer prayers and He wants to show Himself strong in His people's lives!

Ok, now the long story. The Thursday before CCF the leaders met together and prayed in the shelter house at the State Park. We prayed over everything from the activities to the sessions; we gave it all to God and asked that He would take them and bless them. One thing I remember about our time of prayer there was praying over each of the girls and asking that God would prepare their hearts. We also prayed for each other as leaders, for servant's hearts, and wisdom for what we should say. This united us leaders and helped to prepare us for what was to come.

Another prayer I remember was that God would take over. I don't think we quite understood what we were asking when we asked God to take over. When God takes over, He really takes over! Anyway, at this time we didn't know what God wanted to do, but we were willing and ready.

Sunday before CCF my family and I attended church together. The pastor preached about God's vision and God's will. He said that too many times we pray for what we want and what we want to happen instead of asking for God's vision. He challenged everyone to ask God for His vision and pray in agreement with that.

Sunday night I was working on all of my sessions. I really wondered what God wanted me to say. I knew the basics of what I wanted to share what God had been teaching me, but I felt like something was missing. So, I got on my knees and asked God what His vision for CCF was. No, there wasn't lightening or a voice verbally speaking, but I felt like God gave me three things for CCF:

1. That the girls would know that they are Princesses to Me, and live like who they are. Girls who are not afraid of what others think of them. My daughters who walk with Me holding my hand and come to me with their fears and joys, come to Me crying and laughing.
2. Girls who have a solid, standing firm, faithful relationship. Faithful to Me. Daughters who will hold their ground against evil things of the world.
3. Girls who light up their worlds. I want to rekindle their love for Me.

When God gave me these things, I felt like it was more than I could ever ask for! How could God do all of these things? Was God really saying these things over CCF? I just trusted and prayed that God would bring them all to pass.

Monday morning, the leaders met together and began working on the notebooks and putting everything together. We went shopping and got all the food. It was a long day, but a good day. We got home around 11:00 pm.

Tuesday morning was busy packing and getting everything ready. The girls were coming at 3:00 so we had to pack everything and get it to the State Park. Lindsay, Kayla and I ate lunch at the Shelter house and talked over everything one more time before the girls came. I shared with Lindsay and Kayla what the Lord had told me. They said that they totally agree and felt that the Lord was telling them the same things. We all were getting excited!

Back to the Smith's house to get the girls! We went back to their house, tired of all the work, but excited about what God was going to do. Around 3:15 all the girls got there and we pulled out of the Smith's house. We had orientation and then let the girls set up their tents and make their dinner.

That night we had two sessions. One about choosing to be a flower, instead of trying to be like a rock. It was a parallel to being what God has called us to be, instead of trying to be something else. Our second session I gave. It was about different kinds of Christians and how God hates luke-warmness. He wants sold-out Christians. This session ended with prayer time on our knees. God is good!

Wednesday was a fun and full day. We had sessions in the morning and then we packed lunches and went canoeing. It was lots of fun and everyone stayed safe. That afternoon we had another session and then some crafts and other activities. We also had tent times, when we got to spend time with the girls in our tents. I was encouraged with what the girls had to share about what they had been learning during the sessions.

That night Lindsay and I had two sessions that went together about sin and temptation. We were really getting excited about it. We decided that we were going to make an altar up front with two picnic tables in the shelter house.

Before the sessions we had a great time of praise and worship. I spoke first about how bad sin is and that when we have sin it separates us from fellowship with Jesus. Lindsay spoke about temptation. At the end of the sessions we opened up the altar and told the girls that they could come up to the altar and write down any sin they have committed and smash it up and put it in the bucket we had up front. The altars were full! There were tears and freedom that was coming. After a time of prayer and singing some songs, we went down to the fire together and Kayla dumped the papers with sins written on it. It was a very serious thing, and a very powerful experience. We told the girls that the fire had nothing to do with God forgiving their sins; it was just a reminder that when we ask God to forgive our sins, they are gone and gone for good.

Around the campfire we sang and prayed. We told the girls if they wanted the leaders to pray with them we were open. After this, what I truly believe is that the devil was not happy! God was winning and His daughters were being set free from sin! What took place for the rest of the evening is kind of a blur to me.

Kayla and Lindsay were busy with girls praying with them and for them and just being there for them. That left me with the other thirteen girls. This is when everything went crazy. I like to call it, "The Attack of the Raccoons." Honestly, the raccoons were terrible. They were up in the trees above our heads fighting they were under our tables while we were trying to have a campfire. The girls were so scared of them and they were running around and screaming and the raccoons were not even afraid of them! Looking back, it's kind of funny, the girls were yelling and screaming and one girl was so scared she jumped on my back and I was carrying her around! It was bad.

Anyway, I told the girls since it was late and the raccoons were so bad, let's just go to bed. We started packing up the food to put it back into the van. (We used the van as a storage place for the coolers and all the tubs of food.) The girls started helping me, and we realized that the van was locked and all the keys were inside of it!

We didn't lock the van, and we don't know how it happened. The van getting locked, the attack of the raccoons, and lots of other things went wrong. It was like the devil was trying to discourage us and defeat us. Finally, we got all the girls to bed, and Dad came to get the food in our other van and was going to get another key for us in the morning.

Lindsay, Kayla and I got together to talk and pray. We were going to go by the fire, but there were three raccoons by our fire, so we went to the warm bathrooms. We talked and all told each other what had been going on. Kayla and

Lindsay agreed with me that there was some Spiritual warfare going on. We all called our parents and asked them to pray. We needed wisdom and we needed strength. We were all tired and felt worn out.

Kayla mentioned that we should feel “honored” that the devil was fighting so hard against what God was doing. That night I didn’t feel “honored,” but I wasn’t about to let the devil get me discouraged because there was so much good happening.

The next morning I spent some time praying and asking God for strength. I knew that we had some more very important sessions that night about dedication and giving God your life, talents, strengths, and weaknesses. Although I was excited about it, I was kind of worried too. What if what happened Wednesday night happened again? I pulled out my Bible and began reading in Isaiah my chapter for the day. I couldn’t believe what I read!

“Behold, I will again do a marvelous work among this people.” Isaiah 29:14a

Was it true? Did God really want to do another marvelous work in our small group of girls? My eyes teared up as I prayed that God would again touch us. I was ready! I couldn’t wait for the evening session. God is good!

The day went well. There were sessions on relationships and on family members. The girls were getting excited as they made plans for things that they could do when they got home to bless their brothers and sisters.

That night before sessions, I talked to Kayla and Lindsay and shared with them what God had given me that morning. Kayla said that she agreed. Later she also told me that God had given her two words, “Battle, Victory.” Later, she realized that God was saying that the first night was a night of battle and the second night would be a night of victory. God is so good!

The sessions began and the girls were encouraged that God could do great things with their lives. In between we had a time of praise and worship. I’ll never forget singing, “Open the Eyes of my Heart.” It was a sweet time of expressing our love for our King.

I shared with the girls how in the Old Testament there was a temple that was very important to them. The temple was where God was. The New Testament says that we are the temple of the Holy Ghost. Solomon was finally able to build the temple, and when it was completed they dedicated the temple, “so that all men on the earth might know that God is God.” I told the girls that God wants to do the same with our lives. He wants us to give Him our talents, gifts, strengths, weakness, so that He can take them and show the whole world that He is God.

We opened up the altar and encouraged the girls to come forward and give God their lives, their talents, whatever they felt led to give. Again, the altars were

filled. Lindsay and I sang, "Come, just as you are." All I can say, is again God is good!

Once the girls were done praying, we began to worship. We sang some great songs. One I remember is "God of Wonders." I told the girls that God is a God of Wonders and that He will take what they give Him to glorify Himself.

There was a surprise waiting for the girls once we were done. Mr. Stringer (Lindsay's pastor) bought all the girls some pizza. Everyone enjoyed this late night snack. There was still one more surprise waiting for the girls.

We all met up by the shelter house and turned out the lights. We gave each of the girls a candle that was not lit. We all made a circle and began singing, "Go Light Your World." As we sang we began to light each other's candles. Soon everyone was holding a lit candle singing out, "Carry your candle, run to the weary, confused and worn." It was an awesome time. We next sang, "Pass It On." Then we went around and prayed. All the girls prayed as well as the leaders. It was so sweet to hear the girls talk to their King. When that was done no one wanted to blow out their candles! We all did it together and told the girls to take their candles home and remember what we did there.

We ended the day with playing a game in one of the tents with all the girls. It was fun and we all got to fellowship together one last time.

The next morning we tore everything down. The tents were all packed and the girls took lots of pictures. We all gathered together for a parting session. We started with praise and worship. Then Kayla shared for a few minutes. She spoke about the difference between being touched by God and being changed. Her prayer was that the girls would be changed by what happened at CCF, not just touched. Lindsay shared next about being chosen by God and living faithfully for Him.

While they were speaking I was preparing what I was supposed to share. I felt like I should share with the girls what God gave me as His vision for CCF. I also had a quote from *God Chasers for Teens* about pursuing God. I was looking for something else to share and I turned in my book to the chapter entitled, "Don't Date God." That's just what I was supposed to share!

I shared with the girls God's vision and how He wants them to walk with Him and live like they are princesses. I shared that He wants them to be faithful and strong, and lastly that He wants them to light up their world. There should be something different about us.

When I talked about us being faithful and strong I shared this quote from *God Chasers*, "There is something that makes us afraid of the commitment that comes with real intimacy with God. If all you want are the thrills and chills, then

all you ever wanted to do is 'date' God. God is tired of us coming to get our thrills from Him without putting on the ring of commitment. They just want the flowers and the jewelry. The last time I checked, He was still looking for a bride, not for a girlfriend; one who will 'stick' with Him."

I challenged the girls to go all the way with God. God has called us, and He has chosen us, and now we must be faithful. I closed with prayer.

Then we all came together again and made a circle and prayed and sang. God was so there! I just fell to my knees as we sang. He is so good! He is so Holy! I was and am overwhelmed by His goodness to me.

As we closed and Kayla shared with the girls the phrase, "Go with God." Kayla said that we are not all parting by ourselves, but we are literally "going with God."

We packed up and went back to the Smith's house and the parents came back for the girls. Once the girls were gone, Lindsay, Kayla, and I talked and prayed. We were all overwhelmed at what God did! As Lindsay put it, "We are amazed at what God did that we saw, can you imagine all the seeds that were planted and all the commitments that were made that we didn't see?" That was a humbling thought.

My faith has been stretched. God gave me His Vision and I really believe that He made it happen. He is a God of Wonders! A God of the impossible! I am so ready for the rest of the summer. I think that this is just the beginning! I can not wait! We asked God to do great things and He did more than we could have ever imagined! Now I feel that I can ask for things that seem impossible, not that He will always answer yes or always in the time that we want, but just that He does care and He does listen.

The full altars, the new friendships, the new commitments, the worship, and the good tent times are times I will not forget. All I can say is, "We asked God for great things, and He did so much more!"

Cami Reish has been serving homeschoolers ever since she was old enough to set up chairs for support group meetings here in Bluffton, Indiana. She has written or co-written three books for Training for Triumph---*Speak Up!* speech curriculum for elementary and middle school students; *Speak Up!* teacher's guide, and *Women of Wisdom* educational coloring book. Cami enjoys serving the Lord through her various ministries---keeping up on household work while we write for ATI; letter and card writing; writing and typesetting a free monthly newsletter for girls ages eight through fourteen (for five years now); leading and teaching at Called, Chosen, and Faithful; speaking to home schoolers and young people; offering low cost speech classes for elementary and middle school students; and more. This summer she will serve the deaf and handicapped at Joni and Friends camps and deaf camps. She is from Craigville, Indiana, where she continues to

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