

The
YADA
YADA
Prayer
Group
Gets Real
Book Three
Neta Jackson

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

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Reading Group Guide

1. A lot of readers say, “I am *so* Jodi!” Do you identify with Jodi? In what way? Why do you think so many readers identify with her?
2. In chapter 3, Jodi yells at God, “What part of dull and boring don’t You understand?” What pressure points do you have in *your* life right now? Have you considered whether God might have a redemptive purpose to “keeping the pressure on”?
3. Do you have a “Stu” in your life—someone who seems to have it all together and makes your best efforts look like a crumb in comparison? How do your feelings affect your relationship? Do you really know this person in her hidden places? What do you think would help you get “unstuck” in this relationship?
4. In what ways do you see Jodi growing and changing since Book One? What do *you* see as the difference in the “Old Jodi” and the “New Jodi” way of responding to situations.
5. The Yada Yada sisters are challenged not just to “believe *in* God,” but to “*believe* God.” What is the difference? What does that mean to you?
6. In what ways do the various members of Yada Yada “get real”

in this book (or not)? What does “getting real” mean to you? What are the benefits of being more open and honest in your relationships? What might be the downside of doing so?

7. Jodi still carries scars from the car accident—a reminder of her anger and her failure—until she begins to see these scars as a reminder of God’s grace and a reminder to pray for Hakim and his mom. What scars (physical or emotional) do you carry? In what way could these scars serve a redemptive purpose or encourage you to pray?
8. What prompted Jodi’s confession to the mother of Hakim and Jamal at the final parent-teacher conference? How was it different from her first “I’m sorry” at the end of Book One? In what way was the confession healing for Jodi? For Geraldine? In what ways can confession be an agent of redemption?
9. Reflect on the trauma Becky Wallace inflicted on the Yada Yada Prayer Group—and yet something in their response to Becky drew her into the water of baptism. Has God dropped someone into your life—unasked, unannounced, and even unwelcome? What feelings do you have about this person? Are you willing to consider whether God has a redemptive purpose in mind?
10. How has Christ’s forgiveness changed *your* life? (Remember, it cost Him.) How might your forgiveness set another person free? What would it cost you? *How far does that forgiveness go?*

the
YADA YADA
Prayer Group®
GETS REAL
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Let's Celebrate!

*B*irthdays, weddings, anniversaries . . . the Yada Yada sisters are learning that these milestones in a person's life are not just an excuse to party and receive gifts, but opportunities to celebrate friendship, bless our children, give thanks to God for bringing us this far on the highway of life, and commit our future to the Lord of all.

Quinceañera A "Coming of Age" Celebration

"Coming of age" rituals and ceremonies mark the transition from childhood to adulthood in cultures all over the world. Many are religious in nature and mark spiritual awareness and maturity; others coincide with reaching sexual maturity; still others simply acknowledge reaching the legal age of adulthood. A few examples:

For Catholics and Episcopal/Anglican churches, the Sacrament of Confirmation at age 13 is preceded by instruction in the *catechisms* of the church, and confers "sanctifying grace" on youth entering their adolescence. For other Protestant denominations who practice infant baptism, it may be called a Rite of Confirmation, a symbol of a maturing faith.

Other Christian congregations wait for the "age of account-

ability” (around age 12) to be eligible to receive baptism and partake of “communion” or The Lord’s Supper based on a personal confession of faith. Some churches use this time to present a Bible to the twelve-year-old during a worship service, acknowledging they are entering the time when they will be exploring the Scriptures on their own and making more mature decisions regarding their faith. (Some families choose to make it a larger celebration, similar to the Jewish *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*.)

For Jewish youth, the “age of maturity” is celebrated with a *Bar Mitzvah* (for boys age 13) and a *Bat Mitzvah* (for girls age 12). The term “Mitzvah” means “one to whom the commandments apply.” The religious service, in which the young man (or woman) reads from the Torah and leads part of the service, is attended by family, friends, and the larger community, and is usually followed by a lavish party. (Recently, some Jewish youth are choosing to raise money for charitable causes at their Bar or Bat Mitzvahs, rather than the usual extravagant gifts—a hopeful trend among the young.)

Tribal societies have long practiced a wide variety of “coming of age” rituals and rites of passage. These might include “walkabouts” (e.g., Australian aborigines) or other tests of skill and courage alone in the wilderness; scarification or tattoos or other bodily (and often painful) symbols of adulthood; being allowed to go with the men on a hunt and killing their first wild animal (to prove a boy is man enough to be a provider); etc.

The affluent classes in England, the US, and other European countries, still hold debutante balls when young women reach the age of 18. The original purpose of “debutante” (which means making one’s “debut” or “coming out”) was to present young women who had reached marriageable age to the families and eligible

bachelors within a proscribed social circle or class. Today the purpose is somewhat broader, to present the young lady to the society in which she will hopefully remain active, as well as celebrate her accomplishments thus far and support her goals and dreams.

The legal age varies from country to country. In the United States, the legal age for voting, joining the armed forces, and getting married without parental consent is 18 (though the legal age for drinking alcohol is still 21). But the legal age at which one can get a driver's license is 16, and is also the average "age of consent" for consensual sexual intercourse. (Go figure!)

Other: Many young people in the United States do not have official coming of age celebrations, other than graduations from high school or college. Some consider experiences like Outward Bound (or other adventure-based programs for teens) as a kind of "rite of passage," especially for boys, as well as Sweet Sixteen birthday parties for girls—though neither of these involves official incorporation into "adult life" by the faith community or larger society.

If you're like Jodi Baxter (that's okay, you don't have to confess), you might have been oblivious to a major "coming of age" event celebrated not only in many Latin American countries, but in Latino communities throughout the United States—the *quinceañera*. But as the Baxters discovered, it can provide some meaningful ideas for celebrating that young woman growing up in your home.

The *Quinceañera*

The *quinceañera* (or *quinceañero* in Puerto Rico and Peru) stands for *quince años* or "fifteen years." Originally it was a time to acknowledge that a young woman was ready to leave home and eligible

for marriage. (In fact, the lavishness of the occasion sometimes resembles a wedding, but without the groom!) The tradition continues today, although with the more general purpose of marking the transition from childhood to womanhood.

Unlike the *debutante ball*, a *quinceañera* focuses on the individual “birthday girl.” This is her Special Day, and she is The *Quinceañera*. Some of the meaningful traditions:

The Lady and Her Court

The *Quinceañera* wears a formal gown. The traditional color is pink, but today the color is simply “lady’s choice.”

She might choose 7 girls (friends, sisters, cousins) to be her *damas* (“ladies”), and 7 boys to be her *chambelanes* (“escorts”), wearing formal gowns and tuxedos. These 14 plus herself would equal 15—the magic number for the celebration. A more lavish *quinceañera* might include 14 girls and 14 boys, plus one more as her personal escort (can be a friend, cousin, or brother), i.e. fifteen couples—but many *quinceañeras* work perfectly well with fewer attendants.

Godparents are often chosen for the occasion.

Highlights of the Day

The celebration begins with a church ceremony (a mass, if the family is Catholic), which might include: a processional of the court, parents, godparents, and the *quinceañera* and her escort (if she has one); Scriptures focusing on character qualities and the responsibilities of adulthood; prayers of blessing by the godparents, priest, or minister; favorite hymns or songs chosen by the *Quinceañera*; and the presentation of special gifts and what they mean.

Next comes a reception, kicking off the festivities with food,

music, and dance! This might involve an elaborate sit-down dinner, or simply a buffet table with plenty of food and drink.

The first dance is for the *Quinceañera* and her father alone, traditionally a waltz. (In the absence of her father, an honored male relative fulfills this role.) Traditional *quinceañera* songs, such as *De Niña a Mujer* (“From Childhood to Womanhood”) or *Le Última Muñeca* (“The Last Doll”) highlight this very special father/daughter waltz.

The *Quinceañera* might be wearing flats during the church ceremony, but after the dance with her father, she ceremoniously changes from flats to heels, signifying her becoming a young woman.

The *Quinceañera* and her court then perform a specially choreographed dance they have been practicing—from a traditional waltz to a simple line dance or a more modern dance routine—a surprise for the invited guests.

The *Quinceañera Doll* is used as a decoration (often dressed in a similar gown to the guest of honor) and a keepsake, symbolizing the young lady’s last doll. She might also throw an inexpensive Barbie-type doll to the younger children (much as a bride throws her garter), symbolizing leaving her childhood behind.

Special Gifts and their Meanings

Tiara. The *quinceañera* wears a tiara because she is a “princess” in God’s eyes, His beloved daughter. This may actually be part of the ceremony, with her parents or godparents “crowning” the young lady.

Ring. May symbolize a vow to remain a virgin until marriage (see Purity Celebration on pg. 11). Also represents the unending

cycle of life, the emergence of the young woman's abilities, and her future contributions to society.

Earrings. A reminder to listen to the voice of God through His Word, and to listen responsively to others around her.

Cross necklace. Symbolizes her faith in God.

Bible, Prayer Book, or Book of Devotions. Not just a reminder, but resources to help her build her faith on the Word of God and prayer.

Traditional Food

What's traditional? That depends on the country! But if you are trying to recreate a Mexican *quinceañera*, you can't go wrong with a Mexican buffet. Guests can choose what they want to eat and there's not as much waste. Of course there is *birria* (Mexican stew) and *chicken mole*, both served over rice. (Or *mole poblano* served over chicken or turkey.) But there are also simpler foods, such as *taquitos*—beef or chicken mixture rolled up in a corn tortilla, fried lightly, and served with salsa, sour cream, or guacamole. (Check online for recipes!)

Make It Your Own

The whole point of a *quinceañera* is to celebrate the young girl moving into womanhood. Use these ideas to create your own celebration, use what's meaningful to you and your family, and add to them. That's what learning from other cultures and sharing traditions is all about—enriching our lives and enlarging our family of faith.

Purity Promise Celebration

Related to coming-of-age celebrations, but with the specific purpose of encouraging our children to live God's way—to be pure in mind, heart, and body in our sex-saturated culture—is the growing popularity of “purity promise celebrations.” A few variations on this theme:

The father-son, mother-daughter weekend. Focus on the Family offers a “Preparing for Adolescence Pack,” which gives parents of children entering the teen years the opportunity to explore a number of issues together: sexual development, identity, peer pressure, making decisions, developing self-confidence, and much more. The Pack includes CDs a father/son or mother/daughter can listen to together, plus a workbook. Some parents like to use this on a father-son or mother-daughter weekend-away around the age of eleven or twelve.

Father-Daughter Purity Ball. Generations of Light Ministries in Colorado Springs, Colorado, pioneered the Father-Daughter Purity Ball several years ago, and it is growing in popularity around the country. Fathers spiffed up in tuxes escort their dazzling daughters (who may be anywhere from ten to eighteen) to the dance and spend an elegant evening together. A highlight of the ball is the commitment the fathers make to be pure as a man, husband, and father, to be a man of integrity and accountability (i.e., faithful to his wife, shunning pornography, caring for and protecting his family), and the daughter signs his pledge as a witness. The daughters also make a pledge to God to keep themselves pure (remain sexually abstinent) until marriage. Find out more at www.generationsoflight.com.

Purity Rings. A young man or young woman (whether a teenager or single adult) may choose to wear a “purity ring” as a symbol of his or her vow to remain sexually pure until marriage. Sometimes this ring is given as a gift by a parent to a son or daughter who makes a purity pledge. The ring can be worn on the third finger of the left hand until it is replaced by a wedding band. But some wear it on the right hand, reserving the left for the engagement ring and wedding band.

What about the boys? Many of the “purity pledges” seem to focus on girls. But it takes two to tango! Many girls “give in” because of pressure from boyfriends. Our sons need to take the lead, not just “Don’t worry, Mom, I’d never push a girl further than she wants to go,” but “I am saving *myself* to give all my love to the woman God wants me to marry and spend the rest of my life with.”

One more thing—Recent polls have shown that a disturbing number of those who have taken purity pledges break them before marriage. Unsettling? Yes. Does this mean we shouldn’t encourage these ceremonies or commitments? No. Many are sincere—but our children need continuing support, prayer, and encouragement to follow God’s “better way” of reserving sexual intimacy for marriage.

Last but not least . . . One criticism of “purity pledges” is that *if* a young person then yields to the temptation to have sex, they are less likely to use precautions for “safer sex” and more likely to hide it from their parents because of their shame. A parent needs great wisdom to assure their child that “nothing can separate us from the love of God” (see Romans 8:39) or their love as a parent, that *all* of us have sinned and fall short of God’s righteousness (Romans 3:23), and that God longs to cleanse and forgive our sins and make us “pure” once more (1 John 1:9).

A Friendship or Wedding Quilt

A Friendship Quilt can be a wonderful way to celebrate a wedding or anniversary—or any other special occasion where a group of friends and family want to remind a sister, friend, or couple just how many people love them.

The Basic Idea

Muslin squares of material are given to friends and family to decorate in a design of their choosing with embroidery, cross-stitch, or appliqué. Then the squares are collected, sewn together in strips with narrow sashes of colorful material separating each square, then the strips are sewn together to make a large block of squares which represents the body of the quilt. A border of material is added around the block of squares, then batting (the filling) and material for the back side are added, held together with binding around the outer edge. (See pattern on page 18.)

When the front and back of the quilt have been sewn together, it can then either be “tied” with yarn at the corners of all the squares, “quilted” by simple line stitching in the sashes and borders with thread that *matches* the color of the material so it is basically invisible, or actually quilted with little designs by an experienced quilter, again using *matching* thread so as not to compete with the embroidered designs.

Overwhelmed? Don’t be! Take the plunge! It’ll be a gift never to be forgotten—either by the givers or the receiver.

Material Needed

First, decide what your color scheme is going to be. Consider your

friend's tastes—or take her along to help choose the material if it's not a surprise. Generally, the *sashes* between the squares and the *first border* should be a solid color, while the *outside border* can be a complimentary pattern. The *back of the quilt* can either be plain or patterned, but the *binding edge* should be a solid color (e.g., the same as the sashes or picking up a contrasting color from the pattern). Or mix and match your own ideas!

Size of the quilt: These instructions are for a *queen-size quilt with 42 squares*—six across and seven down—which can be used as a bed coverlet or (as often happens) a large wall hanging. Obviously you can make a Friendship Quilt of any size, or even a much-smaller wall hanging. (You will need a sewing friend who can estimate the amount of material needed!)

Material: Use good quality 100-percent cotton—and be sure to wash it before cutting! All amounts are based on 45-inch material, unless otherwise noted.

The muslin squares: You will need $3\frac{1}{4}$ yards of 45-inch muslin. After washing the material, cut muslin into forty-two $10\frac{1}{2}$ inch squares. The finished size of the squares *after hemming* will be 9 inches (leaving room for a $\frac{3}{4}$ inch hem all the way around).

For sashes and first border: You will need $1\frac{1}{8}$ yards of 45-inch material for the sashes and $1\frac{5}{8}$ yards for the first border—a total of $2\frac{3}{4}$ yards (or 3 yards on the safe side!). Cut sashes and first border into $3\frac{1}{2}$ inch strips, which allows for a $\frac{3}{4}$ inch hem on either side. The *finished* width will be $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Outside border: You will need $2\frac{1}{2}$ yards of 45-inch material for the outside border. Cut border strips 6 inches wide, allowing for a $\frac{3}{4}$ inch hem on the inside edge only. (The outside edge will

be “hemmed” by the binding edge.) The *finished* width of the outside border will be $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches.

Binding edge: You will need $1\frac{1}{8}$ yards of 45-inch material for the binding edge, if you use a contrasting color.

Back of quilt: You will need 3 yards of 90-inch material; 6 yards of 45-inch material; or 9 yards of 33-inch material. The last two amounts need to be pieced to cover the back. The *finished size of the quilt* (and the *back*) will be 87-inches wide and 99-inches long.

Option: If you want to make a smaller quilt—say, 30 squares (5 across and 6 down)—the finished size will be $70\frac{1}{2}$ inches across and 82-inches long. The sashes and borders can be adjusted proportionally. Or you could add another border to compensate for the fewer number of squares.

Time Frame

Allow two to three months for sending out the muslin squares to friends and family and getting them back (allowing six to eight weeks for individuals to decorate their square). If past experience counts for anything, you might want to add another four weeks to nag procrastinators!

Allow *at least* three months for piecing the quilt together and quilting it. (Ask whoever is doing the piecing/quilting how much time they will need.)

Sending Out the Squares

Draw up your list of friends and family.

Write a letter giving instructions to accompany each muslin quilt square.

Attach small swatches of the border materials to the letter, and ask them to choose complimentary colors for their design.

They may use embroidery, cross-stitch, or appliqué. (Fabric crayons or paints should be avoided.) Photos can also be used—ask your favorite T-shirt place how to do it.

Leave at least a 1½ inch border *around all sides* of the squares.

Have them embroider their *name* somewhere on the design.

Give them a *deadline* for returning the finished square to you.

Ask them to let you know ASAP if they will not be able to do a square (and return the material) so that you can find a replacement. (Some families are glad to do two squares.)

Optional: Ask friends and family to contribute \$5 to \$10 per square to help with the cost of the material and quilting.

Putting the Quilt Together

As the squares are returned, place each one in a gallon-size zip-lock baggie. This protects the squares and allows you to label each one where it should be positioned in the quilt.

Once you have received all the decorated squares (*ahem . . .* patience, patience!), lay them out on the floor in rows (e.g., six across and seven down). Try to balance the designs in a pleasing overall pattern.

Then label the baggies so the person who sews it together (the quilter) will know where to place each square, using 1, 2, 3, etc. for the horizontal rows, and A, B, C, etc. for the vertical rows. (I.e., the top horizontal row would be labeled: 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E, 1F. The next row would be 2A, 2B, 2C, etc. See diagram on page 18.)

Deliver the squares in baggies, and all the other material to the person who is going to put the quilt together, along with the

pattern and instructions for cutting the sashes, borders, back, and binding (see “Material Needed” on pg. 13). This may or may not be the same person who will do the quilting.

If the quilt is going to be hung for display purposes at the wedding (or even on the wall at home), ask for a “rod pocket” to be attached to the back along the top edge of the quilt, using the same color material as the backing. This is simply a long strip of material, approximately 6 inches wide, machine-hemmed along both sides, and then hand-stitched to the back of the quilt to allow for a sturdy rod (wood or metal) to be slipped through.

When the entire quilt has been put together, then it’s time for the “quilting.” (See quilting ideas under “The Basic Idea,” above.)

This can be done as a “gift” by a relative or friend who has quilting skills, or you may need to hire an experienced quilter.

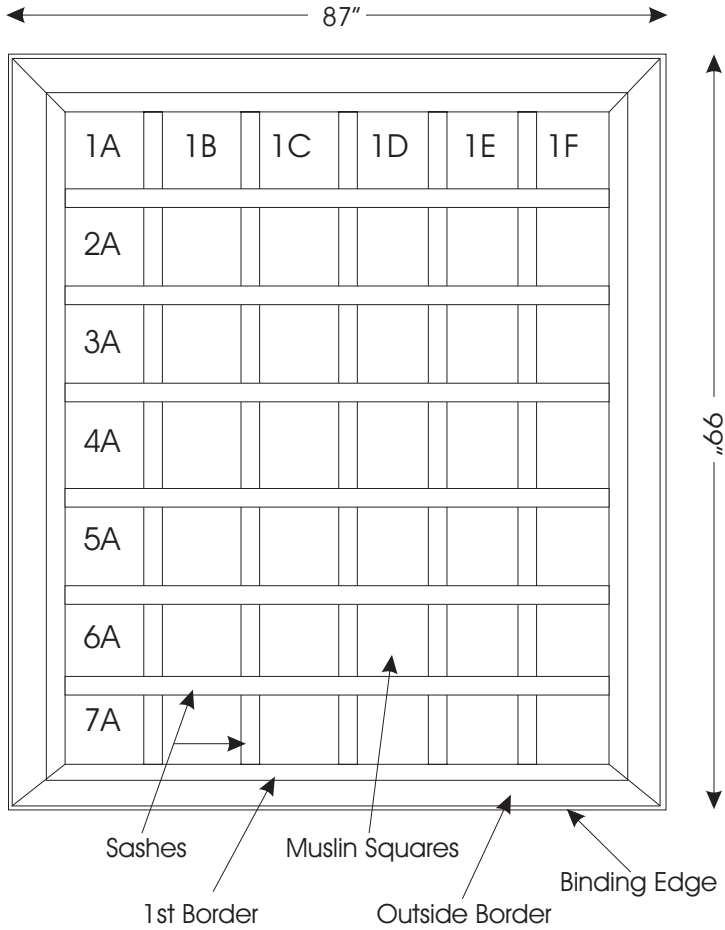
Displaying the Quilt

Hanging the quilt at the wedding reception or anniversary party is a wonderful way to share this wonderful gift of friendship. (See “rod pocket” above.)

Make a “Map to the Quilt” to display: Either by hand or on your computer, create a “grid” with the exact number of quilt squares (e.g. six across and seven down; or five across and six down; etc.). Fill in each square with a brief description of the quilt square on one line, and the name of the person who made it right below (e.g. “Basket of flowers, Jane Doe”). Print out the “map” on pretty paper and frame one for the guest(s) of honor. Make copies for anyone who would like one—especially those who contributed to the quilt!

Wahoo! You did it! Now it’s *really* time to celebrate!

Quilt Pattern



Recipes

*W*as your mouth watering as you read *The Yada Yada Prayer Group Gets Real?* Well, then, do something about it! Try one or all of these recipes and add them to your Family Favorites.

Jodi's Cheese Soufflé with Mushroom Sauce

Jodi prepares this when she wants to pamper her family or guests. But she's learned from sad experience to put up signs saying, "DO NOT SLAM DOORS" and to shut Willy Wonka in a bedroom, otherwise her soufflé might fall like the lopsided top hat worn by the Cat in a Hat. But her family always loves it anyway. So give it a try!

Serves 4–6.

Soufflé:

6 Tbsp. ($\frac{3}{4}$ of a stick) butter

6 Tbsp. all-purpose flour

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

$\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. salt

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. cayenne

$\frac{3}{4}$ pound sharp cheddar cheese, grated or thinly sliced

6 eggs (at room temperature)

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. cream of tartar

Sauce:

6 medium mushrooms, sliced

1 garlic clove, minced

1 can cream of mushroom soup

Thin with $\frac{1}{3}$ cup water or white wine

* metric conversion chart on page 30

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Make sure your eggs are at room temperature so your soufflé will rise better. Melt butter, blend in the flour. Gradually add milk and cook over low heat until thick, stirring constantly. Add salt, cayenne, and the grated cheese. Stir until cheese melts. Remove mixture from heat.

Separate egg yolks from the whites. To do this, crack the egg over one bowl, letting the egg white slide out of the shell. Then dump the yolk in another bowl. Don't let any yolk mix in with the whites. Beat the yolks until thick and smooth. Slowly add the cheese mixture to egg yolks, stirring constantly. Let the mixture cool while you beat the egg whites and cream of tartar (with *clean* beaters) until they stand up stiff but haven't started to dry out or break apart.

Slowly pour the cheese/yolk mixture into the whipped egg whites, gently folding it together with a spatula or wooden spoon that doesn't cut through the egg whites. It does not need to be completely mixed, and excessive stirring or jarring will deflate the egg whites. Carefully pour the mixture into an ungreased 2-qt. soufflé or casserole dish. For a "top hat" effect (it puffs in the oven!), trace a circle through mixture 1 inch from the edge and 1 inch deep.

Bake in a thoroughly preheated oven at 350 degrees for 30 minutes or until a knife comes out clean, but do not open the oven door until it has cooked at least 20 minutes. Gently bring the soufflé to the table to be served immediately. (If the weather or Willy Wonka doesn't knock it down, waiting will.)

Sauce: Fifteen minutes before the soufflé is done baking, lightly sauté the sliced mushrooms and garlic in the bottom of a saucepan using a little butter. Add a can of cream of mushroom soup and $\frac{1}{3}$ can liquid (water or white wine). Bring to a low simmer, stirring to avoid sticking. Ladle the mushroom sauce over individual helpings of soufflé like gravy.

Delores's Easy Carnitas

And we thought making the traditional carnitas would be hard! Give this recipe a try and we guarantee it'll become a favorite to serve over rice, roll up in a tortilla, or use as the meat in your tacos.

Serves 4 (or 8 as appetizers).

1½ pounds boneless pork shoulder, cut into 1-inch cubes (beef may be substituted)

2 Tbsp. brown sugar

1 Tbsp. molasses

2 tsp. beef bouillon

½ tsp. cayenne

1 tsp. cumin

4 cloves garlic, minced

1 can Pepsi or Coke

Place all the ingredients except the Pepsi in a deep, cast-iron skillet over a high flame. Once the meat begins to sear, add half of the can of Pepsi and allow it to boil nearly away, stirring repeatedly. This will take about 20 minutes. Then add the remaining Pepsi a little at a time as the syrup caramelizes and adheres to the meat. Stir so that nothing sticks and burns. When most of the Pepsi has evaporated (about another 10 minutes), turn off the flame and serve over a bed of rice, as the meat in tacos, or with toothpicks as an appetizer.

Garnish with:

3 scallions, sliced

Fresh cilantro

Juice of 1–2 limes

Hot sauce to taste

Include other favorite ingredients (lettuce, tomatoes, cheese, onions, etc.) if you are making tacos.

Stu's Spaghetti alla Carbonara

Legend has it that this dish was originally popularized by the charcoal makers of ancient Italy because the word carbone is Italian for coal. "But there was nothing 'black' in the restaurant versions I've had," explains Stu, "so I fixed it by adding sliced black olives." Well, that's Stu! But it tastes good, so who's going to complain? Oh. One more thing. Preparing carbonara definitely requires a third hand, someone to help you with the final mixing . . . but somehow Stu manages to do it by herself. Go figure.

Serves 4–6.

1 pound spaghetti

1/2 pound bacon, cut into bits

6 eggs

6 cloves garlic, minced

1/2 cup half and half or soy milk

1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, grated

4-oz. can of sliced black olives, drained

Freshly ground black pepper

While cooking the pasta according to the directions on the package, fry the bacon until just crispy, add the garlic 1 minute before the bacon is done. (Frying garlic until it browns causes it to lose its garlic flavor and become bitter.) While these ingredients cook, blend the eggs, half and half, and salt.

When you have drained the pasta, put it in a large bowl while still hot. Then, with one hand remove the pan with the still bubbling bacon and garlic, and with the other hand pick up the blender with the eggs mixture. With your “third hand” (see, Stu must have one), stir the pasta vigorously while pouring the hot bacon bits and grease and the egg mixture simultaneously into the hot pasta. The heat from the bacon grease and pasta will cook the eggs.

Toss in the grated Parmesan cheese, sliced olives, and sprinkle liberally with freshly ground black pepper. Serve with a tossed green salad, garlic bread, and a rich red wine.

Jodi's Chicken Breasts in Mango Sauce

Once you make this, you'll know why Jodi considers this one of the Baxter five-star meals—good and easy. Your dinner guests will think you're a gourmet cook! But hey, if the chicken breasts are thawed and your ingredients are at hand, you should be able to get dinner on the table in less than 30 minutes with no problem. We won't tell.

Serves 4–6.

1 mango, peeled and sliced (or diced)

1 cup orange juice

½ cup apricot jam

1½ Tbsp. spicy mustard

6 skinless, boneless chicken breasts

¼ tsp. salt

¼ tsp. pepper

2 Tbsp. butter

Fresh parsley (optional)

Salt and pepper the chicken breasts and sauté them in butter in a nonstick skillet until golden brown on both sides. While the chicken is cooking, mix the mango, orange juice, apricot jam, and mustard in a bowl until the jam dissolves into the juice.

Add the mango mixture to the chicken and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for about 12 minutes, turning the chicken occasionally. When the chicken is done and the sauce has thickened, lift out the chicken breasts and arrange on a serving platter. Pour the mangos and sauce over the chicken and garnish with sprigs of fresh parsley. Serve with white rice and a green vegetable.

Jodi's Lemony Bundt Cake

The hardest part of this recipe is getting the cake out of the Bundt pan in one piece! But it's one of the Baxter all-time favorites, so if at first you don't succeed, try, try again. It's worth it!

Serves 8–10.

1 package lemon cake mix

1 regular-size package lemon instant pudding (Or use 1 regular-size package lemon Jello dissolved in 1 cup boiling water)

4 eggs

½ cup vegetable oil

1 cup water (if using instant pudding)

Topping:

1⅓ cup confectioners' sugar

5 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice

Vegetable shortening *and* nonstick pan spray

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Evenly grease *and* spray a heavy Bundt cake pan with nonstick spray; dust with flour. All three steps are crucial in getting it to fall free from the Bundt pan in one piece.

Place cake mix, instant pudding, eggs, vegetable oil, and water in a large mixing bowl. (If using lemon Jello, dissolve it in 1 cup *boiling* water before adding to the mixing bowl.) Beat with a mixer on medium speed for 2 to 3 minutes, scraping down the edges of the bowl as needed. Pour into the prepared cake pan and bake for

35 minutes. Cool cake pan on a wire cake rack for about 5 minutes before putting your cake plate over the top, turning it upside down, and gently tapping the pan until the cake drops onto the plate, hopefully in one piece.

Perforate the cake with a small skewer or toothpick so the frosting can soak in. Blend together the confectioners' sugar and lemon juice, and slowly spoon it over the top and sides of the warm cake, covering as much of the cake as possible. The cake will keep moist for several days and is, in fact, best when chilled.

US TO METRIC CONVERSION TABLE

CAPACITY

$\frac{1}{5}$ teaspoon = 1 milliliter

1 teaspoon = 5 milliliters

1 tablespoon = 15 milliliters

1 fluid ounce = 30 milliliters

$\frac{1}{5}$ cup = 50 milliliters

1 cup = 240 milliliters

2 cups (1 pint) = 470 milliliters

4 cups (1 quart) = .95 liter

4 quarts (1 gallon) = 3.8 liters

WEIGHT

1 ounce = 28 grams

1 pound = 454 grams