

The
YADA
YADA
YADA
Prayer
Group
Gets Down
Book Two

Neta Jackson

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

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Reading Group Guide

1. The theme of *The Yada Yada Prayer Group* (Yada Yada #1) was *grace*—discovering what it means to be “just a sinner . . . saved by grace.” What do you think is the main theme of *The Yada Yada Prayer Group Gets Down*? Why?
2. With whom did you empathize more in the incident at Adele’s beauty shop: MaDear or Denny? Why?
3. The Yada Yada prayer group was traumatized by a crime. Have you or someone close to you ever been the victim of a crime? If so, how do you feel toward the perpetrator? If you had a chance for a face-to-face meeting, what do you think would happen? What would you want to happen?
4. How did Yada Yada’s decision to visit Becky Wallace in prison affect the different sisters in the prayer group? How did it impact Becky Wallace?
5. If you were the mother of Jamal Wilkins—the boy who Jodi Baxter killed in her car accident in Yada Yada #1—how would you feel to discover her relationship to your other child? How does this discovery affect (1) Jodi? (2) the mother? (3) the child?
6. Jamal’s mother can’t forgive Jodi, even though Jodi asked

for forgiveness at the end of Yada Yada #1. How does this affect Jodi? If the person she has wronged won't forgive, how can she ever be free of the guilt? However, if Jamal's mother does choose to forgive Jodi, what would that forgiveness look like?

7. What prompted Denny's response to MaDear in the final chapter? Why do you think his response was so healing? What questions does his encounter with MaDear raise for you about "repenting for the sins of others"?
8. Examine your own attitudes that may hinder fellowship with other groups of Christians. What is the most difficult or challenging area for you? What would it mean to repent of this attitude?
9. How might we "repent of" or "take responsibility for" past sins of our nation or people group? No matter what your race or ethnicity, what could *you* do to help bring about racial healing among God's people? How can we help each other?
10. Are there relationships in your own life—of any nature—that need healing through repentance or forgiveness? Whether you have "sinned" or "been sinned against," do you have the courage to take the first step?

The
YADA YADA
Prayer Group®
GETS DOWN
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Let's Celebrate!

The Yada Yada sisters are “gettin’ down”—learning how to praise God and celebrate His goodness beyond their own culture and traditions. How about you? Following are some family-friendly ideas for enriching your family’s “spiritual culture,” growing in your appreciation for the wider Family of God, and having fun (and food!) in the process!

Jewish Holy Days and Festivals

In *Gets Down*, Ruth Garfield invites some of the Yada Yadas to attend one of the Jewish High Holy Days at her Messianic congregation, in this case Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. During the service, the leader explains the meaning of various “feasts of remembrance” instituted in the Old Testament, and also how they prophetically pointed toward the coming of the Messiah.

Following is a brief list of Jewish holidays (holy days) and their meanings, with a few ideas for incorporating some of their significance into your own family times. But for more information, go online and research the background, meaning, and traditional ways of celebrating at least one of the Jewish festivals below. An

awesome site is www.biblicaltholidays.com. Your computer savvy kids will have fun doing this!

Rosh Hashanah—the Jewish New Year

Time of year: Early fall, September or October. (The first day of Tishri, the seventh month on the Jewish calendar.)

Also known as the Feast of Trumpets, i.e. the blowing of the shofar marks the beginning of this festival. (See Num. 29:1–6; Lev. 23:23–25.)

Rosh Hashanah marks the beginning of the Ten Days of Awe (between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur), a time of introspection—a spiritual inventory, as it were, to prepare one’s heart for the coming of the Messiah.

Background: Read Nehemiah 8 (especially verses 9 and 10): “Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, ‘This day is sacred to the Lord your God. Do not mourn or weep.’ For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law. Nehemiah said, ‘Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.’”

Meaning for Christians: Preparing our hearts with expectancy for Yeshua’s second coming, which will be announced by the blowing of a trumpet (Matt. 24:31; 1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:16–17).

Ways to celebrate: Take time to do a “spiritual inventory,”

both personally and as a family. Have you been letting your personal Bible reading or prayer times get swallowed up by busyness? Have you been meaning to have family Bible reading and prayer but just haven't gotten around to it? Early fall (the beginning of a new school year for kids) is a good time to re-evaluate your family schedule and priorities.

Attend Rosh Hashanah services at a nearby Messianic congregation or Jewish synagogue.

Ask a Jewish friend to come to dinner and share with your family what Rosh Hashanah means to them.

Traditional foods for Rosh Hashanah (and their meanings):

Challah bread: The round shape symbolizes a perfect year to come. Sometimes raisins or honey are added to make it extra sweet.

Apples and honey: Apples slices are dipped in honey to symbolize a wish for a sweet year to come.

Gefilte ("filled") fish: Fish symbolize fruitfulness, fertility, and abundance. The fish head symbolizes the head (start) of the New Year, and the desire to lead other nations by living in a just and upright manner.

Tzimmes (honey baked carrots): From the Yiddish word "*meren*" (which means "carrots" and "to increase"), symbolizing the desire to increase one's good deeds in the coming year. (Some Eastern European *tzimmes* recipes add prunes, sweet potatoes, or even meat to the sweet carrots for a "sweet entree.")

Spinach: Symbolizes a green year with plenty of produce.

Rice: Also symbolizes abundance.

Honey Cake or Teiglach (crunchy dough boiled in honey): And once more, “Have a sweet New Year!”

Yom Kippur—Day of Atonement

Time of year: Early fall. Ten days after Rosh Hashanah, concluding the Ten Days of Awe. (The tenth day of Tishri.)

Yom Kippur is a fast day, not a feast day—a day of confession, repentance, and cleansing, when God made a way through the priests and animal sacrifices to atone for the sins of the people. (See Num. 29:7–11; Lev. 23:26–32.)

Meaning for Christians: Jesus has already made atonement for our sins on the cross (see Rom. 3:23–26). With grateful hearts we look forward to that great day when the Book of Life in which our names appear will be opened and read.

Ways to celebrate: Talk together as a family about fasting, its purpose (setting aside a special time for prayer and renewal), and the various kinds of fasts (e.g., the “Daniel Fast,” which is eating only vegetables and drinking only water). Choose an appropriate “fast” for your family—skipping one meal, fasting from certain foods or entertainment, etc.

This may be a good time to review with your family what “atonement” means, and the fact that God sent His Son Jesus to offer His life as a sacrifice and pay the penalty for our sins. Parents, be alert—one or more of your children may want to ask Jesus to write his or her name in the Book of Life on this day!

More ideas can be found at www.biblicaltholidays.com.

Books for your bookshelf: *A Family Guide to the Biblical Holidays* by Robin Sampson and Linda Pierce (Heart of Wisdom Publishers). Also recommended: *The Fall Feasts of Israel* by Mitch and Zhava Glaser (Moody Press, 1987), written from a Messianic perspective.

Sukkot—the Feast of Booths

Time of year: Early fall, five days after Yom Kippur. (The fifteenth day of Tishri.)

Also known as the Feast of Booths or the Feast of Tabernacles (or Shelters), Sukkot (also spelled *Succoth* or *Sukkoth* and pronounced “sue-coat”) is a seven day festival in memory of the time the Children of Israel lived in tents in the wilderness, a time of thanksgiving for His care and provision. (See Num. 29:12–38; Lev. 23:33–35; 39–43, especially verse 42).

Meaning for Christians: A time to remember that “this world is not our home,” and we are waiting for that glad day when Christ comes again to rule both heaven and earth.

Note: This holiday is explained in more detail in the Celebration section of *The Yada Yada Prayer Group Gets Caught* (Book 5.)

Hanukkah—the Festival of Lights

Time of year: Sometime in the month of December. (An eight-day festival that begins on the twenty-fifth day in the month of Kislev on the Jewish calendar.)

Hanukkah commemorates the restoration of temple worship by Judas Maccabee and his followers after Jerusalem had been

captured and the temple desecrated by Syrian invaders (an event which happened between the Old and New Testaments, and is recounted in the Talmud, as well as by Josephus the historian). According to tradition, as the temple was being cleaned out, only a small amount of oil was found to light the temple lamps, enough for one day. But miraculously, the lamps stayed lit for eight days until more oil could be found. Ever since, this holiday is celebrated with the lighting of the *menorah*, a lamp stand with nine candles—eight to represent each day of the miracle and a central one to light the others.

Meaning for Christians: Jesus called Himself the Light of the World (see John 8:12; 9:3–5), and He encourages His followers to be lights in this world (Matt. 5:14–16).

Ways to celebrate: If possible, purchase a menorah lamp stand and the appropriate candles to fit into it. Or create your own “menorah” with eight candles, plus one (the shamash) to light the others. On the first evening of Hannukah, light the candle on the far right of the menorah. On each successive evening, light an additional candle until all eight candles are burning.

Talk with your children about miracles—the miracles in the Bible, and the miracles we experience in our own lives. Say this blessing as you light that evening’s candle: “Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who performed miracles for our ancestors, at this season, in days past.” And add: “And who continues to bless us with the miracles of life, of love, of health, of family.”

Playing with a Dreidel—a spinning top—is a traditional game at Hannukah. On the Dreidel are four Hebrew letters: *Nune*, *Gimel*, *Shin*, and *Hay*. (The letters stand for “*Nes Gadol Hayah Sham*,” or “*A great miracle happened here*.”) How to play: Each player puts the same amount of a treat—e.g., nuts, raisins, chocolate kisses, or peppermints, etc.—into the middle. This is called The Pot. Each player takes a turn spinning the Dreidel. Whichever letter the Dreidel lands on decides what you have to do. Whoever has the most treats in the end wins the game—though sharing them would be completely within the spirit of the season!

Hay: You get half of The Pot.

Gimel: You get ALL of The Pot.

Nune: You get none of The Pot.

Shin: You must add one more treat to The Pot.

Purim—The Feast of Lots

Time of Year: Mid-winter, sometime in February or March. (Observed on the fourteenth day of the Hebrew month of Adar.)

Also considered a Feast of Joy, Purim is a celebration of God’s deliverance of the Jews from an evil plot to exterminate them during their captivity in Persia. The entire story is told in the Book of Esther, a plot with more twists and turns than a bestselling novel or Oscar-winning movie.

Meaning for Christians: As with all stories of God’s deliverance in the Bible, this story is prophetic of God sending us a Savior to deliver us from our sinful condition and to restore God’s

people to their rightful place as heirs of God's kingdom. There is also a personal dimension, of recognizing that God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things for Him. As Mordecai said to Esther: "Who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?" (Est. 4:14).

Ways to celebrate: Read or tell the story dramatically from the Book of Esther.

It's fun to dress up! Either in your own family (each person might have to play several roles) or with a group of children, dress up in costumes and act out the parts as the story is told: Esther, Uncle Mordecai, the King, Queen Vashti, Haman, the two plotters who wanted to kill the king, heralds and messengers and ladies-in-waiting.

Make "graggers" (noisemakers) for children to shake, rattle, or whirl whenever the evil Haman's name is mentioned. Marbles inside clean, empty juice cans that have been decorated and resealed can be shaken with delightful (!) noise. Or buy real graggers online or at a Jewish supply store.

A fun song for pre-schoolers sung to the tune "B-I-N-G-O": "There is a holiday I love, and Purim is its name-o! P-U-R-I-M . . ." etc.

Other ideas can be found online at www.biblicaltholidays.com. Or Google "Purim" and find a number of online sites with activities and recipes—especially for the jam-filled **Hamentashen Cookies**, which are supposed to resemble the triangular shape of Hamen's hat!

Passover (Pesach)

Time of year: Early spring (March or April). Passover is celebrated on the fourteenth day of the first month of the Hebrew calendar (Abib, later called Nisan).

Passover (*Pesach* in Hebrew) literally means “to pass over,” a time to remember when the blood of a lamb on the doorposts saved the slaves in Egypt from the Angel of Death, who *passed over* that house when it saw the blood (see Ex. 6:6–8).

Passover is a time of beginnings for the Jewish people, celebrating the end of their slavery in Egypt and moving toward the Promised Land as God’s people.

Two other festivals occur within days of each other: **The Feast of Unleavened Bread** and the **Day of First Fruits**. In many cases, these three feasts are celebrated together and have become one.

Meaning for Christians: Jesus celebrated the Passover meal the night He was betrayed and arrested. As He and His disciples ate together, He explained the symbolism of the various parts of the meal—the broken bread (His body), the wine poured out (His blood)—saving those who believe from the power of sin and death. (Also, the Feast of Unleavened Bread represents the burial of Jesus, and the Day of First Fruits, His resurrection.)

Note: The Passover meal and its rituals is called a Seder, and ideas for a “Christian Seder” can be found in the Celebration section of *The Yada Yada Prayer Group Gets Rolling* (Book 6).

Shavuoth—Pentecost

Time of year: Late spring (May or June). Seven weeks or fifty days after Passover.

Also known as the Feast of Weeks, Shavuoth (pronounced “Sha-voo-ote” in Hebrew) celebrates the giving of the Law (or Torah) on Mount Sinai, fifty days after crossing the Red Sea. (See Ex. 34:22; Lev. 23:15; Deut. 16:9–10.) In New Testament times, this feast was called Pentecost, a Greek word meaning “fiftieth.”

Also known as the Feast of Firstfruits (or Feast of Harvest), Pentecost celebrated the beginning of the wheat harvest, bringing firstfruits to God as an offering of thanksgiving.

Meaning for Christians: After His resurrection, Jesus told His disciples, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Later, as the disciples gathered together during the annual feast of Pentecost, a wonderful thing happened: God fulfilled His promise to send the Holy Spirit (see Acts 2).

Just as the original feast of Pentecost celebrated God writing the Law on tablets of stone, so now at Pentecost we celebrate the Holy Spirit who writes God’s law on our hearts. And just as this festival brought the first fruits of harvest as a thank offering to God, so the Holy Spirit gives us power to bring in a harvest of souls as we share the Good News of Jesus first in our hometowns, then in an ever-widening circle that reaches to the ends of the earth.

Mexican Independence Day Fiesta

Did you know that Latino Americans are now the largest minority group in the United States? All major cities and many other communities North, South, East, and West have significant Latino populations. Translated into Yada Yada terms, that means there are probably Spanish-speaking mothers and fathers, babies and teenagers, aunts and uncles and grandparents in most neighborhoods who shop at the grocery store, attend local schools, work around town, and attend Bible-believing churches. We are an immigrant nation, and *these* immigrants—some of whom have been US citizens for generations—bring a rich heritage to America’s quilt-of-many-colors.

Latino or Hispanic?

Yikes! Which word do we use? Is Edesa Reyes *Latina*? Is Delores Enriquez *Hispanic*? We discovered the jury’s still out about which is the preferred word, even among Spanish-speaking Americans. “Hispanic” has often been used to refer to those from Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Cuba, as well as Spain (*“Hispania”*), whereas “Latino” refers to a broad spectrum with Latin American heritage (both Spanish and Portuguese-speaking).

But that’s not necessarily how Spanish-speaking people identify themselves. Some prefer “Latino” regardless of country of origin because it arises from the Spanish-speaking community itself, whereas “Hispanic” is the official word used by the United

States government on census records, etc. However, a recent poll revealed another surprising result: The term “Hispanic” was preferred by a majority of second and third generation citizens who tend to be more assimilated, whereas “Latino” was preferred by the older generation, who still tend to view the term “Hispanic” as colonialistic.

Another slight difference: “Hispanic” is an adjective, whereas “Latino” can be either a noun or adjective. Also, “Latino” or “Latina” can be used to specify gender.

In the Yada Yada novels, we had to make a judgment call and chose “Latino” both because it is self-identifying, and also because it can be gender specific. But *Latino* or *Hispanic*, we value and celebrate our Spanish-speaking brothers and sisters! Which is why we encourage readers to . . .

Celebrate Mexican Independence Day!

September 16 is a major holiday, not only in Mexico, but in Mexican-American communities all over the United States (just as Irish Americans celebrate St. Patrick’s Day with all its Irish traditions). On this date in 1810, Father Miguel Hidalgo rang the church bell in the town of Dolores to gather the townspeople, and issued a cry for independence from three centuries of Spanish rule: “*Mexicanos, ¡Viva México!*” (“Mexicans! Long live Mexico!”). Thus began a ten-year struggle for independence, which was finally granted by the Spanish viceroy in 1821. (*Note:* Mexico’s independence is often confused with Cinco de Mayo [the Fifth of May], but that fiesta commemorates the Battle of

Puebla between Mexican and French forces in 1862. However, both holidays are opportunities to celebrate Mexican heritage and colorful culture.)

It's easy to know when September arrives in Chicago where the Yada Yadas live. Huge green, white, and red flags fly from cars all week long as horns honk and street vendors do a brisk business of roasted ears of Mexican corn, cheese nachos, *chicharrones* (pork rinds), tamales, and *champurrado* (thick hot chocolate flavored with cinnamon). The high point for many is the downtown parade along Columbus Drive with its colorful floats, folk dancers, mariachi bands, and more—not to mention the popular neighborhood parades.

But whether or not your town celebrates Mexico's Independence Day, this fiesta is a great time to get better acquainted with your Mexican-American neighbors. Here are a few ways to join the celebration!

Brush Up on Your History

A trip to the library or an online search on Mexico should yield some family-friendly background on our closest neighbor south of the border. During the week of September 16, announce ahead of time that all family members need to tell something new they've learned about Mexico as their "ticket" to supper on the chosen night.

Watch *The Mission*, a 1986 British film (rated PG—some scenes may be disturbing to young children) that tells the story of Father Gabriel, a Jesuit priest who treks deep into the heart of a South American rainforest to build a peaceful Christian

mission among the Guarani Indians in the eighteenth century. But aggressive Portuguese slave traders thwart his mission and lead to tragedy. While this film is not about Mexico, it represents the struggle of the colonial years in South America.

Invite a Mexican-American acquaintance, friend, or family to your home to share his or her own history. (This could be part of your own Backyard Fiesta—see below!)

Get in on the Fun

How is Mexican Independence Day celebrated in *your* community? Choose from the following:

- Take the family to a Mexican Independence Day Parade.
- Take the family to a public fiesta (dancing! music! food!) in a local park.
- Take the family to an authentic Mexican restaurant (preferably one with a mariachi band!) and enjoy traditional dishes such as *Mole Poblano*, *Chiles en Nogada*, guacamole and chips, and much more!

Or . . . Host Your Own Backyard Fiesta!

(Or if your back yard isn't suitable, make it a Block Party! Many cities allow a neighborhood to sign up for a Block Party, and the police will even bring street barriers to keep traffic at bay so the kids can ride their bikes, trikes, and roller skates in the street while the adults haul out the tables and lawn chairs.)

Who to invite? The neighbors, of course! Or your extended family! Or folks from church! But do your best to include some

Mexican American families from school, church, or work—and ask for their suggestions on how to create a fiesta for *gringos*.

How to decorate? Small green, white, and red Mexican flags of course—as well as the good ol’ red, white, and blue! Use green, white, and red as your color scheme—or just bright, vibrant colors in general (no pastels here!). Use crepe paper or mini-lights wound around trees, bushes, and porch railings.

What to eat? Make it potluck, but ask everyone to bring something “south of the border”: chips and salsa, tortillas, taco makings, enchiladas (recipe on pg. 410), burritos, Spanish rice, refried beans, quesadillas, *carnitas*, *pan de polvo* (recipe on pg. 417)—the possibilities are endless.

Music, of course! A live band would be awesome—but most of us might have to settle for a CD player and your favorite Mexican music: *mariachi* (guitars, violins, trumpets); *banda* (brass); *norteño* (accordion and guitars), Mexican *cumbia* (drums, congas, accordion, bass guitar), or some of your favorite popular Spanish artists. (You can check out CDs from your local library if you don’t have any on hand.)

And for the kids . . . a piñata, of course! They aren’t very expensive, and loads of fun. Hang the piñata from the limb of a tree (or other creative substitute!) just above head level, with plenty of clear space around it. You will need a blindfold and a plastic bat. Let the little ones try first (they get three tries); then the bigger children (two tries?). Keep all children except for the “batter” out of reach of the swinging bat. When the piñata breaks, there is usually a mad scramble for the rain of candy, of course. (Be

careful that the “batter” quits swinging before other kids dive into harm’s way!) One way to insure all kids get a fair share is to have everyone dump the candy they pick up into a large bowl. Then divvy it out in little plastic bags.

But most of all, enjoy getting to know real people who represent one of the many cultures that make up the *United States of America*. Mexican Americans are our neighbors—in more ways than one.

Hallelujah Fest (Halloween Alternative)

When Jodi Baxter was growing up, Halloween was just a time to carve grinning Jack-o-lanterns out of big orange pumpkins, dress up in costumes (everything from princesses, super heroes, sheet-wearing ghosts, and cowboys), and to trek from house to house throughout the neighborhood yelling, “Trick or treat!” All innocent fun.

But there’s a dark side to Halloween. Haunted houses. Eggs thrown at windows. Mean tricks for those who don’t dish out the candy. Slasher movies full of terror and gore in the theaters.

Ever wonder where the term “Halloween” came from? On the church calendar, November 1 is All Saints Day, a day to honor the saints who have died and gone to heaven. Therefore the evening *before* All Saints Day, October 31, was called “All Hallows Eve” or “Hallow (Holy) E’en” (evening). For many, this was a holy day, remembering saints of old. But for others, it marked a pagan

“celebration of the dead,” a dark and sinister time full of ghosts, ghouls, and witches’ spells.

What to do? After all, kids love to parade around in costumes! You *could* ban Halloween altogether. Or you could encourage an alternative, a . . .

Hallelujah Fest!

Or call it a Harvest Festival. Or a Festival of Light. Any of these themes would be appropriate for the time of year. The benefits are enormous.

Many parents would welcome a Halloween alternative that would be fun, yet keep their kids off the street at night.

An opportunity for your church to invite kids and parents from the neighborhood for a party.

Compared to simple trick or treating, a Hallelujah Fest has the potential to be lots more fun—complete with costumes and candy, too!

Invitations

Make up a simple flyer at least two weeks before October 31 with all pertinent information and make sure it goes home with all the families in your church. Pass out the flyers in the neighborhood surrounding your church, too—or encourage families to bring another family from their own neighborhood. Besides *date*, *time*, and *place*, the flyer should include:

All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Encourage all children *and* adults to come in costume (see

Costume Ideas, below). Pick a costume theme, or simply encourage non-scary costumes.

What each family should bring: This depends on your plans for your festival! But it might include: A roll of cheap toilet paper (for the “Mummy Wrap”); a bag of candy (to mix and hand out to the kids in goodie bags); nonperishable food (cans, packages, or boxes) if you are collecting for a food pantry; or a candle in a jar or a lantern, if you go caroling in the neighborhood.

Costume Ideas

Avoid ghoulish or violent costumes.

Pick a theme: Fairy Tale characters; Biblical characters; animal characters; or etc.

Encourage “family group” costumes, or “pairs” and “sets”: Raggedy Ann and Andy; Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cottontail; R2D2 and C-3PO; The Three Bears; Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf; Luke Skywalker and Princess Leia; Mary and Joseph; David and Goliath; etc.

During your Festival, have a Costume Parade! You could have prizes for Most Original, Best Family Group, Funniest, etc.

Games

Mummy Wrap. Using the roll of toilet paper each family brought, each set of kids have to wrap their “mummy” (mommy). First family to use up the whole roll wins the prize! (*Note:* To make sure all the rolls are the same size, you may have to provide the toilet paper.)

Relays! There are dozens to choose from, such as: (1) *Cotton Ball Carry*—team members carry a cotton ball in a spoon around a marker and back again (harder than it sounds!); (2) *Pass the Orange* under the chin from person to person (if it drops, the orange has to go back two people); (3) *Lifesaver Relay*—pass out toothpicks to team members, then each team has to pass a Lifesaver from toothpick to toothpick *held in the teeth* (no hands!); first team to finish first wins.

Bucket Toss. Divide into teams. You will need a bucket and an ordinary 1-pound bag of dry beans per team. Mark off toe lines with masking tape: 3 feet from bucket for little ones; 4–5 feet from bucket for older kids; 5–6 feet from bucket for teens and adults. Idea is to toss beans into the bucket! Team with highest score wins!

Refreshments

Keep it simple! Plates of cookies, fresh veggies, fruit slices, and cold (or hot) apple cider will help offset the little goodie bags of candy that will go home with each child. (Collect the bags of candy as each family arrives, mix it all together, then ask a couple volunteers to create little goodie bags for the kids to take home. Plastic sandwich bags tied with ribbon will do the trick.)

Story Time

Ask a good storyteller to tell the story of one or more great Christian heroes of the faith. A good resource is *Hero Tales: A Family Treasury of True Stories From the Lives of Christian Heroes, Vols. I-IV*, by Dave and Neta Jackson (Bethany House).

Or several adults could dress up in costume as various Christian heroes and tell “their” story in dramatic first-person. The list is endless, but some possibilities are: *Amy Carmichael*, missionary to India; *Dwight Moody*, from shoe salesman to evangelist; *Harriet Tubman*, conductor on the Underground Railroad; *William and Catherine Booth*, founders of the Salvation Army; *Eric Liddell*, Olympic champion; *Florence Nightingale*, army nurse; or *Jim Elliot*, modern martyr.

Sing Songs of Light!

Make up a song sheet, or simply sing songs most will know: “This Little Light of Mine”; “When the Saints Go Marching In”; “I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light”; “Jesus is the Light of the World, Alleluia”; “Sing Hosanna (Give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning)”; “Hold Out Your Light, You Heaven-Bound Pilgrim”; etc.

Shine your light in the neighborhood! Help everyone light the candles they brought in jars and take your songs of praise to the streets.

Add Your Own Ideas

These ideas for an “alternative Halloween” are just for starters. But there’s one guarantee: all who attend will be clamoring to do it again next year. (“Mo-om! We *always* do a Hallelujah Fest on Halloween!”) And thus a tradition begins.

Recipes

*A*ll this celebrating is bound to make *everyone* hungry! Not to worry. Here the Yada Yadas offer up some of their favorite recipes, from main dishes to desserts. But you don't have to wait for a party to enjoy any of the following!

Edesa's Easy Enchiladas

Edesa's mother may have made her own enchilada sauce back in Honduras, but Edesa isn't above using a few American short cuts to make these quick and easy enchiladas.

Serves 6.

1 pound ground beef
1 medium onion, chopped
3–4 cloves garlic, diced
1 (1.25-oz.) envelope dry taco seasoning
1 (4-oz.) can black olives, sliced
1 (16-oz.) can ranch style refried beans
2 (10-oz.) cans enchilada sauce
12 corn tortillas
8 oz. grated Monterey Jack cheese

Toppings:

3–4 green onions, chopped
Fresh cilantro
Sour cream
Your favorite hot sauce

* metric conversion chart on page 419

Brown beef, onion, and garlic; add the taco seasoning and water according to instructions on package. Stir in the olives and refried beans; heat through. Warm the enchilada sauce in a separate sauce pan and pour half of it into the bottom of a 9 x 13 baking dish. Fill each tortilla with about four tablespoons of the beef and bean mixture and roll to close. Arrange side by side in the baking dish and pour the remaining sauce over the enchiladas. Sprinkle the cheese on top and bake in a 350 degree oven for about 30 minutes or until thoroughly heated.

Top with fresh cilantro, a dollop of sour cream, chopped green onion, and hot sauce to taste.

Jodi's Pasta with Gorgonzola Cheese Sauce

Jodi found this recipe in a newspaper, clipped it, played around with the ingredients, and it quickly made its way onto the Baxter Five-Star Recipe list (very easy and very good!).

Serves 4–6.

- 1 pound spaghetti or other pasta
- 1 medium red bell pepper, seeded and sliced into thin strips
- 1–2 cups small broccoli tips
- 3 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 8 oz. Gorgonzola cheese, crumbled
- 1 cup soymilk (or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup each, milk and half and half)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ up grated Parmesan cheese

While cooking the spaghetti according to the directions on the package, sauté the red pepper in 1 tablespoon of olive oil and set aside. Cook half the soymilk, all the Gorgonzola cheese, and the remaining olive oil in a sauce pan over a low heat, stirring constantly until the cheese melts. Add the remaining soymilk and heat.

Place the broccoli tips in the bottom of a bowl. Place a colander on top and drain the hot spaghetti into it. The boiling water will drain through and blanch the broccoli tips. Place drained spaghetti in a warmed serving bowl. Pour the cheese mixture over it. Scatter broccoli and red pepper on top and sprinkle with the Parmesan cheese.

Serve with garlic bread and a large green salad.

Jodi's Red Velvet Cake

There are dozens of recipes for Red Velvet Cake, and some may be nearly as good as Jodi's with their signature hint of chocolate. But Jodi's real trick is the mock whipped cream frosting she lathers on it, setting off the rich, red cake like a soft, white, feather boa over a crimson velvet dress.

Cake:

2 eggs

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup shortening

$1\frac{1}{2}$ cups sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt

2 oz. red food coloring (two 1-oz. bottles)

$2\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp. instant cocoa mix

1 Tbsp. vanilla

1 cup buttermilk

$2\frac{1}{2}$ cups flour

1 Tbsp. vinegar

1 tsp. soda

Frosting:

1 cup milk

$4\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp. flour

$1\frac{1}{2}$ sticks margarine ($\frac{3}{4}$ cup)

$4\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp. shortening

$1\frac{1}{2}$ cups sugar

1 Tbsp. vanilla

For the cake: Mix the eggs, shortening, sugar, and salt. Add and mix in the food coloring, cocoa, and vanilla. Add alternately (a little of each at a time) the buttermilk and flour; mix until smooth after each addition. Fold in the vinegar and soda.

Grease and flour three 8-inch or two 9-inch pans. Distribute the mix evenly in the pans and bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

For the frosting: In a saucepan whisk together the milk and flour and cook until thick, stirring frequently. Set aside until cool. (If necessary, you can hurry this step by putting it in the refrigerator.) Then mix the margarine, shortening, sugar, and vanilla until creamy. Finally, add the cooled flour/milk mixture and beat at high speed until frosting is the consistency of whipped cream. Apply only to a *thoroughly cooled cake* or it will look like glaciers in global warming rather than that beautiful feather boa.

Stu's Cranberry Bread

Here's how Stu makes it. If you follow her directions, you might have hollow-leg teenagers, assorted friends, long-lost relations, street people, and the cable guy falling all over themselves to get a warm, moist slice. Make that two. Okay, three.

Bread:

1 stick butter, softened
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
2 egg yolks (reserve the whites)
Grated rind of 1 or 2 small oranges
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups all-purpose flour
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. baking powder
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. baking soda
Pinch of salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fresh orange juice
1 cup fresh cranberries, chopped

Glaze:

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup orange juice
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease loaf pan. In a mixer, cream together butter and sugar. Beat in egg yolks and orange rind until blended. In a separate bowl, sift together flour, baking

powder, baking soda, and salt. Add the flour mixture to the batter alternately with the orange juice. Gently mix in the cranberries.

Beat egg whites until stiff and fold them carefully into the batter, stirring as little as possible. Pour batter into prepared pan and set on middle rack of the oven and bake for 50–60 minutes. (You can cover with tinfoil if the top is getting too brown before the middle is done.) Meanwhile, prepare the glaze.

Combine orange juice and sugar in a small saucepan and simmer for about 5–7 minutes, until a light syrup forms.

Prick the hot bread with a thin skewer or toothpick. Spoon the hot syrup over the hot bread as soon as it is removed from the oven. Cool in the pan on a wire rack.

(This can also be served as a dessert. To make it as a cake: pour batter into a 10-inch Bundt pan which has been greased with vegetable shortening and pan spray. Bake for 30–35 minutes. Cool five minutes, turn out cake, glaze, cool, slice, and serve.)

Delores's Pan de Polvo (Mexican Wedding Cookies)

Abh, that was sweet. José Enriquez showed up on the Baxters' doorstep (to see Amanda, of course) with his mother's yummy Mexican Wedding Cookies in hand. Was there a hidden message in there somewhere? But obviously, you don't have to wait for a Mexican wedding to serve these delectable cookies!

Makes about 4 dozen cookies.

2 tsp. anise seeds

3 sticks cinnamon

5 cups flour

1½ tsp. baking powder

1 tsp. salt

1½ cups shortening (lard is more authentic)

3 cups sugar

2 Tbsp. ground cinnamon

Boil the anise seeds and cinnamon sticks in about 1 cup of water until it produces a strong tea. Remove seeds and cinnamon sticks and allow to cool. Mix the flour, baking powder and salt, then cut in the shortening until the mixture resembles coarse corn meal. Finally combine 2 cups of sugar. (Reserve the third cup for the coating.) When it is evenly mixed, begin adding the anise tea until the dough is well blended. You may have to knead the dough by hand.

Shape. You have two options: (1) Roll out a little at a time with a floured rolling pin on a floured surface until dough is about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick. Use a small cookie cutter (heart-shaped if you have a small one), and place the cookies on an ungreased cookie sheet. (2) Flour your hands, take a handful of dough about the size of a baseball, and roll into a log about 1 inch in diameter and about 12 inches long. Cut logs into $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick circles. Place on an ungreased cookie sheet.

Bake cookies in a preheated oven at 375 degrees until golden brown (15–20 min.). While baking, mix the remaining cup of sugar and 2 tablespoons of ground cinnamon in a bowl. When the cookies are done, remove and, while still warm, roll in the cinnamon-sugar until coated.