



June 2008

Pack Your Purse with TEACHABILITY

Feature: "Bags of Promise"

When we face adversity or failure, how do we respond? We can either become bitter and despondent, or we can use it as a teachable moment and choose to trust in God's promises. Invite your women to come to a special evening of learning about and meditating on God's promises. Prepare in advance small gifts bags for each woman, and then give a devotional presentation based on the contents of the gift bag. Into each bag place the following items:

Comb —"And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows" (Matt. 10:30, 31).

Eraser —"I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more (Jer. 31:34).

Coin —"My God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).

Candle —"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life" (John 8:12).

Pillowcase (or a ball of cotton to symbolize a pillow) — "When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet" (Prov. 3:24).

Small heart —"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Soap —"You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you" (John 15:3).

Chocolate —"The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing" (Ps. 34:10).

Pen —"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know you have eternal life" (I John 5:13).

Tissues —"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain" (Rev. 21:4).

Prayer Tip:

Pray that our young people will be more concerned with what God wants them to do with their lives, than in choosing a career that they and or their parents would consider important. Pray that our young people will choose God's best for their lives.

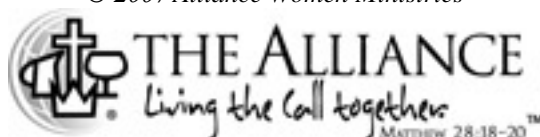
Discipleship Thought:

As disciples, we ought not to be a hindrance to others to enter into God's kingdom, but instead we must try to be the entrance for people to enter into God's kingdom as Jesus said in Matthew 19:14, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them".

Outreach Idea:

Reach out to the single women in your area. Circulate posters in pediatricians' offices and grocery stores to advertise a day of caring for single moms. You can include car washes, oil changes, a meal, a clothing exchange and coupons for groceries. Recruit the men in your church to help with some of the chores!

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Good to Go in Japan

By Jane Landaw

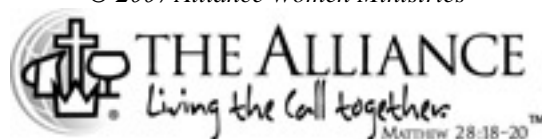
Fitness Clubs have come to Japan! Stationary bikes, sophisticated weight lifting machines, and a list of exercise equipment can be seen lining picture windows of a large area in Tokyo's exclusive major company buildings. And, in every neighborhood, Sports Clubs and exercise centers beckon sports enthusiasts. "Curves" has even come to Japan. All of this is accompanied with a health food craze. Special teas and herbs are advertised as effective treatments for taking off extra pounds and receiving vigor and unusual energy. The business world of Japan is committed to succeeding in engaging *their world* with their innovations in sleek cars and high-tech cell phones. In this high-stress setting, fitness is not an option. It takes tremendous energy to engage our world today. The professional sector has taken intentional steps to meet this challenge.

How much more, we, as carriers of the most important assignment in the world, "have this *Treasure* in our earthen vessels" that has the power to endow all the riches of the glory of God on all who will accept. (II Cor. 4: 6-7)

Imagine life in Japan. The religion is mainly Shinto, followed by Buddhism. All of Japan would fit into the state of California. About 75% of Japan is mountainous, leaving a small percentage for the mass cities and millions of people to occupy. The population is half that of the U.S. Yes, we are surrounded by one another. We, as God's ambassadors, must live on their turf and function inside this framework as we work intentionally to share the Gospel that has been entrusted to us.

What an honor to work for Jesus here. As we gear up for the daily evangelistic opportunities, we are deeply aware of the difference of a day hemmed in prayer. We know that without prayer, intentional prayer, our efforts are only that: "our efforts." Staying spiritually fit through prayer is a prerequisite as we step onto their treadmills. The Christian interest in Japan has recently been polled at about 5%, but the percentage of those who attend church is lower. And so, daily, we walk in Satan's war zone. Only the pure Word of God can provide the needed spiritual armor that allows us to be "good to go" as we share the Light of the world. It has to be "Jesus increasing, me decreasing." In the words of John Piper, "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him." That's why Satan tries in every way to steal time for heart-to-heart time with the Lord. He knows that without it, we have no power.

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He also knows that *with* this supernatural Power, we become channels that the Holy Spirit can creatively direct. A brokenness inside as we realize the task is humanly impossible is what God says He delights in. The way to brokenness is usually painful and humbling, but it is the highway to holiness.

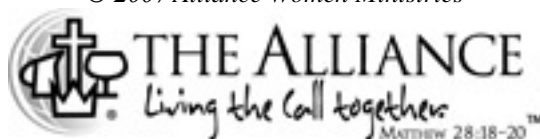
My husband, Harry, and I came into a new neighborhood about 2 years ago. We knew no one, but knew that God had led. We printed up a flyer in Japanese called, "May We Help You", introducing ourselves and our willingness to teach English and the Bible. Harry found a Community Sports Center and developed a friendship with a group of ping pong players. (The group is extremely important in this culture.) They invited him to join their group. He also got in with a basketball team. Hours spent together engaging the world around him has resulted in 5 of the 7 ping pong players attending outreach activities at Chiba Church. He also meets one-on-one for Bible Study with a man who received a flyer and said he knew God had allowed this contact.

As we seize opportunities wherever possible for introducing the love of Jesus to those who don't yet know Him here in our neighborhood, we continue to thank God for the support of the Alliance churches in our area. This partnership has been a two-way street as we work together in outreach. Harry baptized Ken, a high school senior at Yachiyo Church last fall and is discipling him each week. Ken's faith is vibrant, and he has invited an unsaved friend to join this class. This friend is earnest in learning about becoming a child of God.

Involvement in a weekly cell group hosted by a gal from Yachiyo Church, has led to two making a public profession of their faith through baptism. Continually, seekers are drawn into this ministry that God is choosing to use to bring women to Himself. In addition, I teach a "Mom's Time" study for young mothers who are not yet believers. These women, so talented and seeking, are coming in straight out of Buddhist and Shinto backgrounds. We have started out slowly, softly, yet so very intentionally, presenting this Incredible God/Man, Jesus, who has so much to offer in just daily life! Praise God, not one has stopped attending. On the contrary, the interest has grown, and at our January, 2007 meeting, at fellow sister, Mizuka's house, the stake went in! Talking about what they want to discuss in 2007, Yasue, a lovely young mom holding her little daughter in her arms looked up and said, "I don't know anything about the Bible. Could you explain it to us?" And then Junko, mother of little twin boys said, "And could you teach us how we should live in daily life according to the Bible?" **THIS WAS A TURNING POINT!** These ladies had been so leery of "Christianity" before. We covet your prayers as we now will build on the foundation that has been laid through much prayer.

God is winning! We dare **not** be "good to go" as we engage our world. The stakes are high ~~ heaven or hell. Satan desires to blind eyes. Our hearts continue to cry out to God for Japan. We walk their treadmills, play in their sports centers, and welcome opportunities to help young moms struggling with daily life ~sometimes not knowing how to get OFF their treadmill. We are seeing God work in lives, helping them to see that He has more for them than burning out for monetary accomplishments.

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Our input must more than equate our output! We know that we dare not find ourselves running "the treadmill" from early morning till late at night, forsaking the most important exercise, which is time spent on our knees in prayer. Corporately praying with fellow groups of believers in our churches extends the power as they, too, reach out into their communities. This power base of prayer which pushes back Satan's darkness has no limits. ***This*** spiritual fitness gives us the good-to-go power as we accept the Great Commission to engage our world.

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