

Women's Ministries Emphasis Day

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LIKE A DIAMOND IN THE LORD'S HANDS

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South American Division

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About the Author

Denise Muckenberger Lopes is a native of Florianópolis, SC, Brazil. She is married to Pastor Marlinton Souza Lopes, current president of the North Brazil Union Mission. She has two sons: Denisson, 18 years old, and Wellington, 16 years old. She is a graduate of Parana Federal University and works as the director of Women's Ministries, Children's and Teenagers' Ministries in the North Brazil Union Mission. She loves what she does and feels blessed by God for the privilege of serving Him.

Featured Divisions

South American Division

Wiliane Marroni, *Director of Women's Ministries*

Territory: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Falkland Islands, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay, with adjacent islands in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans; comprising the Austral, Central Brazil, East Brazil, and South Brazil Union Conferences, and the Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, North Brazil, North Peru, Northeast Brazil, South Peru, and West Central Brazil Union Missions.

The South American Division is emphasizing two specific fronts:

1. **Reception Ministry** – our target is to make all churches know how to welcome friends and make these friends feel loved and have the desire of staying. We are challenging the churches to be “Receptive Churches.” In other words, all the members should know how to demonstrate God’s true love to their friends.
2. **Breaking the Silence Project** – This campaign has been a blessing to the church and also to the community. The society has opened its doors through city halls, Department of Education, guardianship councils, and further competent departments which deal specifically with the subject.

In some municipalities the “Breaking the Silence” campaign is not a project of the Seventh-day Adventist Church anymore, for it is inserted in the calendar of the municipal secretariat of Education. This implies a mobilization of private, State and municipal schools, making them develop actions against violence.

We are sure that God is opening doors so that the Women’s Ministries, through these two front lines, can present Christ as the One who loves, cares with the needs of our fellow men and who has prepared a future with hope to all His children.

South Pacific Division

Erna Johnson, *Director of Women's Ministries*

Territory: Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and the islands of the Pacific lying south of the Equator between Longitude 140 East and Longitude 120 West, and Kiribati north of the Equator (including Nauru, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and others); comprising the Australian and New Zealand Pacific Union Conferences and the Papua New Guinea and Trans Pacific Union Missions.

Your sisters in the South Pacific have the following concerns for which we would appreciate your prayers:

Literacy – A very big percentage of women in our territory are illiterate. In one of the Missions in Papua New Guinea, one third of its women are illiterate. Women's Ministries has active literacy schools and training schools to train new teachers in many areas, but we don't have funds to cover all the expenses this kind of ministry incurs. We would like to ask our sisters to help us through their prayers.

One woman alone has brought 300 persons, both men and women, to the Lord through her ministry in teaching them how to read, using the Bible as a tool. We could tell you many similar stories from across our Division. Literacy classes are bringing people to God. This ministry is much needed there as elsewhere.

Heart Call – Over the last three years many of our Conferences have put an emphasis on reaching our sisters who are taking a break from church. Some are donating a subscription of the magazine *Women of Spirit* with great results. Others are visiting these sisters on a regular basis. One Mission in Papua New Guinea for example has won 47 women back to church through their love and friendship. Please pray that the Lord will impress more of our sisters to get involved in this very important ministry.

Leadership Certification – Our Leadership Training has now been done throughout our Division, and most places have already started level 1 anew. Our women are growing in confidence as they see how God has gifted them. They now go out boldly to teach and preach and share God's message with the women in their community. We would like you to think of these women, and remember them in your prayers. Many of them have not had much formal education, but still they are out there sharing God's love.

Evangelism/Outreach – Our women are now boldly holding public evangelism—from the islands of French Polynesia to Australia and all the islands in between. Many people, both men and women, have been won for Christ through their efforts. I praise God for their courage and their passion for this ministry. Pray that many more will use their gifts and talents for this ministry.

Reaching our Young Women – The Women's Ministries Directors from all areas of the South Pacific have decided that in the five years to come they will put an emphasis on reaching our young women. They are the future of our church, and thus the future of Women's Ministries. We want to minister to their needs, reaching them where they are. Please pray that we may do that faithfully and lovingly.

North American Division

Carla Baker, *Director of Women's Ministries*

Territory: Bermuda, Canada, the French possession of Saint Pierre and Miquelon, the United States of America, Johnston Island, Midway Islands, and all other islands of the Pacific not attached to other divisions and bounded by the date line on the west, by the equator on the south, and by longitude 120 on the east; comprising the Atlantic, Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada, Columbia, Lake, Mid-America, North Pacific, Pacific, Southern, and Southwestern Union Conferences.

North American Division (NAD) Women's Ministries is emphasizing the following:

Evangelism: Retaining those who were baptized in 2009, the Year of Evangelism, with initiatives to nurture and disciple newly-baptized women and their families.

enditnow: Adventists Say No to Violence Against Women: An initiative of Women's Ministries and Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), the first phase is collecting one million signatures on a petition to be presented to the United Nations to let them know that Seventh-day Adventists support the UN's worldwide campaign to end violence against women and girls. In Phase 2 there will be emphasis on individual churches and conferences sponsoring events both for the church and the community to promote awareness of the evil of all forms of violence against women and girls.

New DVD Womens' Bible Studies: *Journey of Joy – Healthy Emotions and Holy Hearts*, is the new Bible study series that is geared for use in women's ministries meetings, neighborhood Bible studies, and individual studies. The set contains 10 DVD sermons plus a study guide booklet and a leader's guide.

“Like a Diamond in the Lord’s Hands”

Sample Worship Service Outline

Musical Prelude

Entry of Platform Participants

Doxology

Invocation

Tithes and Offerings

Offertory

Prayer of Dedication for Offering

Hymn of Praise: “My Maker and My King” (SDA Hymnal # 15)

Intercessory Prayer

Children’s Story: “God’s Jewels”

Special Music

SERMON: “Like a Diamond in the Lord’s Hands”

Hymn of Consecration: “Brighten the Corner Where You Are” (SDA Hymnal #218)

Benediction

Hymn of Farewell

Postlude

Like a Diamond in the Lord's Hands

Sermon

NOTE: All scripture references are from the New International Version (NIV).

Scripture Reading:

Proverbs 11:16 “A kindhearted woman gains respect, but ruthless men gain only wealth.”

Matthew 5:9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”

I – Introduction

We live in a world that greatly honors beauty, power, and wealth, a world that reveres individuals who have them. However, this fascination does not belong exclusively to our century. In history and biography we read of many people from the past who, in their quest to obtain these things, took paths that sometimes brought joy, but also led to sadness and tragedy.

This morning, let's look at a story about three people. Together, they experienced a struggle involving beauty, wealth, power, pride, hate, and selfishness. Observing these three people, we see them take three different directions, although their paths were intertwined. We are not dealing with fiction but a Bible story found in the Old Testament. We will look in depth at the story of a diamond and of a stone in the rough—a diamond that permitted itself to be polished by God and a stone in the rough that did not accept the opportunity to be polished.

II – Who are the characters in this story?

1 Samuel 25: 2-3 – “A certain man in Maon, who had property there at Carmel, was very wealthy. He had a thousand goats and three thousand sheep, which he was shearing in Carmel. His name was Nabal and his wife's name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and beautiful woman, but her husband [Nabal], a Calebite, was surly and mean in his dealings.”

We do not know the circumstances that led Abigail, a devout, beautiful, enlightened woman, to marry Nabal, a man who repelled God in spite of the fact that he was a descendent of Caleb. However, young women at that time were married to men chosen by the fathers or through family agreements.

We gather that Abigail was very precious to her parents because her name meant “reason for joy” or “my father's joy.” Since children's names at that time revealed the birth experience or the desired future for the child, we can conclude that Abigail's parents were very pleased upon her arrival and they dreamed of a bright future for their beautiful little girl. Evidently they believed that Nabal, a wealthy man, would be a good match for their daughter. However, Nabal used his power and wealth to hide his impoverished character, which was revealed as insensitive, rude and mean during his marriage.

From the rest of the story, we learn that the outward beauty of this woman is overshadowed by her inner beauty. The virtues of her character shine like a polished diamond, making Abigail more respected and honored than her husband with all of his vast material wealth.

III – The Context

Samuel, the great prophet of Israel, had just passed away, and the nation felt the loss of one who had encouraged the people. David also suffered greatly because of this loss. Unable to attend the funeral of the prophet because of King Saul's persecution, David wept like a child who had lost his father. David's danger from Saul was even greater now, so he took advantage of the time that the King was involved with Samuel's funeral and the period of mourning to flee to a more secure hiding place, the desert of Paran.

During his time there, the newly anointed of the Lord and his 600 men protected the farmers in the region from attacks by nomads and thieves. Nabal was one of the individuals who benefited; this protection was so efficient that Nabal's servants affirmed in 1 Samuel 25:16, "Night and day they were a wall around us all the time we were herding our sheep near them."

Time passed quickly and harvest arrived. It was time to enjoy the fruits of their labor. Nabal's servants were celebrating when David sent ten of his men on a mission of peace and neighborly goodwill. The powerful warrior requested some of the wealthy farmer's abundance to meet the necessities of his men. These were the same men who had protected Nabal and, as a consequence of their protection, had helped him to grow richer.

With a foolish, selfish attitude, which plays out the meaning of his name, Nabal pretended that he had never heard of David and compared him to runaway servants. In 1 Samuel 25:10, 11 we read, "Nabal answered David's servants, 'Who is this David? Who is this son of Jesse? Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days. Why should I take my bread and water, and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men coming from who knows where?'"

Such disrespect left David's men disappointed and frustrated. They quickly returned and reported what had happened to David, who became indignant.

Fear and indignation caused one of Nabal's servants to hurry to Abigail because he realized the danger that would result from Nabal's rudeness. He reported the entire incident to her and requested her intervention. Rapidly, but discreetly and wisely, she made the necessary arrangements. Without speaking to her husband, she gathered food for David and his men.

While Abigail prepared to help David and his men, David, without thinking or consulting God, reacted impulsively, motivated by his wounded ego. He gathered 400 men, planning to put an end to Nabal and his servants because of Nabal's immense ingratitude.

A battle of egos, fueled by pride and hatred, was about to occur when Abigail appeared, a diamond of rare beauty in the midst of animosity. At the sight of Abigail, David and his 400 men halted. Abigail got off her donkey and fell on her knees before the anointed of the Lord to plead for her husband (1 Sam. 25:23). She did not defend him; she agreed that he was a fool. She then requested forgiveness and accepted the fault that should have fallen upon Nabal, even though she did not deserve any blame. She said, "My lord, let the blame be on me alone. Please let your servant speak to you; hear what your servant has to say." In verse 28, she continued, "Please forgive your servant's offense, for the LORD will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my master, because he fights the LORD's battles. Let no wrongdoing be found in you as long as you live."

In this way, Abigail was able to defuse a volatile situation and promote peace and reconciliation.

Abigail's wise and humble words soothed angry feelings and prevented bloodshed; her gifts revealed her kindness. Let's note the gifts she brought with her:

- Two hundred loaves of bread – Bread was a mainstay in Palestine and was usually filled with cheese or olives.
- Two skins of wine – This was grape juice that, when fermented, could be used as a disinfectant and medication, which would be very appropriate for David and his soldiers.
- Five dressed sheep – Mutton prepared to be roasted, which was also a main staple.
- Five measures of toasted wheat – This could be eaten at any time and could be used by the soldiers as a snack while they worked.
- One hundred cakes of raisin and 200 of pressed figs – This was the dessert, which, besides being convenient for travelers, would restore their energy.

Abigail provided thoughtfully and generously for David and his men.

Having presented her gifts, Abigail left the presence of the future king of Israel. She returned home and waited for the right time to speak to her husband. Since Nabal was drunk, Abigail waited until sunrise to tell him what had happened. When he learned how close David had come to their camp and how he himself had been so close to death, Nabal suffered a heart attack and died ten days later.

When he learned of the death of Nabal, David was relieved that he had waited for God to pass judgment on that foolish man and had not taken matters into his own hands.

On the day Abigail had taken the presents, David had been impressed, not only by her beauty, but by the beauty of her character and her intelligence, and he was unable to forget her. After Nabal's death, David asked for her hand in marriage, and she accepted. The inner beauty and wisdom of Abigail, whose character was like a beautifully-cut diamond, were honored, and she became a blessing to the new king of Israel. She was also blessed with the joy of giving birth to their first son.

IV – Lessons and Applications

Abigail had been through many difficult situations and had few reasons to be happy. Perhaps she had not experienced true love in her marriage, since her husband was easily irritated. He drank a lot and felt the world revolved around him and his interests. However, in spite of the circumstances, Abigail was faithful to her husband, to the people of her household, and to God and His Word. She was intelligent and generous. She ran her household smoothly and took care of herself. She was confident and trustworthy. Discretion and humility were important characteristics of Abigail; she was also firm in her mission. The Bible does not reveal the name of the virtuous woman in Proverbs, but it is easy to see that the description could well fit Abigail.

Through the story of this woman, we can learn the value of initiative, discretion, setting priorities, determination, and wisdom. And we may ask ourselves, what are the beauty secrets of this woman? What made her a sparkling diamond in the midst of common stones?

Secret #1: Relationship with God. Abigail had a close relationship with God. This helped her to discern what to do and say when faced with pressure from her husband or dealing with his indiscretions. This is the only way for us to have healthy relationships or, as in the case of Abigail and many others, make an unhappy relationship tolerable.

Through a personal relationship and communion with the Lord, one acquires discernment and wisdom necessary for dealing with a non-Christian spouse or any other individual. Through a personal relationship with God, it is possible to experience joy, even when situations seem hopeless. A personal relationship with Him leads us to enjoy unconditional love. In a personal relationship with Him, we learn to rely on the Lord. This is our source of wisdom—the wisdom that permeated Abigail’s life. In Neh. 8:10 we are reminded, “Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

Secret #2: A calm, peacemaker spirit. Abigail did not always agree with her husband’s attitudes; however, she was not argumentative or passive. Her story is proof of this.

The words of Jesus assure us, “Blessed are the peacemakers” (Matt. 5:9). Like Abigail, we can avoid rifts in our relationships, those with our family as well as with others, if we allow God’s peace to fill our spirit. Developing self-control, turning situations around, making ourselves the best that we can be—these are ways to build our character so that we may have a character similar to that of Jesus and so that harmony may be maintained. Ellen White comments in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 667, “Would that there were many more like this woman of Israel, who would soothe the irritated feelings, prevent rash impulses, and quell great evils by words of calm and well-directed wisdom.”

Secret #3: Consistency and faithfulness. Because Abigail was consistent and faithful in all she said and did, people trusted her. If this were not so, Nabal would not have

suffered because of the story she told, the servants would not have trusted her to resolve problems, nor would David have taken her word.

As we read in Luke 16:10, “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much.” If we want to gain the trust of others, so that they also believe in the Story of Redemption, we need to be consistent. Our actions should mirror our faith and our words. It is true that some individuals, like Nabal, even though they believe, will not give in to the pleadings of the Holy Spirit. However, others will come to us seeking help, as in the case of Abigail’s servants. Some will accept and believe in the truth, allowing themselves to be transformed by love and the power of the Word.

Secret #4: Kindness and hospitality. Those who love God will be kind to all, especially those who are rude or unpleasant. Abigail was kind to her husband at all times because she learned that gentle, peaceful words accomplish more than cruel, reprimanding words. She kindly entertained the guests her husband brought to their home. She was concerned with the well-being of those who worked on her property, and she had a friendly relationship with her neighbors. She was also courteous and hospitable toward David and his soldiers.

Paul encourages us to cultivate these winsome traits. In Colossians 3:12 we read, “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourself with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.”

Can the people we come in contact with see unfailing kindness in us? Are we loving and patient, even with those individuals who give us a hard time? Are we good hosts and hostesses to guests in our homes? Does kindness mark our treatment of those the Holy Spirit leads to the house of God? Are we kind to the people we work with, especially those who help us or who work under our direction? What type of hospitality do we show to our neighbors in our community and those who are neighbors of our church?

In *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 667, we read “The piety [or kindness] of Abigail, like the fragrance of a flower, breathed out all unconsciously in face and word and action. The Spirit of the Son of God was abiding in her soul. Her speech, seasoned with grace, and full of kindness and peace, shed a heavenly influence.”

Secret #5: Humility and discretion. Abigail could have lost everything, including her life, if she had not learned to be humble and discreet. In Matthew 10:16, we read: “I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.” Abigail was like a sheep in the midst of wolves. Nabal and David were two powerful men—Nabal, who often acted foolishly, and David, who was about to react foolishly. Abigail chose her words carefully, speaking cautiously and at precisely the right time. As a result, David, Nabal, and their soldiers and servants were saved on that day.

Much suffering is caused by pride, impulsiveness, insensitivity and the desire to take justice into one’s own hands! It should not be like this with the children of God. We are in the midst of wolves, but should not to be like them. This does not mean we should be passive. We are sheep because we are different, and we are to make a

difference. For this reason we have been given biblical counsel regarding discretion and humility (Matt. 10:16), and the reminder that justice belongs to God (Deut. 9:7). There is a time to be silent and a time to speak (Eccles. 3:7). We must learn the difference prayerfully.

Humility has the power of disarming arguments; discretion has the power to change situations. Humility brings about forgiveness, and discretion generates transformation. Humility builds love; discretion builds respect. Abigail's humility and discretion disarmed David, saved her home, gained the respect of all involved, and was honored by God.

Secret #6: God's call. It is possible that some of Abigail's virtues had developed over time because of situations she had faced in a difficult marriage. She refused to be tossed to and fro by circumstances, and she changed the course of events by her discretion. However, she was not passive; she took action. She understood that her mission was to be a blessing to others, including Nabal. Perhaps the only chance of real happiness for him was her presence and her good sense. Her mission was also to protect and save her home and those in it. As she took action, the Lord enabled her and gave her new talents and wisdom, so much so that she was able to be used by God to reprove and counsel King David himself.

Like Abigail, we all are called by God to serve. Our circumstances must not deter us; we must fulfill the mission. Actually, difficulties can lead us to give our best and may show us that we do not need prestige or a special title to become a blessing and accomplish the purpose the Lord has for each of us. Ability is granted to us in the same measure that we grow closer to God and begin to take action. If we do our part, we will be taking blessings and salvation to others. Our sphere of influence, like that of Abigail, includes our spouse, whether he is Christian or not; our family, including our parents and children; our co-workers, those who offer us service, work as colleagues, or hold a position above ours; and of course, our neighbors.

Abigail's greatest beauty secret was to place herself in the hands of the Great Stonecutter and allow herself to be shaped by Him. Abigail could have been a diamond in the rough; however, she allowed herself to be carefully cut, washed of impurities, and made beautiful by her Creator.

Transformation cannot take place without surrender. No stone is cut or made to shine without passing through the hands of a master stonecutter, who cleans and polishes it. To become diamonds, polished jewels shining for Jesus, we must surrender completely to Him. As we reflect our Saviour's love and grace, the beautiful facets of our character, we shine as diamonds for Him

V – Conclusion

We can learn wonderful lessons from the story of Abigail; however, the greatest lesson points us toward Jesus. As Abigail placed herself between David and Nabal, offering to be punished for the sins of her husband, we are reminded of Jesus who placed Himself between God and humanity and received punishment for all of our transgressions, sparing us from God's wrath.

While on earth, Christ was surrounded by very ordinary mortals – rough, common-looking stones, transgressors. However, He was the most exquisite Diamond among all diamonds, a blessing to the world, and He completely fulfilled His mission. Doesn't His immense sacrifice motivate us to reflect that if He loved us so much, are we not able also to love one another? If we are forgiven, are we not also able to forgive? If we have been invited to participate in the Wedding Supper of the Lamb, are we not able to share the bread of truth, compassion, and justice with those who hunger?

Abigail was able to endure a less-than-perfect marriage to Nabal because she had learned to look to God. Jesus was able to endure our world of sin and indifference because He looked toward God. Abigail fulfilled her calling, and at the right time, God changed the circumstances of her life, allowing her to marry King David. Jesus fulfilled His calling, and it was done at the right time. God changed the circumstances, resurrecting Him from the cold tomb and giving Him the keys to Heaven.

If circumstances in your life are difficult, if there are people like Nabal along your path, look to God. Fulfill your calling. Know that God is leading in your life.

We may all have been diamonds in the rough; however, to sparkle like Abigail, we need to surrender to the Great Stonecutter and allow Him to remove our rough exterior and polish our inner spirit so that the beauty of His character is revealed in our lives. Then we shall shine for His honor and glory wherever we may be.

May we daily grow in our relationship with Him, seeking to develop a gentle and peaceful spirit. May we be consistent and faithful in our words and actions. May we practice kindness and hospitality. May we walk with humility and discretion, fulfilling what God has called us to do.

We pray that the Holy Spirit may help us to be like diamonds in the hands of the Master Jeweler and give us the joy of seeing what God can do in us, for us, and through us and through His Church.

Children's Story God's Jewels

Paul was in the second grade and studied very hard. One day, he was curious about a new word he had seen, and he wanted to know its meaning.

The next day during reading class, he asked, "Mrs. Smith, what is 'character'? I saw this word in one of my father's books and I would like to know what it means." The other students wanted to know too.

Mrs. Smith realized this was a good time to teach an important lesson to her students. She asked them to wait until the following day because she wanted to show them something very interesting.

The following day, as soon as class began, Mrs. Smith carefully took a velvet box out of her pocket. Slowly, she opened it and let the students see what was inside.

The beautiful box contained a dark, rough-looking lump.

"Paul, have you ever seen a rock like this? What does it look like to you?"

"Well, yes, Mrs. Smith, I have seen something like it. I think that this looks like a dry clod of dirt.

"Well, this hard, dark clump has something very beautiful hiding inside it. Look!"

The teacher then broke off part of the rock, and under the hard crust, Paul and the other students could see a beautiful, shiny stone; it was not a specific shape, but they noticed it was very shiny. They had never seen anything like it.

Mrs. Smith continued, "Yesterday Paul asked the meaning of the word 'character.' Like a lot of words we use, the word 'character' has more than one meaning, but we will talk about just one. Character is something that you cannot see. Let me explain. There are many things we cannot see, but we know what they are. For instance, we cannot see love or happiness, but we know if people are happy by the way they act. We know if people love us by the way they act. 'Character' is something we cannot see; it's the way we are on the inside, but we can often tell if someone has a good character or a bad character by the way they talk and act. Character is what we are on the inside, similar to a rock like this. It might only look like an ordinary clump of dirt, but it can hide something very beautiful inside.

"There are people who are like this lump. Their actions are not very pleasant or pretty. They do not allow the "hard crust," the unattractive part of their personality, to be removed and make themselves available to become more attractive in the way they behave. In other words, to be "polished." What I am trying to tell you is that these people do not accept the lessons that God gives to us, and they are like rough stones which have not yet been polished by a jeweler, who is a person that works with jewels and precious stones. These people continue to be like this clod, dark and shapeless, because they do not allow Jesus' love to help them become good and kind.

“When we accept the teachings given by God and we allow Him to lead our life, we are allowing Him to be our Jeweler. He cleans and polishes us, and removes the imperfections from our character, and soon we become a beautiful jewel.”

Then Mrs. Smith took out another box from her pocket. It was covered with red velvet and when she opened it, the students could see a beautiful stone that had been cut and polished and was sparkling in the sun. The students were amazed. They had never seen such a beautiful stone.

This beautiful stone was a way of showing what a beautiful character is like, and this is what God does with us as He helps to change our hearts and change us into beautiful, shining examples for Him. He shows us what is right; He teaches us and helps us. If we let Him “clean up” all the things that are wrong in our life, we will shine like this polished stone. People will notice that we have a “sparkling” character through our good deeds, our kindness and love for others.

Can you think of things that help to show beauty of character? (*Let the children talk about other character traits.*)

When we allow God to clean our life, we will be fair, honest, friendly and kind. We will shine in this world and reveal the love of Jesus to others.

Paul was amazed to see that beautiful stone in the teacher’s hands sparkling in the sun, and he said, “Mrs. Smith, I want my life to be like the shiny stone. I want my life to shine for Jesus!”

Boys and girls, do you want your life to shine like a precious stone? The “jewel hymn” (“When He Cometh”- SDA Hymnal # 218) tells us that we are jewels that belong to Jesus. Let’s sing this hymn together.

Note: As mentioned in the story, have two stones in different boxes to show the children, and show the stones as the story is told. (One stone should be covered with dry clay and the other stone should be a shiny, polished jewel.) At the end of the story, sing “When He Cometh”(SDA Hymnal # 218) with the children. Invite the entire congregation to join in the last two verses.

Quotations About Women From the Writings of Ellen G. White

“When a great and decisive work is to be done, God chooses men and women to this work, and it will see the loss if the talents of both are not combined” (*Evangelism*, p. 469).

“We may do a noble work for God if we will. Woman does not know her power for God....There is a higher purpose for woman, a grander destiny. She should develop and cultivate her powers, for God can employ them in the great work of saving souls from eternal ruin” (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 4, p. 642, and *Evangelism*, p. 465).

“There never was a time when more workers were needed than at the present. There are brethren and sisters throughout all our ranks who should discipline themselves to engage in this work, in all our churches something should be done to spread the truth. It is the duty of all to study the various points of our faith” (*Review and Herald*, April 1, 1880).

“If there were twenty women where now there is one, who would make this Holy Mission [one-to-one ministry] their cherished work, we should see many more converted to the truth. The refining, softening influence of Christian women is needed in the great work of preaching the truth” (*Evangelism*, p. 471).

“There certainly should be a larger number of women engaged in the work of ministering to suffering humanity....When believing women shall feel the burden for souls...they will be working as Christ worked. They will consider no sacrifice too great to make to win souls to Christ” (*Evangelism*, p. 465).

“Intelligent Christian women may use their talents to the very highest account....Wives and mothers should in no case neglect their husbands and their children, but they can do much without neglecting home duties” (*Welfare Ministry*, p. 164).

Women's Ministries—How You Can Be Involved

Women are an influential force in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. When women are ministering to others, the family, church, and community receive the benefits of their spiritual strength and their ministry.

Invitation: You are invited to become involved. There are many opportunities to serve.

- Through prayer and encouragement
- By ensuring that there is an active Women's Ministries program in your church, conference, and union
- By volunteering your talents and leadership abilities to serve in the special programs suited to your gifts
- Through your financial support

Programs: Women's Ministries sponsors and develops varied programs and activities, such as:

Special Days

- International Women's Day of Prayer (first Sabbath in March)
- Women's Ministries Day (second Sabbath in June)
- NAD Women's Ministries Offering (second Sabbath in July)
- Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day (fourth Sabbath in August)

Special Programs

- *enditnow: Adventists Say No to Violence Against Women*
- *Journey of Joy—Healthy Emotions and Holy Hearts* – the first DVD Bible study series for women produced in North America
- Heart Call – A ministry to reclaim women who have stopped attending church
- Women in Touch – friendship evangelism
- Nurturing New Members
- M.O.M.S – Moms offering moms support
- Young Women's Ministries
- "I Married a Possibility" – for women married to non-believers
- Literacy programs
- "Prayer and Love Save" – How to pray for adult children
- Leadership training

North American Division Women's Ministries FOCUS

1. Spirituality – Every woman in the North American Division experiencing a radical, life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ
2. "A Ministry for Every Woman" – Every woman in the Church being involved in some kind of ministry (service)
3. Leadership training for women
4. "Tell Your World"
 - Mission projects in your community, conference, or union
 - Evangelism in North America by women

- Being intentional about inviting women from the community and non-attending members to *all* your women's ministries activities
 - Involvement in your community
5. Abuse: prevention, education, and healing
 6. Reclaiming women (and therefore families) who have stopped attending church
 7. Mentoring and involving young women, girls, and teens

Six critical issues that particularly impact women around the world

1. Illiteracy
2. Abuse
3. Poverty
4. Health risks
5. Work loads
6. Lack of mentoring and leadership training

As Christians seeking to follow the example of Jesus, we believe it is important to do what we can to meet the needs of all people, developing trust and helping them find answers to their needs. For this reason, Women's Ministries has chosen to focus much of its attention on these six challenge issues.

These challenges provide opportunities for service for everyone in the church. Women's Ministries invites all to join together to share the Good News of the Gospel!

Although these six critical issues affect all members directly or indirectly, they impact women most strongly. For this reason, Women's Ministries encourages all members to find ways they can help address these concerns. To address these needs is to serve as Christ served, loving and valuing humanity.